Windows of Opportunity

Meet InfoReady Review!

Montclair State University recently added another tool in our Research Administration toolbox with the procurement of InfoReady Review, a cloud-based system to automate the submission, review, and approval of internal competitions. Some members of the MSU community have already started engaging with the product, but here is what you need to know.

The Office of Sponsored Programs is currently using InfoReady for two primary purposes:
1. Limited-submission competitions
2. Internal Award (SBR, SFS, SGPD, FRM, & UDS) competitions

When an opportunity is announced, interested individuals can find all submission materials—including guidelines, templates, and submission instructions—on the InfoReady site. Users log-in using their MSU Net ID & password to submit a proposal. A user's account serves as a repository of current and past submissions and reviews (if applicable). It will also be a place where internal award recipients will submit any required reports.

Similar to Cayuse SP—MSU's sponsored programs administration system—InfoReady can route proposals and applications to necessary approvers. InfoReady, however, has the unique ability to streamline the review process. Reviewers can access the proposal applications, review, rate, and provide comments directly in the system.

This new product offers increased visibility for applicants, reviewers, and administrators and we hope that you find it intuitive and easy to use! Each competition has its own "administrator" in the system, and users are encouraged to reach out to that contact with any questions. When in doubt, users should always feel free to contact osp@montclair.edu.

Kate Dorsett
Post-Award Officer, OSP

OSP Welcomes Christina Carter

Please join us in welcoming Christina Carter, Pre-Award Specialist, to the Office of Sponsored Programs!

Christina comes to us from The James Comprehensive Cancer Center at Ohio State University. Christina has experience in both pre-award and post-award research administration, and significant NIH proposal development experience using the CAYUSE 424 platform.

We are excited to have Christina as our newest member of our excellent pre-award team, led by Dana Natale, Pre-Award Services Manager.

Preparing for Your CAREER

In late July, the National Science Foundation accepts applications for their [Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Program](#)—a Foundation-wide activity, encompassing all of NSF's Directorates, that is meant to support junior faculty in the role of teacher-scholars. A successful CAREER proposal must integrate both education and research into its Project Description and strike a balance between both, as well as meet the needs of the University.

An eligible Principal Investigator (PI) must be an Assistant Professor in a fifty percent tenure-track or tenure-track-equivalent position, hold a doctoral degree in a field supported by NSF, and be untenured. If your appointment should change, NSF will base your eligibility on the date your appointment becomes effective at your university. Also, a PI cannot apply if he or she has already won a CAREER and cannot have had more than two CAREER proposals reviewed. In addition, a PI may submit only one CAREER application each year. It is also important to note that this program does not allow co-investigators. However, NSF does allow a PI to budget support for other senior personnel or consultants, but their role in the project must be limited—think along the lines of someone strictly performing a service, rather than making an intellectual contribution or helping to manage the project.

CAREER has a minimum five-year budget of $400,000, with the exception of the Directorate for Biological Sciences, the Directorate for Engineering, or the Office of Polar Programs—their minimum request is $500,000. In the guidelines, NSF states that a number of programs and Directorates fund proposals that are closer to the minimum award amount in order to fund more proposals. With that in mind, *proposers should discuss typical funding levels with the appropriate Program Officer, or review the list of recent awards to gauge the average award size*.

A CAREER submission should include all components required in [NSF's Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG)](#). PIs should note that the [full CAREER guidelines](#) detail sections with supplemental instructions that supersede the PAPPG. One of the most important is the Departmental Letter. The letter must be less than two pages in length and confirm the University's commitment to the professional development and mentoring of the PI. It should not read like a letter of recommendation; rather, it should state how the PI's department and the University will help his or her career development in both research and education and must indicate that you are eligible for the award. The solicitation gives a list of all the elements that are required for the letter. Proposals that do not include letter will be returned without review.

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Sam Wolverton
Senior Pre-Award
Specialist, OSP

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CAREER Tips

Read the solicitation. The start of every good proposal is reading and understanding the funder's guidelines. In the case of the CAREER, NSF lays out all the requirements for a successful submission, including the necessary integration of research and education plans. The guidelines also detail specific instructions for some proposal sections that differ from what is described in the PAPPG.

