

**PROGRAM SPECIFIC FORMS:
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL
PERFORMANCE PILOT PROGRAM**

June 2007

Dear Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in applying for a grant under the *Postsecondary Student Achievement and Institutional Performance Pilot Program*. As highlighted by the Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education, there is a "remarkable shortage of clear, accessible information about crucial aspects of American colleges and universities, from financial aid to graduation rates. Because data systems are so limited and inadequate, it is hard for policymakers to obtain reliable information on students' progress through the educational pipeline. This lack of useful data and accountability hinders policymakers and the public from making informed decisions and prevents higher education from demonstrating its contribution to the public good."

Similarly, the Secretary's Academic Competitiveness Council cited in their May, 2007 report that "perhaps the most striking finding in undergraduate education is the lack of rigorous evaluation of federal investments due to inadequate mechanisms for the collection of data on long-term student outcomes." Without access to long-term data regarding student enrollment, persistence by major, graduation, job placement, and employer satisfaction, the Council opined that it will be impossible to understand "what works" in improving undergraduate outcomes.

The measurement of student achievement is critical in assessing the results of our postsecondary education system, in understanding causal links between educational activities and student outcomes, and in helping students and families make informed decisions about their personal investments in higher education.

In fiscal year 2007, the Department will hold a special focus competition under the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) to support at least one consortium of institutions of higher education, associations, public and private non-profit organizations, and/or states to develop methods and implement mechanisms to systematically measure, assess and report on student achievement and institutional performance at the postsecondary level. This Department will use \$2.5 million of the \$8 million available for new awards in FIPSE to support this initiative. **Applications must be submitted to FIPSE by Month XX, 2007.**

This letter highlights a few items in the fiscal year (FY) 2007 instructions document that will be important to applicants applying for grants under this program. *You should review the entire application package carefully before preparing and submitting your application.* Information on the program is also accessible at the FIPSE web site at: www.ed.gov/FIPSE.

The Department requires applicants to use an Internet-based electronic system for submitting applications. We are requiring that applications be submitted electronically using Grants.gov (accessible at www.grants.gov), which works differently than the Department's e-Application system. *You are urged to acquaint yourself with the requirements of Grants.gov prior to the preparation of your proposal, and well in advance of the application deadline.* Please read the documents in this package, which provide important information concerning the submission of your application. All applicants must complete all of the forms associated with this competition. These forms are listed in the Application Checklist.

The application must be submitted on or before the deadline date. *Applications submitted late will not be accepted.* We suggest that you submit your application several days before the deadline date. The Department is required to enforce the established deadline to ensure fairness to all applicants. No changes or additions to an application will be accepted after the deadline date.

Electronic submission of applications is required; therefore, you must submit an electronic application unless you follow the procedures in the *Federal Register* Notice [see Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards] and qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement. The requirements for obtaining an exception to the electronic submission have changed. If you think you may need an exception you are urged to review the requirements *promptly*.

Please note that Grants.gov does not allow applicants to "un-submit" applications. If you discover that changes or additions are needed once your application has been accepted and validated by the Department, you must "re-submit" the application. You should know that if the Department receives duplicate applications, proposing to serve the same consortium, we will accept and process the application with the latest "date/time received" validation.

All applicants are required to adhere to the page limit of 25 pages (double spaced) for the Program Narrative. The Notice, published in the *Federal Register* [see Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards] contains specific information governing page limits.

You are reminded that the document published in the Federal Register is the official document, and that you should not rely upon any information that is inconsistent with the guidance contained within the official document.

Sincerely,

/signed/

Leonard L. Haynes, Ph.D.
Director, Fund for the Improvement of
Postsecondary Education (FIPSE)

COMPETITION HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. Applications must be submitted electronically using Grants.gov.** You are urged to acquaint yourself with the requirements of Grants.gov early as the registration procedures may require 5 or more days to complete. A more thorough discussion is included later in this application package. Grants.gov is accessible at <http://www.grants.gov>.
- 2.** It is important to know that the Grants.gov site works differently than the Department's e-Application system, used in past competitions.

