

Transcript for the S-STEM Webinar for 7/21/2015

Welcome everyone and thank you for standing by. At this time all participants are listen only mode until the Q&A portion, and at that time you may press*100 touchtone phone. Today's conference is being recorded and if you have any objections you may now disconnect. I will now turn this over to Mr. Kevin Lee, you may begin.

[Slide 1 – S-STEM 15-581]

Good afternoon, welcome to the S-STEM NSF Scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics webinar. The goal of today's information materials is to help you create a high-quality proposal. Note we have called this a "flipped" webinar because in our presentation today, the format will imitate that of the a flipped classroom. All the materials that we are presenting will be in response to NSF (15-581) the new solicitation for S-STEM, which has been out almost a month at this point.

[Slide 2 - Presenters]

My name is Kevin Lee, I am an NSF rotator in physics and astronomy from the university of Nebraska. I am finishing up my first year in the S-STEM program and with me is John Krupczak who is a rotator in engineering from Hope College in Michigan who is finishing up his second year in S-STEM, and also with me is Connie Della-Piana who is a permanent officer and the lead program officer of the S-STEM program.

[Slide 3 - Agenda]

The goal of our "Flipped" Webinar today is to help you create or craft high-quality strong proposals. We will start with a short PowerPoint will help you gain the big picture of S-STEM. The reason that we call this a flipped format is because there are seven narrated presentations on our website which provide a much longer winded version of the S-STEM program. And even there we do not delve and every possible detail, but focus more on the overarching concepts like Strands. We know a lot of you have had the opportunity to look at those presentations beforehand and we are hopeful that you were thinking of questions that might pertain to your own projects while watching these PowerPoints. After about half an hour presentation will break into Q&A and allow you the opportunity to ask your own specific questions.

Another resource that will be coming your way shortly is a frequently asked questions document that will basically pose 69 questions and our answers and we expect this to be on the website by the end of the week. It has already been approved by management here NSF and we just need to get it posted. These are questions with typed up responses and also pointers into the solicitation and grant proposal guide on the relevant sections to find these answers. They are a mixture of questions that we anticipate and also ones that have come in by email very recently.

[Slide 4 - Goals]

So here are some key themes to keep in mind regarding the S-STEM program. Our main goal is to increase the recruitment, retention, student success, and graduation of low income academically talented students in STEM. We want students to become part of the workforce and to do so with their degree in hand. Another goal is to implement and study models,

effective practices, and strategies that contribute to success in STEM. And lastly, to contribute to the implementation and sustainability of effective curricular and co-curricular activities within STEM education. And by effective we mean evidenced-based practices. Most of the things that you implement, should have been written up in the educational literature and have their effectiveness be well-documented. Now these curricular activities can either be core curriculum, professional development activities, or workforce development. We encourage all of you to develop innovative solutions that are based on these, or some combination of these, that work and that other institutions will want to emulate.

[Slide 5 – Core Purpose]

Again, the core purpose of S-STEM is to improve the S-STEM workforce of our nation by increasing the number of students who graduate with S-STEM degrees. These can be associate degrees, undergraduate degrees, or graduate degrees. We want to increase the number of students entering the workforce that have that degree in hand so they can have a bigger impact on the workforce. Now, S-STEM accomplishes this mainly by providing scholarships for academically talented, low income students with demonstrated financial need.

Another key aspect of this program is to inform the STEM education community about what works and how other institutions can implement effective practices.

[Slide 6 – Key Themes]

One last page of overarching goals, our main goal again is STEM degree completion. We want students to have degree in hand and move out into the workforce, and again these can be associate, undergraduate, or graduate degrees. Students should be academically talented or have academic promise and potential -- and this is defined by you, the institution. We want institutions to define academic potential, and to recognize it, and promote it in students.

Now the low income with demonstrated financial need part is determined by the FASFA form which is a standard procedure that would be recognized by your financial aid office. Lastly the program should be evidence-based and evidence-generating. We want to learn about and contribute to the knowledge base of how best to use scholarships and get students graduating with STEM degrees.

[Slide 7 – Proposal Categories]

Let's look a little bit at S-STEM proposal categories -- the three different ways to submit a proposal. Note there are no logical progressions or required progression between these different proposals. For example, you do not have to have had a strand 2 proposal or have a Strand 1 previously to get a Strand 2 proposal. Strand 1 proposals are called institutional capacity building with \$650,000 maximum for a maximum of five years. These are intended for institutions with less experience with NSF awards. We want to bring in new institutions that have not been widely involved with S-STEM previously. Possibly another way to say this is that for institutions that cannot quite generate the "horsepower" to fit into Strand 2 where the research is going to be more complex.

