



ADDRESSING A NATIONAL ISSUE: A Brief Introduction to Realigning the Broader Impacts Conversation

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Michael Thompson
The Broader Impacts Guy



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Preface

If you are reading this, you are probably somewhat familiar with the term “broader impacts” and the associated broader impacts criterion. My intent with this discussion is to briefly share some thoughts and ideas about broader impacts which have yet to be fully explored or made explicit by the broader impacts community. This community mainly includes local, state, and federal agencies, colleges, institutions, centers for teaching excellence, faculty, researchers, scientists, scholars, educators, graduate students, proposal writers, administrators in research offices, engaged scholarship specialists, community engagement and outreach activists, industry-academic relationship professionals, and post-doctoral associates or fellows. If you find these thoughts and ideas interesting please let me know and also share them with a friend or colleague.

The Background and Issue with Broader Impacts

The National Science Foundation (NSF) broader impacts criterion was formally introduced as a new criterion in 1997. More specifically this grant-writing expectation was communicated to the research community via Notice 121, New Criteria for NSF Proposals (<https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/issuances/in121.txt>), on July 10, 1997 and officially implemented on October 1, 1997. During this time the NSF broader impacts definition for the criterion was described to all as “encompassing the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes”. This criterion definition remains the same... [Click Here to Read Entire Article](#).