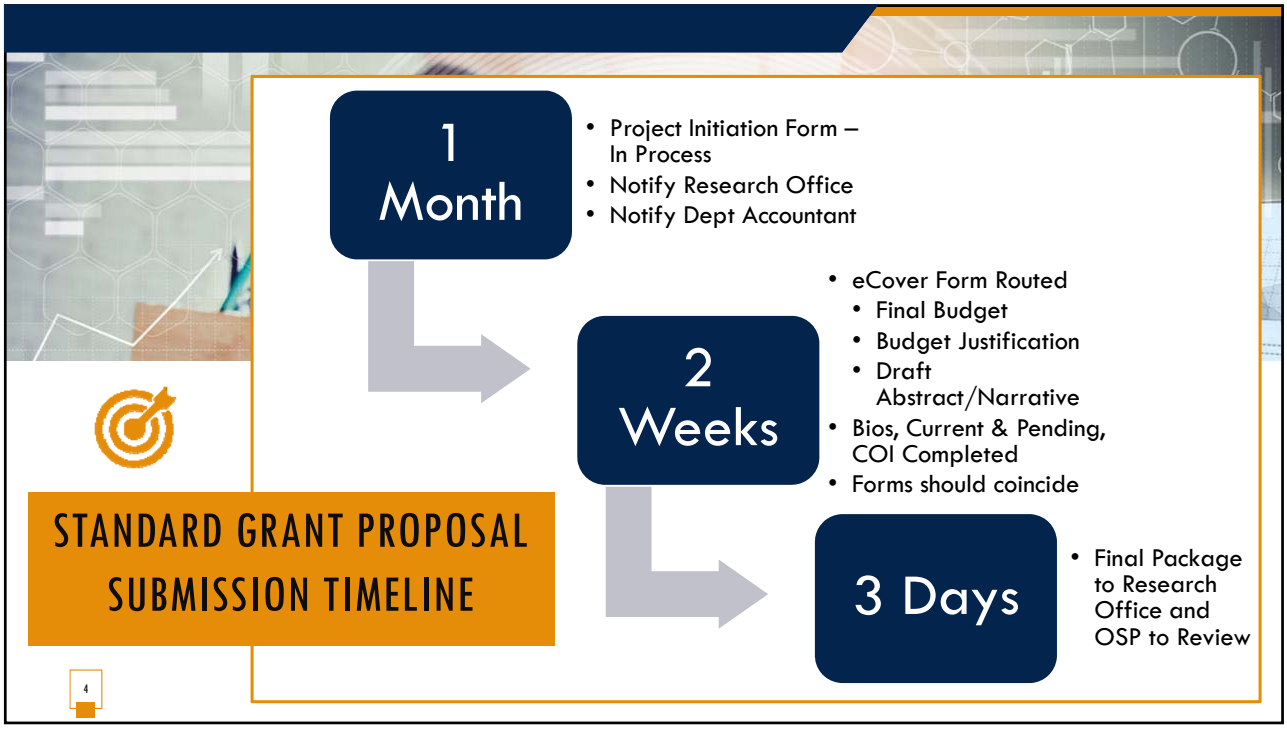
OUTLINE

- **Introductions**
  - Dr. Arthur Appel, Savannah Mehren, Tim Hooper, Jacque Kochak, Hogan Ricks
- **Proposal Submission Process** – Savannah Mehren
- **Proposal Development** – Tim Hooper
- **Writing the Narrative** – Jacque Kochak
- **Post Award Process** – Hogan Ricks
- **AAES Grant Programs, Hatch/Multistate** – Dr. Appel

2

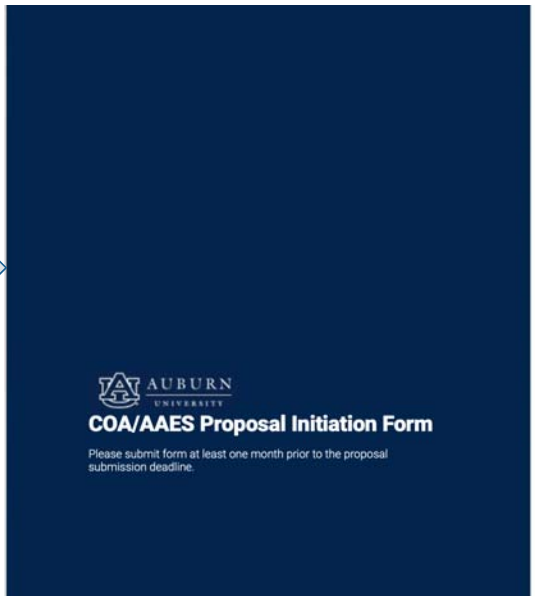
PROPOSAL SUBMISSION TIMELINE & PROCESS

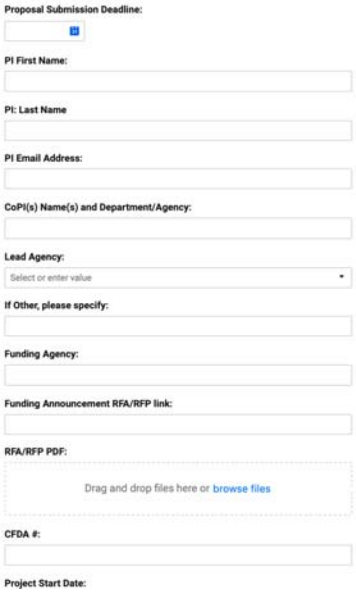
SAVANNAH MEHREN



COA/AAES PROPOSAL INITIATION FORM

1 MONTH (or earlier) before deadline





5

COA/AAES PROPOSAL INITIATION FORM

1 MONTH (or earlier) before deadline

- When an accountant is selected and the form is submitted, the **Dept. Accountant** and the **Research Office** are notified of the upcoming proposal.
- If "**Foreign Activity**" is selected, there is a notification of the international process that involves **Kelly Pippin**. **Phase I approval must be obtained prior to proposal submission.**
- The Grant Writers (either Jacque Kochak or Tim Hooper) will reach out the PI to determine proposal preparation
- RO creates an electronic folder to collect all proposal elements.

6

PI AND RESEARCH OFFICE GRANT WRITER

- Determine project management structure.
- Work from checklist that lists all proposal requirements.
- Make writing assignments.
- Discuss need for supporting graphics/figures/statistical data.
- Recruit advisory board members (if required).
- Identify outside evaluator and sub-awards (if required).
- Submit the final proposal

PI AND DEPT. ACCOUNTANT

- Discuss budget needs
- Develop a draft budget and budget justification
- Coordinate Subaward documents:
  - **Scope of Work**
  - **Letter of Commitment**
  - **AU Subrecipient Commitment Form**
  - **Budget & Budget Justification**
  - **Grant forms – Biosketches, Current Pending, Conflict of Interest**
- Complete the eCover form

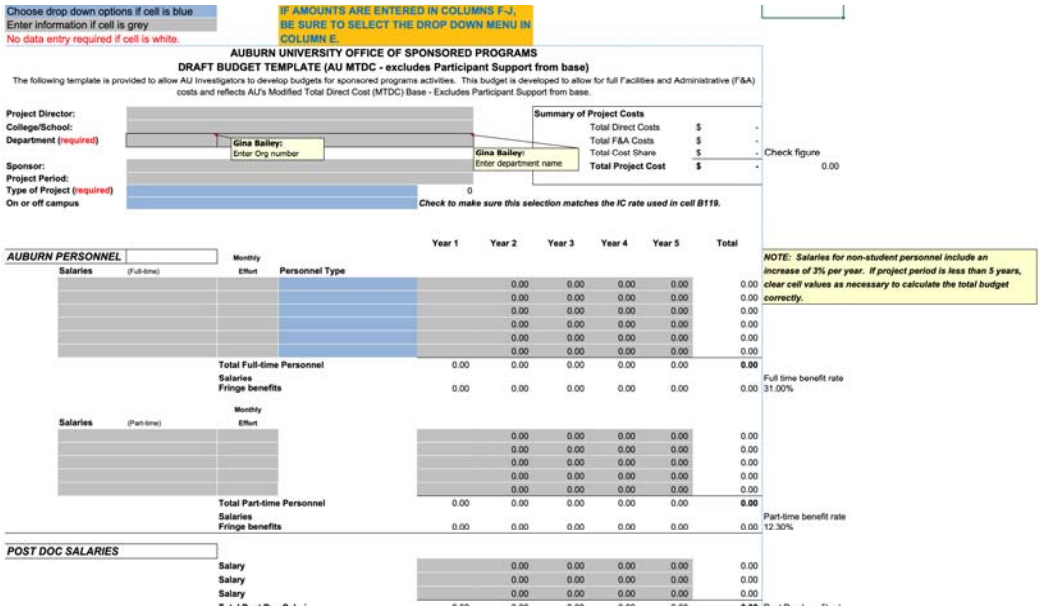
PI AND CLD

- Completion/submission of the application
  - Reviewing all final documents prior to submission
- Completion of subrecipient forms for other agencies
- Developing letters of commitment/collaboration

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

- Consult departmental accountant
- Start with the **AU Budget Template**
- Identify the maximum budget allowable
- What is the **Indirect Cost Rate** (IDC)? Can be limited by sponsor:
  - **26% Off-Campus**
  - **51% On-Campus**
  - **If IDC is under AU's negotiated rate, do not use MTDC**
- Determine if **Cost Share** is required by sponsor
  - **Don't overcommit!**
- Determine the amount for **Subawards** early (if applicable)

AU BUDGET TEMPLATE



Choose drop down options if cell is blue
Enter information if cell is grey
No data entry required if cell is white.