Strand 2 is entitled S-STEM Design and Development. These are intended for institutions with some experience with S-STEM or possibly STEP, or CSEMS, or IUUSE – but have some experience with NSF grants previously. Type one single institution grants are capped at \$1 million for a maximum duration of five years. So the complexity of the support structures and

the research associated with them, are expected to be more complex here, more in-depth, requiring greater resources.

Or last category is called type II multi-institution. These have a maximum of \$5 million over a duration of five years. And basically this allows for several institutions to collaborate and take advantage of economy of scale by sharing resources. We anticipate that the institutions that are collaborating envision some common challenge that is affecting all of them that they can work together on.

Note the monetary amounts mentioned here are maximums. Most institutions will not ask for the maximum and I think it is important that you want to be under the maximum. But you also want to effectively justify why you need the funding that you have asked for the type of project you are doing.

[Slide 8 – The New S-STEM Program]

So no matter which Strand you are submitting to, at least 60% of the funds must be used for scholarships. And this is 60% of the total amount requested. So up to 40% of funds may be used for other things like support structures, research, recruitment, etc. So why the 60/40 division of funds? Why not 100%? It is because we've learned that scholarships are necessary to see students complete degrees and enter the workforce, but they are not enough. They are a necessary but not a sufficient condition to have students complete degrees. Student support structures are needed -- structures like tutoring, mentoring, research experiences, a variety of combinations are possible. But we also want you to do a more systematic determination -- incorporating testing, evaluation, and research about these support structures -- to actually determine what is most useful to help students complete degrees.

And previously in S-STEM there were not sufficient resources to study these questions. But the new solicitation allows a systematic determination of what support structures will work best and disseminate lessons learned to the broader education community.

[Slide 9 – Student Outcomes]

So let me mention a few key student outcomes and we expect every student who has received a S-STEM scholarship to meet one of these. The first one is to receive a degree in one of the S-STEM disciplines supported by our program. There is a list of specific STEM disciplines supported, given in the solicitation.

The second is to transfer from an associate to an undergraduate program or from an undergraduate to a graduate program. And we think that most institutions will be in these first two bins. Either to get a degree or transfer and again students transferring will typically be getting a degree and entering the workforce of a later date with a higher power degree.

A third possibility, which we envision being more infrequent, is to successfully overcome one or more of an institution's self-identified attrition points. So if there is a particular course that is very difficult, a real hurdle to getting students to graduation, possibly identifying it and targeting support mechanisms to get students through the course would be an appropriate outcome.

[Slide 10 – Cohorts/Mentors]

Additionally, let me mention that all programs are required to provide two features. They are required to provide faculty mentors for S-STEM scholars and to provide a cohort experience for the scholarship recipients. Now we've learned that most of our successful S-STEM scholarships really involve both faculty members or mentors and cohorts, where a cohort is simply a group of students who in some way naturally associate. It is certainly possible to have students who are not scholarship recipients participating within a cohort. They just do not meet the requirement of academically talented and having financial need, but they are certainly able to take advantage of the support structures provided by S-STEM. We encourage you to take data on these non-scholarship students participation in your support structures and let us know about it in annual and final reports. Again it is very useful information for us to figure out how well support structures are working. So your project plan should include activities to establish relationships between students in a cohort and also between students and the faculty members. We want your program to foster these relationships.

[Slide 11 – Institutional Needs]

Let me briefly mention institutional needs. Our experience has shown that the most effective programs are well-aligned with the unique needs at a University, or well-aligned with unique opportunity and taking advantage of them at a University.

Encourage efforts that are focused on well-documented institutional needs or concerns. We strongly encourage proposals to build on completed needs analysis or institutional scans. So rather than submitting a generic proposal, use your understanding of the local situation. There is an awful lot of variation in circumstances among institutions. Know your own circumstances and local needs and craft your proposal to take advantage of the unique needs and take advantage of your unique opportunities.

[Slide 12 – Evidence Based]

Note that we want the support structures for your project to implement, adapt, and study highly effective curricular and co-curricular activities and professional development activities. These activities should be tailored to your students, your STEM faculty, and different types of institutional challenges that you face. Know what has been done before! We don't want programs to reinvent the wheel. You need to know what has been successful and where there are difficulties through an understanding the relevant literature. We don't want people starting from scratch and reinventing the wheel. So note that we use words like adapt or modify. We do not want people creating support structures, really designing from scratch the materials for their students. Please make very good use of the STEM literature, know that materials that are out there and modify and adapt these materials to meet your own needs at your own institution. Here is another area in which S-STEM really has changed, because previously there were not sufficient resources to demonstrate findings you could have regarding the effectiveness of your support structures. These things have changed as well. The new solicitation allows you to study and also demonstrate what you have learned from that study. You might think of this as some type of a fully closed cycle -- where you learn about what is out there in the educational literature, you implement in some way that is particularly fashioned for your students, then you further learn about how it works with your students in your situation, and then funnel that information back into the educational literature. You really have a full cycle of learning about reporting the use of scholarships to help students graduate.