Grants.gov does not allow applicants to "un-submit" applications. Therefore, if you discover that changes or additions are needed once your application has been accepted and validated by the Department, you must "re-submit" the application. You should know that if the Department receives duplicate applications, we will accept and process the application with the latest "date/time received" validation.

- 3.** In the FY 2007 competition, the Department is particularly interested in applications that meet the following invitational priority:

Applications from consortia of institutions of higher education, associations, public and private non-profit organizations and/or states to design methods and implement mechanisms to systematically measure, assess and report student achievement and institutional performance at the postsecondary level.

Please note that these priorities are explained in detail in the Closing Date Notice contained in this application package. You are urged to fully review the Closing Date Notice carefully before preparing your application.

- 4.** The project abstract is limited to one single-spaced page and should outline the key features of the project. The abstract must be uploaded into the ED abstract form.
- 5.** Please note that you must submit your application by 4:30 p.m. (Washington, D.C. time) on or before the application deadline date. Late applications will not be accepted. **We suggest that you submit your application several days before the deadline.** The Department is required to enforce the established deadline to ensure fairness to all applicants. No changes or additions to an application will be accepted after the deadline date and time.

6. Electronic submission of applications is required; therefore, you must submit an electronic application unless you follow the procedures outlined in the Federal Register notice inviting applications for new awards for FY 2007 and qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement.
7. All applicants are required to adhere to the 25-page limit for the Program Narrative portion of the application. The Federal Register notice contains the specific standards for preparing the Program Narrative.
8. All attachments must be in .DOC, .RTF, or .PDF format. Other types of files will not be accepted.

Please note, once you download an application from Grants.gov, you will be working offline and saving data on your computer. Please be sure to note where you are saving the Grants.gov file on your computer. You will need to log on to Grants.gov to upload and submit the application. (This is different from e-Application, where you are working online and saving data to the Department's database.) You must provide the DUNS number that was used when your organization registered with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR).

For help with Grants.gov, please go to <http://www.grants.gov/ForApplicants> and click on "help" at the top of the screen. Also, refer to the "Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants" found on page eight of this application booklet.

You are reminded that the document published in the Federal Register is the official document, and that you should not rely upon any information that is inconsistent with the guidelines contained within the official document.

COMPETITION INFORMATION

PURPOSE

To support at least one consortium of institutions of higher education, associations, public and private non-profit organizations and/or states to develop methods and implement mechanisms to systematically measure, assess and report student achievement and institutional performance at the postsecondary level.

ESTIMATED FUNDING AND PROJECT PERIOD

- Estimated Available Funds for FY 2007: \$2,500,000
- Estimated Range of Awards: N/A
- Estimated Average Size of Award(s): \$2,500,000
- Estimated Number of New Award(s): 1
- Project Period for New Award(s): 18 months

The U.S. Department of Education is not bound by these estimates

INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs was issued to foster an intergovernmental partnership and to strengthen federalism by relying on state and local processes for the coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

Applicants must contact the appropriate State Single Point of Contact to find out about, and to comply with, the State's process under Executive Order 12372. A listing of the Single Point of Contact for each State may be viewed at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/grants/spoc.html>.

APPLICANT FUNDING

The Department is often unable to award the full amount of funds requested. Applicants should pay close attention to the "Award Information" section of the Notice. The Department will not fund any application at an amount exceeding the applicable maximum award level.

EVALUATION OF APPLICANTS FOR AWARDS

A three-member panel of non-federal reviewers evaluates each application. Each reviewer assigns points for each selection criterion and prepares evaluation comments.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 75.210 and are listed in the application package.

NOTICE TO SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

The Department's Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs will inform the Congress regarding applications approved for new AORC Program

grants. Successful applicants will receive award notices by mail shortly after the Congress is notified. No funding information will be released before the Congress is notified.

NOTICE TO UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing following the notice to successful applicants.

