TIMELINE

1) Q: Proposal activities are likely to be tied in to the academic calendar, with popular start times likely to include the beginning of the academic year (say early September) and the beginning of the summer (say late May). If awardees are selected and funding is made available by spring 2013, will proposers be allowed to select a start time to best suit their programming plans or will they be required to execute their program within 2 years of the specific date they actually get the funding?

A: It is anticipated that cohorts of students would be identified and ready to start the program during the Fall of 2013.

2) Q: What/when is the award date of the grant?

A: It is anticipated that awards will be announced during the Spring of 2013.

PARTICIPANTS

3) Q: The original Summer of Innovation solicitation (the one that needed to be vetted by Space Grants) had explicit expectations for (very high) numbers of participants. This solicitation is on the opposite end of the spectrum, with high expectations for the investment in each student participant. Is there also an expectation here, at least in an average sense, for the number of participants per proposal?

A: Please see page nine (9) of the solicitation for guidance on the criteria by which proposals will be evaluated. The Space Grant Program Office does not require a specific target participant number.

4) Q: Classification of students as “significantly supported” has always covered cumulative awards and I assume same holds true here. For example, $2,500 to a student during each of 2 semesters or 80 contact hours for a student during each of 2 summers would suffice. But can we split it up? For example, would 80 contact hours during a summer program followed by $2,500 in financial support in the following school year qualify as “significant support”?

A: Per page seven (7) of the solicitation, engagement must include a significant level for each participant (i.e. ≥ $5,000 of direct financial support and/or ≥ 160 contact
hours). A partial combination of these resources does not meet the requirement for the full financial or time investment.

5) Q: Are students in the cohort(s) required to be enrolled full-time at an institution of higher education, as is the case for standard Space Grant scholarships and fellowships, or may cohorts include students enrolled part-time in an accredited institution?

A: There is no restriction on the involvement of part-time students, however, proposers are encouraged to engage a cohort in a manner which will maximize the investment and result in a demonstrable contribution to the desired outcomes of this opportunity -- increased retention in STEM education and demonstrated effective K-12 STEM Teacher Education strategies.

6) Q: For the STEM Retention Focus, may students be engaged (and funded) during the summer before their freshman year, as long as they have graduated from high school and are committed to attending the proposing institution in the fall?

A: Per page seven (7) of the solicitation, eligible participants for the STEM Retention Focus are:
   - Rising first-year or sophomore undergraduate students
   - U.S. Citizens
   - Must be enrolled at an accredited college or university in the U.S. or U.S. Territory

7) Q: [Redacted institution name] essentially does all their STEM teacher training as a 15-month "post-bac" program (i.e. for students who already have a standard major in a STEM field). So, technically, none of their students are "junior or senior undergraduates." Are institutions that do their high school and middle school STEM teacher training this way going to be precluded altogether from this opportunity?

A: Per page seven (7) of the solicitation: Recruited participants should be:
   - Rising junior or senior undergraduate students
   - U.S. Citizens
   - Must be enrolled at an accredited college or university in the U.S. or U.S. Territory

Proposers are encouraged to engage a cohort in a manner which will maximize the investment and result in a demonstrable contribution to the desired outcomes of this opportunity -- increased retention in STEM education and demonstrated effective K-12 STEM Teacher Education strategies. The intent is that the same cohort of students will be engaged and progress tracked/reported throughout the period of performance as described on Page 7, Section C. Award Reporting Requirements.
8) Q: One of our potential proposers is a community college that has a large program bringing local high school students onto their campus for college courses worth college credit. These students have NOT already graduated from high school, but are even younger than that. However they are “part-time college students” in some technical sense of the phrase.

A: Per page four (4) of the solicitation: Eligible participants are limited to:
   - Rising first-year or sophomore undergraduate students (STEM Retention Focus)
   - Rising junior or senior undergraduate students (STEM Educator Focus)
   - U.S. Citizens
   - Must be enrolled at an accredited college or university in the U.S. or U.S. Territory

IMPLEMENTATION

9) Q: Are proposed activities required to be cohort-exclusive or may funding be used to engage students in entire classes, not all members of whom are named as cohort participants?

A: Per page four (4) of the solicitation: Eligible participants are limited to:
   - Rising first-year or sophomore undergraduate students (STEM Retention Focus)
   - Rising junior or senior undergraduate students (STEM Educator Focus)
   - U.S. Citizens
   - Must be enrolled at an accredited college or university in the U.S. or U.S. Territory

Additionally, “…Regardless of selected focus (undergraduate retention in STEM or qualified STEM educator), proposals for either opportunity should include:

• Investments of a significant level for each participant (i.e. ≥ $5,000 of direct financial support and/or ≥160 contact hours)”

There is no restriction on the involvement of entire class, however, proposers are encouraged to engage a cohort in a manner which will maximize the investment and result in a demonstrable contribution to the desired outcomes of this opportunity -- increased retention in STEM education and demonstrated effective K-12 STEM Teacher Education strategies. The intent is that the same cohort of students will be engaged and progress tracked/reported throughout the period of performance as described on Page 7, Section C. Award Reporting Requirements.

