NSF “BROADER IMPACTS” – A Checklist for Proposal Writers

Proposal writers must follow the National Science Foundation’s instructions on “Broader Impacts.” To assist you, the IIT Research Office has developed a checklist of questions to ask yourself before you begin writing this section of your proposal. NSF instructions state:

“The Project Description must contain, as a separate section within the narrative, a discussion of the broader impacts of the proposed activities. Broader impacts may be accomplished through the research itself, through the activities that are directly related to specific research projects, or through activities that are supported by, but are complementary to the project. NSF values the advancement of scientific knowledge and activities that contribute to the achievement of societally relevant outcomes. Such outcomes include, but are not limited to: full participation of women, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); improved STEM education and educator development at any level; increased public scientific literacy and public engagement with science and technology; improved well-being of individuals in society; development of a diverse, globally competitive STEM workforce; increased partnerships between academia, industry, and others; improved national security; increased economic competitiveness of the United States; and enhanced infrastructure for research and education.”

**IIT Proposal Writers can use the following questions to help them address these instructions:**

- Does your project include an IPRO, and if it does, can you describe the engagement of underrepresented minorities with your IPRO? For example, inviting high school students to view your research on IPRO Day and the potential impact on those underrepresented minorities?
- Are you planning to present to conferences, workshops, or other forums?
- Are women involved with your research; if so, how?
- Are people with disabilities engaged with your research?
- Are diverse populations involved; if so, how?
- Are you planning to engage high school students with your research in some way? For example, speaking at a local high school with students from underrepresented minorities.
- What impact will your research have on STEM education?
- What graduate or undergraduate classes will the research contribute to?
- Have you had or do you have plans to engage with the press/media?
- What is your engagement with public policy or government entities (e.g., DOD)?
- Are there standards that the research will positively impact?
- What have you already done to illustrate your involvement in any of these areas?
- How will the research enhance the skill set of the research team itself, including faculty?
- Do you have a direct relation with a company or companies that will benefit from the research?
- Are there portions of IIT’s Mission Statement you can cite in relation to the issues in the NSF instruction on Broader Impacts? IIT’s Vision/Mission Statement: “Vision: IIT will be internationally recognized in distinctive areas of education and research, using as its platform the global city of Chicago, driven by a professional and technology-oriented focus, and based on a culture of innovation and excellence. Mission: To provide distinctive and relevant education in an environment of scientific, technological, and professional knowledge creation and innovation.”