PERFORMANCE REPORT REQUIREMENTS

At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For program-related questions and assistance, please contact:

Program Officer: Name
Address: Office
U.S. Department of Education
1990 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006-8521
Telephone: (202) 502-????
Fax: (202) 502-????
E-mail Address: firstname.lastname@ed.gov

For Grants.gov-related questions and assistance, please contact:

Support Desk: Grants.gov Support Desk
Telephone: (800) 518-4726
Hours: Monday – Friday, 7:00 A.M. – 9:00 P.M. Eastern Time

Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards

4000-01-U

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Postsecondary Education

Overview Information

Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education --

Special Focus Competition: Postsecondary Student

Achievement and Institutional Performance Pilot Program

Notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year
(FY) 2007.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.116X

Dates:

Applications Available: [Fill in date].

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: [Fill in date].

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: [Fill in date].

Eligible Applicants: Consortia of institutions of higher education (IHEs), associations, public and private nonprofit organizations, and/or states.

Estimated Available Funds: Congress appropriated \$21,989,000 for the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education for FY 2007, of which we intend to use \$2,500,000 for the Postsecondary Student Achievement and Institutional Performance Pilot Program.

Estimated Range of Awards: N/A.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$2,500,000.

Maximum Award: We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding \$2,500,000 for a single budget period of 18 months. The Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the Federal Register.

Estimated Number of Awards: 1.

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Project Period: Up to 18 months.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: To provide grants or enter into cooperative agreements to improve postsecondary education opportunities by focusing on problem areas or improvement approaches in postsecondary education.

Priority: Under this competition, we are particularly interested in applications that address the following priority.

Invitational Priority: For FY 2007 this priority is an invitational priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1), we do not give an application that meets this invitational priority a competitive or absolute preference over other applications.

This priority encourages proposals designed to support the formation of at least one consortium of institutions of higher education, associations, non-profit organizations, and/or states, to design methods and implement mechanisms to systematically measure, assess and report student achievement and institutional performance at the postsecondary level. Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1138-1138d.

Applicable Regulations: The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 82, 84, 85, 86, 97, 98, and 99.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to institutions of higher education only.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.

Estimated Available Funds: Congress appropriated \$21,989,000 for the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education for FY 2007, of which we intend to use \$2,500,000 for the Postsecondary Student Achievement and Institutional Performance Pilot Program. The actual level of funding, if any, depends on final congressional action.

Estimated Range of Awards: N/A.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$2,500,000.

Maximum Award: We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding \$2,500,000 for a single budget period of 12 months. The Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the Federal Register.

Estimated Number of Awards: 1.

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Project Period: Up to 18 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants: Consortia of institutions of higher education (IHEs), associations, public and private nonprofit organizations and/or states.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching: This program does not involve cost sharing or matching.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package:

[Insert name of person], Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW., 6th Floor, Washington, DC 20006. Telephone: (202) [fill in number]. E-mail: [insert address].

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain a copy of the application package in an alternative format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) by contacting the Education Publications Center (ED Pubs), P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398. Telephone (toll free): 1-877-433-7827. FAX: (301) 470-1244. If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call (toll free): 1-877-576-7734.

You may also contact ED Pubs at its Web site: www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html or you may contact ED Pubs at its e-mail address: edpubs@inet.ed.gov

If you request an application from ED Pubs, be sure to identify this competition as follows: CFDA number 84.116X.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission:

Requirements concerning the content of an application, together with the forms you must submit, are in the application package for this competition.

Page Limit: The application narrative (Part III of the application) is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. You must limit Part III to the equivalent of no more than 25 pages, using the following standards:

- A "page" is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.

- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs.

- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch).

- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial. Applications submitted in any other font (including Times Roman and Arial Narrow) will not be accepted.

The page limit does not apply to Part I, the cover sheet; Part II, the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; Part IV, the assurances and certifications; or the one-page abstract, the curricula vitae (3-page, condensed vitae are preferred), the bibliography, or the letters of support. However, you must include all of the application narrative in Part III.

