

# The University Senate of Michigan Technological University

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## PROPOSAL 19-03

### CHANGING PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS ON FUNDED RESEARCH PROJECTS

#### Motivation For Guidelines (meet requirements of sponsors):

Grant/contract awards are made to the university, rather than to individuals. Recently, there have been situations where a PI has taken a leave of absence due to personal or other reasons and this has caused concern for appropriate administration with the sponsor (meeting the requirements of the grant/contract). Presently there is no guideline/procedure addressing the change in Principal Investigator (PI) status on externally funded research grants/contracts for the following situations: PI takes a short-term leave of absence (< three months), PI takes a long-term leave of absence or PI leaves the University, and PI and the University a) transfer the project to another university, institution, or private company, b) appoint a new PI, or c) terminate the project. Consequently, there is a need to develop guidelines for Research & Sponsored Programs to follow in these types of situations.

#### Guidelines

It is up to the PI to provide Research & Sponsored Programs with a written letter of notification, signed by the department chair, explaining the changes in status and direction of a research project. Research & Sponsored Programs will investigate the sponsor's requirement for the specific situation and negotiate the appropriate changes with the sponsor. Specific cases are discussed below.

#### Short-term leave of absence

The PI can usually take a leave of absence up to three months (90 days) without a sponsor requiring a replacement. In most cases, if a sponsor requires that an alternate PI is named for shorter absences, then the procedures under "Long-term leave of absence" will be followed. The PI must still inform Research & Sponsored Programs as stated above so that the University and the sponsor can take the necessary steps to ensure the project continues to progress.

#### Long-term leave of absence

For an absence over three months (e.g., a sabbatical/professional/personal/medical leave of absence) an interim PI may be required by a sponsor. The letter to the sponsor must include a justification and description of the substitute's qualifications and be authorized with a Request of Modification form through Research & Sponsored Programs. Research & Sponsored Programs will prepare the letter to the sponsor. The PI must also provide written notification to any compliance committees.

#### If the PI leaves the University

- When a supervisor receives a letter of resignation, the sponsor of any research for which that person is PI must be notified and receive a plan from MTU regarding project continuation. This normally means transferring the project to a new institution, replacing the PI, or terminating the project.

- If the PI is leaving the University to go to another institution, MTU can request to transfer an externally funded project even though the project is awarded to the University (sponsor approvals are required). The University may allow transfer of the project to the PI's new workplace if the sponsor and the new institution agree. A sponsor's guidelines may vary regarding the transfer of a project and equipment to a new institution, and guidelines specific to the transfer can be obtained from Research & Sponsored Programs.

The process of transfer begins with the written PI notification of resignation. A Request for Modification form is submitted to Research & Sponsored Programs describing his/her intention to leave the University and his/her desire to continue the project at another institution. This Request for Modification should include a conservative estimate of the dollar amount to be transferred, and must identify equipment to be transferred. The Request for Modification Form must be signed by the PI, the department chair, and dean (if required by policy), and forwarded to Research & Sponsored Programs. If MTU Co-PI's are involved, they should approve of the transfer.

The sponsor will begin procedures to close out the project at the University with Research & Sponsored Programs. The sponsor will also inform the PI of the steps necessary to reissue the award to a new institution. In some instances the process may require a new, competitive application submitted on behalf of the PI by the new institution.

The transfer of equipment procedures can be found at [http://www.admin.mtu.edu/admin/procman/ch2/ch2p115.htm#sponsor\\_transfer](http://www.admin.mtu.edu/admin/procman/ch2/ch2p115.htm#sponsor_transfer).

- If a new PI is appointed:

The University may elect to request that a new PI be named for a funded project (sponsor approval is required). This requires the approval of the new PI; it may be appropriate to issue a subcontract to the original PI's new institution (sponsor approval is required). A plan should be submitted to Research & Sponsored Programs as early as possible to insure timely completion of the process; Research & Sponsored Programs will communicate with the sponsor and the new institution (if appropriate).

- If the project is terminated:

The University, in consultation with the original PI, Co-PI's, department chair(s) and dean(s) may choose to terminate a project if it cannot be transferred to a new institution, if there is no appropriate and willing substitute PI, or for other reasons. If this is the case, Research & Sponsored Programs will transmit the request to the sponsor.

**Adopted by Senate: 10 September 2003**