Protocol for Authorized Organizational Representatives (AORs)

Introduction

Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with us today. My name is Allison Smith, and I am part of a team conducting research for the National Science Foundation's (NSF's) Office of Equity and Civil Rights (OECR) on the policies that NSF has developed to promote safe and harassment-free research and education environments. I am also joined by my colleague, _____, who will be taking notes during our conversation.

As part of this research, we are conducting interviews with representatives at NSF awardee organizations across the United States. Given your current role on an active NSF award, we are very interested in learning about your perspectives on NSF's anti-harassment policies and their implementation, as well as any opportunities or challenges they have presented within your organization. We would also appreciate you sharing any recommendations you may have related to these policies.

We will be audio-recording the conversation today to ensure that we capture your exact words and that our final report reflects all participants' views as accurately as possible. We will not share this recording or our notes from this interview with NSF or anyone outside of the immediate project team, and both the recording and our notes will be deleted once the project is completed.

After we complete all of the interviews, we will analyze the data collected to identify major findings and recommendations. To ensure confidentiality, none of the findings or recommendations reported to NSF will be connected with the names of specific interview participants or their organizations.

This interview is completely voluntary, and you may skip any question or stop participating at any point. The interview should take no more than an hour to complete, and the OMB clearance number is 3145-XXXX. Before we begin, do you have any questions for us?

If you are ready to start, we will begin recording now. Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this research.

Background Questions

1. How long have you worked for your organization?
2. How would you describe your responsibilities?
3. Are there others in your organization who share these responsibilities? *[Probe for how the office of sponsored projects is organized, whether it covers both pre- and post-award activity, how responsibilities are divided, and whether individuals work together or independently.]*
4. How many awards is your office responsible for? *[Probe for how many different agencies fund these awards and how many awards are funded by NSF.]*
5. In addition to your role on these awards, do you serve in other roles in your organization?

a. If so, what are these roles? *[Probe for what percentage of time is dedicated to being an AOR and whether participants feel they have enough time to dedicate to their AOR responsibilities.]*

Questions Related to Communication and Knowledge of the T&C/Conference & Travel Policies

1. How did you learn about the NSF term and condition related to sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, or sexual assault? *[Probe for whether they recall receiving emails or other communications from NSF regarding the T&C and whether the rollout of the T&C was the same as or different from the rollout of other new NSF policies.]*
2. If you were asked to summarize the NSF term and condition related to sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, or sexual assault in a sentence or two, how would you?
3. Have you been to the section on the NSF website focused on the term and condition? *[Show the [T&C webpage](#) on the screen and give the participant time to look at it.]* What additional information, if any, you would like about these requirements? *[Probe for comments on the website, what, if any, additional information they would like, and how it could most effectively be disseminated.]*
4. How did you learn about the policy requiring that NSF-funded conferences have a policy or code of conduct related to sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, or sexual assault? *[Probe for whether they recall receiving emails or other communications from NSF regarding the conference policy and whether the rollout was the same as or different from the rollout of other new NSF policies.]*
5. *[Show the [conference policy](#) on the screen and give the participant time to read it. Mention that the policy also applies to conferences that awardees attend using NSF travel awards.]* What additional information, if any, would you like about the conference policy? *[Probe for what, if any, additional information they would like, and how it could most effectively be disseminated.]*
6. If you had questions about either the term and condition or conference policy, whom would you ask? *[Probe for whether they would ask someone in the same campus office, a different campus office, at NSF, etc.]*
7. Have you communicated with other members of the campus community about the NSF term and condition or conference policy?
   a. If so, with whom? *[Probe for whether they have spoken with the organization's Title IX Coordinator or the PIs on NSF awards about the T&C or conference policy and in what context.]*

Questions Related to Implementation of the T&C/Conference & Travel Policies

T&C

1. Could you take me step by step through the process that would be followed at your organization to make a notification under the NSF term and condition? *[Probe for which offices at the organization would coordinate, how and when the AOR would be notified of the concerns, how*

the determination would be made that NSF should be notified, and how long the process might take.]