We will reject your application if--

- You apply these standards and exceed the page limit;

or

- You apply other standards and exceed the equivalent of the page limit.

3. Submission Dates and Times:

Applications Available: [Fill in date].

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: [Fill in date].

Applications for grants under this program must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site (Grants.gov). For information (including dates and times) about how to submit your application electronically or by mail or hand delivery if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, please refer to section IV. 6. Other Submission Requirements in this notice.

Individuals with disabilities who need an accommodation or auxiliary aid in connection with the application process should contact the person listed under For Further Information Contact in section VII of this notice.

We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: [Fill in date].

4. Intergovernmental Review: This program is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. Information about Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs under Executive Order 12372 is in the application package for this program.

5. Funding Restrictions: We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

6. Other Submission Requirements: Applications for grants under this competition must be submitted electronically unless you qualify for an exception to this requirement in accordance with the instructions in this section.

a. Electronic Submission of Applications.

Applications for grants under this competition must be submitted electronically using the Government-wide Grants.gov Apply site at <http://www.Grants.gov>. Through this site, you will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit your application. You may not e-mail an electronic copy of a grant application to us.

We will reject your application if you submit it in paper format unless, as described elsewhere in this section, you qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions. Further information regarding calculation of the date that is two weeks before the application deadline date is provided later in this section under Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement.

You may access the electronic grant application for this competition at <http://www.Grants.gov>. You must search for the downloadable application package for this competition by the CFDA number. Do not include the CFDA number's alpha suffix in your search (e.g., search for 84.326, not 84.326A).

Please note the following:

- When you enter the Grants.gov site, you will find information about submitting an application electronically through the site, as well as the hours of operation.
- Applications received by Grants.gov are date and time stamped. Your application must be fully uploaded and submitted, and must be date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system no later than 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. Except as otherwise noted in this section, we will not consider your application if it is date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system later than 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. When we retrieve your application from Grants.gov, we will notify you if we are rejecting your application because it was date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system after 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.

- The amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

- You should review and follow the Education Submission Procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov that are included in the application package for this competition to ensure that you submit your application in a timely manner to the Grants.gov system. You can also find the Education Submission Procedures pertaining to Grants.gov at <http://e-Grants.ed.gov/help/GrantsgovSubmissionProcedures.pdf>

- To submit your application via Grants.gov, you must complete all steps in the Grants.gov registration process (see http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp). These steps include (1) registering your organization, a multi-part process that includes registration with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR); (2) registering yourself as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and (3) getting authorized as an AOR by your organization. Details on these steps are outlined in the Grants.gov 3-Step

Registration Guide (see <http://www.grants.gov/section910/Grants.govRegistrationBrochure.pdf>). You also must provide on your application the same D-U-N-S Number used with this registration. Please note that the registration process may take five or more business days to complete, and you must have completed all registration steps to allow you to submit successfully an application via Grants.gov. In addition you will need to update your CCR registration on an annual basis. This may take three or more business days to complete.

- You will not receive additional point value because you submit your application in electronic format, nor will we penalize you if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, as described elsewhere in this section, and submit your application in paper format.

- You must submit all documents electronically, including all information you typically provide on the following forms: Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424), the Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424, Budget Information--Non-Construction Programs (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications. Please note that two of these forms--the SF 424 and the Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF

424--have replaced the ED 424 (Application for Federal Education Assistance).

- You must attach any narrative sections of your application as files in a .DOC (document), .RTF (rich text), or .PDF (Portable Document) format. If you upload a file type other than the three file types specified in this paragraph or submit a password-protected file, we will not review that material.

- Your electronic application must comply with any page-limit requirements described in this notice.

- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive from Grants.gov an automatic notification of receipt that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. (This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only, not receipt by the Department.) The Department then will retrieve your application from Grants.gov and send a second notification to you by e-mail. This second notification indicates that the Department has received your application and has assigned your application a PR/Award number (an ED-specified identifying number unique to your application).

