

Donor-Sponsored Research

From time to time faculty scholarly activities attract the interest of companies or individuals who are inclined to provide financial support of the research. The following guidelines are presented to faculty and academic administrators when considering such gifts, and when providing oversight to the use of gift funds by faculty. Implicit in these considerations is the principle that gift funds become the property of the university and not the faculty member. Further, when made available to faculty these funds are to be used exclusively for university purposes.

It should be stated that in disciplines where traditional extramural sponsorship of research activities is the norm, there is wisdom in the time-tested process of competitive peer review and award of grants and contracts. This process ensures that the proposed work is timely, that the approach is sound, and that the investigators are capable of undertaking the work. Because research and creative activities sponsored by gift funds do not receive that important initial peer review, the scholarship may be vulnerable to negative feedback when it is later exposed to peer review. This can often result in an unpleasant, unproductive research experience for both students and faculty.

Care must be taken in managing donor interest that donors not subject the university to stipulations that would violate tax laws governing the charitable deduction associated with such gifts. Charitable donations to the university in support of scholarly and creative activities may be directed only to project areas; they may not be directed to a specific faculty member. Further, such gifts to the university must carry no expectation or promise of deliverables, written or verbal, implied or explicit. All externally funded research that comes with the expectation of deliverables to the sponsor must be administered by the Office of Research and Creative Activities. Receipt of donor funds must be coordinated by LDS Philanthropies, and will be deposited in a project account under the control and management of the college. These project funds may be subsequently distributed to faculty by the college in consultation with department leadership.

Scholarly activities funded through the traditional external grants/contracts process automatically trigger processes and oversight at the university to ensure compliance with federal regulations. This may include protection of human or animal subjects in the research, and adherence to safety with biological and other hazards, appropriate purchase of equipment, research-related hosting and travel expenditures, protection of intellectual property, *etc.* Further, accounting and audit oversight mechanisms are in place to ensure proper observance of these applicable regulations. When faculty research is funded by other mechanisms, care must be taken to ensure that compliance with such federal regulations is maintained. Additionally, the university has established its own policies governing the appropriate use of accounts that must be followed. The level of scrutiny applied to appropriated and external research funds should also be applied to gift funds. In short, faculty and administrators should manage donor funds with the same level of rigorous accountability as is expected of appropriated or externally-funded research accounts.