WRITING SUCCESSFUL GRANTS
(how to get the money!)

New Faculty Research Support
UW Bothell and UW Tacoma
MEET PRESENTERS

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Strategies for Success

• Be Realistic: Merge Teaching & Research
• Assess your strengths and interests
• Develop your research ideas to highlight your strengths
• Develop short and long term goals
Successful Researcher Behavior

• Number of Awards
  – Number of proposals
  – Consortium/collaboration
  – Reduced teaching load
  – Association Officer

• Dollar amount
  – Education in Grant Writing
  – Number of proposals
  – Association meetings
Branch Campus Support

• Number of Awards
  – Number of proposals
  – Consortium/collaboration
  – Reduced teaching load
  – Association Officer

• Dollar amount
  – Education in Grant Writing!!
  – Number of proposals
  – Association meetings

We can and want to help!
Getting Started – Proposal Formulation

• What are you passionate about?
• What is the problem?
• Why is it important?
• How is existing knowledge inadequate?
• Why is your idea better?
• What is new, unique or different?
• What will this research contribute?
• Who will benefit?
• How will your research be disseminated?
Advance Grant Preparation

- Preliminary data
- Publish a paper
- Find Mentors
- Enlist collaborators
- Courses and compliance
- Research ethics/Human subjects etc.
Finding the Right Opportunities

• Contact Office of Research Support
• Grant writers/funding searches
• Develop funding search skills
• Ask your Colleagues

Grants are rejected because the proposal does not match the program!
Funding Sources

- Federal, State, and Local Agencies
- Foundations
- Corporate America
- Private Donors
- Specific initiatives

Be aware of current funding climate!
Finding the Right Opportunities

• Research possible funding sources read successful proposals; understand their interest
• Match your strengths and project to the needs of the funding source – don’t “shotgun” it
• Contact the funding source/program officer
• Develop collaborative relationships if needed
  – Multiple collaborators
  – Multiple organizations
Developing the Proposal

- Allow appropriate amount of time and more!!!
- Please let ORS know as soon as you decide to apply
- Read the instructions!! (in their entirety)
- Use sponsor format -page limits, font sizes and margins
- Read the instructions again

Grants are rejected because the applicant did not follow directions!
The Problem makes the Proposal

• Clearly define the problem or significance of the research to the discipline funding agency
• Need strong argument
  – Does it address an important need or issue?
  – Does it fill a knowledge gap?
Every Grant is a Sales Pitch

• Sell Your Idea!
  – Opening 2-3 paragraphs of the proposal
  – Get the reviewer interested fast!
  – An expanded abstract

Keep it simple and brief.
The Sales Pitch...

• Set the Stage
  – Identify the importance
  – Summarize the state of the art
  – Describe technical challenges to solving the
    problem
  – Potential benefits
The Sales Pitch...

- State The Theme – Your Solution
  - Describe the concept and approach
  - Establish credibility-why it will succeed
  - Describe your project’s fundamental purpose

- Create a Vision
  - Show how your work will advance the field
  - Envision the world with the problem solved
Writing the Proposal

• Clearly define the project goals/objectives
  – Specific and measurable
  – Usually 1 overarching goal; 2-5 objectives
• Include research design and work plan with a timeline
  – Visualize overall project with a drawing if possible
  – Specify major tasks and timelines with flow charts, etc.
**Reviewers like Timelines**

**Table IV. Timetable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Aim 1</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sh RNA knockdowns</td>
<td><em>In vivo</em> experiments</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Breeding IL-6 /SCID mice</td>
<td><em>In vivo</em> experiments</td>
<td>Breeding IL-6Ra KO /SCID mice</td>
<td>Characterization and <em>in vivo</em> experiments</td>
<td>Results evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specific Aim 2</td>
<td>Immune cell depletion studies</td>
<td><em>In vitro</em> mechanism experiments</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Soluble gp130 <em>in vivo</em> experiments</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conditional expression studies; breeding / <em>in vivo</em> experiments</td>
<td>Results evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From: Grantsmanship and Navigating through the NIH
Bill Parks, Lynn Schnapp, and John Amory
*Department of Medicine, University of Washington*
Writing the Proposal

• Applicant qualifications and capabilities
  – within your field of expertise and capabilities
  – cite prior work - don’t be modest
  – highlight your contributions
• Evaluation plan and/or expected outcomes
• Budget
  – include budget narrative
• Appendix - only if needed
Writing the Proposal

• Letters of commitment/support
  – ahead of deadline
• Vita (bio)
  – match the proposed work
  – Publications
    • Up to date
    • Complete citations—all authors
    • NO abstracts (if necessary then different heading)
    • Match on-line
    • Submitted manuscripts OK
Strategies for Success

- Include pilot/preliminary data (if possible)
- Address all review criteria
- Follow the suggested format
- Don’t make reviewers look for information;
- All important information should be
  - easily accessible
  - clearly stated
  - can be highlighted (bolding, tables, etc.)
The Reviewer–

• Reads lots of grants
  – At Home
    • in bed
    • while watching Survivor/Law and Order
  – On the plane
  – At the last minute!