- We may request that you provide us original signatures on forms at a later date.

Application Deadline Date Extension in Case of Technical Issues with the Grants.gov System: If you are experiencing

problems submitting your application through Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov Support Desk at 1-800-518-4726. You must obtain a Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number and must keep a record of it.

If you are prevented from electronically submitting your application on the application deadline date because of technical problems with the Grants.gov system, we will grant you an extension until 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, the following business day to enable you to transmit your application electronically or by hand delivery. You also may mail your application by following the mailing instructions described elsewhere in this notice.

If you submit an application after 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date, please contact the person listed elsewhere in this notice under For Further Information Contact and provide an explanation of the technical problem you experienced with Grants.gov, along with the Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number. We will accept your application if we can confirm that a technical problem occurred with the Grants.gov system and that that problem affected your ability to submit your application by 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. The Department will contact you

after a determination is made on whether your application will be accepted.

Note: The extensions to which we refer in this section apply only to the unavailability of, or technical problems with, the Grants.gov system. We will not grant you an extension if you failed to fully register to submit your application to Grants.gov before the application deadline date and time or if the technical problem you experienced is unrelated to the Grants.gov system.

Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement: You qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, and may submit your application in paper format, if you are unable to submit an application through the Grants.gov system because--

- You do not have access to the Internet; or
- You do not have the capacity to upload large

documents to the Grants.gov system;

and

- No later than two weeks before the application deadline date (14 calendar days or, if the fourteenth calendar day before the application deadline date falls on a Federal holiday, the next business day following the Federal holiday), you mail or fax a written statement to the Department, explaining which of the

two grounds for an exception prevent you from using the Internet to submit your application.

If you mail your written statement to the Department, it must be postmarked no later than two weeks before the application deadline date. If you fax your written statement to the Department, we must receive the faxed statement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.

Address and mail or fax your statement to: **Name of Program Contact**, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20006-8544, FAX: **(202) 502-????**.

Your paper application must be submitted in accordance with the mail or hand delivery instructions described in this notice.

b. Submission of Paper Applications by Mail.

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you may mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier) your application to the Department. You must mail the original and two copies of your application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the applicable following address:

By mail through the U.S. Postal Service:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: CFDA Number 84.116X
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202-4260

or

By mail through a commercial carrier:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center, Stop 4260
Attention: CFDA Number 84.116X
7100 Old Landover Road
Landover, MD 20785-1506

Regardless of which address you use, you must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

- (1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark.
- (2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service.
- (3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier.
- (4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do not accept either of the following as proof of mailing:

- (1) A private metered postmark.
- (2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

If your application is postmarked after the application deadline date, we will not consider your application.

Note: The U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, you should check with your local post office.

c. Submission of Paper Applications by Hand Delivery.

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you (or a courier service) may deliver your paper application to the Department by hand. You must deliver the original and two copies of your application by hand, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: CFDA Number 84.116X
550 12th Street, SW.
Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza
Washington, DC 20202-4260

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, except Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays.

Note for Mail or Hand Delivery of Paper Applications: If you mail or hand deliver your application to the Department--

(1) You must indicate on the envelope and--if not provided by the Department--in Item 11 of the SF 424 the

CFDA number, including suffix letter, if any, of the competition under which you are submitting your application; and

(2) The Application Control Center will mail to you a notification of receipt of your grant application. If you do not receive this notification within 15 business days from the application deadline date, you should call the U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center at (202) 245-6288.

V. Application Review Information

1. Selection Criteria: The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 75.210 of EDGAR and are listed in the application package.

2. Review and Selection Process: A three-member panel of non-federal reviewers will evaluate each application. Each reviewer assigns points for each selection criterion and prepares evaluation comments.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices: If your application is successful, we notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators (would we plan to notify the Representative and Senator for each participant in the consortium or just the principal investigator?) and send you a Grant Award Notification (GAN). We may also notify you informally.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other requirements in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice and include these and other specific conditions in the GAN. The GAN also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

3. Reporting: At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multi-year award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as specified by the Secretary in 34 CFR 75.118.

