



# Best Practices: Doubling Submissions at South Alabama

*An InfoReady Review Business Case*

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# Doubling Submissions at University of South Alabama

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When it comes to a college or university office of research, the equation is simple: Awareness of solicitations drives an increased number of applications, and an increased number of applications drives stronger competition, and stronger competition drives higher quality awards.

But how do you make faculty aware of myriad opportunities? And how do you provide aggregated, easy-to-use, and comprehensive resources to ensure a robust and timely response through the multi-stage process of submission, review, decision, and award?

*Kim Littlefield, former Assistant Vice President for Research Development and Learning at the University of South Alabama, found an answer that more than doubled the research office's submissions, which is still used at the office of Research Communications, Development and Learning today ...*

The typical paradigm for many institutional research offices has been a largely manual search for relevant research opportunities, followed by email blasts to chairs and faculty to create awareness, more back and forth email to prospective reviewers, and still more email exchanges of questions and answers, applications, routings to reviewers, reviewer responses, and ultimately a decision – whether to approve the application in the case of a limited submission competition, or grant an award in the case of an internal competition.

And along with the plethora of back and forth email was the attendant problem of lost, unopened, unread, and direct-to-spam errors, plus untold hours of unproductive administrative efforts in data entry, errors, and late or missed submissions.

Kim found that InfoReady Review provided a single, effective, and automated solution that simply and easily addressed each of her challenges. To maximize the implementation of Review at her institution, she provided these tips.

*First, give it a home and start small.*

Kim did that by bringing the management of the limited submission process under the Office of Research Development and Learning (RDL). As she explained to us, “Giving the process a home and a single point of contact was a critical first step and immediately provided accountability, auditability, and accessibility to the process.”

## *Second, Increase awareness.*

She also centralized the posting of limited submission information in two locations: the RDL's own website and InfoReady Review™, an online software platform for automating limited submissions (and other internal competitions).

As a result, faculty members knew exactly where to look for opportunities and competition guidelines, also helping them discover new opportunities. Just as importantly, the same InfoReady Review platform simplifies enlisting reviewers and allows them to securely post their review response directly back to the administrator, with all documentation saved in the Cloud versus unsecure email attachments.

To further boost the University of South Alabama's efforts, Kim's office began an all-out limited submission eligibility awareness campaign. Submission-eligible nominees received an approval memo, a copy of which routes electronically with their proposal. The memo brought awareness to department chairs and informed the central grants office who is/is not cleared for takeoff.

Institutional nominees were also announced on the RDL website. As Kim noted to us, "this is a small but significant way for the institution to recognize the efforts and expertise of faculty who step up to apply for these very competitive opportunities and to bring awareness of their efforts to their faculty peers."

## *Third, standardize processes and automate them.*

South Alabama purchased InfoReady Review to assist with process standardization and automate many of the administrative tasks associated with limited submission competitions. For many competitions, the institution's Office of Research Development and Learning starts with a notice of intent (NOI) – a brief form, created in InfoReady Review, which collects the faculty member's name and project title. Kim shared with us, "The NOI is a great way to gauge interest in a particular opportunity and an effective way to estimate if an internal competition will be necessary. Moreover, for those opportunities that progress to a competition, the NOI information makes identifying and recruiting reviewers more efficient and effective."

Should a full competition be desirable, Kim automates the entire process. She says, "What used to take 15-40 hours to administer now takes 1-2 hours," which means she can manage many more competitions in the same amount of time, dramatically increasing submissions and awards.

How substantially? When Kim Littlefield started at the University of South Alabama (USA), the Office of Research and Economic Development was running approximately four limited submission competitions per year. While that volume is typical for a small institution, Kim made it her mission to

increase limited submissions. The number of limited submission competitions is now over 25, so Kim's success – and ultimately the institution's success – was nothing less than dramatic. Larger institutions have seen a proportionately larger increase.

To learn more, schedule a demo, or get in touch with current Review users, please visit [www.inforeadycorp.com](http://www.inforeadycorp.com).

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