January 7—Proposal Preparation—NSF Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program

Location: SJSU Research Foundation Central Office, 4th Floor Board Room | Time: Noon to 1:30 p.m.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) is once again offering an informative webinar on preparing proposals for the National Science Foundation (NSF) Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program. This webinar is recommended for STEM faculty and education faculty who are considering submitting proposals to the Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program in 2014. For your convenience, the webinar will be hosted at the Research Foundation on Tuesday, January 7. You may also register to view the webinar directly. To register to view the webinar directly, or to view the full program solicitation for the Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program visit the NSF website.

For more information on this webinar, contact Carmina Grande Som at foundation-osp-infoservices@sjsu.edu.

February 20—OSP Workshop—NSF Framework for Improving STEM

Location: MLK Library, Room 255/257 | Time: 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. | RSVP by February 17

The National Science Foundation (NSF) includes in its goal support for fundamental science and engineering and is tasked with keeping the United States at the leading edge of discovery in a wide range of scientific areas, from astronomy to zoology. In addition to funding research in the traditional academic areas, the agency also supports “high risk, high pay off ideas, and novel collaborations.” During this informative workshop, Dr. Ferdinand Rivera, SJSU Professor of Mathematics and (former) NSF Program Director, will provide an overview of the NSF Education Directorate’s strategic goals and framework that are designed to advance science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and nurture innovation.

RSVP to Carmina Som at foundation-osp-infoservices@sjsu.edu.

Transparency and Accountability at NSF—Important Notice From The Acting Director

As a public agency, the National Science Foundation builds and sustains trust for our mission through the transparency of our processes and the accountability of our organization. Periodically, as a learning organization committed to continuous improvement, we review our processes to ensure that they continue to engender this trust. A recent review by NSF senior leadership in consultation with the National Science Board affirmed our fundamental principles and identified opportunities for improvements in two areas to enhance our public stewardship.

One area is our accountability for ensuring that our investment decisions support the national interest, defined by NSF’s mission “to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity and welfare; to secure the national defense…” To strengthen this alignment, our directorates and offices are examining process improvements for defining research priorities and objectives at all levels of the organization and at all stages of merit review. As a result, the community should
benefit from greater understanding and knowledge of the priorities and objectives of our research programs. We would certainly welcome the community’s thoughts and suggestions in this regard.

A second area is communications regarding our investment decisions. In the current fiscal environment, it is more important than ever to justify the expenditure of public funding. We believe we can enhance our public communications of what we are funding and why it is important. The immediate focus will be on improving our research abstracts, ensuring these primary sources of public information clearly articulate the broader context and funding justification. While our program officers are responsible for preparing abstracts, this often involves input from principal investigators, and so we will be directly engaging the community in this effort. Of course, one of the most effective outreach mechanisms for improved communication is through our community, and we look forward to working with you as we identify other mechanisms to strengthen our public message.

From an implementation perspective, our efforts may result in the adoption of new policies and improved processes, which we will share with the community. We expect that, over time, this increased focus on transparency and accountability will improve our processes, strengthen our research programs, enhance our communications and advance the national interest.

Thank you for your continuing support for NSF and the nation’s science and engineering research and education enterprise.

Cora Marrett, Acting Director

Material from the NSF website.

WHAT THE BUDGET DEAL MEANS
According to Inside Higher Ed, the federal budget deal announced by Congressional negotiators in early December would have a positive impact on research funding. Although the proposal does not detail specific amounts of money for federal agencies it would increase the overall funds currently available in the part of the budget that affects higher education and research. The deal also sets the top-line funding level for the 2015 fiscal year that begins next October.

The budget calls for $492 billion in non-military spending and will restore approximately 87 percent of funding that was lost due to the March 2013 sequestration. Although it is still approximately $14 billion below the original level of non-defense funding prior to the cuts that took place in March, it is approximately $23 billion more than would be available if Congress were to allow a second round of cuts to take effect in January.

“The higher [budget] caps for both years should allow the restoration of some damaging cuts, and should at the minimum prevent any further cuts for the next two years,” said Jon Fansmith, director of government relations at the American Council on Education.

Material from Inside Higher Ed website.

FELLOWSHIPS AND SCHOLARSHIPS
The SJSU Research Foundation receives notification of fellowship and scholarship opportunities for faculty and students. Highlights this month include:

Program: FLETC College Intern Program
Agency: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
Deadline: January 31, 2014

Program: Humane Studies Fellowships
Agency: Institute for Humane Studies
Deadline: January 31, 2014

Program: Atmospheric and Geospace Sciences Postdoctoral Research Fellowships (AGS-PRF)
Agency: National Science Foundation (NSF)
Deadline: February 10, 2014