

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

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

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 pleonasm: “...*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 too short or too long – again, follow the guidelines



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

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Questions?

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