October 8, 2014

Dear Colleague:

The annual Effort Certification Period for Fiscal Year 2014 begins today and will remain open until November 21, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. (Please note: your department or school may set an earlier internal deadline for administrative purposes.) By the deadline, you must complete the following tasks:

✓ Review and certify your own effort through the University’s electronic effort reporting system, ECRT, at https://ecrt.columbia.edu/. For detailed instructions, please review the reference guide How to Certify Your Effort in ECRT.

✓ For principal investigators, use ECRT [https://ecrt.columbia.edu/] to review and certify the effort of your sponsored project staff using suitable means of verification, such as direct supervision, discussion with the employee, or other methods of verifying the individual’s activities. Complete instructions can be found in the reference guide How to Certify Your Effort and the Effort of Your Researchers in ECRT.

What to Look for When Certifying
✓ Make sure all sponsored projects are listed on the effort card
✓ Check for cost sharing
✓ Indicate proper effort percentages for each sponsored project and non-sponsored effort

If you discover problems with the effort card, contact your effort coordinator before certifying.

Complete Online Training Before You Certify
All faculty who have not previously completed training must complete the mandatory Effort Reporting Policy and Process Training Course prior to certifying. The course is available in Rascal at: https://www.rascal.columbia.edu/login/tc0068/. For faculty in non-science departments, click here: https://www.rascal.columbia.edu/login/tc0501/. If you completed training previously, you do not need to take it again.

PIs Certify Non-Sponsored Effort
As in previous years, PIs must certify both sponsored and non-sponsored effort for their project staff. Where project staff work for more than one PI, PIs will need to coordinate and share information. In some cases, this coordination will need to take place not only within departments, but across departments or schools. Effort coordinators can support this process. Ultimately, one PI will need to certify the non-sponsored effort. Ideally, this should be the PI who supports the largest share of the individual’s sponsored effort; however, any PI who has knowledge of the activities of the individual may perform this function. Please note: all PIs listed on an individual’s effort card will continue to receive reminders until the card has been fully certified, including the non-sponsored effort line.

Refresher FAQ
For your convenience, we have a brief effort reporting refresher sheet with answers to frequently asked questions. You can find the Effort Reporting Refresher FAQs for Self-Certifiers and Principal Investigators in the Reference Guides section of the Effort Reporting website. You may find it helpful to review the reference guide before you begin the certification process.

Support Available
To help you with your effort reporting and certification requirements, the University has a number of resources available, including:

- The Effort Reporting Website - Contains information on effort reporting and ECRT, including updated reference guides on using ECRT to certify effort for yourself and your research staff, FAQs, links and other helpful tools.
The Effort Reporting Helpdesk - For answers to your effort reporting questions, contact your effort coordinator or the effort reporting team at effort-reporting@columbia.edu.

Effort certification is required by University policy and federal regulation. Because this requirement is so important, the University may impose the following consequences on those who fail to meet the November 21st deadline:

- Disallow proposals for new funding
- Transfer salary relating to uncertified effort from sponsored projects to departmental projects

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please contact us at effort-reporting@columbia.edu.

We look forward to a successful FY14 certification, and thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Naomi Schrag
Associate Vice President for Research Compliance

Anne Sullivan
Executive Vice President for Finance
and Interim Associate Vice President for Sponsored Project Finance