MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Directors, and Department Heads

FROM: Jennifer Easley
Director, Sponsored Programs Administration

DATE: March 25, 2014

RE: Routing of Pre-proposals through SPA

As more sponsors are beginning to require pre-proposals prior to submission of a full proposal, we are receiving many questions on when our office should be involved in the submission of a pre-proposal. Our desire is to simplify the proposal submission process wherever feasible, and so the purpose of this memo is to provide clarification on when a pre-proposal should be submitted through our office or when it can be submitted directly to a potential sponsor. For further guidance on proposal submissions in general, please refer to MSU OP 70.01.

Pre-proposals (also referred to as informal proposals, letter proposals, mini-proposals, preliminary proposals, pre-applications, concept papers, or white papers) are brief descriptions of research plans, which may or may not include an estimate or brief budget. These pre-proposals may be submitted to sponsors per their program guidelines, or may be investigator-initiated to determine the interest of a particular sponsor in funding a proposed project. These submissions generally occur prior to the submission of a formal proposal.

In many cases a pre-proposal can be submitted directly to the sponsor without going through Sponsored Programs Administration. A pre-proposal should be routed through SPA, along with an Internal Approval Sheet (IAS) in cases where:

1) A detailed budget is submitted with the pre-proposal,
2) MSU is committing cost share or matching on the project,
3) The sponsor requires the Authorized Organizational Representative’s signature,
4) The sponsor requires submission through a portal or system via which only SPA can submit, or
5) Institutional certifications or assurances are required.

We hope this memo has provided clarification. Please contact us if you have questions or need further guidance.