HELPFUL HINTS on USING the NSF's FASTLANE

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This handout is posted on my homepage;
copies are also available in Minna's office.

1. OVERVIEW

NSF now requires proposals to be submitted via FastLane, which is easy to use. The intend of this handout is to provide helpful information, most of which is USC or TeX specific, on using FastLane to prepare a standard NSF proposal.

If you do not already have a personal FastLane PIN, then step zero is getting one. For this, call Bonnie Feary at SPAR (7-7093).

To simplify life later,

> first go to the directory in which your proposal's TeX files are and pull up netscape from there by typing `netscape&` . (*)

Go to FastLane's homepage at

`https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/`

to find the needed information and instructions. From here, link to

Proposal Preparation

and login. This will link you to your **PI Information** page. Make special note of the **General Instructions for all forms** box about navigating through Fastlane. If so needed, edit your **PI Information** by linking to Edit Information . Next go to **PROPOSAL ACTIONS** to prepare a Standard Proposal by clicking on OK . The first time you do this, next you will want to Create New Proposal . Next Edit your **Proposals In Progress** (which at this point appears as: "N – Not Assigned" where N is a 7-digit number).

Note the box of **Forms in Proposal Kit Number** N. You will need to do the *meat and potatoes* of your proposal, which consists of the following forms.

- Section A: Project Summary. This is restricted to one page.
- Section C: Project Description. This is 1–15 pages long.
- Section D: References Cited. These are the references cited in Section C.
- Section E: Biographical Sketch(es). A biographical sketch is required for each senior project personnel.
- Section F: Budget. Georgia will do your budget pages for you if you so wish. However, you still need to submit a Budget Justification.

Section B is the Table of Contents, which is automatically generated so no such form appears for this. All other forms can be completed by either you or Georgia; just let Georgia know which ones you would like her to complete.

Note that each form must be submitted separately; thus, each form must be prepared as a separate TeX file. To submit a form, first prepare it as a TeX file. Next convert the TeX file to a pdf file (see Section 2 below). Then, in the box of **Forms in Proposal Kit Number** N, click on the radio button next to the form that you wish to submit and then click Go To Form . Next click on Transfer PDF . Click on Browse , which brings up the Browse window. Browse through your directories to find your pdf file (if you followed $(*)$ this should be simple); you might have to adjust the `Filter` so that:

1. the last part of the path name is /$*$.pdf
2. it gives a path name of a directory under which your pdf file is sitting, under `Directories` you can further specify the directory in which your pdf file is sitting by clicking on the desired directories.

Once you have browsed to the desired directory, your pdf file should appear under `Files`. Highlight your file.pdf by clicking on it and then click on OK . The appropriate file.pdf name, along with its entire path, should appear on the white box (although you might not be able to see all of it since it is too long). Then hit Transfer PDF , a box should appear saying all is fine, then click on OK . Voilà, all done. Note the options to view (i.e., Display) and delete (in case you want to make changes and resubmit) what you have submitted. At this point, click on Return to Form Selector in order to submit further forms. If you have difficulties transferring your pdf files, then mail, **as attachments**, your separate **pdf** files to Georgia and she will do it for you. Please do not send her your tex files since errors can be generated by mailing tex files; mailing pdf files as attachments is much safer.

Once you have submitted all the forms which you are doing, let Georgia know. She will then do the remaining forms. Once she has finished her part, print off your entire proposal: go to **PROPOSAL ACTIONS**, highlight your proposal N - Not Assigned, and click on Print , click on the radio button **Print Entire Proposal**, click on Print Selected Item . Next click on Cancel, which takes you back to **PROPOSAL ACTIONS**, click on Allow SRO Access , which gives SPAR the right to access your proposal. Then take your printed proposal to Georgia; she will have the SPAR processing form and the Disclosure form finished and a few papers that you need to sign. You are all done!

2. converting a tex file to a pdf file

Minna has made it easy for us to convert tex files to pdf files. Just type the appropriate command:

pdftex file.tex
pdflatex file.tex
pdfasmtex file.tex

which will TeX your file and create the corresponding pdf file. If your tex file has an embedded EPS file you will have to convert the EPS file to a pdf file first by using epstopdf and then use pdftex, pdflatex, or pdfamstex.

You can preview your file.pdf file before sending it off. In your command window, in the directory the pdf file is in, type the following command.

```
acroread file.pdf &
```

This will pull up an Acrobat Reader window with your file in it. Use the arrow keys to navigate through the pages. Note that under `File` there is a print option.

3. page numbering

On page 5 of the Grant Proposal Guide NSF 00-2 , under `C. FORMAT OF THE PROPOSAL`, it reads: *Every page of the proposal must be numbered at the bottom center. Proposers however, may select any numbering mechanism for the proposal (e.g., sections may be separately paginated and include both the section and page number on the bottom of each page, or the entire proposal may be numbered consecutively).*

Hints on getting the number bottom center. If you are using AMS-TeX, you might have to include the command \NoRunningHeads between your \documentstyle{?} and \document commands. If you are using Latex, you might have to include the command \pagestyle{plain} between your \documentclass[?]{?} and \begin{document} commands.

Hints on numbering consecutively. Section A is page 1. Section B is page 2. Thus Section C should start with page 3. If you are using AMS-Tex, then just after your \document command, put \pageno=3. If you are using Latex, then put \setcounter{page}{3} between your \documentclass[?]{?} and \begin{document} commands.

4. further ams-tex comments

AMS-TeX automatically puts the header References when you have the \Refs and \endRefs commands. To replace this header with "Section D: References Cited", just after \Refs put \nofrills{Section D: References Cited}.

5. FURTHER LATEX-TEX COMMENTS

Latex automatically puts the header REFERENCES when you use the command \begin{thebibliography}. To replace this header with something else, anywhere between your \documentclass[?]{?} and \begin{thebibliography} commands, put

either \renewcommand{\refname}{\vskip -20 pt}
or \renewcommand{\bibname}{\vskip -20 pt} ,

which one depends on your documentclass. The vskip command moves the references vertically up 20 points (you might have to adjust this) and creates a blank header. Then, just before \begin{thebibliography}, put whatever header you want.

Let's say that in your project summary, which is Section A, you have 2 display formulas which are tagged as (1) and (2) via the \begin{equation} and \end{equation} commands. Then, in your project description, which is Section C, you should start your tagging off with (3). To do this, between your \documentclass[?]{?} and \begin{document} commands, put \setcounter{equation}{2} (yes, 2 not 3).

Let's say in Section C, Project Description, you want to Tex up your Project Description using the \cite command to do your references, which means that the end of your file contains your citations:

\begin{thebibliography} ... \bibitem's ... \end {thebibliography} .

This causes troubles since the references are to be a separate file and not included at the end of your Project Description. There is an easy way to fool Latex to get around this. Write your Section C, using the \cite command along

\begin{thebibliography} ... \bibitem's ... \end {thebibliography} ,

all as one file. Latex the file to create a file.aux file, which contains the needed reference information. Then insert \end{document} just before the \begin{thebibliography} . Next type `pdflatex file.tex`. You will have a pdf file with the correct citations but without the actual references at the end. Then cut-&-paste the

\begin{thebibliography} ... \bibitem's ... \end {thebibliography} ,

into a new file to create your Section D, References Cited.