Workshop Dealing with NSF's Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts Criteria

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Abstract – Since all NSF proposals are evaluated using the intellectual merit and broader impacts criteria, applicants need to address these in a convincing way to make their proposal competitive. The goal of this interactive workshop is to increase the participant's ability to design projects and write proposals that respond effectively to these two criteria. The workshop consists of a series of small group activities that will encourage participants to update their conceptual understanding of the issues by correcting their misconceptions and by connecting new knowledge to their current understanding. The workshop will address three issues: (1) activities that contribute to a project's intellectual merit, (2) activities that contribute to a project's broader impacts, and (3) defining and critiquing a project's intellectual merit and broader impacts. The workshop will be lead by a group of NSF program directors from the Division of Undergraduate Education and the Engineering Education and Centers Division of NSF

Index Terms – Proposal review criteria, NSF grants, writing proposals, interactive learning

WORKSHOP JUSTIFICATION

Since all NSF proposals are evaluated using the intellectual merit and broader impacts criteria, applicants need to address these in a convincing way to make their proposal competitive. Although NSF solicitations have included these two criteria for a number of years, many proposals still do not demonstrate a clear understanding of these criteria and lack a convincing plan to achieve them in the project. The workshop will enable applicants to be more responsive to these two criteria.

WORKSHOP GOALS

The workshop's goal is to increase the participant's ability to design projects and write proposals that respond effectively to NSF's intellectual merit and broader impacts criteria. In pursuit of this goal, the workshop intends to enable participants to list categories and activities for addressing each criterion and to evaluate and prepare plans that address intellectual merit and broader impacts. The workshop is intended for faculty members who are seeking NSF support for educational research and development projects.

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

The workshop consists of a series of small group activities using a think, share, report, and learn format. In this format, participants first reflect on their own current conceptual understanding of the issue, then share these ideas in small groups and then with the large group, and finally hear an expert's opinion. Through this process, they update their conceptual understanding of the issues by correcting their misconceptions and by connecting new knowledge to their current understanding. The workshop will address three issues: (1) activities that contribute to a project's intellectual merit, (2) activities that contribute to a project's broader impacts, and (3) defining and critiquing a project's intellectual merit and broader impacts. The workshop will be lead by a group of NSF program directors from the Division of Undergraduate Education and the Engineering Education and Centers Division of NSF.