



Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance

Benjamin Railton, Fitchburg State University

Dear Mr. Vought:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Proposed Rule: Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance (OMB-2026-0034; FR Doc. 2026-10817). These changes to government-wide grant policies would have profound consequences for every aspect of higher education in America, and especially for institutions of public education and their students. As a result, I advise against the proposed changes.

I write in my capacity as a Professor and Chair at Fitchburg State University, a regional comprehensive public university serving students and communities in North Central Massachusetts and throughout New England. I have worked at FSU for more than 21 years, and in that time have taught more than 5000 students, both undergraduates from across the university's departments and graduate students in our MA program.

Time and again in my years at Fitchburg State, I have seen the crucial role that research projects—and thus the grants on which they rely—play for our students. That certainly includes all of the research that our professors themselves conduct, which informs every aspect of their teaching and thus impacts our students in countless ways. But it also and especially includes the numerous research projects that involve our students—research featuring students is a key area for the evaluation of faculty at FSU; and such projects are so present and prolific that we have an annual Undergraduate Research Conference highlighting hundreds of examples of such collaborations and especially of the resulting student work. That work literally changes the lives of the majority of our students, which is precisely the goal of public higher education.

The proposed changes would make it far more difficult, and indeed in many cases impossible, for faculty and students at a public university like FSU to start, conduct, and publish their research projects. Sections 200.205, 200.218, and 200.300 would significantly limit the possible projects that our researchers could find funding to support, especially at a hugely diverse public university where most of our work intersects with topics of community and society. Section 200.340 would make even supported projects so precarious that they could not offer students consistent funding. And sections 200.461 and 200.454 would make it impossible for even conducted research to find outlets for publication.

The changes would, in short, greatly curtail faculty research and likely end entirely collaborative research efforts on campus. The results would be catastrophic for our students, and through them for our local, regional, and national communities, now and for decades to come.

For this crucial reason, I advise against the proposed changes.

Sincerely,

Ben Railton, PhD
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