IF AMOUNTS ARE ENTERED IN COLUMNS F-J, BE SURE TO SELECT THE DROP DOWN MENU IN COLUMN E.

AUBURN UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF SPONSORED PROGRAMS
DRAFT BUDGET TEMPLATE (AU MTDC - excludes Participant Support from base)

The following template is provided to allow AU Investigators to develop budgets for sponsored programs activities. This budget is developed to allow for full Facilities and Administrative (F&A) costs and reflects AU's Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) Base - Excludes Participant Support from base.

Project Director:
College/School:
Department (required)
Gina Bailey: Enter Org number
Gina Bailey! Enter department name
Sponsor:
Project Period:
Type of Project (required)
On or off campus
Check to make sure this selection matches the IC rate used in cell B119.

Summary of Project Costs
Total Direct Costs $ -
Total F&A Costs $ -
Total Cost Share $ -
Total Project Cost $ -
Check figure 0.00

AUBURN PERSONNEL

Salaries (Full-time)	Monthly Effort	Personnel Type	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
				0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
		Total Full-time Personnel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
		Salaries						
		Fringe benefits	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Full time benefit rate 31.00%

Salaries (Part-time)	Monthly Effort							
				0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
				0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
		Total Part-time Personnel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
		Salaries						
		Fringe benefits	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Part-time benefit rate 12.30%

POST DOC SALARIES								
		Salary		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
		Salary		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
		Salary		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

NOTE: Salaries for non-student personnel include an increase of 3% per year. If project period is less than 5 years, clear cell values as necessary to calculate the total budget correctly.

11

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

- Consult departmental accountant
- Itemize the justification
- Include all costs
- Describe how costs are derived
- Don't leave the sponsor with questions
- Make sure numbers add up
- Ask for what you need

Rely on the expertise of your accountants!

12

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

3 Weeks before deadline

- Finalize goals and specific objectives.
- Complete logic model (if required).
- Begin collecting required forms (i.e., *Biographical Sketches*, *Current and Pending Support*, and *Conflict of Interest*).
- Start collecting letters of commitment/support.
- Tentative budget – **subaward amount final**.
- Subaward notified of required documents (if applicable).
  - **Allow two weeks for internal routing/approvals**
  - Subrecipient commitment form, budget, budget justification, scope of work, and letter of commitment

13

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

2 Weeks before ** Halfway**

- **Route eCover form:**
  - **Final budget, budget justification** and draft summary, narrative, or scope of work needed.
  - Final Sub-award documents (if applicable).
- **Finalize attachments**, such as Key Personnel, Equipment, Facilities and Other Resources, Management Plan, and Data Management Plan (DMP).
- **Forward all completed documents to RO.**

14

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

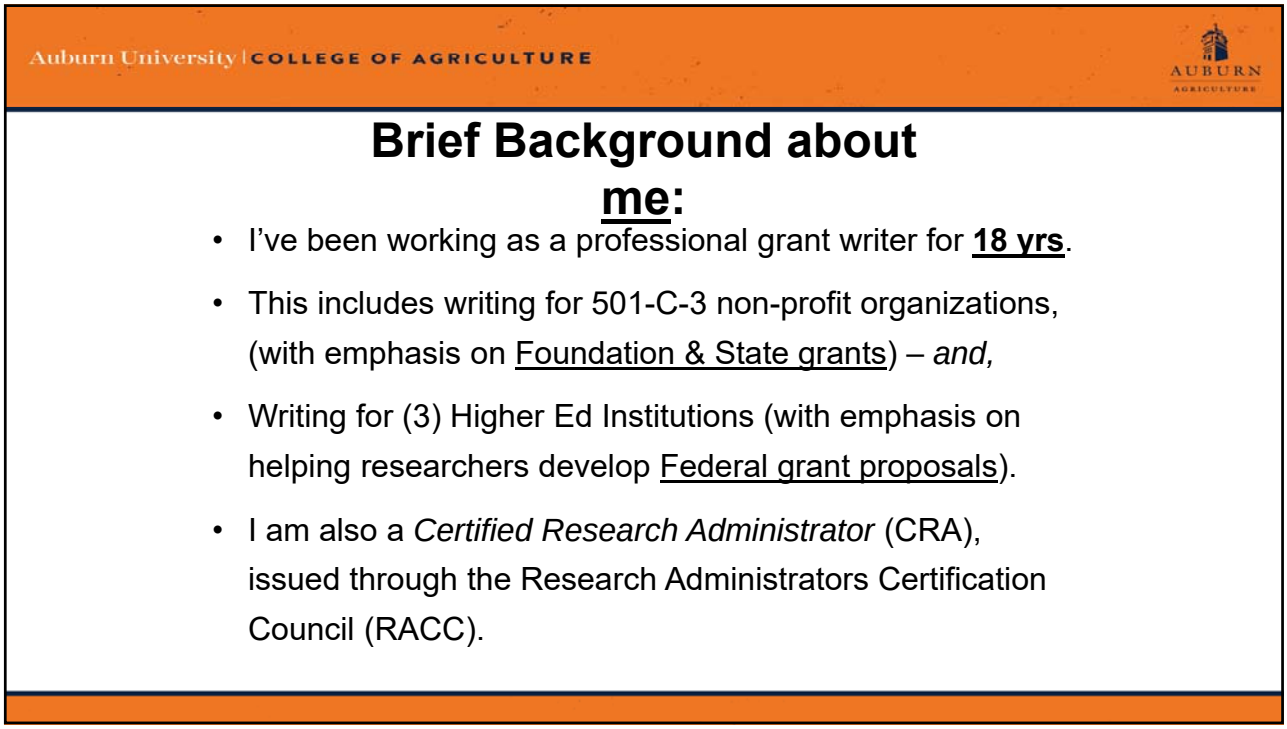
3 days before

- **<u>Final package to RO for review before submission</u>.**
- **We can offer no guarantees if proposal not received three days before deadline!**
- *<u>Note</u>: PI may continue to make final edits to the Project Narrative and other Scientific Components (**excluding the Budget and Budget Justification**) of the proposal until 24 hours prior to the sponsor.*

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

TIM HOOPER, MPA, CRA


AU College of Agriculture
2021 Faculty Workshop Series
Developing Your Proposal:
What Makes for a Good Grant Proposal?
Tim Hooper, MPA, CRA
This is the work that makes the world WORK.
THIS IS AUBURN.
AUBURN
AGRICULTURE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AUBURN
AGRICULTURE
Brief Background about me:
• I've been working as a professional grant writer for 18 yrs.
• This includes writing for 501-C-3 non-profit organizations, (with emphasis on Foundation & State grants) – and,
• Writing for (3) Higher Ed Institutions (with emphasis on helping researchers develop Federal grant proposals).
• I am also a Certified Research Administrator (CRA), issued through the Research Administrators Certification Council (RACC).

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Ask - Who is my Audience? How will they be reading this?

- Federal proposals typical have (3) assigned readers (*Primary*, *Secondary*, *Third* reader), and other panel members charged to be "familiar" with your proposal.
- The Primary Reader presents the proposal to the full panel.
- They **may/may NOT be familiar** with your line of research.

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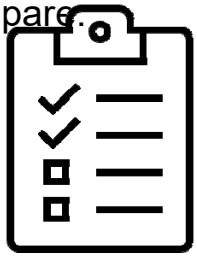
Working Together: How best do we BOTH get started?

- I read the full RFA first, then **make a checklist** of all the items we need to prepare.



Instructions for USDA grants are in Part IV, C

- This is referenced only briefly in the RFA.
- Part IV, C is accessed by a URL link only.
- It takes you to an entirely difference website than the RFA.

The following details Part IV, C. of the Foundational and Applied Science Request for Applications.

July 17, 2020: Update Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants (page 11). Update seed grant information (page 15).

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

++++++++++++++

C. Content and Form of Application Submission

Electronic applications are to be prepared following Parts V and VI of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A of this part). The following is **additional information** you need to prepare an application in response to this RFA. **If there is a discrepancy between the RFA and the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide, the information contained in the RFA and this document overrides the Application Guide.**

Note the attachment requirements (e.g., PDF) in Part III, 3 of the guide. ANY PROPOSALS THAT ARE NON-COMPLIANT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS (e.g., content format, PDF file format, file name restrictions, and no password protected files) WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM NIFA REVIEW. Grants.gov does not check for NIFA required attachments or whether attachments are in PDF format; see Part III, 6.1 of the guide for how to check the manifest of submitted files. Partial applications will be excluded from NIFA review. We will accept subsequent submissions of an application until close of business on the closing date in the RFA (see Part V, 2.1 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further information).

