

PROJECT ADMINISTRATION NEWS

Successful Research Models

Researcher Behavior that Leads to Success in Obtaining Grant Funding: A Model for Success

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This study conducted in 2006 by Sharon Stewart Cole, Ph.D. of the Nevada Cancer Institute outlines steps for success in obtaining grant funding. This study examined a previous funding success model for its use across disciplines in order to identify the significant behaviors, networking activities, and demographic profile that contributed to the successful receipt of federal grant awards. A comprehensive model of funding success was identified. The ability to participate in grant-funded research can be critical to new faculty seeking tenure and to institutions seeking funding to support research activities. Only a few recent studies have attempted to systematically investigate the behaviors that lead to federal grant awards.

Several key, prominent issues might influence faculty's success in receiving federal funding: (a) the perspectives and needs of research faculty; (b) incentives that could influence faculty to pursue funded research; (c) institutional processes and behavior that could impact faculty who seek funded research; (d) the balance between teaching and research; and (e) the competitive nature of federal funding. Researchers in this article

showed that the key to pursuing grant funding lies in discovering the motivators that attract faculty. Becoming a complete scholar is traditionally identified as behavior associated with preparing proposals, participating in research projects, and publishing research results. Competition for support could seriously hinder new researchers' efforts. Data from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) showed that only 13.5% of its proposals were submitted from investigators between the ages of 36 and 40, while 20.4% were submitted from investigators over 50 years of age (National Institutes of Health, 2005).

Discovering the individual motivators that attract faculty would reduce barriers and stimulate the grant funding efforts. Demographic or profile data with significant frequencies for the respondent population was identified in this study. Junior faculty often have little awareness of how to receive federal funds or how to become a P.I. Studies suggest that too few mentors are available to help new faculty in becoming successful. Training and incentive programs and facilities would help build faculty research capacity. Researchers have also pointed out that previous experience with funding programs is directly related to activity in seeking external funds. Other studies suggest that tenure status and academic rank have no significant correlation to faculty research productivity. Also, tenure and academic rank are not significant variables for this study

population in obtaining grants. There is a need for peer review processes to provide applicants with feedback. For this study, few survey respondents reported the use of peer review as behavior to gain success in obtaining grant awards. In light of the findings, the research community could benefit from applying the funding success models represented in this study which can be found at: http://www.ncura.edu/content/news/rmr/docs/research_behavior.pdf

The success model as determined by this study can be applied across disciplines, and this study offers a systematic approach to determining the significant behaviors that can be applied to similar populations. To apply this model to other disciplines, the agencies selected as independent variables should be those who usually fund programs in the disciplines under study. This model can be applied to colleges and universities that focus on other objectives, such as student support, operating expenses, or program costs, by replacing the research-related variables with those related to other objectives.

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Grant Opportunities

- ◆ August 12, 2008 -US Department of Education: Opportunity No. "ED GRANTS 070708-003: High Quality Supplemental Educational Services and After School Partnerships Demonstration Program, CFDA 84.287N
- ◆ September 2, 2008 - Volunteer Income Tax Assistance : Opportunity No. "VITA 2009": VITA Grant
- ◆ September 30, 2008- National Science Foundation: Opportunity No. 08-579: Arctic Observing Network
- ◆ October 8, 2008-National Science Foundation: Opportunity No. 08-581: Astronomy and Astrophysics Postdoctoral Fellowships

Spotlight on National Research



ORSP Website!

NSF Signs Memorandum of Understanding with Department of Defense for National Security Research

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Defense (DoD) that would allow researchers to apply for grants to study subjects that may be of interest to U.S. national security. Officials anticipate the MOU will fund work leading to new knowledge about topics such as religious fundamentalism, terrorism and cultural change. The results may have uses for U.S. armed forces and other DoD agencies. David Lightfoot, assistant director of NSF's Social, Behavioral and Economic (SBE) Sciences Directorate stated: "We've always believed that sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists and other social scientists, through basic social and behavioral science research, could benefit our national security. In fact, we've always done so through various research projects."

According to the MOU, funding for research projects will be determined on a case-by-case basis. DoD will consider supporting proposals submitted to regular NSF programs managed by SBE. In return, DoD will get the gold standard for the U.S. peer review process ensuring the research meets specific criteria for intellectual merit and broader impact. Grant proposals will be evaluated by SBE's normal merit-review panels, though Pentagon officials will have some input into who sits on the panels. The research will not be classified and there will be no constraints on the researchers' ability to publish their results.

At this point, the MOU will be in effect for three years.

<http://www.du.edu/orsp>

DU ORSP—Proposal Preparation TIPS # 1-5

1. Read sponsor guidelines, RFA, RFP, etc. carefully. Read them again.

- Do you have the most current version?
- Have all involved in preparation of the proposal meet early in the process to review guidelines, RFA, RFP and assign tasks, etc.
- Do guidelines require any supporting documentation you must request from another part of the university?
- Cost sharing or matching should be included only if required by the sponsor – get department approvals.
- Make sure you understand proposal requirements and pose your own questions before this date.

2. Alert administrators involved in review and sign-off process that a proposal is being developed.

- Tell them when it is due to sponsor and when it has to go to ORSP.
- Alert your ORSP contact and send them a copy of the guidelines or RFA or RFP, the proposal due date, and the date you hope to send it to ORSP for review. University policy specifies proposals be received by ORSP five working days prior to due date.
- Ask whatever questions at this stage.

3. Who will be working on the proposed project?

- Is there a Co-PI?
- Will it involve university people from outside your school or department (if so, you need confirming emails from their Directors, Deans or Department Chairs)?
- Are there consultants? A letter of commitment generally strengthens a proposal.
- Subcontractors - work scope, budget, institutional sign-off from the collaborating institution, a copy of the collaborating institution's F&A rate agreement, CV or bio. sketch of key personnel, facilities/equipment/other resources *if necessary*, letter of commitment, if necessary—be reminded letters of commitment generally strengthen a proposal.
- Get names, email addresses and phone numbers of all contact people.

4. Consider various components in the proposal. Determine who is responsible for which pieces. Make a list/Think ahead.

- Do key personnel have updated CVs? Are biographical sketches needed? For whom? Is the format specified by the sponsor?

- Is a Current & Pending Support required (this is often a time-consuming piece)?
- Do you need to include references or letters of support?
- Send emails alerting all appropriate people as to what you need from them. Follow up.

5. Think backwards from the due date and make a schedule for yourself and others.

- When does the proposal have to be sent out? Be sure you know the REAL deadline—the receipt date or the mailing date?
- How many sign-offs are required for your division/school/department? Try to set a timeline for each review.
- When must it get to ORSP to give adequate time for review and changes if there are any (university policy specifies proposals be received by ORSP at least five working days prior to due date)?
- Make sure local administrators, PI and others working on the proposal are aware of your internal deadlines.

"Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known." -Carl Sagan