

Required Disclosure of Research Sponsors in Public Communications

Recently enacted state legislation (House Bill 1295) impacts SFA faculty, staff and students who engage in research sponsored by external entities. This legislation “requires the public disclosure of sponsors of research in any public communication, including both oral and written publications.” The bill was effective on September 1, 2015, and applies to any and all public communication concerning sponsored research projects on or after that date.

For this legislation, sponsored research includes any research project that receives money or materials from an external sponsor and the money or materials received from the sponsor, or under a combination of more than one sponsor or grant, constitutes at least fifty percent of the cost of conducting the research.

In order to satisfy the requirements of House Bill 1295, any oral or written public communication intended for external distribution that involves sponsored research must contain a conspicuous disclosure of the sponsor. Examples include but are not limited to any form of:

- oral communication, speech or testimony, including presentations at conferences, interviews with radio/television stations, and podcasts;
- written communication, including press releases, publications, white papers, briefs, conference presentations, abstracts, reports, and other printed materials; and
- electronically published materials, including website pages, social media, and blog posts.

In accordance with the guidelines in the Business and Commerce Code, the disclosure should be contained in the heading or sub-heading of the communication or set apart from the surrounding text by: larger or different font, bold text, or different color. **To meet this requirement, for most instances, SFA has adopted the use of an italicized subheading with the same text size as the document that contains the required information.** Depending on the nature of the written communication, a different font color may be used for the disclosure.

Considerations when developing communication:

- (a) written communication should contain the italicized disclosure as a subheading on the title of first page
- (b) PowerPoint presentations should contain the italicized disclosure on the title page or a separate page immediately following
- (c) website should contain the italicized disclosure on the main page or as a conspicuous footer
- (d) for oral presentations, interviews with radio/television stations, the disclosure language should be included at the beginning and end of the interview

Examples of acceptable formats and content:

Private Funding Source – *“This research was funded through a grant from the Moody Foundation.”*

State Agency – *“This research was supported by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.”*

Federal Agency – *“This Research was supported by the National Science Foundation; award number DUE123456, CFDA 47.074.”*

The PI/PD must also adhere to any sponsor-specified disclosure or acknowledgement requirements. For federal awards, this may include the award amount and percentage of federal and non-federal funds committed to the project.