For any questions related to the preparation of an application, review the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide and the applicable RFA. If assistance is still needed for preparing application forms content, contact:

- Email: electronic@usda.gov
- Business hours: Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, excluding federal holidays.

1. SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 2 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. See Part V, 2.18 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for the required certifications and assurances (e.g., Prohibition Against Entities Requiring Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements).

2. SF 424 R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s)

Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part V, 3 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

Instructions for AFRI's FY2022 Foundational Program

- Reference to access and follow proposal guidelines is located on **Page #81** of RFA.
- NSF sends applicants to their **PAPPG Guide** (which is updated annually).

b. Full Application

Applications for the 2021 and 2022 review cycles must be received by Grants.gov by 5 p.m. Eastern Time on **the dates indicated in the Program Area Descriptions beginning in Part I, C** of this RFA. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

We recommend that you conduct an administrative review of the application before submission of it via Grants.gov to ensure that it complies with all preparation instructions.

An application checklist is included in Part VII of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide to assist with this review.

You should check the application for completeness. The application should be checked for the following required items, which must include:

- Project Summary/Abstract
- Project Narrative
- Bibliography & References Cited
- Logic Model for Integrated Projects (if applicable)
- Management Plan for Integrated Projects (if applicable)
- Data Management Plan
- Facilities & Other Resources
- Curriculum Vitae
- Conflict of Interest Lists
- Current and Pending Support
- Budget
- Budget Justification
- Felony and Tax Certification Form (if applicable)

This is not an exhaustive list of required items; it only serves to highlight items that may be overlooked. **Failure to include any of the three critical required documents of Project Summary/Abstract, Project Narrative, or Bibliography & References Cited sections as PDF attachment will result in the application not being reviewed or considered for funding by NIFA.**

Instructions for submitting an application are included in Part IV, Section 1.5 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

If you have trouble submitting an application to Grants.gov, you should FIRST contact the Grants.gov Help Desk to resolve any problems. Keep a record of any such correspondence. See Part IV, B of this RFA for Grants.gov contact information.

We send email correspondence to the AR regarding the status of submitted applications. We strongly encourage you to provide accurate email addresses, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance.

If the AR has not received correspondence **from NIFA** regarding a submitted application within

81

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Proposal Checklist:

Proposal requirements: The following items need to be completed and inserted into your final electronic grant packet:

☐ a.) **Project Summary/Abstract – PDF Attachment. Use form document.** This document has a title 'Project Summary' in the document header. Save file as 'ProjectSummary'. **Note:** The template for the "Project Summary" template document can be obtained at this link: https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/application-support-templates

☐ b.) **Project Narrative - PDF Attachment.** Title the attachment as 'Project Narrative' in the document header and save file as 'ProjectNarrative.' (Project Narrative section may **not exceed a total of 18 pages** with 12-point font and line spacing not exceeding six lines of text per vertical inch, including all figures and tables.) **Note:** AU's Research Office has a formatted project narrative draft template you can use.

Supporting attachments

☐ c.) **Bibliography & References Cited – PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as 'Bibliography & References Cited' in the document header and save file as 'BibliographyReferencesCited'.

☐ d.) **Facilities & Other Resources – PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as 'Facilities & Other Resources' in the document header and save file as 'FacilitiesOtherResources'.

☐ e.) **Equipment – PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as 'Equipment' in the document header and save file as 'Equipment'.

Other attachments

☐ **Key Personnel Roles – PDF Attachment. 2-Page Limit.** Title the attachment as 'Key Personnel' and save file as 'KeyPersonnel'.

☐ **Logic Model – PDF Attachment. 2-Page Limit. Required for all Integrated Project applications. Encouraged for Research, Education, or Extension Project applications.** Title the attachment as 'Logic Model' and save file as 'LogicModel'. **Note:** AU's Research Office has a formatted logic model and reference guide you can use.

☐ **Management Plan – PDF Attachment. 3-Page Limit. Required for Integrated Project applications. Encouraged for Research, Education, or Extension Project applications.** Title the attachment as 'Management Plan' and save file as 'ManagementPlan'.

- The plan is to be clearly articulated and include an organizational chart, administrative timeline, and a description of how the project will be governed, as well as a strategy to enhance coordination, collaboration, communication, and data sharing and reporting among members of the project team and stakeholder groups. The plan must also address how the project will be sustained beyond termination of an award.
- The management plan must also include an advisory group of principal stakeholders, partners, and professionals to assess and evaluate the quality, expected measurable outcomes, and potential impacts for the proposed research, education and/or extension. Please include rationale for their role, and how they will function effectively to support the goals and objectives of the project. The plan must demonstrate how partners and stakeholders contribute to project assessment on an annual basis.

☐ **Data Management Plan (DMP) - PDF Attachment. 2-Page Limit. Required for Research, Education, Extension, or Integrated Project applications.** Title the attachment as 'Data Management Plan' and save file as 'DataManagementPlan'. A Data Management Plan (DMP) is to clearly articulate how the project director (PD) and co-PDs plan to manage and disseminate the data generated by the project. The DMP will be considered during the merit review process. **Note:** COA's staff grant writer can work with you to help develop this attachment item.

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Proposal Checklist:

(Page #2)

☐ **Documentation of Collaboration – PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as 'Documentation of Collaboration' in the document header and save file as 'Collaboration'. Evidence, e.g., letter(s) of support, must be provided that the collaborators involved have agreed to render services. The applicant also will be required to provide additional information on consultants and collaborators in the budget portion of the application.

☐ **Biographical Sketch (CV) – PDF Attachment. 2-Page Limit** (excluding publications listings) per PD, co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel. Title the attachment as 'Biographical Sketch' in the document header and save file as 'BiographicalSketch' followed by the **last name** of the PD or co-PD (Example: "BiographicalSketch_Jacobs") such that each biographical sketch file in the application has a distinct file name.

- The **Conflict of Interest** list **must not be included** in the biographical sketch, but it must be provided as a separate document (see Part IV, C. 7. b for more information).

☐ **Current and Pending Support Field – PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as 'Current and Pending Support' in the document header and save file as 'CurrentPendingSupport'. And, just like in your BioSketch, please add your last name to the file name (Example: "CurrentPendingSupport_Jacobs"). Total project listed for each PD must be indicated as a percent effort and not exceeds 100% for concurrent project.
Note: please use the recommended template for this document at this link: https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/application-support-templates

☐ **Budget Justification – PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as 'Budget Justification' in the document header and save file as 'BudgetJustification'.

- **Budget Template Note:** Grant applicants will submit budget dollar amount (per category) directly into the electronic grant application. Faculty can use the Excel budget sheet prepared by AU's Office of Sponsored Programs to develop their program budget, then use it as a reference when entering in project budget amounts into the electronic grant packet. **Please ask Research Office Staff to forward you a copy of the budget template.**

☐ **Conflict of Interest List – PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** A Conflict of Interest List is required for all applications submitted to the AFRI. The Conflict of Interest List should be provided as a separate PDF attachment and not included in the vitae or resume. Must be completed individually for all personnel who have submitted a Biographical Sketch in the R&R Senior/Key Personnel Profile.

Collate all individual Conflict of Interest lists into a single document file. The lists must be submitted as a single PDF attachment.
Link to form: https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/application-support-templates

☐ **Felony and Tax Certification Form – PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** This form may be obtained by COA's Research Office. **Please ask staff to insert this into your electronic grant packet for you.**

☐ **Sub-award agreements.** Please notify COA's Research Office if your project will include any external (none AU) sub-awards. Research Office staff will assist you in identifying the specific items that get submitted into your electronic grant packet that are specific to sub-awards and their associated budgets.

= = END of Electronic Grant Attachments = =

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Proposal Checklist:

(Key items)

☐ **Management Plan – PDF Attachment. 3-Page Limit. Required for Integrated Project applications. Encouraged for Research, Education, or Extension**

Project applications. Title the attachment as 'Management Plan' and save file as 'ManagementPlan'.

- The plan is to be clearly articulated and include an organizational chart, administrative timeline, and a description of how the project will be governed, as well as a strategy to enhance coordination, collaboration, communication, and data sharing and reporting among members of the project team and stakeholder groups. The plan must also address how the project will be sustained beyond termination of an award.
- The management plan must also include an advisory group of principal stakeholders, partners, and professionals to assess and evaluate the quality, expected measurable outcomes, and potential impacts for the proposed research, education and/or extension. Please include rationale for their role, and how they will function effectively to support the goals and objectives of the project. The plan must demonstrate how partners and stakeholders contribute to project assessment on an annual basis.

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Page-count limit (*per attachment*)

How to name/save your file

Any specific instructions (*per RFA*)

Any supporting instructions (*from me!*)

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Working Together: How best do we BOTH get started?

- I read the full RFA, then make a checklist of all the items we need to prepare.
- We **engage your Dept. Accountant** on the front-end too. Much of what you write on is in your budget.

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Working Together: How best do we BOTH get started?