[Slide 13 – Management Team]

Let me make a few comments about the management teams, and again these people can be PI's, co-PIs, or senior personnel. But each team must have a minimum of three members and we need one member from each of these three areas.

First we need a member that brings in S-STEM disciplinary expertise. They are a faculty member currently teaching in one of the S-STEM disciplines.

The second member of the management team must be or must be a STEM administrator. This is someone who is going to help you communicate across functional units of the institution. Now note this person does not have to be a STEM person, but they need to know about STEM. So the administrator is typically in a position like director of a teaching and learning center, or director of admissions, a financial aid officer, part of student services. Again they are not specifically focused on STEM students but they are helping a large variety of students, among which some are STEM students. This is somebody who can get things done! They will be familiar with the structure of the University and will help you guide information (or pass information) across higher levels of the University.

Our last management team member is either a general education person, or a discipline-based education person, or a researcher in social science, or somebody who works on transformational change of institutions. This is typically the researcher who will guide your study on support structures.

Again, your team should be a minimum of three members in these areas, but certainly can include more people. You ultimately want a cohesive package of expertise appropriate for what you are trying to accomplish.

Now one question we commonly get on this page is -- can the evaluator be a co-PI? The answer is no! The evaluator will look at the results of a program and see how well what we have accomplished aligns with what we proposed to do as goals. To really do that in an unbiased way, you want have some distance from the management team. The evaluator should NOT be a co-PI.

[Slide 14 - Deadlines]

So note there are two separate deadline dates mentioned in this recent solicitation -- September 22 and May 16 of next year. So there are two opportunities this year to submit proposals. And both are full submission opportunities where all strands are possible.

We expect the proposals submitted on the September 22nd day date will be processed in time for May 16. So if you do submit a proposal on September 22 and it is declined, you will get feedback that you can incorporate in an even better proposal and resubmit it for May 16. Again that is what we expect to happen.

The goal here is we're trying to redistribute our proposal processing responsibilities evenly throughout the year and one aspect of this is moving S-STEM into the spring. So we expect that future S-STEM solicitations will only have one deadline date and it will be held in the spring.

[Slide 15 – Research Participation Stipends]

Let me turn things over to my colleague John Krupczak and he can talk to you a little bit about research participation.

Thanks Kevin. I am going to talk a little bit about some potentially confusing aspects of the new S-STEM program and clarify ahead of time some issues to help you as you are preparing your proposal. The first issue is research participation stipends. The new solicitation, NSF 15-581, allows projects to provide monetary stipends for research participation for students.

These stipends are to be considered as separate from scholarship, so the stipends are not the same as scholarships. If the project elects to include research participation as part of your overall student support plan, the stipends should be paid from the 40% of the non-scholarship portion of the budget. These are allowed, but they are not counted as scholarships. I will work for a few examples about how you would include this in the budget, and the purpose is to avoid some potentially confusing aspects as you are preparing your proposal.

Working in fastlane, if you are deciding to provide research stipends, this would need to appear on line F1 of the standard NSF budget sheet within fast lane. Let's take a look at that.

[Slide 16 – line F.1]

This is just an example. Suppose that you are envisioning a particular budget year in your project and \$100,000 would be allocated towards scholarships. In your mix of student support activities are going to have research participation stipends, \$20,000 in this particular budget year.

This is a potentially confusing part. To enter that into the budget, you add the \$100,000 to the \$20,000 and get \$120,000. This goes on line F1 of the standard NSF budget sheet within Fastlane. We know it is confusing. It says stipends there on line F1. The direction is to add the scholarships to the stipend amount and enter it on to line F1. Within your budget justification, then you need to explain that the \$100,000 for scholarships is counting towards your 60% total allocation to scholarships, and the \$20,000 in this example are stipends for research participation. This counts towards the 40% of the non-scholarship funds.

The reason for is bringing this up in this flipped webinar is we record as this is a potential area of confusion and we want to try to get the word out as to how research participation stipends (which are allowed) can be included in the budget.

[Slide 17 – In grants.gov E.2]

To make matters even more confusing, if you are one of the few who happens to use grants.gov, the budget lines are different. So let's go to that option.

If you are submitting your proposals in grants.gov, the relevant budget line is E.2. So in grants.gov, the budget category for participant support costs (into which the stipends and scholarships and go) is section E. The combined total goes on line 2. In this example you have \$100,000 in scholarships, \$20,000 in stipends, you add these together to get \$120,000 and that goes online E.2, if you happen to be working in grants.gov.

