

Enhancing Research Competitions

*Because Research Competitions are So Vitally Important,
Improving Your Outcomes Makes Sense*

An InfoReady Whitepaper



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Because Research Competitions are So Vitally Important, Improving Your Outcomes Makes Sense

Research competitions are standard operating procedure at most doctoral institutions and increasingly common across the higher education spectrum – even becoming so at primary undergraduate institutions (PUIs). That shouldn't be surprising given their many benefits. Most obvious, of course, is the funding revenue, often substantial, that successful applications bring both to the investigator and the institution.

But the potential influx of funds – whether from the NIH or NSF, other government bodies, foundations, corporations, or philanthropic organizations – is hardly the only reason for promoting research competitions.

And, it's certainly not the only benefit accruing to the institution from doing so, because successful applications:

- Enhance the reputation and prestige of the researcher.
- Fund and expose graduate and undergraduate students to the research process.
- Advance knowledge and potentially lead to significant breakthroughs in the sciences, humanities, and arts.
- Further local and regional economic growth.
- Promote industry collaboration and new institutional partnerships.
- Boost professional development for faculty.
- Expand the institution's intellectual property portfolio.
- Advance the institution's reputation, resulting in more interest from prospective faculty members, graduate students, and undergraduate students. This increases donor support from both internal and external constituents.

So why we do them is important ... but how we can do them better is more important...

Simply because research competitions are so common, we don't always ask:

- Can we improve the process to encourage greater faculty participation?
- How can we expand our pool of reviewers?
- Is it possible to increase the completion rate?
- Can we simplify the process so time-constrained younger faculty in particular can submit their own applications in the midst of teaching and service commitments?
- Can errors and communication chaos be eliminated?

Errors discourage everyone involved, and, not least, reduce the staff time and effort necessary to administer a robust research competition program.

Let's apply the investigatory lens to our own processes. We see that addressing common flaws and disconnects significantly enhances an institution's "win" record. And this can increase its research output.

Here are some simple strategies – all provided in the [InfoReady](#) platform, by the way – that could have quite dramatic results:

1. Expand faculty awareness of research competitions

Your research faculty can't pursue opportunities about which they're unaware. And yet, it takes considerable time and effort to trawl the research opportunity databases. If your Office of Research doesn't already provide a web-based list of opportunities to faculty, consider Pivot™. It lists almost every opportunity and directly feeds into InfoReady to save applicants time and effort.

2. Create a comprehensive research website

The entire institution's research energy transforms from potential to kinetic when faculty have a single online locus they can access to:

- explore research opportunities including limited submissions and internal competitions

- check deadlines and application status
- see the results of research competitions
- view messages from the Vice President of Research and other administrators
- and even access the institution's research publications and other outputs.

Incidentally, such a research website or microsite is also a powerful tool to motivate graduate and undergrads.

3. Eliminate paper

No question about it, paper applications can be a nightmare to complete for faculty and a nightmare to process for administrators. They contain errors, are difficult to edit, take more time for reviewers to read and evaluate, may get lost or garbled whether hand-delivered or emailed, and have to be manually replicated for each future competition application. So why place a disincentive in the process when we want our faculty to be research productive? The solution is to go paperless with a cloud-based platform like InfoReady. Such a solution saves hours in completion and evaluation time, is secure, may be easily edited and corrected, and can be saved for future applications. It can also be immediately and safely transmitted to and from applicants, reviewers, administrators, as well as Deans' or Provosts' Offices for final vetting.

Result: more time saved, fewer errors, more applicants, and happier campers all around.

4. Make reviewers' and administrators' workloads easier

Reviewers and administrators are often the unsung heroes of the institutional research process, spending hours behind the scenes to help ensure the university forwards its very strongest research applications for funding. Moving to a completely online platform, like InfoReady, makes it possible to more quickly and more accurately process and route applications, receive evaluations, approve results, and notify participants. This is done without lost paperwork, unopened emails, missed deadlines, and phone and email status queries.

Result? More satisfied and productive reviewers and administrators, significant time savings for everyone involved, and a substantively improved research process.

Time to up your research process game? The answer may be InfoReady.

Here are some reasons why InfoReady works so well for over 150 colleges and universities and could do so for yours:

- Cloud-based
- Securely accessible from anywhere and any platform
- Speedy implementation with no need for IT support or maintenance
- Easy to learn and simple to use
- Extensive tracking and analysis for enhanced reporting and assessment
- Outstanding customer support

Learn more about [InfoReady](#) or request a demo by contacting Amanda or Max below:

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