- I read the full RFA, then make a checklist of all the items we need to prepare.
- We engage your Dept. Accountant on the front-end too. Much of what you write on is in your budget.

Now, we **divide & conquer**!

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What section should I start with?

Principal Investigator / Collaborators	Grant Writer
1.) Meet with your Dept. Accountant first.	1.) We can meet with you both on this.
2.) Review and gather up all items going into your Project Narrative.	2.) We will prepare a formatted Word document of your narrative questions.
3.) Pull your sources / Develop your Bibliography & References list.	3.) We interview you on content that goes into your supporting attachments.
4.) Finish your narrative rough draft / ask for feedback.	4.) We can draft your Letters of Support & forward them to your team
5.) Review your budget & draft up your Budget Justification.	5.) Attachments we can complete include: *DMP*, *Management Plan*, *Logic Model*.
6.) Your Project Summary is written last.	6.) We double-check and start preparing your files for electronic upload.

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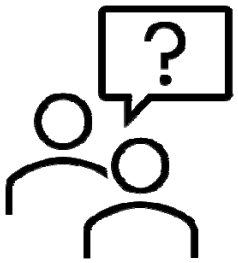
What writing style works best for grant proposals?

Ask – Why does this matter?



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What writing style works best for grant proposals?

Why does this matter?

1. Proposals are read electronically
2. Reviewers have a heavy reading load
3. They're looking for reasons to toss it

What writing style works best for grant proposals?

Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF)

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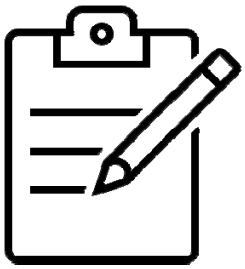
1. Structural Changes:

Ask – "**Identify the one sentence** you would keep if you had to eliminate all others."



1. Structural Changes:

Ask – "Identify the one sentence you would keep if you had to eliminate all others."

> **Position this as your response.**

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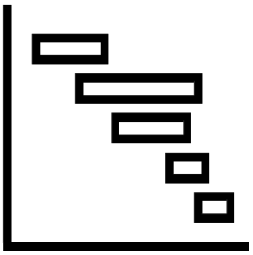
1. Structural Changes:

Next, work on "**packaging**" your sentences.



1. Structural Changes:

Next, work on "packaging" your sentences.

> Clearly separate each major sub-section by using _____ _____, _____, or _____ **titles**.

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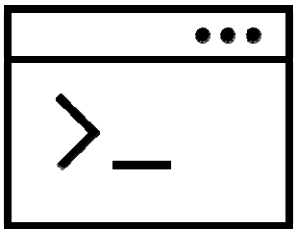
1. Structural Changes:

Employ a key writing strategy that's helpful in **online**, **quick-read situations**:



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1. Structural Changes:

Employ a key writing style that's helpful in an online, quick-read situation:

The Inverted Pyramid

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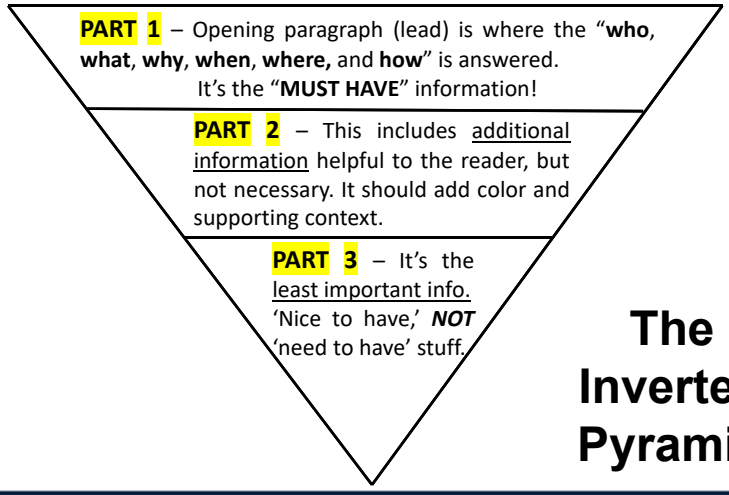
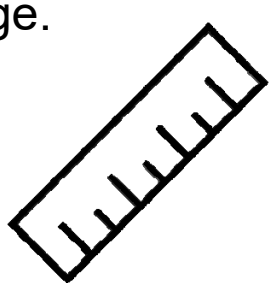
1. Structural Changes:



The Inverted Pyramid

2. Style Changes:

- ***Avoid long paragraphs.*** Goal - No more than one inch deep on the printed page.



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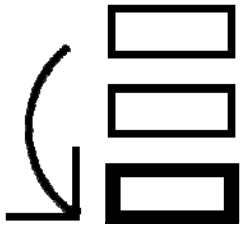
2. Style Changes:

- ***Avoid long paragraphs.*** Goal - No more than one inch deep on the printed page.
- ***Shorter word-counts per sentence.*** Goal – Average of 15-words per sentence.
- ***Express rather than impress.*** Write like you talk – If you wouldn't say it, don't write it!

3. Purpose-based Editing:

This involves a **3-read proofing strategy**.



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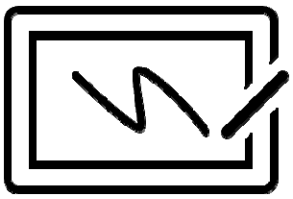
3. Purpose-based Editing:

- **First read** – look for **noticeable errors** (typos) and mark them for correction.



3. Purpose-based Editing:

- **First read** – look for noticeable errors and mark them for correction.
- (i.e., Trees) look for **linear effectiveness**.

Ask – "Is my info presented in a cohesive and logical manner?"

- "Does the information flow for

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3. Purpose-based Editing:

- **2nd read** – look for **linear effectiveness**.

Tip – Brevity is your friend!

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3. Purpose-based Editing:

- **First read** – look for noticeable errors and mark them for correction. (i.e.: Typos)
- **2nd read** – look for linear effectiveness
- **[redacted]** – check **diction & enunciation**.
  Ask – "Does any of my phrasing slow the reader down? Do any sections make

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3. Purpose-based Editing:

- **3rd read** – check **diction & enunciation**.

Goal – Prepare your content for a single, rapid read!

Template guide:

- **Blue copy is** word-for-word per RFA.
- **Red copy** are my supporting instructions.
- **Underlined** sections align with the RFA score sheet.

Project Narrative (Template)

Please delete all **Blue** and **Red** copy from final narrative and save as a PDF.
Do Not Exceed **18-pages** of copy. 12-point font.

a. Introduction

Include a clear statement of the **long-term goal(s)** and **supporting objectives** of the proposed project. Summarize the **body of knowledge** or past activities that **substantiate the need for the proposed** project. **Describe ongoing or recently completed activities** significant to the proposed project including the work of key project personnel. **Include preliminary data/information** pertinent to the proposed project.

This section should include in-depth information **on the following**, when applicable:

1. Estimates of the magnitude of the issues and the relevance to stakeholders and ongoing state-federal food and agricultural research, education, and extension programs;
2. The role of stakeholders in problem identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation, as appropriate; and
3. Reasons for performing the work at the proposed institution.

Cite all referenced works in Bibliography & References Cited in separate attachment.

- *Statement of project's long-term goals:* [Begin response here.]
- *Supporting objectives:* [Begin response here.]
- *Body of knowledge/past activities that substantiate need for project:* [Begin response here.]
- *Ongoing/recently completed activities significant to this project and associated personnel:* [Begin response here.]
- *Preliminary data/information pertinent to this project initiative:* [Begin response here.]

Narrative Tips:

- Include a bit of open-space between sections.
- Allow your copy to wrap around the difference figures you insert too.
- Justified alignment looks great and gives you a clean edge on both sides.
- Do NOT use this in NSF proposals. Use Left justification.

Project Narrative

Results indicated that continued land use increased soil compaction in the crop root zone (top 6 inches of soil). Soil compaction was constantly greater for second and third growing-season compared to first season (Fig. 3A). Furthermore, the direct impact of soil compaction on soil water availability was confirmed by a shortage of soil water availability with the increase in soil compaction. Soil moisture was 2- and 3-fold lower for second- and third-growing seasons compared to first, respectively (Fig. 3B). Overall, results suggested that the continuous land use with conventional tillage increased soil compaction, reduced soil water availability, and may impact root distribution and reduce crop yield. Alternative pre-planting land preparation for the initial years of an organic transition should be required to ensure soil health parameters, such as soil compaction and soil water holding capacity, will not negatively impact crop yield.

Use of cover crop mulch for weed suppression: Drs. Li (Co-PI) and Price (USDA-Collaborator) investigated the integrated use of cover crop mulch with and without plastic against the grower standard of conventional tillage with and without plastic mulching for weed management on watermelon production fields. Results indicated that cover crop mulch with plastic (Fig. 4) provided the highest weed control (70%). The use of cover crop mulch with no plastic performed better than conventional tillage with no plastic, but it had no significant difference from the conventional tillage with plastic (Price et al., 2018). Cover crop mulch with plastic has potential to suppress weeds in production systems. Still, this three-year trial relied on pre- and post-herbicides for weed control. Effects of treatments on organic transitioning systems are unknown.

