



Memorandum

Date: April 17, 2007

To: College Research Officers
Steve Ringel
Director, Institute for Materials Research

From: Douglas Kniss
Associate Vice President for Research

RE: Procedures for coordination of the MRSEC initiative

Colleagues:

This memorandum serves to communicate the procedure the Office of Research will use in coordinating the NSF sponsored Materials Research Science and Engineering Center initiative. At Monday's meeting of the IMR Advisory Committee, there was a discussion about the process for selecting the Interdisciplinary Research Groups (IRG) to be included in the MRSEC application. The release date for RFP soliciting pre-proposals is early May 2007, and officials from NSF have informed the Office of Research that the new solicitation will be very similar to the one released in 2004.

Shown below is the sequence of events that will be used to down select the IRGs to an optimum number.

1. After careful consideration, it was decided that faculty members interested in forming IRGs should prepare a synopsis of their projects and submit them to the IMR no later than May 2nd, 2007. There is a 3-page limit for this synopsis. I will then coordinate the distribution of the project summaries to the Associate Deans for Research for the colleges who have submitted IRG summaries, as well as to Steve Ringel, Director of the IMR.
2. Within two weeks after receiving the IRG summaries, we will convene a meeting of all interested faculty members to discuss IRGs. A major goal of this meeting will be to find creative ways to consolidate the number of IRGs to an optimal number of distinct projects within the greater context of the MRSEC program.
3. After the meeting of the faculty wishing to participate in the MRSEC pre-proposal, the down selected IRGs will be distributed to external reviewers who

have expertise in operating MRSECs at other institutions who will evaluate them within a 10-day period. During the evaluation process, the faculty members comprising the individual IRGs should prepare a brief presentation (10-minute talk; 5 minutes for questions) that will be presented to the external review team, college research officers and myself via videoconference. Shortly, after the videoconference presentations, the Office of Research will disseminate information on which teams will finalize their IRGs into a coherent and synergistic MRSEC pre-proposal application.

4. The IMR will work with the IRG teams to facilitate the application process.

The Office of Research is bringing this information to your attention prior to the actual release date for the 2007-2008 MRSEC initiative to allow adequate time for coordination of the process and to provide the faculty with sufficient time to prepare the full pre-proposal. We have been assured by the MRSEC Program Director that the new RFP is very similar to the 2004 RFP which can be found at:
<http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2004/nsf04580/nsf04580.htm>.

cc: Robert McGrath
Sarah Starr