Fact Sheet for Faculty at The University of Texas at Austin

What is ESI? The Environmental Science Institute was founded by UT-Austin in 2000 to foster interdisciplinary research, community and K-12 outreach and education in environmental science. ESI is an initiative supported by the university, through the Provost’s Office, Natural Sciences, Geosciences and Liberal Arts, and by local, state and federal agencies and partners.

Who is ESI? ESI is directed by Dr. Jay Banner and is staffed by two research program coordinators (Eric James and Eric Hersh), education and outreach coordinators (Deborah Salzberg and Geoff Hensgen), a development director (Stefania Tafuro) and a financial analyst (Nina Schenck), as well as several student interns from UTeach and Communications. ESI’s staff has scientific expertise and is skilled in editing, web support, graphic design, and administration. More than 120 UT-Austin faculty and research scientists are affiliated with ESI.

What can ESI do for my grant proposal? ESI can help you prepare and coordinate your proposal in a number of ways:

- **Project Coordination:** ESI can coordinate conference calls, in-person meetings or video conferencing with your colleagues for brainstorming, proposal preparation or information sharing.

- **Support for Broader Impacts:** ESI’s mission includes a substantial outreach component, accomplished through several innovative programs: 1) the Hot Science - Cool Talks Outreach Series; 2) the NSF GK-12 Program; and 3) the NSF Research Experience for Teachers Program. We interact directly with K-12 educators and the community and can help you incorporate initiatives such as these into your grant proposal for a powerful Broader Impacts statement.

- **Team Building:** ESI has successfully worked with PIs in Natural Sciences, Geosciences, Engineering, Liberal Arts, Architecture, and the LBJ School, and can help you connect with researchers across disciplines to address large problems from a variety of perspectives.

- **Editing, Formatting and Logistics:** ESI’s staff and affiliated faculty include trained scientists with broad scientific backgrounds and significant experience writing successful grant proposals. We can help edit your proposal to ensure comprehension and flow and accuracy of works cited. ESI can help merge documents from multiple contributors into a cohesive, properly formatted document for any funding agency. ESI works with the Office of Sponsored Projects on a regular basis and can help move your proposal through the system.

- **Budget Formulation and Proofreading:** ESI can compile budget information provided by PIs and create an appropriately formatted budget, including justification.

Who can submit grants through ESI? ESI can work with single or multiple-PI interdisciplinary projects as well as proposals that include PIs from other institutions provided the lead PI is housed at UT.

Will submitting my grant through ESI affect overhead return to my department? No. ESI’s mission is funded through the Provost’s Office and participating colleges and does not receive overhead from grants submitted through it.

Who will administer my grant? Because overhead return to your department is not affected, you may choose either ESI or your home department to administer funded proposals submitted through ESI. ESI’s financial analyst has extensive knowledge concerning grant administration, purchasing, travel, etc., and years of experience at UT-Austin to help you administer funds should you choose to administer your funded proposal through ESI.

Who should I contact about working with ESI? Feel free to contact any of the following people at ESI: Eric Hersh (ehersh@esi.utexas.edu) Eric James (ewjames@esi.utexas.edu) or Jay Banner (banner@jsg.utexas.edu) with questions or ideas.

For more info about ESI, please visit [http://www.esi.utexas.edu/](http://www.esi.utexas.edu/).