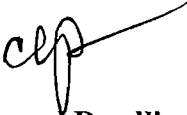


UNIVERSITY OF  
**ROCHESTER**

Charles E. Phelps  
Provost

MEMORANDUM

**To:** University Deans, Directors, Chairs, Investigators and Administrators

**From:** Provost Charles Phelps 

**Subject:** **New Internal Grant Proposal Deadlines**

**Background**

As you may know, the federal government is in the process of implementing its new electronic proposal submission system, Grants.gov. In addition, many of the private funding agencies are moving toward electronic submissions. The UR has had problems with these electronic proposal systems as noted below, and we have experienced several electronic proposals rejected for missing agency deadlines.

Therefore, there are predominantly two (2) reasons to re-examine the timing of the internal proposal submission process. These are 1) the diminishing success rates of funding applications due to the flattening of the federal research budget and 2) the imminent requirement for submission of ALL federal grant proposals electronically through Grants.gov. In time, this system will become the single portal for all grant applications to federal agencies, including NSF, NIH, NASA, and DOE. In fact, we are approaching our first significant Grants.gov application deadline of June 1 for the NIH R03 and R21 grant mechanisms.

From our experience, Grants.gov still has severe deficiencies that impact the research community: it is cantankerous, slow to access and upload files, difficult to identify the proposals as they move through the Grants.gov system, slow to respond and subject to service provider failures. While we are diligently doing all that we can to accommodate for the shortcomings of Grants.gov (see <http://www.rochester.edu/orpa/Grants.gov/index.htm>), we anticipate an inevitable "train wreck" when late proposal submissions to ORPA and unpredictable electronic proposal submission processes collide.

The Grants.gov system requires the UR to establish a buffer of time to protect the application against the agency deadline, as the system may experience technical difficulties or detect application errors at any point in the submission process. It may, for instance, take up to 48 hours (or more!) following e-submission to learn whether an application has been accepted by the sponsoring agency or rejected for corrections. If errors have been detected, the applicant must make all corrections and repeat the e-submission process, resubmitting the entire application package to Grants.gov in

accordance with the original agency deadline. Applicants cannot assume the first submission will be successful and must allow time for resubmission(s).

We have therefore re-evaluated the proposal review and submission process for electronic proposals, and redefined the timeline for submission of proposals for review and endorsement by ORPA. At this time, the new internal requirement will only apply for electronic proposals, however, it is still the University's expectation that sufficient review time will be provided for traditional paper submissions. In addition, as Grants.gov and other electronic submission systems become more stable, these internal requirements will again be re-evaluated.

### **UR INTERNAL PROPOSAL REQUIREMENT – EFFECTIVE MAY 15, 2006**

For purposes of this requirement, a "business day" is the standard University administrative work day ( 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.). The sponsor deadline is the day the application must be submitted by the University via Grants.gov or any other electronic proposal system.

**Effective immediately, applications requiring electronic submission must be completed, routed through sign-off and submitted to ORPA at least five (5) business days prior to the Grants.gov submission deadline. For instance, if the agency deadline falls on a Friday at 5:00pm, the proposal application must be received by ORPA the preceding Monday at 8:30am. This means that all aspects of the proposal must be completed at time of submission to ORPA, including the scientific proposal or research plan. Individual departments will need to establish their own internal requirements to ensure review and approval of the application in advance of submission to ORPA. As a general guideline, investigators should plan to finish their applications 10-14 business days prior to the Grants.gov submission deadline in order to accommodate department/academic review.**

Proposals submitted in a timely manner to ORPA will help assure a successful submission. Electronic proposals will be submitted in the order in which they are received; on time proposals will receive higher priority than late proposals. ORPA will make its best effort to submit the proposal electronically if it is received after the five-day requirement. However, ORPA is not responsible for electronic submissions that arrive at ORPA too late to meet the sponsor's deadline.

Should you have any questions or concerns with meeting these established deadlines, please contact your ORPA Research Administrator for assistance and advice.