[Slide 18 – Strand and Type: Fastlane]

One other important, but potentially confusing issue and we want to make a point of it in this webinar, is the question of identifying the strand and type. Kevin has been discussing the various strands, and has given me the hard part. He has done the easy stuff that has asked me to do the hard stuff on how to avoid making mistakes. So thanks Kevin. Next webinar we're going to flip.

OK -- the two Strands and Strand 2 has two types. Where does this go? It is very important that you get this information included in your proposal, so that it can be routed efficiently to the appropriate group. Working in Fastlane, which I believe most of you are when submitting the proposal, the Strand and the type are included in the project data form. We know this is confusing. It is not on the cover sheet. It is on the project data form. What we are looking at here on the PowerPoint is the main page of Fastlane if you happen to be preparing a proposal. The little gray button on the right side says project data form.

[Slide 19 – Strand and Type: Fastlane 2]

At some point, you will click that. And that will show you the option to enter the program track. If you select the drop-down, you will see the three's choices: Broadening participation in institutional capacity, strand 1, and then Strand 2 and the two types. Select that, close the form, and you're good.

The final, potentially confusing issue here. Those of you working in grants.gov will have to do something a little different. What I just described was people submitting proposals within Fastlane using the new project data form to enter your Strand type.

[Slide 20 – Strand and Type: Grants.gov]

If you're working in grants.gov, there is no equivalent to the project data form in Fastlane. What you need to do is submit your proposal in grants.gov. Grants.gov requires that you sit through a brief waiting period while it does whatever it is going to do to your submission. And then you actually have to go into Fastlane and open your proposal there and fill out the project proposal form within Fastlane. Again this is a potentially confusing aspect which is why we're mentioning it in the webinar. If you are using grants.gov, fill out your proposal, submit it, get a flag from grants.gov, take that, and you go into Fastlane and then you fill out your project data form. This will help us to make sure that your proposal is efficiently allocated into the review process with the Strand and type you envision.

[Slide 21 – Proposal Checklist]

Now I will pass things back over to Kevin.

Let me draw your attention to a late breaking opportunity called the generic proposal preparation checklist. This checklist is a tool to make sure that you haven't forgotten anything when submitting a proposal. Again, very small errors there can cause long delays or to actually have your proposal returned without review. Note that on the bottom of the page there are three checkboxes shown. It turns out this goes down quite a ways and there are 48 things it asks you to check and make sure that you have done to your proposal. We consider this a very good thing for both experienced PIs and new PIs to use. No matter how experienced you

are, there are a very large number things to remember with a proposal, and this tool will help you accomplish that.

[Slide 22 – Summary]

Let me summarize some of the key themes we talked about today. So S-STEM is very much about degree completion. We want students with degrees to go out into the workforce and improve our nation's workforce within the STEM areas to ensure global competitiveness. We want our scholarship recipients to have academic talent and also to a demonstrated financial need. And lastly, we want our S-STEM programs to create support structures that are evidence-based and evidence-generating and based on the unique needs and capabilities of their institutions.

[Slide 23 – Final Thoughts]

So some final thoughts, we encourage you to develop innovative implementations based on the themes that work and you will find this out in the educational literature. Adapt, combine, and adjust things, don't invent them, to work for the particular problems at you university. Come up with inspiring solutions and disseminate and get the word out, so other institutions can build upon your work.

[Slide 24 – S-STEM Team]

On the half of the S-STEM team I do want to thank you, and this is about two-thirds of the S-STEM team. Let me bring in our operator again and ask if you have any questions for the three of us to address for your particular projects.

[Slide 25 – Questions]

At this time if you would like to ask a question please press star one on your touchtone phone, take phone off of mute and record your name when prompted, you may remove yourself by pressing star two. If you like to ask a question please press star and then one at this time. One moment please for our first question.

[Question 1]

Your first question comes from Helen. Your line is open.

Hello. Hello and please go ahead.

I just have a couple of questions. I know that the first filter is to demonstrate or to select a cohort to demonstrate the need using the FAFSA and the second is they have to be academically talented. Can we install their third is gender specific or ethnicity specific?

No you can't! To get scholarships students just have to be those first two: academically talented and have financial need. Again, NSF values improving diversity just like you do. But the way that you can accomplish that within S-STEM is to recruit from a very broad group of people. It is very common for programs to recruit in certain specific ways to try and improve the diversity of their applicant pool. But anybody who meets the requirements of your pool, again there are just those first two criteria.

Okay. Am I allowed to ask a second question at this point? Sure, go ahead.

I am planning to submit the proposal on behalf of the College of Engineering at our university. Do you prefer the major or area of engineering specific like civil engineering or biomedical engineering? Or can it just be the general engineering program as a whole?

Hello this is John Krupczak speaking. There is a no preference for any particular field or area of engineering. The key point is that you are preparing a coherent project and that your students will be undergoing a cohort experience as part of all of the other areas of S-STEM, there is no bias in favor of say the particular field of engineering.