Figure 4. View of the cover crop mulch with plastic system.

e. Supporting in-depth information:

Estimates of the issue's magnitude and relevance to stakeholders: Alabama has 1490 vegetable farms, but only 9 are organic certified as 2017 (USDA, 2019). This shows the tremendous gap and need to grow organics. With growers continuously looking to transition to organic, requests for guidelines are common. A recent survey of 36 new organic producers in Alabama showed, cost of certification, cost of inputs, labor intensity, and competition were the largest monetary barrier to adoption, while weeds and soil management were the biggest challenges (Goodrich et al., 2020). Lack of soil health and pest management education for new organic fields at Auburn University farms is also a limiting factor that impacts transitioning and beginning farmers who want to see more focused research done in the state. However, interest among participants remain strong and letters of support highlighting the value and importance of this project were provided by growers (3), stakeholders (4), students (1), and researchers (4) and are attached to the proposal.

Role of stakeholders in problem identification and associated planning: Stakeholders were and continue to be key in identification, planning, and developing the project. The aforementioned survey shows growers' involvement in identification of needs for best management practices on weeds and soil. In the *Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development* project of Co-PD Majumdar, lack of incubator programs for beginning farms was identified as a key problem by the stakeholders. Our project will address growers' and stakeholders' needs and use their feedback to leverage the organic industry with science-based knowledge.

Reasons for performing work at Auburn University: The E.V. Smith Research and Extension Center from Auburn University is located in Shorter, AL, in the center of the southeastern U.S. (32° 26'54" N, 85° 54' 14" W). The area is characterized as a humid subtropical climate with frequent rainfall during the summer and cool dry period in winter (Koppen, 1931). Soil in the research field is classified as Cahaba sandy loam soil (a fine-loamy, siliceous, semiactive, thermic Typic Hapludults) with organic matter content of 0.5%, pH of 6.5, and low water holding capacity (USDA, 1983). Both soil and climate conditions are

Project Narrative (cont.)

• *Project timeline:* [Begin response here.]
The proposal must outline **all important phases** as a function of time, **year by year**, for the entire project, including periods beyond the grant funding period.
*(**Note:** Please let me know if you have any activities that extend beyond Year #5. If so, I will revise this timeline for you.)*

Template guide:

- My narrative word template includes a few supporting tables as needed.
- **NOTE:** Data tables are a good way to visual reinforce key information items. Don't be afraid to insert them directly into your narrative discussion.

Project Activities	Year 1 (quarters)				Year 2 (quarters)				Year 3 (quarters)			
Start date: Oct. 1, 2021	1						3	4	1	2	3	4
TBA	x				x				x			
TBA		x				x				x		
TBA			x				x				x	
TBA				x				x				x
TBA												

Key items to include:

- Advisory Committee or Key Stakeholders
- Link job duties and objective to specific investigators
- ID person in charge of data collection
- Timeline should be presented per quarter

Management Plan

1. *Organizational Chart:*

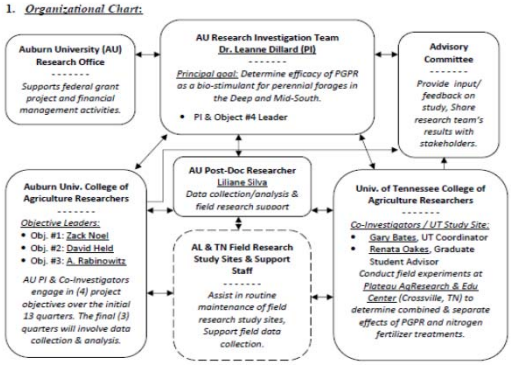


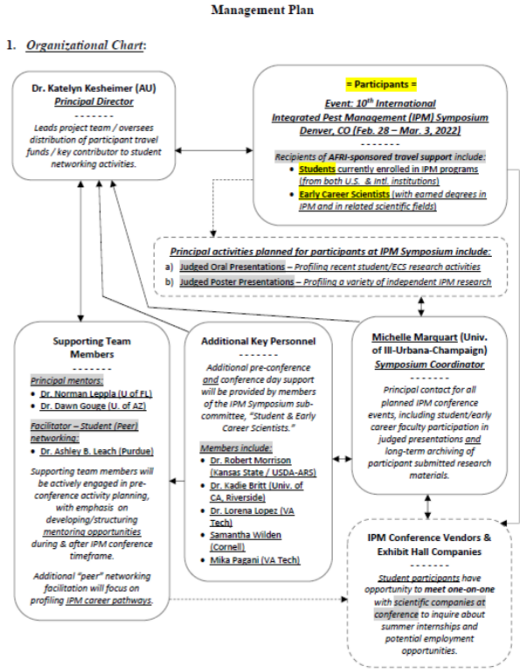
Figure 1. Management Plan Organization Chart

2. *Administrative timeline:* (Grant period is Oct. 1, 2021 to Sept. 30, 2025. 16-total quarters.)

Quarter	Calendar Year 2021	Calendar Year 2022	Calendar Year 2023	Calendar Year 2024	Calendar Year 2025
Q1	---	Training Video Production (Yr. 1)	Training Video Production (Yr. 2)	Summit Training Conference	Summarize data
Q2	---	Maintain/optimize field study sites	4H Dairy Univ. Training Event	4H Dairy Univ. Training Event	Prepare final report
Q3	---	Year #1 data collection period	4H Beef Univ. Training Event	4H Beef Univ. Training Event	Present findings to AFRI & Key Stakeholders
Q4	Prepare field study sites	Yr. #1 information update for project advisory group	Yr. #2 information update for project advisory group	Prepare economic Data Decision Tool and share w/ Insurance groups	---

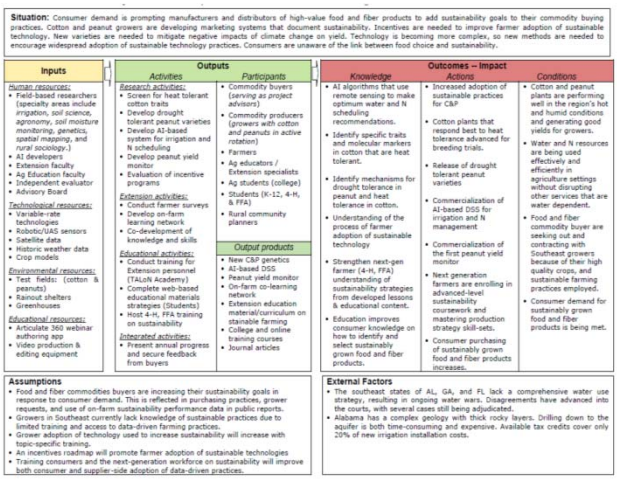
Key items to include:

- ***Extension folks:*** If you are including training activities, be sure to include info on who the participants are.
- Include details on how they provide feedback.
- Same goes for student training activities.



Logic Models:

- USDA-NIFA has a standardized format.
- After a brief review of your project's activities, we can work one up for you too!



Collaboration Letters:

- Be sure to include the requested header title.
- Address letter to PI.
- Include project name.
- Include the specific role and/or duties of the collaborator.

PURDUE UNIVERSITY

Documentation of Collaboration

Sept. 15, 2021

Katelyn Kesheimer, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor / Extension Specialist
Dept. of Entomology & Plant Pathology
105 Extension Hall
Auburn University, AL 36849

Re: Letter of support for AFRI Foundational conference grant

Dear Dr. Kesheimer:

I want to thank you for reaching out to my department at Purdue University and asking for assistance in preparing for the **2022 Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Intl. Conference**. This is the largest professional conference held for researchers that focuses exclusively on improving integrated pest management strategies in urban and agricultural settings. Attendees will gain a wide range of useful information designed to strengthen their overall research capabilities.

I currently serve as Co-Chair for the IPM Sub-committee, *Students & Early Career Scientists*. The stated purpose of our sub-committee is to "*works with Program, Finance, Awards, and Poster Committees to develop funding, presentation, and networking opportunities for students and early professionals.*" The specific activities our committee has developed for this conference are geared to do just that—offer presentation and networking opportunities for participants.

As *co-investigator* on your AFRI proposal, my role will be to help coordinate the competitively judged poster and oral presentations of attending graduate students and early career faculty. Instructions on how attendees should submit presentation material has been posted on our conference website, and we are actively collecting submissions.

The financial support we are requesting through the USDA-AFRI *Foundational Program* will be used cover the travel costs for several first-time attendees. I look forward to hearing a favorable follow-up report from you on this soon!

Respectfully,

Ashley Brooke Leach, Ph.D.
Postdoctoral Research Associate
Dept. of Entomology

Department of Entomology, Purdue University, B71 Smith Hall, 901 W State St, West Lafayette, IN 47907

NSF Letter of Collaboration:

- Same wording is used by ALL collaborators.
- NSF asks you to use this phrasing **only**.
- Letters cannot be used to provide additional endorsements or evaluation of the proposed project.