4. Performance Measures: The success of the FIPSE program depends upon 1) the extent to which funded projects are being replicated (i.e., adopted or adapted by others); and 2) the manner in which projects are being

institutionalized and continued after funding. If funded, you will be asked to collect and report data from your project on steps taken toward achieving these goals. Consequently, applicants are advised to include these two outcomes in conceptualizing the design, implementation, and evaluation of their proposed projects. Institutionalization and replication are important outcomes that ensure the ultimate success of consortia funded through this program.

VII. Agency Contact

For Further Information Contact: [Insert name of person],
Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, U.S.
Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW., 6th Floor,
Washington, DC 20006. Telephone: (202) [fill in number]. E-
mail: [insert address].

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain this document in an alternative format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) on request to the program contact person listed in this section.

VIII. Other Information

Electronic Access to This Document: You may view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department

published in the Federal Register, in text or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) on the Internet at the following site:
www.ed.gov/news/fedregister

To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at this site. If you have questions about using PDF, call the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO), toll free, at 1-888-293-6498; or in the Washington, DC, area at (202) 512-1530.

Note: The official version of this document is the document published in the Federal Register. Free Internet access to the official edition of the Federal Register and the Code of Federal Regulations is available on GPO Access at:
www.gpoaccess.gov/nara/index.html

Dated:

James F. Manning,

Acting Assistant Secretary for
Postsecondary Education

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

1998 Amendments to Higher Education Act of 1965 [excerpt]

P.L. 105-244

TITLE VII--GRADUATE AND POSTSECONDARY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

SEC. 701. REVISION OF TITLE VII.

Title VII (20 U.S.C. 1132a et seq.) is amended to read as follows:

TITLE VII--GRADUATE AND POSTSECONDARY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

SEC. 700. PURPOSE.

It is the purpose of this title--

(1) to authorize national graduate fellowship programs--

- (A) in order to attract students of superior ability and achievement, exceptional promise, and demonstrated financial need, into high-quality graduate programs and provide the students with the financial support necessary to complete advanced degrees; and
 - (B) that are designed to--
 - (i) sustain and enhance the capacity for graduate education in areas of national need; and
 - (ii) encourage talented students to pursue scholarly careers in the humanities, social sciences, and the arts; and
- (2) to promote postsecondary programs.

PART A--GRADUATE EDUCATION PROGRAMS [not shown; not applicable]

**PART B--FUND FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION
SEC. 741. FUND FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION.**

- (a) AUTHORITY- The Secretary is authorized to make grants to, or enter into contracts with, institutions of higher education, combinations of such institutions, and other public and private nonprofit institutions and agencies, to enable such institutions, combinations, and agencies to improve postsecondary education opportunities by--
- (1) encouraging the reform, innovation, and improvement of postsecondary education, and providing equal educational opportunity for all;
 - (2) the creation of institutions, programs, and joint efforts involving paths to career and professional training, and combinations of academic and experiential learning;
 - (3) the establishment of institutions and programs based on the technology of communications;
 - (4) the carrying out, in postsecondary educational institutions, of changes in internal structure and operations designed to clarify institutional priorities and purposes;
 - (5) the design and introduction of cost-effective methods of instruction and operation;
 - (6) the introduction of institutional reforms designed to expand individual opportunities for entering and reentering institutions and pursuing programs of study tailored to individual needs;
 - (7) the introduction of reforms in graduate education, in the structure of academic professions, and in the recruitment and retention of faculties; and
 - (8) the creation of new institutions and programs for examining and awarding credentials to individuals, and the introduction of reforms in current institutional practices related thereto.
- (b) PLANNING GRANTS- The Secretary is authorized to make planning grants to institutions of higher education for the development and testing of innovative techniques in postsecondary education. Such grants shall not exceed \$20,000.

SEC. 742. BOARD OF THE FUND FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION.