10) Q: If funding may be used in standard (albeit, modified) classes, may time spent by participants in such classes be counted toward their “160 contact hours” for the purpose of classifying them as significantly supported, or must such contact hours all be for activities outside of standard / required courses?
A: There is no restriction on the involvement of entire class, however, proposers are encouraged to engage a cohort in a manner which will maximize the investment and result in a demonstrable contribution to the desired outcomes of this opportunity -- increased retention in STEM education and demonstrated effective K-12 STEM Teacher Education strategies. The intent is that the same cohort of students will be engaged and progress tracked/reported throughout the period of performance as described on Page 7, Section C. Award Reporting Requirements.

11) Q: Are the lists for potential project activities on page 4 of the CAN to be considered suggestive or exhaustive? More specifically, why is the list for the STEM Retention Focus so different from the list for the STEM Educator Focus? Participation in “experiential learning opportunities” and “challenges and competitions” could potentially be useful for both groups (I think), but these are only on one list.

A: Per page twelve (12) of the solicitation, proposals will, in part, be evaluated by “...Merit of the proposal including feasibility to achieve the proposed project(s); support of the purpose, intent and scope, and anticipated results of the announcement; innovative strategy, predicated on proven educational methodologies and evidence-based practices that will result in an increased retention of STEM undergraduate students and an increase in the number of qualified STEM educators.”

12) Q: On page 6, it says that participants must be tracked in OEPM. Is this the responsibility of the institution receiving the award or of the jurisdiction Space Grant Office?

A: It is required that student profile and award data for each participant be entered into OEPM. The award will be made directly to the institution. The PI for the respective institution will be required to obtain the necessary credentials required for data entry into OEPM during the period of performance.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

13) Q: The solicitation is described as “open to all Space Grant institutions” (page 3) but required partnerships may be with Space Grant affiliates or non-affiliates (page 5). Must every partnership include at least one Space Grant affiliate or, even more strongly, must every partnership be lead (sic) by a Space Grant affiliate?

A: Proposals will be accepted from Space Grant consortium member (AKA Affiliate) institutions only. Per page five (5) of the solicitation, partnerships may include Space Grant Affiliate or Non-Affiliate Partner Engagement. Proposers are encouraged to engage partners which will maximize the investment and result in a demonstrable contribution to the desired outcomes of this opportunity -- increased retention in STEM education and demonstrated effective K-12 STEM Teacher Education strategies.
Q&A – Space Grant Cooperative Agreement Notice – No. 1

14) Q: As we understand the solicitation for the SG Innovative Pilot in STEM Education, any Space Grant institution can submit a proposal as long as only two proposals per state and Director concurrence conditions are met. Can that institution send directly from their university or do the proposals still need to be submitted through the lead institution for Space Grant within the state? Will awards be made directly from the NSSC to the institution itself or will they be channeled through the Space Grant lead institution where we will set up subcontracts to those performing the work?

A: Proposing institutions should submit proposals directly from their institution using the instructions in the solicitation document. Awards will be made directly from the NSSC to the institution receiving the award.

15) Q: May consortia collaborate on proposal submissions?

A: There is no restriction on multi-consortia collaborative proposals. Proposers are encouraged to engage partners which will maximize the investment and result in a demonstrable contribution to the desired outcomes of this opportunity -- increased retention in STEM education and demonstrated effective K-12 STEM Teacher Education strategies. Each consortium can only be represented in a total of two proposals, either as lead or submitting collaborator. The budget per award has a maximum value of $500,000.

OTHER

16) Q: In the budgetary restrictions it list (sic) no equipment purchases. The below highlighted text is from the guidelines but still has some ambiguity which we need further clarification on please. As defined Equipment of a value greater than $5,000 is not permitted by guideline, is the restriction on the above referenced grant that no equipment can be purchased at all, or that no equipment over $5,000 can be purchased as per the guideline?

Equipment: List all facilities and equipment items separately. General-purpose equipment (i.e., personal computers and/or commercial software) valued at or above $5,000 is not allowable as a direct cost unless specifically approved by the NASA Award Officer. Any requested general-purpose equipment purchase valued at or above $5,000 to be made as a direct charge under this award must include the equipment description, an explanation of how it will be used in the conduct of the research proposed, and a written certification that the equipment will be used exclusively for the proposed research activities and not for general business or administrative purposes. [Ref.: Appendix B, Part (c)(7)].

A: The purchase of equipment with NASA monies is not permitted in this competitive opportunity. For more specific information on items characterized as
equipment and correlating provisions, please see the NASA Grant and Cooperative Agreement Handbook, which can be accessed by following this link: 
http://prod.nais.nasa.gov/pub/pub_library/grcover.htm