
Temple participates in September Meetings of the Federal Demonstration Project

The Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) initiated Phase V of its 20 year-long history in a celebratory meeting held in Amelia Island, Florida from September 7-9, 2008. The September meeting was the first of three that will be held this academic year. Temple University is new to the FDP, having been approved by the FDP membership committee after completing an application process last spring.

A central objective the FDP is to develop demonstration initiatives among member institutions within the partnership that aim to improve grant administration processes. These demonstrations are proposed by member institutions based on discussions among the partnering institutions for finding solutions to problematic aspects of submitting, managing, and accounting for federally funded grants and contracts. The initiatives to improve grant administration that are "demonstrated" in one institution are assessed to determine their effectiveness on: (a) easing the burden for research on faculty members who direct federally sponsored research grants and programs, (b) improving efficiency related to grant administration responsibilities within universities, (c) improving the degree to which federally funded contracts and grants are implemented in accordance with federal guidelines, and (d) fostering consistence in the interpretation and implementation of federal guidelines across institutions.

The emphasis of demonstration projects for Phase V will be to identify processes and practices that reduce faculty research administrative burdens. This goal follows from a four year long effort on the part of FDP to assess the degree to which research administrative tasks affect the overall ability of faculty to conduct research. The study showed that the research administrative burden for faculty involved in federally funded sponsored projects represents 42% of their total work effort. Factors related to this surprisingly large proportion of administrative effort related to research, as well as strategies for addressing the problem, were discussed at length during the September meetings as a basis for identifying new demonstration projects to be undertaken by member institutions during the next five years. Such projects will present mechanisms to address the concern that the high percentage of administrative effort is eroding faculty productivity and competitiveness in a global research community. The entire report can be found online at: http://thefdp.org/Faculty_Committee.html under the heading Faculty Burden Survey Report.

Temple University will actively participate in several aspects of the FDP, including participating on Faculty, Communications and Electronic Research Administration committees. Temple also receives benefits from participation. One example is that we now have the ability to use FDP forms for generating sub-awards. These are used in common by member institutions. For other examples and more information on how to use these forms see: http://www.thefdp.org/Subawards_Forms.html.

Temple University's Administrative Representative is Robert Gage; the Technical Representative is Robert O'Malley; and the Faculty Representative is Michele Masucci. For more information about Temple's involvement in the FDP, contact: research@temple.edu.