WRITING SUCCESSFUL GRANTS
(how to get the money!)

New Faculty Research Support
UW Bothell and UW Tacoma

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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
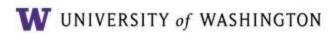 - Association meetings

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!

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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
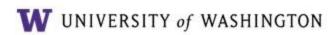 - Specify major tasks and timelines with flow charts, etc.

Reviewers like Timelines

Table IV. Timetable

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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!
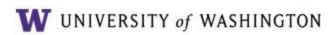
Do Not Tick off the Reviewers!

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
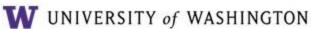- Make it visually pleasing/easy on the eye for your reader

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
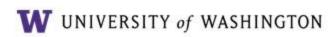- Realistic amount of work
- Cost effective

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

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Questions?

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