Contact your NSF Program Officer. Contacting a Program Officer is critical. They are an invaluable resource—so much so that NSF publishes [a list of contacts for CAREER submitters](#). Talk to one and find out if your proposal is appropriate for their directorate or find out if it should have a home elsewhere, and be sure to ask if your budget is competitive. Also, a Program Officer can help you determine if the scope of your education plan is adequate for your research and our University.

Give it some time. Even though this is an early career award, it is not a perfect starter for new investigators. Preliminary data is a very important part of this proposal. Begin by searching for opportunities that will provide resources to accomplish this task. And when you do reach the point where you are ready to submit a CAREER application, start as early as possible with your preparation and writing—this is not the type of proposal you can get out in a week. Remember: You have three tries and many investigators are awarded on the second or third attempt.

You and your long-term plans. In the Project Description, the PI should communicate his or her qualifications. What makes you uniquely qualified to carry out this work? Also, explain how this project relates to your overall career plan. The project represents five years, but what comes after that?

Start reaching out. Begin with your department chair, who will need to supply the Departmental Letter that is required for the proposal. Do your goals match with those of the department? Also, even though the CAREER solicitation lists relevant literature to assist you with your education plan, you may feel that your proposal would benefit from the assistance of a faculty member in the College of Education and Human Services (and make sure they provide you with a Letter of Collaboration). If you want to review an awarded proposal, contact your colleagues who have received a CAREER or visit OSP for a sample.

Presentation matters. Since the Project Description only allows fifteen pages, many PIs feel the need to make every bit of space count. However, no one benefits from a proposal that is difficult to read. Use a readable font size and one-inch margins. Also, ensure that any diagrams, charts, or graphs have not been compressed so much that the text is not legible. Finally, a successful proposal should not include spelling or grammatical errors—considering using a proofreader before submitting. And be sure not to overlook any sections required by the CAREER guidelines or the PAPPG. For example,

even if you have not received prior funding from the NSF, do not skip the "Results from Prior NSF Support" section—this is *required* and can easily be satisfied by a statement such as, "There are no results from prior NSF support to report."

For More Information. For more guidance on submitting a CAREER proposal, please visit the [2022 NSF CAREER Webinar and FAQ](#) wepbpage.

MSU CAREER Awardees

Quinn Vega, Analysis of RET Co-Receptor Function in a Teaching Laboratory Setting, 1999–2004

Stefanie Brachfeld, Tracing Antarctic Sediment Transport Pathways and Antarctic Ice Sheet Stability Using Iron-titanium Oxide Magnetic and Chemical fingerprints, 2004–2011 ([Profiled in Windows of Opportunity, Fall 2014](#))

Jamaal Matthews, How Urban Adolescents Come to Think of Themselves as Mathematicians, 2014–2020 ([Profiled in Windows of Opportunity, Fall 2015](#))

Pankaj Lal, Exploring Place-Based Opportunities for Bioenergy Sustainability, 2016–Present ([Profiled in Windows of Opportunity, Spring 2016](#))

Marc Favata, Research and Education in Gravitational-Wave Science, 2017—Present

Glen O'Neil, Engineering Light Addressable Electrochemical Sensors for Imaging Chemical Neurotransmission, 2020—Present ([Profiled in Windows of Opportunity, Spring 2020](#))

Featured Awards

Dr. John Soboslai of the Department of Religion received $39,176 from the National Endowment for the Humanities in support of "Seeing What Takes Place: Exploring Immersive Experiences of Religious Rituals." This project seeks to convene a meeting of religious studies scholars and experts in XR modalities to explore the creation of immersive videos analyzing and explaining religious rituals. A two-day advisory meeting will evaluate the best practices for creating stereoscopic (360 degrees) videos combined with documentary style analysis and discussion into resources aimed at teaching about religion.

Dr. Amrita Sarkar of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry has been awarded $194,025 by the National Science Foundation for her two-year project "ERI: Underlying Interfacial Phenomena in PFAS- Polymer Sorbent Adsorption." This proposal aims to develop a powerful low-cost mass-scale sorbent production strategy using a novel fluorinated block copolymer that leverages its self-assembly at the solid-liquid interface and facilitates elimination of toxic fluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS) from drinking water.

