

NRSP Review Committee Meeting

Hilton Atlanta Airport

Wednesday, June 7, 2017

Minutes

Attendees:

Clarence Watson, Don Latham, Vallerie Giddings, Fred Servello, Doug Buhler, Tom Bewick, Rick Rhodes, Bret Hess, Eric Young

1. Renewal Proposal –

a. **NRSP 1** - Multistate Research Information Management and Impact Communications Program

i. NIMSS portion of proposal

1. North Central region thinks NIMSS is going very well, still a few bugs, but nothing real significant. Would be good to block the use of NIMSS project email list for routine communication among project members. (Subsequent to the meeting, Chris reported this problem has been fixed.) Full support for this part of the proposal.
2. Northeast also thinks it is going well, could use a few minor upgrades, such as a date stamp for submitted documents. Clemson contractors are very responsive and helpful. Fully support NIMSS portion of proposal.
3. West agrees with everything previously said, plus support from Chris in the NC was excellent during Sarah's leave and also for overall system support for bugs, etc. Would like to see NIMSS more interactive with REEport. Full support for what's proposed for NIMSS.
4. South is also very pleased with the new NIMSS, no significant problems. Editing capability in the test boxes could be improved. Full support for NIMSS.

ii. Impact Writer portion of proposal

1. In their response to regional reviews, the Writing Committee has suggested that the training element of the proposal be eliminated to provide more time for impact writing.
2. Full agreement that the quality of impact statements being produced is excellent, however the generally poor quality of impact information in multistate project reports is a problem that's been very hard to solve.
3. There seem to be a lot of "extras" being added to NRSP 1 and there's concern that its primary mission is being diluted.
4. It's hard for a multistate project group to do a good job at writing an impact for their report for a number of reasons. Most of the significant impacts are a result of extramural funding obtained by the group or a subset, rather than from the MRF that go into the project. Many projects have a diverse set of activities on-

going and it's hard to tie them together. Most scientists do not think in terms of potential impacts, but only concrete results.

5. Training is still very important, but the effectiveness of a broad training component (general offer of training services) under NRSP 1 is questionable.
6. Training for faculty is especially important for smaller institutions that can't afford to have dedicated positions for impact writing.
7. Training may be more effective if it's targeted specifically only at multistate project groups and their Administrative Advisors. This would also allow a more focused and customized type of training to specifically improve the information in multistate reports.
8. The impact writer/trainer could consider developing a simple guided format to assist a project group in putting together bullet lists of content appropriate for use in impact statements. This would give the writer a starting point to work with the group to produce a high quality impact statement.

iii. **Recommendations for Proposal Modification**

1. No changes in NIMSS portion of proposal
2. Retain training component in impact writing portion, but target it specifically and only toward multistate project groups and administrative advisors in order to improve the usable content of multistate reports, particularly the termination report.
3. Consider utilizing various types of distance education, as well as face-to-face training with project groups or subsets, either during their annual meeting or at workshops with representatives of multiple projects.
4. Consider collaborations with communicators and writers in various colleges that are known to be skilled at writing impact statements and solicit their supervisor's support for their involvement in training multistate groups, particularly when it can be done locally.
5. Set benchmarks in the proposal for production of impact statements, training activities, and social media use so that progress can be assessed at the mid-term review.
6. Better define the respective roles and responsibilities of the Communication Specialist, student employee, and Program Director and how their activities are coordinated.
7. No changes in the budget from the original proposal.

iv. **Recommendations for the NRSP 1 Steering Committee Actions**

1. Consider whether or not the multistate impact writing and communication portion of NRSP 1 should be developed as a separate NRSP proposal at the next project renewal. The NRSP Review Committee would appreciate a recommendation on this question in time for the mid-term review.
2. Continue to encourage NIFA to do the necessary programming to better integrate NIMSS with REEport.

2. Mid-term Reviews
 - a. **NRSP 3** – The National Atmospheric Deposition Program
 - i. Reviews were excellent, no significant concerns
 - ii. Having some issues with the host institution on overhead and other support, but working to resolve those.
 - iii. No change recommended
 - b. **NRSP 10** – Database Resources for Crop Genomics, Genetics and Breeding Research
 - i. Reviews were excellent, high level of productivity and extramural funding
 - ii. Project group is considering beginning to draft a renewal proposal early to get preliminary feedback
 - iii. No change recommended
3. Policy proposal on budget reduction exemption for NRSP 1
 - a. NRSP 1 Writing Committee has proposed that the NRSP 1 budget be exempt from reduction in the case of a reduction in Hatch funding. This request is based on the contractual nature of the NIMSS budget with Clemson and salary/fringe included in the impact writing budget.
 - b. Since the NIMSS contract will be a fixed amount for the five-year project, it makes sense to exempt it from any reductions. However, the impact writing portion is no different than most other NRSP's, which, except for NRSP 8, all include a significant portion of their budget for salary/fringe.
 - c. It would be simpler to put a caveat on the approved five-year budget than to change the guidelines, similar to what was done with the NRSP 7 budget a few years ago.
 - d. **Recommendation for NRSP 1 budget modification**
 - i. Put the following caveat (footnote) on the NIMSS budget lines. *“In the event of a reduction in the NIFA Hatch funding line, the NRSP 1 budget lines that fund the NIMSS contract with Clemson ITT are not subject to reduction and will not be included in any overall reduction calculation.”*
4. 2018 Project Decisions
 - a. Renewal Proposal
 - i. NRSP 8 – National Animal Genome Research Program
 - b. Mid-Term Reviews
 - i. NRSP 4 – Enabling Pesticide Registrations for Specialty Crops and Minor Uses
 - ii. NRSP 6 – The US Potato Genebank: Acquisition, Classification, Preservation, Evaluation and Distribution of Potato (*Solanum*) Germplasm.
 1. The committee discussed the previous issues relating to the management and funding for the project. Buhler and Jacobsen have pledged to lead additional discussion with key stakeholders as part of the mid-term review. Maine as asked to be part of that discussion.
 - iii. NRSP 9 – National Animal Nutrition Program