UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

October 17, 2008

<u>Guidance for addressing NSF requirement to provide a mentoring plan for post-doctoral fellows</u>

Beginning in January, 2009, all NSF grant applications that include funding support for post-doctoral fellows MUST include a mentoring plan. The specific language of the requirement is:

Chapter II, Section C.2d(i):

> *Each proposal that requests funding to support postdoctoral researchers must include, as a separate section within the 15-page Project Description, a description of the mentoring activities that will be provided for such individuals. Examples of mentoring activities include, but are not limited to: career counseling; training in preparation of grant proposals, publications and presentations; guidance on ways to improve teaching and mentoring skills; guidance on how to effectively collaborate with researchers from diverse backgrounds and disciplinary areas; and training in responsible professional practices. The proposed mentoring activities will be evaluated as part of the merit review process under the Foundation's broader impacts merit review criterion. Proposals that do not include a separate section on mentoring activities within the Project Description will be returned without review.*

The following information is provided to assist you in preparing this section. Be aware that NSF has recommended against the use of 'boilerplate' language and expects that each PI will tailor a mentoring plan best suited to his/her own laboratory and research program. However, we recommend that you address many or all of the following points, and have provided key information and web links to make this easier for you:

1. Post-docs should be encouraged by you to join the <u>University of Washington Postdoctoral Association</u>. In addition you should bring to their attention the University of Washington <u>Office of Post-doctoral Affairs</u> (OPA). The OPA provides services to postdoctoral scholars and to faculty . The OPA works to enhance the learning and the productivity of UW post-docs and offers assistance to both post-docs and their mentors to advance the role and work of postdoctoral scholars on the three UW campuses. The OPA sponsors a variety of activities and events each academic year. For example, the current OPA calendar includes a series of workshops focused on career enhancement:

- August 6, 2008, Developing a Teaching Statement
- September 9, 2008, How to Find and Be a Good Mentor
- November 13, 2008, Scientific Writing
- December 10, 2008, Individual Development Plan
- January 14, 2009, Managing Yourself and Your Lab
- February 19, 2009, Setting Expectations and Conflict Resolution

- May 6, 2009, Revising Dissertations into Books
- June 3, 2009, Beyond Academia: The Art and Science of Job Offer Negotiations
- June 3, 2009, Academic Careers: Navigating the Negotiation Process

The OPA website provides post-docs and mentors ready access to a number of resources on mentoring. For example, there are links to materials provided by the UW Graduate School on Good Practices in Mentoring, Mentoring Resources, and a Faculty Mentoring Handbook, as well as access to information on mentoring available from the National Postdoctoral Association.

2. You should indicate how frequently you meet individually with each post-doc to address the following areas:
   a. discuss research results,
   b. explicitly discuss his/her specific career goals
   c. [weekly, biweekly, monthly] lab meetings, in which post-docs have the opportunity to present and discuss their research with the rest of the laboratory.

3. Indicate if you provide travel support for post-docs to attend regional, national, and/or international scientific meetings to facilitate their training and to provide networking opportunities.

4. Indicate that you encourage/require your post-docs to attend relevant seminars and workshops on the "Responsible Conduct of Research" (RCoR). The OPA website provides a listing of seminars, publications and other relevant materials that address RCoR.   Examples you could list include the UW Department of Bioethics and Humanities sponsored program entitled "Biomedical Research Integrity" (BRI) that explicitly addresses important issues of research integrity and research ethics. The BRI program was designed to meet the PHS requirement for instruction in the Responsible Conduct of Research in National Research Service Award Institutional Training Grants (NIH Guide, 1994), but is open to NSF fellows as well. The program annually covers the following topics: a) Conflict of interest, b) Data acquisition and ownership c) Peer review, d) Responsible authorship and e) Research misconduct. The BRI website provides links to local and national policies, sample cases with discussion, and current articles. Attendance at required lectures and discussion sections is recorded and subject to PHS review. Attendance is also reported to department chairs and Principal Investigators to monitor their trainees' participation. As noted above, the program is now available to NSF post-doctoral trainees.

5. If relevant, you should also indicate that you require your post-docs to attend training programs that address ethical and safety issues related to Human Subjects research and use of laboratory animals. The UW provides both 'in person' and/or web-based training modules for human subjects and animal use training requirements.

6. If your post-doc is interested in pursuing an academic career, you should help him/her identify workshops on grant proposal preparation, and/or register for class that offer training in proposal preparation. Such workshops are periodically offered through the School of Medicine and/or UW Libraries through the Research Funding Service.