Awardee Profile: Douglas Larkin & Mika Munakata

Drs. Douglas Larkin and Mika Munakata were recently awarded $1,065,877 by the National Science Foundation for a proposal they submitted to the Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program, and marks the second project funded by that program for Dr. Larkin. As part of our Awardee Profile series, we asked them to share their insights about the proposal submission and award process.

What are the major aspects of your awarded project?

The STEM-4-STEM Noyce Scholarship program provides preservice science and mathematics teachers with full tuition, fees, stipend, and other support for up to two years of study in the MSU teacher education program. In return, for every semester of support, Noyce Scholars teach one year in a high-need district.

This program is open to undergraduate students in the teacher education program and graduate students in the MAT program seeking certification in a STEM field. We are also running a pilot program for potential STEM teacher education transfer students from Bergen Community College in which they participate in a teacher internship program at an area high school and complete prerequisite teacher education coursework at BCC, permitting them to complete a STEM degree and teacher certification in four years.

The STEM-4-STEM program provides about $32,000 of support for undergraduate students and $20,000 for graduate students:

- Full tuition (up to 2 years for undergraduate students & up to 1 year for graduate students).
- A stipend of $1,000 per semester.
- A one-time payment of $1,105 to go towards testing fees and other costs for teacher certification.

- Academic support and professional development support in first years of teaching.
- Participation in a community of Noyce Scholars at MSU, locally, and nationally.

What were your first thoughts after having received the news that you were awarded?

We were incredibly excited. One of our goals was to expand the scholarship program, which had been previously limited to undergraduate students in science majors, to a broader population of graduate students and students in the combined Bachelor's / Masters programs, which now includes mathematics majors as well.

What are some of the challenges involved in projects like yours? How are you tackling these?

Right now there is a dire shortage of teachers in New Jersey, with a demographic wave of retirements that would be significant even without a global pandemic. Teachers for secondary mathematics and science are in particularly high demand. Yet there are still a number of barriers for people who wish to be STEM teachers. As a public state university, MSU's tuition is reasonable, but the overall costs associated with college attendance remain high. The Noyce STEM-4-STEM Scholarship is designed to provide tuition support to make degree completion and certification more possible, particularly during the final semester of full-time clinical practice.

It is also the case that the teaching profession as a whole is under a great deal of pressure right now, and teaching during such uncertain times comes with its own set of challenges. That's why our program also builds community among the Noyce scholars and extends support throughout the first year of teaching after graduation.

How would you advise colleagues interested in submitting a grant application?

There is a lot someone can do in order to become more familiar with the process of writing and submitting a grant prior to actually doing it. This particular grant is run by the National Science Foundation, and there were numerous webinars and Q&A sessions provided in advance. Also,

serving as a grant reviewer—in any capacity—offers a unique vantage point for understanding what will and won't get funded. Reading the RFP carefully—before and during the writing process, and again as the deadline approached closer—helped us make sure that we were addressing all of the important elements of the program while ensuring that we were adhering to its requirements.

For this grant in particular, which has a lot of moving parts, we used a good deal of the valuable 15-page limit for explanatory diagrams, making sure that our proposal was clear to reviewers while also meeting all the required elements. The nature of this project also required us to be in communication with various stakeholders in the community well in advance of the deadline.

Finally, this took a great deal of summer work. Because we had a previous grant, we weren't sure until late spring that

we would actually apply, and so we missed the opportunity to apply for summer grant writing funds. We highly recommend doing so if interested! sure that the broader impacts and intellectual merits of the proposal are very strong.

Internal Awards Survey & Assessment

Thank you to all the faculty that participated in the Internal Awards online survey and/or focus groups this past spring! Over 200 faculty completed the survey, providing critical input that will help guide and renew MSU's internal funding programs moving forward.
We look forward to sharing the survey results soon and continuing to work with faculty to meet the goal of stimulating, enhancing, and developing research, scholarly, and creative activities at MSU!

What is the Global and Export Compliance Committee?

Montclair's export compliance program is led by the Office of Research and Research Compliance, and includes representatives from divisions across the University. The committee's function is responsible for facilitating export compliance procedures across all academic, research, operational and business activities. Some of these procedures include:

- Evaluating proposed international transfers so that export license requirements can be determined

- Coordinating U.S. Government restricted party screening

- Partnering closely with Office of Sponsored Programs to interpret and resolve publication and citizenship restriction clauses in grants and contracts

- Advising on international programs (e.g., exchange programs, and inter-institutional agreements)

- Advising faculty on international research collaboration

- Addressing academic and research engagements with OFAC-sanctioned countries (e.g., Cuba and Iran)

I travel internationally on my sponsored project. What export control activities are required?
When international travel involves the temporary or permanent transfer of research tools or samples (either by advance shipment or via hand-carried baggage), be sure to include this information in your Cayuse SP documentation.

