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America COMPETES Act Excerpt and NSF Implementation Plan from the Federal Register

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ESENCe:

Ethics in Science and Engineering National Clearinghouse

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is building the prototype for an ethics in science and engineering national clearinghouse (ESENCe). The project is part of the National Science Foundation's response to the America COMPETES Act. It was launched by a team of researchers and experts from the Science, Technology and Society Initiative; the UMass Libraries; the Center for Public Policy; and the National Center for Digital Government. The NSF Office of Integrative Research supports the project (SES 0936857).

This document excerpts relevant sections from the America COMPETES Act and the National Science Foundation's Implementation Plan posted in the Federal Register on August 20, 2009 (Vol. 74, No. 160).

America COMPETES Act (PL NO. 110-69, August 9, 2007)

Section 7008: Postdoctoral Research Fellows

- MENTORING.—The Director shall require that all grant applications that include funding to support postdoctoral researchers include a description of the mentoring activities that will be provided for such individuals, and shall ensure that this part of the application is evaluated under the Foundation's broader impacts merit review criterion. Mentoring activities may include career counseling, training in preparing grant applications, guidance on ways to improve teaching skills, and training in research ethics.

- REPORTS.—The Director shall require that annual reports and the final report for research grants that include funding to support postdoctoral researchers include a description of the mentoring activities provided to such researchers.

Section 7009: Responsible Conduct of Research

The Director shall require that each institution that applies for financial assistance from the Foundation for science and engineering research or education describe in its grant proposal a plan to provide appropriate training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research to undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers participating in the proposed research project.

NSF Implementation Plan from the Federal Register (Vol. 74, No. 160, August 20, 2009)

"Effective January 4, 2010, NSF will require that, at the time of proposal submission to NSF, a proposing institution's Authorized Organizational Representative certify that the institution has a plan to provide appropriate training and oversight in the responsible and ethical conduct of research to undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers who will be supported by NSF to conduct research. While training plans are not required to be included in proposals submitted to NSF, institutions are advised that they are subject to review upon request. NSF will formally implement the new RCR requirement via an update to the NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide (PAPPG). It is anticipated that the revisions to the PAPPG will be issued on October 1, 2009. NSF also will modify its standard award conditions to clearly stipulate that institutions are responsible for verifying that undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers supported by NSF to conduct research have received RCR training. In addition, NSF will support the development of an on-line RCR resource containing research findings, pedagogical materials, and promising practices regarding RCR in science and engineering. The development and evolution of the ongoing online RCR resource will be informed by the research communities that NSF supports, and it will serve as a living resource of multimedia materials that may be used to train current and future generations of scientists and engineers in RCR."

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