

## Letters of Collaboration for NSF Proposals

**Important NSF Policy:** Unless otherwise specified in the program solicitation, only letters of commitment that follow the recommended format are allowed. Letters of *support*, which provide endorsement of the project and the proposers, are not allowed by NSF. A proposal that includes them will be returned by compliance checkers without the proposal being reviewed.

### **NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide, effective January 29, 2018**

Pp. II-25. Documentation of collaborative arrangements of significance to the proposal through letters of collaboration.

Letters of collaboration should be limited to stating the intent to collaborate and should not contain endorsements or evaluation of the proposed project. The recommended format for letters of collaboration is as follows:

“If the proposal submitted by Dr. [insert the full name of the Principal Investigator] entitled [insert the 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 the *Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources* section of the proposal.”

While letters of collaboration are permitted, unless required by a specific program solicitation, letters of support should not be submitted as they are not a standard component of an NSF proposal. A letter of support is typically from a key stakeholder such as an organization, collaborator or Congressional Representative, and is used to convey a sense of enthusiasm for the project and/or to highlight the qualifications of the PI or co-PI. A letter of support submitted in response to a program solicitation requirement must be unique to the specific proposal submitted and cannot be altered without the author's explicit prior approval. Proposals that contain letters of support not authorized by the program solicitation may be returned without review.

### **Notes from OSP**

- The Letters of Commitment need to work hand-in-hand with the *Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources* document. Give the person signing the letter a copy of the *Facilities* document so they will know what they are signing to commit. Commitments in letters from UVU administrators include such things as space, resources, and especially the time of key personnel that is not being paid by the proposed budget.
- Sometime signatories are concerned about signing a letter that commits to the text of another document. In this case, just put the commitment in the letter (see the Example #2). This is within the range of what NSF will allow and makes the signatory more comfortable. In this case, also include what is being committed to in the *Facilities* document.
- Never put a dollar amount of support in a letter or in the *Facilities* document, either from UVU or a partner, unless approved by OSP (the Program Director of Sponsored Research). This makes this institution auditable for the amount and is not allowed by UVU. It is also not allowed by NSF except in rare cases.
- Since these letters are so specific in their content, it is best if you prepare them for whoever will sign. You should talk with them first about what their organization will commit to so there are no surprises. Then have them review the letter and print it on their letterhead.
- Letters must be printed on letterhead paper of the signer's organization, signed, and scanned as a pdf document. The PI should keep a signed original copy of the letter in the event the proposal is funded and audited. A pdf copy will be submitted with the proposal.

**Example Letter 1 – NSF Letter of Collaboration – from UVU administrator**

V. Celeste Carter,  
ATE Lead Program Director  
The National Science Foundation  
4201 Wilson Boulevard  
Arlington, Virginia 22230

Dear Dr. Carter:

If the proposal submitted by Dr. Paul Weber entitled “Modernizing Instrumentation for Nanotechnology Education” is selected for funding by NSF, it is the intent of the College Science Utah Valley University to collaborate and commit resources as detailed in the *Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources* section of the proposal.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Fairbanks  
Dean, College of Science and Health  
Interim Dean, College of Technology and Computing

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**Example Letter 2 – NSF Letter of Collaboration – from business partner**

Dr. V. Celeste Carter,  
ATE Lead Program Director  
The National Science Foundation  
4201 Wilson Boulevard  
Arlington, Virginia 22230

*Note: In this letter, the company briefly introduces itself. They also state the need they have for training, which was required of the ATE program. Here we included the commitment in the letter instead of the Facilities document.*

Dear Dr. Carter:

Gooch Engineering is a technology-based company focused on research and development and bringing products to commercialization. We develop industrial wireless sensors, home automation, industrial process controls and IIoT (industrial internet of things) Technologies. Our company needs technicians with improved training in metrology and nanotechnology which requires equipment that is currently unavailable at UVU.

If the proposal being submitted by Dr. Paul Weber entitled “Modernizing Instrumentation for Nanotechnology Education” is selected for funding by NSF, it is the intent of Gooch Engineering to collaborate by evaluating the quality of the proposed curriculum and by considering hiring qualified students who successfully complete the training program at UVU

Sincerely,

Name of signatory  
Position of signatory

## Example 1 – Letter of Collaboration

Letterhead

Date

To: The NSF Robert Noyce Scholarship Program

South Sanpete School District (SSSD) is pleased to collaborate with Utah Valley University (UVU) to place Noyce Scholarship recipients who are qualified mathematics and science teachers and/or interns with highly qualified cooperating teachers/mentors in our school district. South Sanpete School District will provide mentors and professional development opportunities for new teachers, as described by state law, and for one additional year in support of this worthwhile program. SSSD will collaborate with UVU science and education faculty to improve pre-service and in-service training, as described in the accompanying proposal.

Sincerely,

Kent Larson  
Superintendent  
South Sanpete School District

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## Example 2 – Institutional Letter of Commitment

Letterhead

Date

To: NSF Major Research Instrumentation (MRI) Program Officer

By signing below, I certify that the College of Science and Health at Utah Valley University will provide support for operations and maintenance for the proposed instrument during the period of the grant and in the longer term. We will also provide support for maintenance contracts for the Bruker maXis™ Ultra High Resolution (UHR-TOF) quadruple Time-of-Flight Mass Spectrometer as described in the attached proposal and budget.

We will also provide space for the equipment in a specially designed room in the new Science Building (SB 161A; 300 sq. ft.) and reduce the teaching load of Matt Bernart and Glendon Parker by 0.2 FTE as budgeted in this proposal. We will encourage the PI, Glendon Parker, to apply for additional funds from intramural sources that, if successful, will allow for more reassigned time on the instrument (up to 0.4 FTE). In addition, we will support the development by the PI of an upper-division protein science course (CHEM 4650) that will make heavy use of this instrument.

We state that Utah Valley University meets the institutional requirements of the MRI program. We are encouraged that a successful proposal will make a significant impact on the learning experience of students at this institution and provide more opportunities for both faculty and students to engage in research.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Fairbanks  
Dean, College of Science and Health

Effective January 29, 2018

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