I have a research team member here on a visa. What do I need to consider or who should I contact?

Kat DeMarco
Compliance
Coordinator

Specific considerations could include whether the team member is visiting from an embargoed or sanctioned country. Research Compliance will work with the Office of Global Engagement to determine if any additional licenses or screening are required for your specific research activities. If you are unsure, please contact the export compliance program directly.

What is restricted party screening?
Restricted party screenings seek to identify any parties that might be prohibited from receiving items subject to export control regulations. The main goal of restricted screening is to ensure safety for researchers as well as compliance with regulated items and activities. To reduce the burden of this activity on researchers, most of the required screening activities are conducted and documented by Research Compliance, OSP, Finance or other trained offices.

For more information related to export control and compliance, please email exportcontrol@montclair.edu or call Kat DeMarco directly at (973) 665-7785.

We Are Here to Help: OSP Website Resources

OSP has developed our website to be a useful and evolving resource for MSU grant seekers and grant awardees. Over the past few years, we have put a lot of thought toward making it user friendly and succinct. The following are some examples of the resources we hope you will utilize.

Find Funding

The latest update to this section of OSP's website is the _Grants Resource Center_ (GRC) subpage. OSP's newest subscription provides MSU faculty and staff with access to a comprehensive suite of tools, services, and expertise for successful proposal submissions. Interested parties should contact OSP to request our username and password for the GRC website. _Find Funding_ also contains links to curated funding opportunities lists.

The sidebar also contains a subpage for _Limited Submission Opportunities_. OSP uses the web-based system InfoReady to manage limited submission competitions. MSU faculty and staff can submit an application to one of these competitions, which will be posted on the InfoReady homepage.

Proposal Submission

Users who are ready to develop and submit a proposal will find invaluable tools in this section. This webpage offers information on OSP's Proposal Submission Policy, a Time and Effort Map, required documents for proposals that include subawards, and multiple proposal development resources.

On the sidebar, users can find subpages for _Budget Preparation_, the _National Science Foundation_ (NSF), and the _National Institutes of Health_ (NIH). The Budget Preparation page contains OSP's budget guidelines, updated spreadsheets, and justification templates. These materials are available to aid in developing budgets for proposals, continuing applications, and general reference.

Critical information, such as agency-specific submission guidelines and templates for required proposal sections, are gathered on the NSF and NIH subpages for easy reference. A list of technical section samples are located at the bottom of the NSF page for easy access. Principal Investigators (PIs) should refer to these samples when developing their proposal. PIs should make sure to check with their assigned pre-award specialist for successful full proposal samples and additional resources.

> **_Amanda Lopez_**
> _Junior Pre-Award Specialist, OSP_

Award Management

This section provides information and links to commonly requested information and situations you will encounter during the tenure of your grant. It also includes MSU and federal policies that affect your grant, such as the disbursement of indirect costs and requesting authorization to incur pre-award costs. The _Tracking Time and Effort_ subpage is the latest addition, containing information on how to track a PI or Co-PI's committed time and effort on funded grants by using a T&E Map. OSP encourages MSU faculty and staff who are heavily committed to current and pending sponsored projects to utilize the tool provided on this page in order to ensure that they are meeting their obligations.

Cayuse Research Suite

This page leads PIs to the three different Cayuse systems that MSU currently uses: Cayuse Proposals (formerly Cayuse 424), Cayuse SP, and Cayuse IRB.

The most recently implemented system, Cayuse SP, is the internal system that initiates the proposal submission process between a PI and OSP. Helpful resources such as video tutorials and quick start guides are readily available for PIs, department chairs, and deans to refer to when navigating through this system.

The _Cayuse FAQs_ provide answers to frequent questions OSP receives when a new user is navigating through Cayuse Research Suite. Other answers pertaining to questions about Cayuse SP and completing the Internal Processing Form (IPF) will also be found on this page.