That cohort can be a mix of different engineering fields?

It can be mixed, but it is up to you to show that it is a true cohort versus students from a diversity of majors that are in the same room for a while.

I have got it. You prefer the cohort to have that experience all through the four years of their college years? That is preferred, or required?

Right. What's important is that the students complete degree and graduate and receive various types of academic support and get the support they need to keep complete the degrees. Generally speaking, the cohort that will persist through the entire program, well, the students may not. You can't ensure that any particular student will remain in the cohort in case they leave for example. But your project should maintain the cohort for the entire duration of the project.

Okay. And last question, does the flipped webinar PowerPoint going to be online as well?

Yes it will be. We hope to get a transcript up of the dialogue we're having as well .

Am I the only attendant? No, I show 64 of you right now.

I will stop asking questions. Thank you. Your next question.

[Question 2]

I am at the University of Washington. I have a question about requiring participation versus having everything be optional, because this is primarily a scholarship program. The support services you're going to provide are purely academic, how do we balance that? We do not want students picking and choosing to attend math workshops when they feel like it. Could you please address that? Thank you.

Hello, this is Connie. Hello.

So in terms of requiring particular activities, one of the things that we don't want folks to perceive is that students are doing something to get the scholarships. What we really want to show is that the institution has made an argument for students to participate in these activities and that I think in terms of requiring them, I think that in my mind is up to the institution. We only have two requirements they are in a cohort and have mentors.

So you make the argument for those and that becomes part of your program.

It is mentioned in the solicitation that there should be some allowances for reasonable absences, recognizing that the academic support, if students do not attend regularly, and they pick and choose, it starts to lose its impact. On the other hand, students have other things come up, they may have family responsibilities so the programs need to strike a balance between mandatory attendance in the other. [Indiscernible-low volume] mentioned in the solicitation is the program should be aware that the students have a variety of things going on and should not overload their schedules with activities. It is tempting to start creating long lists of activities the students will be compelled to attend. It loses its effectiveness because the students do not have sufficient time to do their other interests. That is something that the reviewers watch for as far as appropriate balance.

[Silence] Thank you. Next question, the line is open.

[Question 3]

Hello. I just want to let you know I have only video but no audio on the computer. I finally called in. But anyway, I do have four questions and I will try to make it fast. In the previous S-STEM, you had less than 5% allocated for management. But I see no restrictions in this grant, Am I correct?

And has to fall within 40%, everything that is non-scholarship, including the administration and management has to be less than 40% of the total.

And the second question is you talked about evaluators. Do they have to be external evaluators, or can they be someone from the campus?

They can be someone from the campus. But they have to be independent, third parties.

OK can you give me an example?

That could be someone from your teaching and learning center, there could be a faculty member in the social sciences or educational psychology, or education. Some folks are also in the public administration program. So those folks are eligible. You can also talk to someone in your office of institutional research to see if they have appropriate evaluation background.

Okay thank you. And if the grant is approved when is funding going to happen in the fall of next year?

6 months is a general reasonable rule of thumb.

I am sorry I cannot hear you.

Six months would be a reasonable timeframe in which to hear. But you can specify in your proposal what you would like to start date to be.

OK. Could you give me examples for direct and indirect costs ?

Again, indirect costs are something that is added by your institution for like the support of buildings, overhead costs, things like that.

It would be best to work with your sponsored research office because there is a set rate, the institution has made an agreement with the federal government in terms of their indirect costs.

Is that in kind contribution?

That is not in-kind contribution. I think working with your sponsored research office would be the best way to find out what your institution is charging and what those funds go towards.

Okay thank you very much.

[Question 4]

Next question is from Audrey Davis.

Thank you. My question is in our previous submission we required research and that was not allowed. Can we require it in this submission?

Well, if you require it, then you still need to make some sort of allowance for students with other responsibilities. It cannot be required without any kind of compensation.

It cannot be required without compensation. All right. And the other question is can we have an active S-STEM grant currently that ends in 2016 and still apply for this?

Yes, you may apply for this.

Okay. One final question, sustainability examples. Do you have any recommendations on that? That is one thing that we were docked for on our previous submission as well .

I think the challenge here is that you need to realize that your proposals will be reviewed de novo. And what that means is, yes it is important to respond to the comments from the previous review. But there will be different reviewers for your proposal and they could respond to other deficiencies. So in terms of sustainability, what we are trying to do is get a sense of what types of activities would be sustained after NSF funding. So you need, as an institution to make the argument for those types of activities they can be sustained and how your institutional will go about doing that.

Okay thank you.

[Question 5]

The next question comes from Kathy, your line is open.

I have two quick questions. Last year the indirect costs were in addition to the total amount, it is it part of the \$650,000 or is it in addition to question

The \$600,000 is the total award amount, or 650.

