Rice University Policy No. 301

POLICY FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF SPONSORED PROJECTS

I. Introduction

This policy is to guide principal investigators, department and program chairs, project leaders and deans in the management of sponsored research or other externally-funded scholarly projects and outlines University policies for sponsored research related matters and activities. This policy supplements instructions issued through other Rice University policy memorandums and bulletins as they may relate to research activities at the University. The Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Studies or the Director of the Office of Sponsored Research may also issue guidelines or other memoranda that explicate, expand upon or supplement the principles in this policy.

In addition to following this policy, principal investigators and others responsible for sponsored projects should read their grant and contract documents carefully and be familiar with all requirements, terms, and conditions stated therein.

II. Guiding Principles and Rights

The expansion of knowledge and its dissemination through research and scholarly studies are integral to Rice University’s mission as an educational institution. Accordingly, members of the faculty are encouraged and are expected to undertake fundamental research of interest to them and, where available, to seek support for their studies from any source, provided that any source of funding and any terms imposed by that source comply with University policies and procedures and state and federal law. In the conduct of such research, principal investigators shall

1. follow the high ethical and professional standards befitting an academic setting,
2. provide for the health and safety of students, post docs and research and support staff,
3. provide for the health and safety of human subjects in research and safeguard their privacy,
4. provide for the humane treatment of animals,
5. properly manage and be compliant with all safeguards and policies when working with recombinant DNA (rDNA),
6. comply with University policies, governmental laws and regulations, and terms of sponsors’ agreements, and
7. disseminate their results and conclusions in keeping with the principles of academic freedom and openness in research.

III. Principal Investigator Eligibility

Tenured and tenure track faculty and faculty fellows are eligible to serve as principal investigators. Any exceptions to the above require the prior written approval of the Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Studies.

IV. Responsibilities

Principal Investigators. Principal investigators have the primary responsibility to ensure that students, post docs, research staff and any visiting scholars receive the appropriate instruction and mentorship necessary to participate in the responsible conduct of research. This instruction and mentorship program should include, but not be limited to, the proper recording and storage of data, handling of hazardous materials, the handling of rDNA, the use and care of equipment, as well as issues regarding conflicts of interest, research ethics and scientific misconduct. For research involving human subjects or the use of animals in research, principal investigators shall also ensure that students, post docs and research staff complete the necessary training prior to conducting any research in these areas. Principal investigators need to keep themselves informed of such matters as export control issues and provide information and
training to their research staff, post docs and students through resources provided through their school or the University. Principal investigators shall also inform their research staff, post docs and students of those University policies and procedures that may impact their research projects such as those on purchasing, travel, and intellectual property. Principal investigators should inform members of their research teams, including students and post docs, of the source of support of the research and of their salary or stipend and principal investigators must have first-hand knowledge of the effort and amount and type of contribution each person makes to a research project.

In the mentorship of students, principal investigators shall avoid the acceptance of external sponsorship of research activities which would compromise a student’s ability to publish or discuss his/her work openly or jeopardize a student’s ability to satisfy a graduation requirement in a timely manner due to a sponsor’s imposed time constraint.

Principal investigators should not pursue work for hire nor work that is not fundamental research or that is a service ordinarily performed by a commercial entity. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the University recognizes that there may be occasions where it is appropriate for faculty to undertake such work because of the opportunities it may provide for students or others to collaborate with a sponsor or the unique instrumentation available at the University or expertise of a principal investigator. Under these circumstances, the prior written approval of the Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Studies is required.

The Academic Schools and Departments. In supporting sponsored research activities by its faculty, post docs and research staff, schools and departments assume certain responsibilities. The school deans’ and the department chairs’ approval of a proposal certifies to the following:

1. compliance with existing University and departmental policies,
2. scholarly merit of the project,
3. the competence of the principal investigator in the area of research,
4. the ability of the principal investigator to successfully manage the proposed research project,
5. that, to the extent possible, the research project relates to the academic objectives of the department and provides opportunities for graduate and/or undergraduate education or research training,
6. the capability of the department to provide necessary administrative support (personnel and supplies),
7. the availability of university and department space, facilities, and equipment to fulfill project needs,
8. any additional information technology resources needed for the project have been identified and communicated to the appropriate university office,
9. the adequacy of the budget and the determination of the department to prevent cost overruns,
10. the recognition of applicable safety standards and regulations and the existence of plans for appropriate action to comply with them, and
11. the project will be conducted with appropriate management and oversight.

The University. The University affirms its role in working with principal investigators, departments and schools to provide the resources, infrastructure and facilities necessary to support a strong program of research, subject to its strategic academic priorities and financial capabilities.