• Reviewers are stressed, anxious, busy and will not be sympathetic!

Do Not Tick off the Reviewers!
Strategies for Success

• Understand your reviewers
  – Assume an uninformed but intelligent reader
  – Use clear, accessible language
  – Take the reviewer by the hand
  – Don’t make them think
  – Don’t require them to look elsewhere for information

• Polish Abstract/Introduction/Specific Aims
  – Read first by the reviewers—may be all they read.

Reviewers are looking for reasons to stop reading!
Writing Tips

• No tolerance for typos
• Keep it simple and brief
• Use active vs. passive voice
• Avoid excessive jargon
• Avoid excessive abbreviations
• Avoid vague terms
Writing Tips

• Avoid obvious or tautological statements
  – “…the cytoskeleton is important for cell structure.”
  – “…poor outcomes mitigate the ability to actualize wellness potentials.”

• Avoid pleonasms: “…has been shown to…”

• Avoid unfettered enthusiasm
  – Do not use the word “exciting” more than once

• Figures
  – Label figures with numbers, titles, or legends
  – Do not put figures a page or two away from the text
    – Little figures are hard to see
Writing Tips

• Need logical flow from aim to aim
• Link Conclusions to Aims
• Method
  – Not too much, not too little detail
• Stay focused
• Discuss expected findings, pitfalls, etc.

Lead the Reviewer through the Proposal!
Presentation and Style

- Paragraphs, spaces, and white space
  - Don’t make it look dense or cluttered
  - Readable fonts
  - consistent fonts, margins (all 0.5 in), etc.
- Consistent system (bold, underline etc.) to indicate sections and subsections
- Make it visually pleasing/easy on the eye for your reader
Strategies for Success

• Don’t write in isolation;
  – Work closely with the program officer, collaborators, grant writers and/or colleagues
  – Have a colleague(s) or someone else review the proposal using a feedback form
    • Check ego at the door and allow time for rewrites
  – Use grant writers/proofreaders
    • Root out inconsistencies in format, typos, misspellings, grammar etc.
    • No error is too small to correct
    • Reviewers hate typos!
Process and Submit the Proposal

• Be aware of electronic submission requirements
• Include enough time for the internal review process
• Make sure your budget is in line with the proposal;
  – provide sufficient budget justification
• Be sure all supporting documents are included
Ready - Submit

And Wait

for the Decision
Dealing with the DECISION

• Understand the “competitiveness” of the environment
• If rejected (as many are the first time), read the reviewers comments (if not received, ask for them)
• Stay in contact with the funding source
• Persistence counts – prepare to re-submit
What Winners Have in Common-

- Significance
- Original approach
- Strong likelihood of success
- Knowledge and experience in the field
- Experience in methodology
- Realistic amount of work
- Cost effective
What Winners Have in Common -

• Detailed budgets match the proposed program
• They give something back; planned dissemination of outcomes may give your proposal an edge
• Follow the guidelines
• Professional looking - white space
• Not to short or too long – again, follow the guidelines

Good Proposals Teach!
Reasons for Failure

- Lack of original ideas
- Diffuse, unfocused or superficial research plan
- Lack of knowledge of relevant literature/work
- Lack of experience in essential methodology
- Lack of preliminary data
- Uncertainty in future directions
Reasons for Failure

- Unrealistically large amount of work
- Lack of sufficient experimental detail
- Uncritical approach
- Deviating from guidelines
- Ignoring review criteria
Strategies for Success

• Fit research and grant writing into your job
  – Attend workshops
  – Read successful grants
  – Get funding alerts
  – Get on a review panel
  – Find a mentor

• Use ORS resources/grant writers
• Submit, revise, & resubmit
Finally—Treat the Process as a:

• Game
  – Learn the rules and keep playing!
• Team Sport
  – use your team
WRITING SUCCESSFUL GRANTS (how to get the money!)

Questions?

This slide set is available from:
UW Bothell Office of Research
www.uwb.edu/research
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