

Date: February 24, 2025

To: Chancellors, Provosts, CBOs, Campus Federal Updates Working Group Members

From: Jay Rothman

Re: Request to Temporarily Suspend Delegated Authority for Federal Grant Awards

It has recently come to our attention that federal agencies are using the federal grants and awards process to require that your university, and by extension the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System (the Universities of Wisconsin), follow certain new federal policy changes.

Examples include requests to update standard terms and conditions for existing awards to include compliance with new Trump Administration Executive Orders, demands for certification statements related to federal anti-discrimination laws, and new grant award agreement terms and conditions that include broad language that may result in increased legal, regulatory and compliance risk for both your university and the broader Universities of Wisconsin. It is also important to note that certain new award language, if agreed to by one university, may extend certain terms and conditions to all 13 universities within the Universities of Wisconsin.

Therefore, we are requesting that Chancellors temporarily rescind any delegations of authority for signing, entering into, certifying, modifying, amending or renewing all federal grants and awards until we have greater certainty around the approach the federal government is taking to existing terms and conditions for federal grants and awards. This will ensure visibility and that good due diligence is being conducted prior to signing, entering into, certifying, modifying, amending or renewing any federal grant or award agreement. If it is operationally necessary to delegate this authority, it is recommended that authority be restricted to one individual at the Vice Chancellor level or higher. We ask that you communicate this temporary rescission by COB on Monday, February 24th, and notify General Counsel Quinn Williams and me when complete.

Additionally, we are requesting that all new federal grants and awards, amendments, and certification requests be reviewed by the Office of General Counsel (or your respective Office of Legal Affairs) and your university's Federal Updates Working Group liaison. Those individuals should consult with the Universities of Wisconsin Administration Federal Updates Working Group team to determine compliance risk for both the university and Board of Regents as it relates to Trump Administration Executive Orders on these and other topics:

- Providing federal funding to nongovernmental organizations supporting or providing services, either directly or indirectly, to removable or illegal aliens

- Foreign assistance program, or providing funding or support activities overseas
- Imposing an undue burden on the identification, development, or use of domestic energy resources (including through funding under the Inflation Reducing Act of 2022; and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act)
- DEI and “diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility” (DEIA) mandates, policies, programs, preferences, and activities, under whatever name they appear, or other directives in the same EO, including those related to “environmental justice” programs or “equity-related” grants
- Promoting gender ideology
- Promoting or supporting in any way abortion or other related activities identified in the Hyde Amendment

UWsA will be creating a Microsoft Teams site that catalogues all reviewed and approved updated federal standard terms language to assist in your university-level review of new and amended grant award agreements when such language is available.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. We appreciate the collaboration among our universities during this rapidly changing time. Please feel free to contact General Counsel Quinn Williams, Vice President Chris Patton or me with any questions.