V. Proposal Preparation

The preparation and submission of a proposal is directed by the principal investigator who assumes responsibility for the identification of an appropriate sponsor, use of any application forms specific to a sponsor, the content of the proposal (including the budget), and, when applicable, mailing of hard copy applications in final form. The Office of Sponsored Research (“OSR”) may be contacted for assistance in identifying potential sponsors and securing any sponsor application materials. To the extent possible,
proposals should provide educational opportunities for, and permit the participation of, undergraduate and graduate students and post docs.

All proposals submitted for research and other sponsored projects to be performed by faculty, students and/or staff at the University require the review and approval of the Office of Sponsored Research. Staff in OSR are responsible for providing the official signature on all proposals submitted on behalf of the University.

The proposal budget should include all anticipated costs of the proposed project including, but not limited to, salaries, fringe benefits, tuition remission, equipment, supplies and materials, travel, subcontractors, consultants, any other anticipated costs, and associated facilities and administrative costs (also referred to as indirect costs or overhead). Allowance shall be made for salary increases and inflationary increases in materials at appropriate rates. Salary increases shall be based on (1) rate increases included in the applicable then-current annual Budget Office memoranda, (2) knowledge of an increase from the relevant dean’s office, (3) the average of the rates of increase for the prior three years, or (4) a rate determined by a sponsoring agency. Any requests for waivers or reductions in the federally approved facilities and administrative rate for budgets must be reviewed by the appropriate dean(s) and approved by the Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Studies. A copy of the written waiver must be submitted to OSR with the proposal. Approval is not required for reduced facilities and administrative rates based on policies of external sponsors; documentation of a sponsor’s policy should be provided to OSR. Cost sharing included in budgets shall follow current procedures established by the University and should be detailed on the University’s cost sharing form. Proposals should include a budget justification consistent with a sponsor’s requirements.

VI. Negotiations and Grant/Contract Management

In the event a proposal is funded, the University, not the principal investigator, assumes responsibility for negotiating and formally accepting agreements from external sponsors. This will help ensure that all legal requirements incumbent upon the University in the application and acceptance of outside funding are carefully reviewed and appropriately acknowledged and that University policies and procedures are consistently and reasonably applied and followed. Some agreements (i.e., grants) are issued on a unilateral basis and require no negotiations or signatures from the University except under unusual circumstances. Award negotiations are the responsibility of the Office of Sponsored Research under the overall supervision of the Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Studies with assistance provided by the offices of the General Counsel, Technology Transfer and Risk Management, as needed. Except for rare instances, agreements with sponsors are executed between the University (not the principal investigator) and the sponsor. In accepting these legally binding agreements, the University becomes the grantee or the contractor. The principal investigator becomes responsible for the technical work, fiscal oversight, and the overall management of the project, and he/she is obligated, together with the University, to comply with all terms of the agreement.

VII. Acceptance of Awards

The official acceptance of awards from external sponsors is done by the Office of Sponsored Research. Signature authority with regard to research agreements rests with the Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Studies or a more senior University official, depending upon the size of the award. Signature authority may be delegated to the Director or Assistant Director of the Office of Sponsored Research. Principal investigators are prohibited from signing research agreements.

VIII. Research Involving Human Subjects

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University conducts the initial review and approval, and the continuing review, of research involving the participation of human subjects through an Assurance approved by the appropriate federal agency. All reviews are conducted in accordance with this Assurance and the Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46 and Title 21 Parts 50 and 56 for the purpose of protecting the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in research and to assist the
principal investigator and the University in their mutual obligation to comply with federal, state and Rice policies with respect to these subjects.

The jurisdiction of the Rice IRB shall include the following circumstances:

(1) Research which is sponsored by Rice University
(2) Research conducted by or under the direction of a Rice employee (student research must be conducted under the direction of an identified Rice faculty member)
(3) Research conducted by an individual(s) not employed by Rice but who is utilizing Rice students, staff, post docs or faculty as research subjects; and
(4) Research conducted by an individual(s) not employed by Rice but who is conducting research on the property or in facilities of Rice.

"Human subjects," for the purposes of the IRB and its responsibilities, are defined as living individuals about whom a researcher conducting research obtains (1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual, or (2) identifiable private information. Identifiable private information includes information about (a) behavior that occurs in a context in which a subject would reasonably expect that no observation would take place and (b) which has been provided for specific purposes by a subject and which the subject can reasonably expect will not be made public (for example, a medical record).

No research involving human subjects shall be conducted by faculty, staff, post docs or students until each has undergone the required training and official communication has been received from the IRB that the research protocol has been reviewed and approved. Questions regarding such training shall be referred to the Office of Sponsored Research.

