MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty and Administrators

FROM: Austin Choi-Fitzpatrick
Associate Provost for Research and Administration

DATE: October 20, 2026

RE: Research Policy & Compliance Update, 2026: New Training and Expanded Support

---

As the University of San Diego enters its ninth year as an R2 institution, and as the Provost's Office develops a Research Strategy aligned with the University's strategic plan, we continue to invest in the systems that support sponsored research. This annual memo outlines critical updates, expanded institutional resources, and mandatory expectations designed to sustain our research growth.

This year brings a new IRB team, an expanded research team adding two Provost Research Fellows, and enhanced pre- and post-award support through the Grant Development Program (GDP), Ignite Program, New PI Training, and Sponsored Programs Lifecycle Support (SPLS).

As always, our sustained growth depends on a shared practice: every grant and contract goes through the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP), beginning with the Proposal Intake Form and arriving with enough time to be completed correctly.

NEW POLICIES AND ACTION ITEMS

1. **USD | New PI Training:** *External Funding Essentials* is a new training designed to orient new principal investigators to USD's processes. Available on Canvas, this training is required of all Lead PI's prior to routing a proposal through OSP. The course takes approximately 45 minutes and can be found on OSP's website here.
2. **Federal | Research Security Training:** Federal policy now requires completion of *Research Security Training* (RST). This requirement applies to PIs and senior/key personnel, must be renewed annually and must be completed within 12 months of each proposal submission. USD has partnered with CITI to provide this training, which can be accessed here.
3. **Federal | Research Misconduct Policy:** USD's Research Misconduct Policy 2.7.1 has been updated to reflect new Federal policy changes. These updates modernize our system to reflect the contemporary research environment—expanding digital data, multi-institution projects, and new technologies—while clarifying definitions, timelines, and institutional responsibilities.

4. **USD | AI in Proposal Preparation:** It is the sole responsibility of the Principal Investigator (PI) to carefully review the specific Request for Proposals (RFP) for any agency or program guidance regarding AI use prior to submission.
5. **USD | Preventing After-the-Fact Awards:** USD has experienced an increase in awarded proposals bypassing OSP. These after-the-fact awards delay award setup, slow down spending, and can put the award itself at risk. Remember to complete the Proposal Intake Form as early as possible.

EXPANDED FACULTY SUPPORT SERVICES

6. **USD | New IRB Team:** The Institutional Review Board is supported by a new human subjects team: Dr. Marcus Lam (Faculty Analyst) and Emilio Esparza (IRB Coordinator). The team is focused on streamlined processes, operational efficiency, and customer service. If human subjects research is part of an external proposal, note that some sponsors require evidence of IRB approval before an award is issued, and IRB review can take up to 30 days (learn more here).
7. **USD | Enhanced Pre-Award Programming:** OSP is working closely with the Provost's Office in their expansion of pre-award programming. This includes the Grant Development Program (GDP), Ignite Research Fund (facilitating interdisciplinary proposals for GDP), and two newly appointed Provost Research Fellows who are building programming for grant and external funding proposal development.
8. **USD | Enhanced Post-Award Programming:** USD's Sponsored Programs Lifecycle Support (SPLS) team gathers post-award departments for monthly Zoom meetings to support PIs. The meetings are sponsored by the Provost's Office and hosted by OSP. Watch your email for the monthly invitation and RSVP there.

REMINDER OF CORE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

9. **USD | Routing Timeline:** Have all required documents ready for Cayuse routing at least two weeks before the submission deadline. Four weeks is recommended for Federal or multi-unit proposals. Work with OSP early to identify the documents your proposal needs. Full timelines can be viewed here.
10. **USD | Routing Requirement:** Proposals may not be submitted until Cayuse routing is complete and all required internal approvals are secured.

Please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs at research@sandiego.edu or me at caustin@sandiego.edu with any questions.