So the indirect costs have to come from that? And the second question is it seems like using the difference between Strand one and Strand 2 is how mature your institution is question

Largely, also the complexity the project of your research, Strand 2 lets you view more complex things and the maturity of your organization factors into how well-positioned you are to do more complex things.

If we are of primary teaching institution that is only done one NSF grant the past you would say Strand 1?

It depends on what that particular award was. Again, your institution needs to make a decision on which Strand you would like to apply for and then say why the Strand you selected best fits what you want to accomplish.

Okay. Since we do not have a lot of research going on at my institution, Strand one would be a good place to start. Thank you.

The next question, your line is open.

[Question 6]

Good afternoon. My question is about the different -- and distinguishing who are the PI's and who are members of the project team. We have in mind half a dozen people who would be part of the project team, but we also have two or three other people who might be listed as PI and/or co-PI. I want to know if there is any value or benefit in adding more members as co-PI's , or if we should simplify that number and leave those numbers as project team members, understanding we need to cover the three bases or requirements for the project team.

So I believe that you are limited to five PI's and you should really think about roles under senior personnel for these other people you want to include in the management of your project.

And so do I understand what you mean by that is that the project team folks have distinctly different roles from the co-PI's?

No, not necessarily. They could be the same. Again, it is going to be up to the institution on how they want to structure the PI and co-PI and project team management.

Typically, do PI's and co-PI's -- are they included and the numbers that might be paid? Is that a distinguishing factor?

Not necessarily.

Thank you. Next question, your line is open.

[Question 7]

Hi. Some of my questions actually have been answered, but I am a little confused about Strand 1 and Strand 2. I am confused because we've had two of these S-STEM grants before. I am worried that we are a primary teaching institution and if we apply for Strand 1 we would be penalized, because we have received to S-STEM grant to the past and I am also worried that if we apply for Strand 2 we will not be seen as having enough educational research background to support a Strand 2.

So again, we understand the challenges on selecting Strand 1 or Strand 2. However, again, it is up to the institution to make the strongest argument they can for submitting to either Strand 1 or Strand 2.

Do you anticipate that the Strand 2 applicants would be mainly research institutions?

We are not making any assumptions about what types of institutions are going to be submitting proposals to which Strand. We will do our best to make sure there is a fit between the type of institution that is submitting a proposal and the types of folks --- we are trying to make sure that institutions are kind of clustered together. You wouldn't necessarily see, in terms of our plan, a community college in the same panel as a research institution.

Okay. One other question. I wonder if I read the program description incorrectly because when I read it, it seemed as if the Strand 1 project with \$650,000 and five years, that the 40% was above and beyond that like it used to be, but that's not true. It is included in the \$650,000?

Yeah, those maximums are all total amounts.

Okay. I guess that is all my questions. I missed the beginning audio. But the man in the tan blazer, his microphone is fading in and out.

Thank you. Okay thank you.

[Question 8]

The next question comes from Charlie Robberson, your line is open.

I am from the LSU Shreveport campus. I have one question, are we allowed to seek partnerships outside of our institutions to accomplish our goals?

Yes you are. Yes. Okay thank you.

[Question 9]

The next question is from Caroline Nelson.

Hello and thank you. You mentioned it would be possible to include students who are not scholarship recipients and the cohort. My question is about evaluation. Is it important that our evaluation plan focus only on the S-STEM scholarship recipients or can we include those other potential cohort members in our evaluation plan?

Yes. You should include in the evaluation of your project include the students in the cohort who are not S-STEM scholars. Because what you will be wanting to do is report your accomplishments for the duration of the award, and also NSF requires folks when they submit additional proposals to report on the results of prior support.

Great, thanks.

[Question 10]

Next question is from Sharon. Hello? Hello, go ahead.

Wonderful. We do have two questions, although the entire proposal lends itself to broader impacts, is there a specific section that you would like to broader impacts to be called out and specified?

No. I do not think so. You certainly could highlight the particular study that you are doing on the support structures there and talk about how that information is going to get propagated out into the education community. That would be one area of broader impacts that you could emphasize.

Thank you. The second question is are we able to focus on curriculum changes in majors within one specific area of STEM or do we need to keep it broad and offer scholarships and curricular and co-curricular changes in all areas?

You could certainly do either, we have had both projects in the past.

Thank you.

[Question 10]

The next question is from Janel.

Thank you, I have a few questions. First of all I want to go back to the definition of the management team. It is my understanding from reading the solicitation that the management team is required now, I know it is different than the previous solicitation, it was defined as the PIs and co-PI's. Now during the webinar I heard you refer to them as the management team or they can be the senior personnel. My question is on a previous proposal we actually had our institutional researcher serving as our evaluator and we're a small institution. So we do not have a lot of people to pick from. Now I am reading this is our institutional researcher really needs to be part of the management team. My question is -- if she becomes a co-PI it is my understanding she cannot be the evaluator they can she still be listed as senior personnel?