Dear NSF Proposal Review Committee:

If the proposal submitted by Dr. [*insert PI's full name*] entitled [*insert proposal title*] is selected for funding by NSF, it is my intent to collaborate and/or commit resources as detailed in the Project Description or Facilities, Equipment, and Other resources.

Sincerely,

[*Your name*]
[*Title*]
[*Address*]

What do Grant Reviewers key in on?

Federal Review Panel Comments:

Proposal Number: 2021-05699

Positive Aspects of the Proposal:

- The data management and evaluation plans provide a detailed protocol for data development, use, and sharing.
- They use a well-designed logic model and comprehensive management plan.

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What do Grant Reviewers key in on?

Federal Review Panel Comments:

Proposal Number: 2021-05041

Positive Aspects of the Proposal:

- Strong support letters.

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What do Grant Reviewers key in on?

Federal Review Panel Comments:

Proposal Number: 2021-04817

Positive Aspects of the Proposal:

- Many letters of support demonstrate support from stakeholders and need for project.
- Very well written and nice integration of figures.
- Detailed data management plan.
- Good timetable.

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Final thought

Please remember:

The more time we have –
the more we can do for you!

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AUBURN AGRICULTURE

Tim's contact info:

Office: 203 CASIC Building

Email: tph0016@auburn.edu

Phone: (334) 844-1431

Thank you!

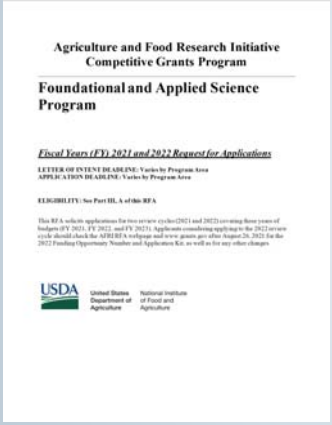
WRITING THE NARRATIVE

Jacque Kochak

BEFORE YOU START

- Understand the program's **main purpose** (*funding priorities*).
- **Read abstracts** of previously funded projects.
- Contact the **program manager** to discuss your idea (but first read the RFP!).

Become a student of the RFP/RFA.



Agriculture and Food Research Initiative
Competitive Grants Program

Foundational and Applied Science Program

Fiscal Years (FY) 2021 and 2022 Request for Applications

LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE: Varies by Program Area
APPLICATION DEADLINE: Varies by Program Area

ELIGIBILITY: See Part III, A of this RFA

USDA United States Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture

- Organize information as prescribed in the guidelines.
- Align your proposal with the *sponsor's* goals and objectives.

WHAT REVIEWERS LOOK FOR

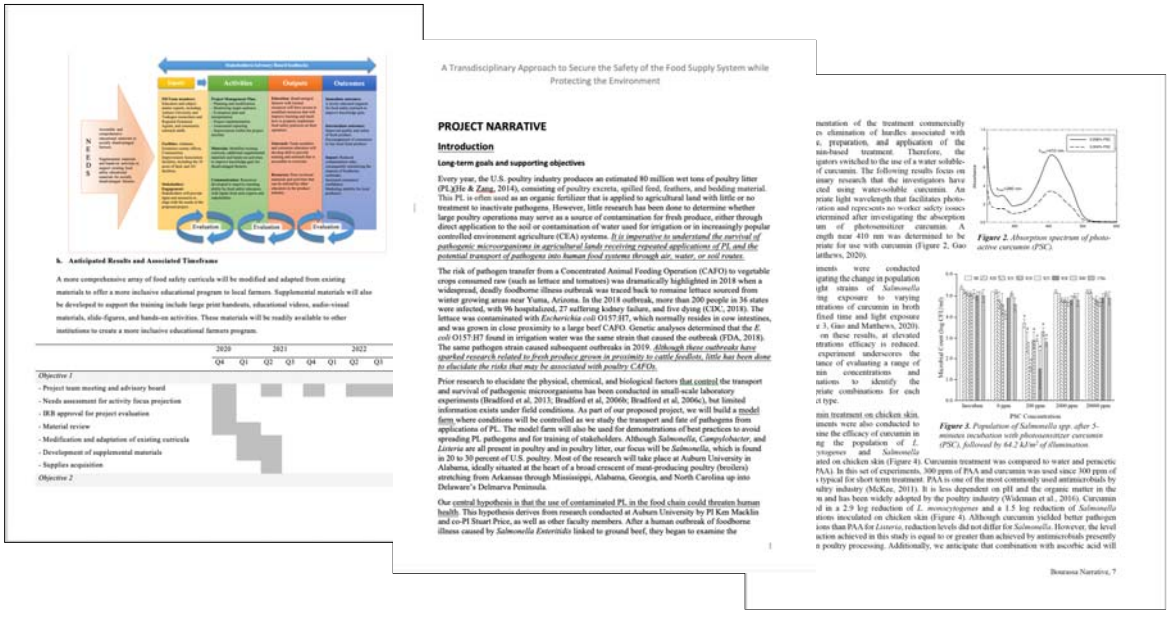
- Reviewers look at strengths, weaknesses, qualifications, and probability of success.
- **Understand the criteria before you write.** Reviewers will summarize strengths/weaknesses *for each criterion*.
- Prepare the proposal logically so reviewers know where to find what they are looking for.

Evaluation criteria vary somewhat by agency.

- NSF looks at "broader impacts" and "intellectual merit."
- NIH looks for "overall impact" (innovative, groundbreaking projects supported by great research).
- USDA looks for major impact on U.S. food and agriculture, and the top criterion is "scientific merit" (with "innovation" at the top of the list).

APPEARANCE

- Follow the page number limit and use correct fonts and margins
- Make sure the proposal is attractive, with a clean, simple format.
- Use “bites” of information —short paragraphs, bullet lists, etc.
- Include visual aids (photos, charts, figures, etc.).



A Transdisciplinary Approach to Secure the Safety of the Food Supply System while Protecting the Environment

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Introduction

Long-term goals and supporting objectives

Every year, the U.S. poultry industry produces an estimated 80 million wet tons of poultry litter (PLy)(Ile & Zang, 2014), consisting of poultry excreta, spilled feed, feathers, and bedding material. This PL is often used as an organic fertilizer that is applied to agricultural land with little or no treatment to inactivate pathogens. However, little research has been done to determine whether large poultry operations may serve as a source of contamination for fresh produce, either through direct application to the soil or contamination of water used for irrigation or in increasingly popular controlled environment agriculture (CEA) systems. *It is imperative to understand the survival of pathogenic microorganisms in agricultural lands receiving repeated applications of PL and the potential transport of pathogens into human food systems through air, water, or soil routes.*

The risk of pathogen transfer from a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) to vegetable crops consumed raw (such as lettuce and tomatoes) was dramatically highlighted in 2018 when a widespread, deadly foodborne illness outbreak was traced back to romaine lettuce sourced from winter growing areas near Yuma, Arizona. In the 2018 outbreak, more than 200 people in 36 states were infected, with 96 hospitalized, 27 suffering kidney failure, and five dying (CDC, 2018). The lettuce was contaminated with *Escherichia coli* O157:H7, which normally resides in cow intestines, and was grown in close proximity to a large beef CAFO. Genetic analyses determined that the *E. coli* O157:H7 found in irrigation water was the same strain that caused the outbreak (FDA, 2018). The same pathogen strain caused subsequent outbreaks in 2019. *Although these outbreaks have sparked research related to fresh produce grown in proximity to cattle feedlots, little has been done to elucidate the risks that may be associated with poultry CAFOs.*

Prior research to elucidate the physical, chemical, and biological factors that control the transport and survival of pathogenic microorganisms has been conducted in small-scale laboratory experiments (Bradford et al, 2013; Bradford et al, 2006b; Bradford et al, 2006c), but limited information exists under field conditions. As part of our proposed project, we will build a model farm where conditions will be controlled as we study the transport and fate of pathogens from applications of PL. The model farm will also be used for demonstrations of best practices to avoid spreading PL pathogens and for training of stakeholders. Although *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, and *Listeria* are all present in poultry and in poultry litter, our focus will be *Salmonella*, which is found in 20 to 30 percent of U.S. poultry. Most of the research will take place at Auburn University in Alabama, ideally situated at the heart of a broad crescent of meat-producing poultry (broilers) stretching from Arkansas through Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and North Carolina up into Delaware’s Delmarva Peninsula.

Our central hypothesis is that the use of contaminated PL in the food chain could threaten human health. This hypothesis derives from research conducted at Auburn University by PI Km Macklin and co-PI Stuart Price, as well as other faculty members. After a human outbreak of foodborne illness caused by *Salmonella Enteritidis* linked to ground beef, they began to examine the

Figure 2. Absorption spectrum of photo-active curcumin (PSC).

Figure 3. Population of Salmonella spp. after 5-minutes incubation with photosensitizer curcumin (PSC), followed by 84.2 kJ·m² of illumination.

Bourassa Narrative, 7

- Poor ideas will not be successful regardless of how well they are "packaged."
- Good ideas are often *not* funded because they are not packaged well.

FUNDAMENTALS OF GOOD WRITING

- Write for someone educated and scientifically literate but not an expert in your field.
- Eliminate typos, misspelled words, and grammar mistakes.
- Spell out acronyms on first use.
- Avoid jargon.

