**RCN-UBE Logistics Notes**

**Some common pitfalls to RCN-UBE Proposals:**

* **Limited range of collaborators/network** (too much about their own institution) (so you want to include a variety of institutions (perhaps professional societies as well) in your academic ecosystem (if appropriate, community colleges, PUIs, Research, etc.). For an incubator, not everything has to be in place--but the list of people to try to invite conference/workshop/satellite meeting should be diverse- State level/chancellor office and/or professional society collaboration/ “buy in” also may be good and appropriate. The Steering Committee should be diverse as well and have defined role(s)

* **Is it appropriate (i.e. is a network needed?)** if the grant is all about curriculum at your institution, or very limited with respect to collaboration (see above), the answer would be no...(i.e. maybe an IUSE would be better)
* **How will it be used to improve undergraduate education?** (the reviewers should not have to guess) –might be more than one category, i.e. when you think about broadening participation (could be increasing success of transfer students for needed bio careers)
* **Be sure to define the products of project clearly**
* **How are the activities/outcomes/products being assessed?**

* **Weaknesses in management/coordination plan** (roles not defined, sketchy in detail...a bit more leeway here for an incubator but it needs to be a clear "plan to plan")

* **Broadness of approach** (don't want to narrow...use the power of the network!); this also relates to being careful of “over ambitious” or “incremental” labeling by reviewers.

* **Link network meeting to major conferences if possible**...to draw a larger group of faculty/stakeholders...(some meetings could include admin whose "buy in" is needed)--obviously engage diverse students and faculty if possible

* **With respect to stakeholders and collaborators--what is their incentive? (if the network is going to be active/vibrant) Are you leaving anyone out?**

***I am working on a “Common positive elements” section for RCN-UBE proposals….***

**Budget Notes:**

As stated in the RCN solicitation, there are no restrictions beyond those in the PAPPG on what items can be included in the RCN budget.  All budget items must be justified in terms of the goals and objectives of the RCN proposal.  There are no “normal” practices since RCN proposals differ greatly in planned activities and their costs.  That said, the bulk of an RCN budget commonly resides in the Participant Support Costs line item, since that covers all costs associated with participants. What follows is general budget items from some representative (and diverse) RCN-UBE proposals:

**Typical RCN-UBE Budget Items**

* **Full RCN-UBE proposal is for 500K and up to 5 years**; this does not have to be spent at 100K/year; in some cases, a project may require a high first or second year “stimulus” and then use less funding in subsequent years, and/or finish in 3 or 4 years (5 year window often good for establishing sustainability).
* **Salary** (limited for PI/coPIs…i.e. 5% of salary, release time during the academic year, 1-2 mos summer…)—again, this could vary depending on the project
* **Part time information technology specialist** (websites [often important product], databases)
* **Graduate students, undergrads** (i.e. collection and compilation of project information, development and maintenance of the project website, coordinate activities, etc—see categories below and above that could be filled by students) pay i.e. $15/hour, 10 hours/week (this may vary at different institutions)
* **IT staff** support time (when appropriate, leading up to/during workshop)
* **Stipends** (could apply to faculty, other personnel)
* **Network Coordinator** (i.e. staff member maybe 10-20% of salary for full proposal—day to day operations of the network if warranted)
* **Evaluator** (i.e. $2000 a year, final year $4000…just an example, may vary)
* **Consultant services** (i.e. technical writer for documents, reports, papers; from various centers, i.e. for genomics research…) i.e. $5000 (see disclaimer above)
* **Participant support costs** (travel, lodging, per diem, meeting space, workshop materials…) tends to be a big category (includes travel for Steering Committee meetings, workshops, conferences, etc—PI/coPIs, participants, students…) (most obvious category)
* **Materials and Supplies** (modest, not for any direct research—i.e. workshop supplies, laptop, software if appropriate; i.e. for a next generation sequencing RCN-UBE, $500 per participant for wet lab supplies for genomics research (i.e. for enzymes, kits , gels, PCR reagents, etc), some sequencing costs…nothing wrong in getting research results from these activities if part of the network activities!
* **Publication costs**
* **Subawards** (by PI to coPIs/institutions)
* **Funding for International Partners:** The inclusion of international partners (even as steering committee members) is encouraged NSF-15-527, page 5, Guidance item 7. Costs for international partners will be covered for their network activities while in the US…we are seeking further clarification on this but are interpreting this to mean air travel for international partners to a conference is OK (if on US carriers).

**More about Incubators:** One year/50K. Typical incubators (max length of proposal is 8 pages) identify an initial steering committee (with roles of collaborators), define the challenge/approach/goals/aims/justification—often reference “Vision and Change” docs!), planned activities (i.e. meetings, workshops, surveys, (tentative agendas, format (I.e. breakout sessions...) questions to be addressed), products and information sharing (a report for stakeholders to be disseminated, web site/presence), impact, future plans to expand the network...if you have some existing data or synthesis of conversations about the issues, link to project development....