Useful Information about the PACS Approval Process for CAS

The goal of the CAS Dean’s office is always to approve your grant proposals quickly. When you submit your proposals to PACS, they must first be approved by your department. Then the Dean’s office is notified by the PACS system that a proposal is waiting for approval. Approximately 90%-95% of the proposals are approved within less than 24 hours of us receiving a prompt to approve them, often within just a few hours. The other 5-10% requires some clarification before they can be approved. This document gives you some tips to make your proposal be part of that group that goes through the process without a hitch.

Tips for success with PACS review

- If you have questions or need clarification, call the CAS Dean’s office or send an e-mail in advance of submitting the proposal to PACS for approval. If you are unsure which Assistant Dean to e-mail, send questions to Assistant Dean, Elizabeth Gaffney who will route them to the appropriate person.
- Make sure your budget is clear to someone who has not been working on developing it. (e.g. the CAS person reviewing it in PACS)
- Make it clear whether any salaries are for summer or the academic year.
- Note when salary funds are intended to cover a course buyout.
- If support/matching funds have been committed from another source, please attach the letter or e-mail documenting the commitment.
- All proposals that include the hiring of graduate students must also budget for tuition. If the funding agency does not allow for this please contact Kathy Gersowitz before submitting the proposal to discuss how tuition will be covered.
- Communicate, communicate, and communicate ahead of time. Let the Dean’s office know if a proposal is coming that requires a rapid turnaround time. If there is something unusual in the way you are constructing your budget, drop an e-mail ahead of time to explain. That way any questions that might arise can be answered before you submit the proposal to PACS for approval.

What the Dean’s office is looking for/at when we review the application is reviewed in PACS?

1) Is the budget appropriate? Having a separate, clear budget justification can be very helpful in this regard. The forms required by some agencies don’t always afford much room to explain expenses.

2) Are there any financial commitments being made on the part of the College or Departments? Are these commitments clear? Have they been discussed with the right people?
3) Do course buyouts (if any) follow the CAS Course buyout policy? This policy and other useful information can be found on the CAS Research page: http://www.albany.edu/cas/research.php

4) If there are graduate students supported in the proposal, are both their stipends and tuition covered. Tuition Scholarship funds are a limited resource. It is expected that faculty applying for grants funds to support graduate students, will also apply for tuition support for the students if this is an allowable expense under the grantors guidelines. For those cases where the grantor does not consider tuition an allowable expense, faculty can apply, in writing, to the College Office to the attention of Kathy Gersowitz, to request tuition support. The form for this can be found at on the CAS website in the Firms section under Awards, Assistantships, Fellowships & Scholarships.

5) Tuition scholarships should not be offered until approval has been secured. You may also consider asking students who have advanced to candidacy and are only required to register for one credit each semester, to pay their own tuition.

6) Does the budget account for fringes on personnel salaries as appropriate? Are the fringe rates used appropriate to the situation? (i.e. Grad student rates, Summer rates etc.) If there are questions about this or other personnel issues in your proposal, it might be worthwhile to discuss them with Associate Dean, Steven Galime before submitting your proposal to PACS for approval.

7) Does the credit split look equitable? Some people have agreements to split their credit in a specific way. Have those agreements been followed? This is another CAS Policy which can be found at the website listed under #3.

8) Are there any space needs that are part of this request? Is additional office or lab space required? If this is an instrumentation grant, do we know where the equipment will be located? Are there any costs to have the equipment installed? (e.g. plumbing connections to be made, a specific kind of receptacle needed for the instrument that is not already in place?) Are there funds in the grant or another plan to pay for this installation? If space issues are part of the grant, please make sure to have a discussion about this with your department regarding how these needs might be met. If your department cannot offer a solution make sure to contact Assistant Dean Elizabeth Gaffney well in advance of submitting the proposal to PACS for approval.

9) If this is a project where some work will require using the Life Sciences cores, have the appropriate core fees been included? If you are a PI who has a lab in the LSRB and are not including any core fees in the grant, please include some explanation of why there are no activities in the proposal that would be using the Life Sciences Cores. If you are
including partial core fees for this project, please make a note about where you envision the rest of the core fee will come from.

10) If you are requesting extra service funds for someone in the grant, are the duties truly outside their normal scope of work? Will they be performed outside of normal work hours? Both of these criteria must be met to be considered extra service.

Contact Associate Dean Galime (sgalime@albany.edu), Assistant Dean Gaffney (egaffney@albany.edu) or Gersowitz (kgersowitz@albany.edu) via e-mail or by calling the CAS Dean’s office, 442-4651.