- (a) ESTABLISHMENT- There is established a National Board of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (in this part referred to as the 'Board'). The Board shall consist of 15 members appointed by the Secretary for overlapping 3-year terms. A majority of the Board shall constitute a quorum. Any

member of the Board who has served for 6 consecutive years shall thereafter be ineligible for appointment to the Board during a 2-year period following the expiration of such sixth year.

(b) MEMBERSHIP-

(1) IN GENERAL- The Secretary shall designate one of the members of the Board as Chairperson of the Board. A majority of the members of the Board shall be public interest representatives, including students, and a minority shall be educational representatives. All members selected shall be individuals able to contribute an important perspective on priorities for improvement in postsecondary education and strategies of educational and institutional change.

(2) APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR- The Secretary shall appoint the Director of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (hereafter in this part referred to as the 'Director').

(c) DUTIES- The Board shall--

(1) advise the Secretary and the Director on priorities for the improvement of postsecondary education and make such recommendations as the Board may deem appropriate for the improvement of postsecondary education and for the evaluation, dissemination, and adaptation of demonstrated improvements in postsecondary educational practice;

(2) advise the Secretary and the Director on the operation of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, including advice on planning documents, guidelines, and procedures for grant competitions prepared by the Fund; and

(3) meet at the call of the Chairperson, except that the Board shall meet whenever one-third or more of the members request in writing that a meeting be held.

(d) INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE- The Director shall make available to the Board such information and assistance as may be necessary to enable the Board to carry out its functions.

SEC. 743. ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS.

(a) TECHNICAL EMPLOYEES- The Secretary may appoint, for terms not to exceed 3 years, without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service, not more than 7 technical employees to administer this part who may be paid without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of such title relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

(b) PROCEDURES- The Director shall establish procedures for reviewing and evaluating grants and contracts made or entered into under this part. Procedures for reviewing grant applications or contracts for financial assistance under this section may not be subject to any review outside of officials responsible for the administration of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education.

SEC. 744. SPECIAL PROJECTS.

(a) GRANT AUTHORITY- The Director is authorized to make grants to institutions of higher education, or consortia thereof, and such other public agencies and nonprofit organizations as the Director deems necessary for innovative projects concerning one or more areas of particular national need identified by the Director.

(b) APPLICATION- No grant shall be made under this part unless an application is made at such time, in such manner, and contains or is accompanied by such information as the Secretary may require.

(c) AREAS OF NATIONAL NEED- Areas of national need shall initially include, but shall not be limited to, the following:

(1) Institutional restructuring to improve learning and promote productivity, efficiency, quality improvement, and cost and price control.

(2) Articulation between 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education, including developing innovative methods for ensuring the successful transfer of students from 2- to 4-year institutions of higher education.

(3) Evaluation and dissemination of model programs.

(4) International cooperation and student exchange among postsecondary educational institutions.

SEC. 745. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this part \$30,000,000 for fiscal year 1999 and such sums as may be necessary for each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years.

PART C--URBAN COMMUNITY SERVICE [not shown; not applicable]

PART D--DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS TO ENSURE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES RECEIVE A QUALITY HIGHER EDUCATION [not shown; not applicable]

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROJECT NARRATIVE

Applicants will attach the project narrative to the **Project Narrative Attachment Form**.

Please note that the Program Narrative Attachment Form is limited to **25 pages**. This section includes your responses to the selection criteria specified in the Notice and in this package.

Formatting

A “page” is “8.5 x 11”, on one side only, with 1” margins at the top, bottom, and both sides. Page numbers and an identifier may be within the 1” margin. Double-space all text in the application, including titles and headings. All text in charts, tables, graphs, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions may be single-spaced. Applicants may use one of the following fonts: *Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New or Arial, only*. Applications submitted in any other font (including Times Roman and Arial Narrow) will not be accepted. Do not use anything smaller than a 12-point font.

Before preparing the Program Narrative, applicants should review the Dear Applicant Letter, the Federal Register notice (Notice), and program statute for specific guidance and requirements. Note that applications will be evaluated according to the specific selection criteria specified in the Notice and this package.