Yes I think that is okay. As long as she is not the evaluator. Which she count as institutional researcher? What it fit the piece that's required on the management team?

Yes. Again she should have the qualities you are looking for to guide your study support structures.

But she can still be the evaluator as well? No.

She has to have responsibilities either as the institutional research person or the evaluator. This person could not have dual responsibilities.

Okay. Thanks. In terms of the evaluation piece, on our previous proposal we were told our evaluation plan was really good, but they did not think that we really had enough money to pay for that. I am a little concerned about the scale of the evaluation. I am not sure how big or small it needs to be. Could you clarify that at all?

One thing, the amount of money available to pay for the evaluation has increased in the current solicitation. In the prior solicitation, only 15% was available for administration and

student support. You could presumably, you could use the same plan, but you have more resources now available to pay for it.

A general guideline we use when talking about evaluation is it really should be about 10% of the total funds requested for a grant. Again, there will be some variation, but 10% is a good ballpark figure.

And that's of the total that you said? Yes.

Very helpful. So another question is about the timeline, I know it is flexible in terms of when the funding starts and ends. But are there any limits as to when we can have it start? So for example, if we submit a proposal the fall and we do not find out until well into the spring semester, it will be a little difficult for us to do recruiting and have students coming in to do the application process for the following academic year. Can we have it start a full year later?

I think the thing is that there are activities you could be implementing during that first year, that could be drawing down funds such as -- maybe a need to do planning, planning for recruitment and getting your recruitment strategies and recruitment materials together. Maybe it is really thinking about how you are going to be implementing those effective practices that you will be adapting from other settings. From our perspective that are certainly things that could be done during that first year that is not necessarily a full implementation of your proposed activities.

So just to be clear, if we did take the first year for recruitment that means we only have four years for scholarships, correct?

Yes. I mean there is always the opportunity to have a no-cost extension.

But I assume that is not something we can just assume from the start when working on our timeline?

That is correct.

I'm sorry I don't mean to have so many questions, but my last two are both related to the writing of the proposal itself. First of all, you have mentioned that we need to explain why or how we fit into a specific Strand, where is this supposed to be discussed?

In the justification of your project in the project description, that is a whole 15 pages. You as the team involved in writing this proposal, need to structure your proposal in a way that presents the best argument for supporting your proposal.

So just anywhere within the description is appropriate?

So long as it is cogent and fits into the line of argument you're making.

So would that also be the same in terms of responses to previous comments we received on a proposal?

Again, just remember that certainly it is important to respond to those previous comments. But again, your proposal will be reviewed de novo. You need to look at those comments in relation to the re-envisioned S-STEM program and see how they fit.

Thank you.

[Question 11]

The next question, your line is open.

My questions have been answered. Thank you. Thank you.

[Question 12]

The next question is from Ashley Fitzgerald.

Thank you so much, I am calling from Louisiana State University in Shreveport and I have a few quick questions. One person asked a question about the evaluation. And in terms of if you are doing multi-participation institution Strand 2, should your evaluation person come from the major institution or can it be an evaluation team where you have evaluators at each institution?

Your evaluation plan needs to fit with what you plan to do. It could be one evaluator or it could be a team of evaluators across the institution. It depends on the evaluation design and how that design that fits in with the proposing activities.

Okay. I was also reading on the grant and it said that is you report with a five-year grant there would be a third-year review. Do you ask for a progress report every year with like a third-year non-competitive renewal or is it just that third-year review that is required?

Annual reports are required for all NSF reports. The third-year review is in addition to those annual reports. That third-year review is more formative in orientation -- that is to provide the project with information on how well it is progressing to achieve its goals.

Okay. One more question, I know there may be questions beyond this webinar but in terms of contacting you all, I know that you cannot sit in front of your computer all day and answer emails. So what you expect in terms of return responses? If I send an email should I expect 24 or at the maximum 48 hours that you would respond so I'm not sitting at my email waiting for a response.

I have put up a slide for the contact information for the three of us as well as two other people who are involved with S-STEM at a high level. Again, all of us travel and do other things. I think you will certainly get a response within a week, and usually sooner. But, one or two days, you probably can't expect that.

Okay, thank you so much this was very helpful.

One of the things that I think is important in terms of contacting anyone is to -- in the email make sure that you state your questions so that people are able to get back to you with the information that you are requesting.

Okay. Thank you so much. Thank you.

[Question 13]

The next question.