- Be concise.
- Use short, sharp sentences without too many clauses.
- Avoid long paragraphs.
- Obtain critical input from experienced colleagues.

Strive for clarity

- Use active voice. Think “subject, verb, object.”

”Our organization designed this program.”

Not

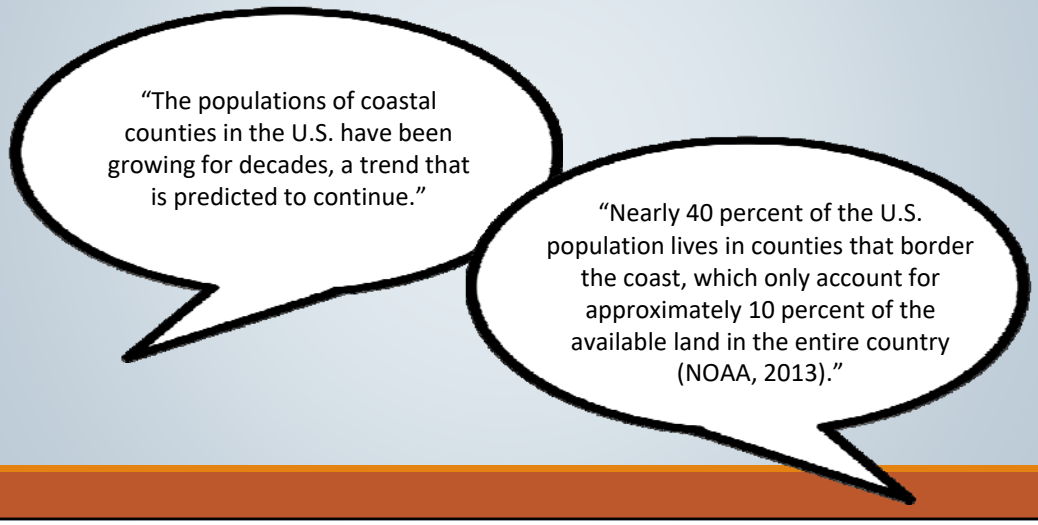
”The program was designed by our organization.”

WRITING A COMPELLING NARRATIVE

The Introduction

- Your first paragraph makes or breaks your proposal.
- The **first sentence** should catch attention.

Which gets your attention?



- Ask yourself, “who cares?” Why is this important?
- Look at your proposed project from the funder’s point of view – why it is important to *them*.
- The opening paragraph provides a framework to explain the problem your research will solve.

- Follow up with a couple of sentences on what is known (a brief sketch - you’ll go into detail later) which should lead to **what we do not know or do not have.**

- Next comes the "needs statement" – state the gap and follow up with something like, "As a result, there is a critical need to…"
- Then briefly explain what happens if we don't fill that need.
- Mention what makes this research **innovative** (details will come later).

Long-term goals and supporting objectives

- Make a tight argument by writing your long-term goal, overall objective, and central hypothesis back-to-back.
- The long-term **goal** should be in clear alignment with the funder's goals.
- The **overall objective** is always to meet the critical need outlined above.
- The **central hypothesis** is your overall sense of what is going on with the phenomenon you wish to research. Your research plan tests this central hypothesis.

Objectives

- Know the difference between a goal and an objective
  - A **goal** is a broad statement about what you want to achieve
  - An **objective** is a *measurable* step you take to get there
- No more than three or four specific objectives/aims
- An objective should be S.M.A.R.T. – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound

S.M.A.R.T.

Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound

S	M	A	R	T
SPECIFIC	**MEASURABLE**	**ACHIEVABLE**	**RELEVANT**	**TIME-BOUND**
State what you will do Use action words	Provide a way to evaluate Use metrics or data targets	You are qualified Possible to accomplish	Makes sense in your field of expertise Will move your field forward in some way	Achievable in the period of the grant You have a timeline with realistic target dates

Make sure goals and objectives are easy to find!
(Subheads are your friends)

Long-term Goal

Our long-term goal is to advance the well-being of broiler chickens slaughtered for the consumption of meat products while addressing the needs of both consumers and producers. Our overall objectives are to identify and evaluate behavioral and physiological factors indicative of broiler chicken well-being during stunning for slaughter and the feasibility of stunning methods based on product quality and economic outcomes. Our central hypothesis is that electrical and CAS stunning methods will result in differing degrees of bird well-being, and that subsequent product quality will impact the economic feasibility of use. This hypothesis is based on our preliminary data indicating physiological differences in birds between stunning methods and on anecdotal evidence if improved meat quality of birds stunned using CAS systems.

Project Objectives

Objective 1: Evaluate well-being of broilers stunned by electrical or carbon-dioxide-controlled atmosphere stunning methods, using behavioral and physiological indicators.

Objective 2: Evaluate the impact of electrical and carbon-dioxide-controlled-atmosphere stunning methods on subsequent carcass and meat quality.

Objective 3: Assess the economic advantages and disadvantages of electrical and carbon-dioxide-controlled atmosphere stunning systems for use in broiler processing facilities.

If you need help on experimental design:

- Once you have determined your hypothesis and objectives, contact Bernardo Chaves-Cordoba, director of statistics teaching and consultant, if you desire help with your experimental design.
- Experimental design includes the layout in the field or lab, the treatment arrangement, database structure, and basic statistical analysis of data.

The Introduction

The RFA/RFP will lay out other information that should be in the Introduction. In a USDA RFP, for example, these are:

- Summary of body of knowledge
- Ongoing/recently completed activities significant to proposed activities
- Preliminary data/information pertinent to proposed project
- Magnitude of issue/relevance to stakeholders
- Stakeholder role in identifying problem and planning, etc.
- Why Auburn?

Three things to remember:

- *Don't skip a section!*
- For USDA, required sections are no longer in the RFP, but they can be found on the NIFA website. NSF requirements are in the PAPPG, and NIH can be found online.
- Tim or I can help you a lot by preparing personalized templates and checklists.

REMEMBER!

- Be a "student" of the RFA - know what the funding agency wants and expects!
- Keep the agency's priorities in mind – look at your research from *their* point of view.
- This is *not* an academic paper. *This is a sales pitch!*
- Step back and ask yourself, "who cares?" Why is this important?
- Your first paragraph will make or break your proposal.
- Write for someone who is knowledgeable but not expert in your field.
- Ask colleagues to read your proposal.

FINALLY

Resubmit!


Vice President for Research and Economic Development
Office of Sponsored Programs
THIS IS TRADITION.
THIS IS SPIRIT.
THIS IS PASSION.
THIS IS AUBURN.
Hogan Ricks, J.D.
Contract and Grants Administrator
334-844-7854 | hcr0022@auburn.edu
540 Devall Drive, Suite 200
www.auburn.edu/osp
ospadmn@auburn.edu
SP
Sponsored
Programs
334.844.4438


