

MEMORANDUM

Date: November 28, 2007

To: Shellie Wilkie Martinez, Desk Officer
Office of Management and Budget

From: Lynda T. Carlson, Director
Science Resources Statistics Division

Via: Suzanne Plimpton, Clearance Officer
National Science Foundation (NSF)

Subject: Notification of data collection under generic clearance

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you of NSF's plan to conduct site visits and interviews under the generic clearance for survey improvement projects (OMB #3145-0174). This activity is associated with the redesign of the NSF Survey of Research and Development Expenditures at Universities and Colleges.

Background

The Survey of Research and Development Expenditures at Universities and Colleges has been conducted annually since 1973. The survey collects information on the amount of research and development (R&D) expenditures at colleges and universities in the United States. In the spring of 2007, NSF began a three-year effort to evaluate and redesign the survey. The goals of the redesign are to update the survey instrument to ensure we are obtaining the most valid and reliable measurements of the amount of academic research activity in science and engineering fields in the U.S, and to evaluate the need to expand the scope of data collected beyond that of R&D expenditures. We have already hosted a data user workshop and an expert panel in order to receive input on possible changes to the survey. The next phase of the redesign will involve communication with the survey respondents (academic institutions) to determine the feasibility of the proposed changes.

This communication will be in the form of 25 site visits to academic institutions across the country.

Data Collection Instrument

A draft of the protocol for the upcoming site visits is provided in Appendix A.

Data Collection Procedures

As soon as clearance is obtained, we will begin the first of four trips to different U.S. regions: the South (Georgia/Alabama), the Northeast (Massachusetts/Rhode Island), the Midwest (Nebraska/Kansas), and the West (Los Angeles, CA). We will schedule half-

day visits to 4 or 5 institutions in each region. We will also attempt to schedule several DC area site visits depending on time and budget restrictions. These visits will consist of an interview with the survey respondent as well as representatives from applicable offices such as the accounting or budget office, sponsored programs office, institutional research office, and the office of the Vice President for Research. The protocol for the interviews (attached) is divided into two sections: 1) high level questions about the institution's research enterprise, and 2) respondent questions dealing with accounting and record-keeping issues. It will cover topics such as how the institution currently records data on R&D expenditures, the uses of NSF's survey data or other data for tracking the academic R&D enterprise, and the ability of the institutions to collect additional data requested during our data users workshop and expert panel.

Burden Information

Site Visits: We expect to conduct 25 site visits to academic institutions. An average of 5 people from each institution will be invited to the meeting and we expect each meeting to require 3 hours. Therefore, we estimate a total of approximately 375 hours of respondent burden (i.e., (5 people * 3 hours) * 25 site visits = 375 hours).

Incentive Payments

There are no incentive payments.

Contact Information

The contact person for questions regarding this data collection is:

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Attachments

cc: Fran Featherston