Thank you so much. I am calling from Heritage University in Washington state. I just want to say I appreciate very much are explanation of how to include the research stipends within Fastlane. My question though is the split between scholarship money and non-scholarship money. It recommends 60%, but the RFP says -- depending on your institution needs, you could have more. I was wondering that if you budget 80% as scholarship money, is this too much? How much more can you go above the 60%?

I think it all depends on your justification for doing that. You must spend at least 60% on scholarships, but you certainly can spend more. As long as you have good and valid reasons for why you're doing what you are doing, you certainly can do that.

All right. Another question I have is concerning the GPA, as the selection criteria, I have heard different things from reviewers concerning that. I was wondering what do you think is a good GPA to use as your selection criteria for the scholars?

Again, the way the solicitation is written is that it is a really up to the institution to make a strong argument for the GPA it selects. NSF is silent on any kind of required GPA for scholarship.

Thank you very much.

I just wanted to say one thing about looking to increase the percentage of funds going to scholarships. One of the things we have learned is that scholarships alone are not sufficient to increase retention and graduation within STEM. So you need to balance the percentage of monies that you want to send to scholarships and the amount of money that you need to support those scholarship students outside of scholarship dollars.

Yes. Another thing I heard from the reviewers is the number of participants. The first time, small scholarship amounts allowed us to do more for students, but it has to fit the financial need that you have. And if it does not meet the financial need is that wise? How do schools that have higher financial needs for their students, because we are a very low income community, how do they balance that with the number of scholars served?

The key thing is the goal of the program is for students to graduate and complete degrees. You really have to look at the need of the students in your profile and how you are going to build a program that meets their financial need on the average. ***** it doesn't really accomplish the goals of the program to provide partial support, it doesn't get them over the hurdle. Make it very clear in your proposal what the need profile of your students is and who you are trying to serve. There are vast differences amongst institutions, try to make it clear to the reviewers that this is the type of need where seeing in our students and this is how we're putting together the program to meet that need. That should be your key objective.

Thank you.

As a reminder please press*one if you would like to ask a question. The next question.

[Question 13]

Hello and thank you for taking my call. In one of the slides you have on the web related to S-STEM, there is an amount mentioned of \$10,000. Is that the limit for tuition per student? It wasn't clear to me.

So the legislation states that scholarships can be made per student \$10,000 for four years of support. But in the solicitation it asks you to provide justification for the amount of money your scholarships are going to be and the number of students you think you are going to be providing scholarships to.

Is that limited per semester or per calendar year? \$10,000?

It is per year.

Oh, I see. And one quick second question is, we have a memorandum of agreement with the University at Casindor? campus which is an HBCU campus where they finished three year of study there with two hours to complete engineering. Can this be accommodated through Strand 1 proposal? Or should we go for Strand 2?

It can be accommodated in either Strand 1 or 2. What you need to do is really to look at the need of your institution and what you want to provide for your students and the students at the HBCU and come up with a proposed program with scholarships that will ensure that students obtain a degree in, and you are saying particularly in engineering, or put to carelessly - are particularly successful in making the transition from the HBCU to your program.

Thank you. This will be our last question.

[Question 14]

The next question is from Mike.

Thank you. I have a couple of questions. First of all, can a non-scholarship member of a cohort be eligible for research stipends?

No.

Okay. Can an internal evaluator who will not be part of the project once it is implemented, can that internal evaluator be part of the proposal development?

That is the best strategy to use when you're developing an evaluation plan for a proposal and proposed activities. Because then you're going to get a nice fit between the activities you are proposing and the type of evaluation that will be conducted on the proposed project.

And finally the question as a would pertain to community colleges, that have dual enrollment programs with high school students, while they are in high school working towards their associate degree in a STEM field, they would not be required to have scholarship money because it is part of a high school. Could we structure a program with an agreement with a baccalaureate granting institution that after they are able to finish their high school and early college, the scholarship would be applied to the four-year baccalaureate program afterwards?

One of the challenges here is that the project you are proposing will have to ensure in some way that those students are going to be going to a particular institution. That is my

understanding. And then you have to think about what kind of agreement you would have to have at that institution in terms of your particular institution who receives the funding to provide scholarship support to a student attending another institution. Those things would need to be worked out before the proposal is submitted and you would have to describe those types of agreements that you have with the institutions you plan to work with.

And if stipends are not allowed or non-scholarship recipients of a cohort, then it would not make sense to proposed something for which early college students would be part of a cohort, because they do not have financial aid because they are part of the public secondary education while getting their associate degree.

Yes. We agree with your analysis.

That is too bad. Thank you very much for your help.

[Slide 23 – Contact Information]

I want to thank all of you for coming today. And we will shortly get the transcript as well as these PowerPoint slides available to you on the webinar website. And we look for further questions in the email addresses that I have provided. Thank you.

This does conclude today's conference. All parties may disconnect at this time.

[Event concluded]