Office of Sponsored Programs
• Acquisition and administration of externally funded projects
• Research
• Teaching
• Service
• The only office with the delegated authority to contractually bind the University to such agreements
• Review, endorse, and submits proposal – as needed
• Facilitate award transfers
• Negotiate award terms and conditions
• Accepts awards, signs contracts
• Establish subcontracts for sponsored agreements when needed
• Ginger Phillabaum, MRA and Kim Ford
• subawards@auburn.edu
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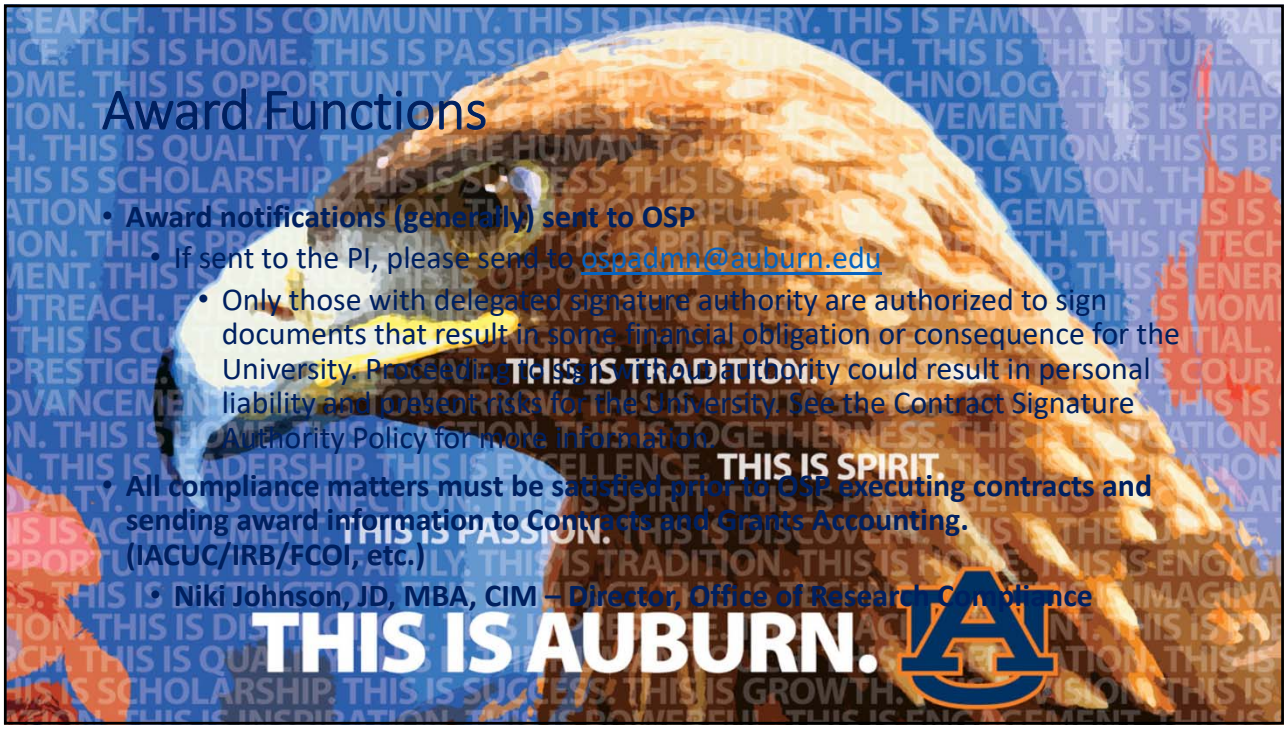
Award Functions
• Award notifications (generally) sent to OSP
• If sent to the PI, please send to ospadmn@auburn.edu
• Only those with delegated signature authority are authorized to sign documents that result in some financial obligation or consequence for the University. Proceeding without such authority could result in personal liability and present risks for the University. See the Contract Signature Authority Policy for more information.
• All compliance matters must be satisfied prior to OSP executing contracts and sending award information to Contracts and Grants Accounting. (IACUC/IRB/FCOI, etc.)
• Niki Johnson, JD, MBA, CIM – Director, Office of Research Compliance
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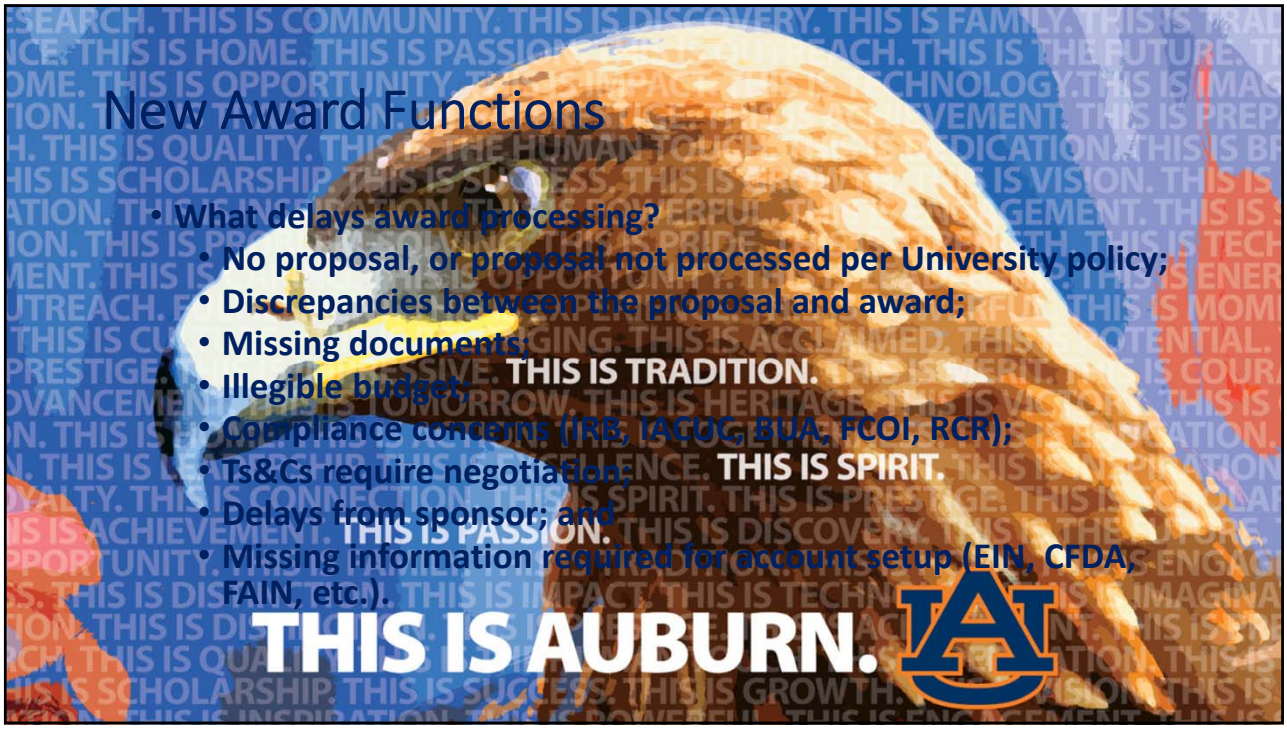
New Award Functions
• What delays award processing?
• No proposal, or proposal not processed per University policy;
• Discrepancies between the proposal and award;
• Missing documents;
• Illegible budget;
• Compliance concerns (IRB, IACUC, BUA, FCOI, RCR);
• Ts&Cs require negotiation;
• Delays from sponsor; and
• Missing information required for account setup (EIN, CFDA, FAIN, etc.).
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Modifications to Existing Award Functions
• What delays processing of modifications?
• Incomplete package;
• The PI receives the mod, but doesn't forward it to his/her accountant for processing;
• Mod is not officially awarded by the sponsor's contracting officer;
• Budget is illegible or contains errors;
• Missing amendment issued by the sponsor.
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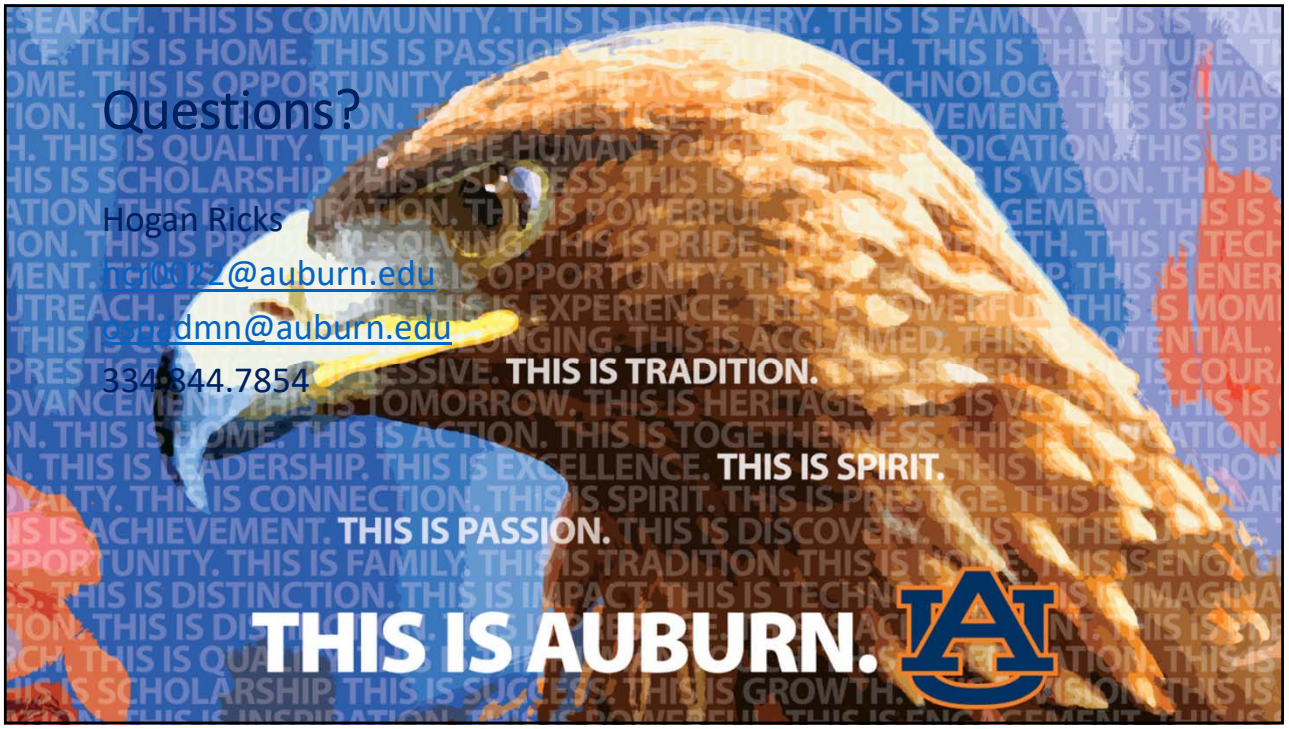
Questions?
Hogan Ricks
hcr0012@auburn.edu
osprodmn@auburn.edu
3348447854
THIS IS TRADITION.
THIS IS SPIRIT.
THIS IS PASSION.
THIS IS AUBURN.