IX. Research Involving Animals

All research conducted by Rice faculty, research staff, post docs and students, or in Rice facilities or on Rice property shall be undertaken only after review and approval by the University’s Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). The activities of the IACUC shall be conducted in accordance with all applicable federal regulations and governed by The Laboratory Animal Welfare Act, Public Law 89-544, as amended, and such instructions and guidelines as may be issued by the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Department of Agriculture or other federal agency. No research involving animals, nor the purchase of animals for use in research, shall be undertaken by faculty, research staff, post docs or students until each has undergone the required training and official communication has been received from the IACUC that the research protocol has been reviewed and approved. Questions regarding such training shall be referred to the Office of Sponsored Research.

X. Research Projects Involving Recombinant DNA (rDNA) Molecules

Research conducted by Rice University faculty, research staff, post docs and students involving recombinant DNA molecules, regardless of sponsorship or source of funding, shall be conducted only with the approval and under the cognizance of the Rice University Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC), and in accordance with the Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules, published by the National Institutes of Health. It is the charge of the Institutional Biosafety Committee to ensure that recombinant DNA activities conducted at Rice University or on Rice property are conducted safely and comply with all applicable regulations.

XI. Research Projects Involving Select Agents

The University currently does not engage in any research involving select agents as defined and covered by the rules of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Accordingly, any applications for proposed sponsored research involving any select agents must first be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Provost and the President of the University prior to submission to a potential sponsor.
XII. Toxic Materials

The purchase, use, handling, and disposal of all hazardous and toxic materials must comply with the requirements established by the appropriate federal agencies, the policies of the University, and in conjunction with the University's office of Environmental Health and Safety.

XIII. Transfer of Materials

Any materials used as part of research and that are required to be transferred to or from Rice University by faculty, research staff, post docs or students must be transferred pursuant to a Material Transfer Agreement (MTA), which shall be negotiated and executed by the Office of Technology Transfer. All transfers shall also be made in accordance with applicable federal requirements and shall be verified by the Office of Technology Transfer as not violating any federal export control regulations.

XIV. Export Controls

All exporting of materials and data shall be in compliance with federal regulations [i.e., Export Administration Regulations (EAR) and International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR)]. Exporting shall include actual shipments or transmission of items subject to EAR and ITAR or disclosing, either by oral or visual means, technical data or technology to a foreign person whether in the United States (deemed export) or abroad. The exporting of any materials or data shall be done with the assistance and approval of the Office of Technology Transfer and/or Office of General Counsel, as necessary.

XV. Expenditures of Grant/Contract Funds

The grant/contract period begins on the effective date of the agreement and runs for the length of time indicated on the award document. Expenditures incurred prior to the effective date of the grant/contract may not be charged against the project account unless specifically authorized in the award document or approval has been received by the sponsor or by other means (i.e., expanded authorities granted by federal agencies). No expenditures may be made after the scheduled expiration date of the agreement unless approved by the sponsor.

All accounting functions shall be under the direction of the Controller of the University and conducted by the Controller's Office of Research and Cost Accounting. It is the ultimate responsibility of the principal investigator to ensure that all charges to an externally-funded project are made in accordance with the terms and conditions of the award, including the approved budget, and in accordance with the relevant policies of the University.

XVI. Grant/Contract Closeout

It is the responsibility of the principal investigator to ensure that all periodic and final technical reports are transmitted to the sponsor in accordance with the terms of the award. Failure to submit reports on a timely basis may result in action by the University against the principal investigator, including ineligibility to submit any future proposals for sponsored research until all delinquent reports have been submitted and accepted by a sponsor.

The University, through the Office of Sponsored Research, the Office Technology Transfer, and Research and Cost Accounting, is responsible for submitting all invention, equipment/property and fiscal reports. The principal investigator shall work with, and provide the necessary information to, these offices to ensure the timely and accurate submission of all reports.

XVII. Other University Policies and Procedures Governing Research

The following policies and procedures embody the principles set forth in this policy and provide further policy and guidance applicable to the research activities of principal investigators.
Research Misconduct - Policy 324-00
Protection of Human Subjects - Policy 326-98
Care and Humane Treatment of Animals - Policy 314-90
Intellectual Property - Policy 333
Conflict of Interest - Policies 332-96 and 838-99 and 216-97
Health and Safety – Policies 805-00, 833-91 and 323-96
Salary Support Through Organized Research Policy - No. 311-98
Research Faculty - Policy No. 327-90
Funding Requests to External Sources - Policy No. 328-90
Research Equipment - Policy No. 331-03
Chemical Hygiene Plan - Policy No. 833-91
Purchasing – Policy No. 814-03

Policy No. 301
February 13, 2007

Issued: January 1, 1983
Revised: February 8, 2003