

## PAPPG Draft comment re: change to biographical sketch (sect d)

Kate Spohr <kspohr@berkeley.edu>

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To: Plimpton, Suzanne H. <splimpto@nsf.gov>;

Dear Susan Plimpton,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG) for 2019. I'm writing to comment on a proposed change that I believe has significant ramifications for the handling of broader impacts contributions.

This change concerns the "Synergistic Activities" Section (Section D) of the biosketch, the section traditionally dedicated to broader impacts. The current PAPPG instructions for this section are:

*"A list of up to five examples that demonstrate the broader impact of the individual's professional and scholarly activities that focuses on the integration and transfer of knowledge as well as its creation."*

NSF proposes to change the instructions as follows:

*"This section is **limited to five separate** examples. **Multiple entries under a single example** are not permitted"*  
*[emphasis mine].*

Importantly, the proposed change does not elaborate on what constitutes an example. Thus, the strictest interpretation of "a single example" might well limit proposers to a stripped-down list of activities devoid of context and background to help reviewers assess the significance of their past broader impacts contributions.

I am writing to urge NSF to continue to take a flexible stance, allowing proposers to use their discretion in describing five single examples (with context and background), or up to five categories of broader impacts/synergistic activities that may include a few representative examples in each category, so long as the overall two-page limit for biosketches is not exceeded.

If NSF persists with the wording change as proposed, I recommend that you clarify the meaning of “a single example” and provide a set of clear samples to show what is permitted (and what is not permitted) in this section.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards,

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