**Requests for “Voluntary Matching” Support from the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research**

**April 2014**

A voluntary match is one that is not required in order to submit a proposal (that is, is not in the proposal submission guidelines). Typically a program officer may suggest that a voluntary match would make the proposal more competitive – but this does not mean that a proposal cannot be successful without a match.

Guidance from the recent OMB super circular states

“**Cost Sharing**

*Voluntary committed cost sharing is not expected under federal research proposals. Further, it "cannot be used as a factor during the merit review of applications or proposals, but may be considered if it is both in accordance with federal awarding agency regulations and specified in a notice of funding opportunity."*

*Only mandatory cost sharing or cost sharing specifically submitted in the project budget will be included in the organized research base for computing indirect (F&A) costs for research projects*.”

As with required matches, if you would like to ask for voluntary matching support for a proposal you must make the request sufficiently early in the process for full consideration. The larger the requested match, the earlier the request should be made – but requests must be made at least a week in advance.

* As much as possible of the match should be “in kind”. Check to see if a waiver of indirect cost charges on the matching funds can be counted as part of the match.
* Requests must be accompanied by a draft of the budget to be submitted to the funder.
* Requests must be accompanied by an outline of the matching support that will come from the unit and college. You should first ask for unit support and then for support from the college (in A&S please contact the Associate Dean of your division, in Engineering please contact the Associate Dean for Research). If there is no unit or college matching support in evidence, it is unlikely that you will get any matching funds from the campus.

Since the request is for a voluntary match, you must include an explanation as to why the situation is sufficiently unique to qualify for voluntary matching support (it is insufficient to say only that the funds will make your proposal more competitive; you must explain how supporting the request will benefit the campus).

There is no defined split for voluntary requests among the unit/college/campus; however, at least 1/3 of the match should usually come at the unit level. Additional limitations may be placed on the college and campus contributions depending on the details of the request. If the match can be covered by the unit’s share of the indirect cost recovery, then these funds should be the primary source of the match. Requests for support for equipment that can be used by other faculty members or for other projects are preferred to requests for salary support.

Once a grant has been awarded, requests should not be made for “matching” support funds to compensate for a reduced scope of funding. A reduced amount of funding should be addressed by reducing the scope of work.