The Secretary evaluates an application on the basis of the broad criteria in 34 CFR Part 75, sections 75.209(a) and 75.210 of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR). Please see “Selection Criteria” in the Federal Register Notice.

To facilitate the review of the application, provide responses to the following selection criteria in the following order:

(a) Need for project. (10 points)

(1) The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project.
(2) In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.

(ii) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

The Secretary's Commission on Higher Education noted a remarkable shortage of clear, accessible information about crucial aspects of American colleges and universities, from financial aid to graduation rates. Similarly, the Secretary's Academic Competitiveness Council (ACC) also noted a serious deficiency in our ability to understand the impact of federally-funded educational interventions and activities on student outcomes and achievement. In reviewing applications, we will be assessing the degree to which the applicant is proposing innovative and comprehensive approaches to addressing the recommendations of the Commission and the ACC by improving the ability to collect, empirically evaluate, and report outcome-based student achievement and institutional performance data.

(b) Significance. (20 points)

- (1) The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project.
- (2) In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - (i) The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.
 - (ii) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement.
 - (iii) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to yield findings that may be utilized by other appropriate agencies and organizations.
 - (iv) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.
 - (v) The potential replicability of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings.
 - (vi) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in teaching and student achievement.

In reviewing proposals, we will consider the scope of the project and the likelihood that student achievement and institutional performance reports will be useful to institutions, educators, parents, students and policy-makers in making informed decisions regarding higher education and investments therein. We will also consider the likelihood that other institutions outside of the consortia will adapt and implement the data collection, assessment and reporting methodologies developed through the pilot project.

(c) Quality of the project design. (20 points)

- (1) The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project.
- (2) In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - (i) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.

(ii) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.

(iii) The extent to which the design of the proposed project includes a thorough, high-quality review of the relevant literature, a high-quality plan for project implementation, and the use of appropriate methodological tools to ensure successful achievement of project objectives.

(iv) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.

(v) The extent to which the proposed project will be coordinated with similar or related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State, and Federal resources.

(vi) The extent to which the proposed project encourages consumer involvement.

(viii) The extent to which performance feedback and continuous improvement are integral to the design of the proposed project.

In reviewing proposals, we will look for evidence that the project will significantly advance the field by increasing the transparency and accountability of institutions of higher education and by developing new, rigorous methods for determining empirically “what works” to improve student learning and achievement. We will also look for evidence that the project will continue after Federal funding has ceased. Further, we will look for evidence that the ultimate consumers of the information, including students, parents, educators, institutions of higher education and policy makers, have a role in defining the parameters to be measured and have opportunity to provide feedback on and improve the system.

(d) Quality of project services. (10 points)

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the technical assistance services to be provided by the proposed project involve the use of efficient strategies, including the use of technology, as appropriate, and the leveraging of non-project resources.

In reviewing proposals, we will look for evidence that a variety of postsecondary institutions will participate in the proposed project and that data and reports can be disaggregated in ways that allow stakeholders to understand performance outcomes for traditional as well as non-traditional students, those who change enrollment status or transfer between institutions of higher education, and those who are in underrepresented groups. It is assumed that technology will be

appropriately deployed in this project, and we will look to ensure that adequate protections are built in to maintain student privacy and confidentiality of data.

(e) Quality of project personnel. (10 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator.

(ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

(iii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

(f) Adequacy of resources. (10 points)

(1) The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project.

(2) In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization.

(ii) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.

(iii) The extent to which the budget is adequate to support the proposed project.

(iv) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.

(v) The potential for continued support of the project after the Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.

(v) The potential for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing program of the agency or organization at the end of Federal funding.

(g) Quality of the management plan. (10 points)

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

(ii) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

(iii) The adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project.

(iv) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

(v) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.

(h) Quality of the project evaluation. (10 points)

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

(ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are appropriate to the context within which the project operates.

(iii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies.

(iv) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

(v) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(vi) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.