2. Has your organization ever had to make a notification under the NSF term and condition? *[If the response is "yes," probe for any details the participant feels comfortable sharing.]*
    a. If so, has your organization also had to notify any other federal agencies regarding the same issue(s)?
        i. If so, which agencies? *[Probe for whether the agencies included the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) or the National Institutes of Health (NIH).]*
3. Has your organization had to institute any procedural or organizational changes in order to ensure compliance with the NSF term and condition related to sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, or sexual assault?
    a. If so, what changes have been instituted?
    b. If so, how are these changes working? *[If the participant mentions challenges, probe for the nature of these challenges and how they might be addressed.]*
4. In addition to providing links to a variety of information, the NSF term and condition webpage includes a link to the webform to be used when notifying NSF regarding a PI's placement on administrative leave or a finding of harassment. *[Show the [webform](#) on screen.]* Do you find this form to be user-friendly?
    a. If not, why not? *[Probe for any concerns about privacy, the security of the website, etc.]*
    b. If not, what changes to the form would you suggest? *[Probe for any recommended changes to the webform, reporting mechanism, etc.]*
5. Are there any changes or revisions you would recommend making to the NSF term and condition more generally?
    a. If so, what changes and why?

Conference & Travel Policies

1. Has your organization received a conference award from NSF in the past three years?
    a. If so, can you tell me about the policy/code of conduct and reporting mechanism that were established for one of the conferences? *[Probe for details on policy/code of conduct, how it was disseminated, and the mechanism for reporting violations.]*
    b. If not, can you tell me how the NSF requirements would likely be met? *[Probe for details on how the policy/code of conduct would be developed, whether it could be modeled after one the organization already has established, how the policy/code of conduct would be disseminated, and what mechanism would likely be established for reporting violations.]*
2. Have any of the NSF-funded awards you've worked on in the past three years supported travel to a conference?
3. Does the NSF travel policy make it more challenging for awardees to travel to a conference using NSF funding?

a. If so, why? *[Probe for difficulties related to ensuring that other conferences have policies/codes of conduct and reporting mechanisms, etc.]*
b. If so, how could these challenges be addressed?
4. Are there any changes or revisions you would recommend making to the NSF anti-harassment conference or conference travel policy?
   a. If so, what changes and why?

Questions Related to Perceptions of the T&C/Conference & Travel Policies

1. Do any of the other federal agencies that fund your organization have a term and condition related to sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, and sexual assault?
   a. If so, which agencies?
   b. If so, are these agencies' requirements different from NSF's?
      i. If so, how? *[Probe for any differences in the requirements of the NASA T&C , NIH T&C, and/or other agencies' T&Cs and whether any of these agencies have more stringent requirements.]*
2. Do any of the other federal agencies that fund your organization have a policy requiring that the conferences they fund have a policy or code of conduct related to sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, or sexual assault?
   a. If so, which agencies?
   b. If so, are these agencies' requirements different from NSF's?
      i. If so, how? *[Probe for whether any of these agencies have more stringent conference policies.]*
3. Do you think that all agencies that fund your organization should have a term and condition, conference policy, and conference travel policy similar to NSF's?
   a. If so, why?
   b. If not, why not?
4. Do you have any concerns – or have others in your organization expressed any concerns – about the NSF term and condition, conference policy, or conference travel policy?
   a. If so, what is the nature of these concerns?
5. Do you think these types of policies help to prevent and address sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, and sexual assault in your organization? Why or why not?
   a. If so, are there particular aspects of the policies that make them effective?
   b. If not, what do you think could be done to make these policies more effective?
6. Are there other ways that government funding agencies could help to prevent and address sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, and sexual assault in your organization?
   a. If so, how?
   b. If not, why not?

General Questions

1. What would you say are the most challenging aspects of your job? *[Probe for whether meeting certain types of agency requirements is considered challenging.]*
2. How could these challenges be addressed?
3. If NSF asked you for advice on how they could improve the experience of working with NSF, what advice would you give? *[Probe for recommendations regarding changes in policies, communications, training, intra-agency coordination, etc.]*
4. Are there any other questions you feel we should have asked or any additional comments you would like to provide?

Conclusion

We appreciate all of the valuable information you've provided during this interview and, again, want to assure you that neither your name nor that of your organization will be connected with any of the findings or recommendations that will be presented to NSF. If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to provide additional information in the future, please feel free to reach out to me at allison@101research.com or (202) 868-2151 at any time. Thank you again.