Proposal Development & Submission

Parallel Session for Researchers

"My project is simply this. I want to find out once and for all whether there's any truth in the belief that money can't buy happiness."

DEVELOPING TECHNICAL CONCENTRATION
What is grantsmanship?

The art of writing a proposal (or request) for support which successfully <u>advocates</u> for a particular line of inquiry, research or investigation while <u>aligning</u> with a funder's mission, ethos or interests.
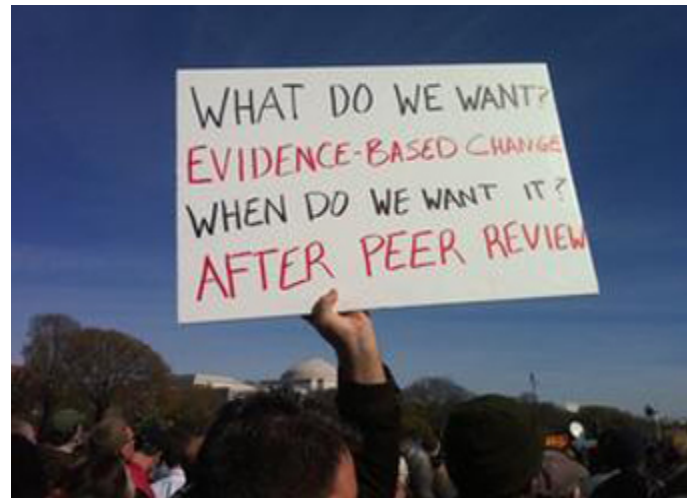
DEVELOPING TECHNICAL CONCENTRATION

Ok, that helps with "*advocacy for a particular line of research*," but what about "*aligning with funder's mission, ethos and interests*"?

1. Identify mission of agency/funder – *what are they all about?*

2. Address specific FOA/RFP criteria

3. "Selling points"

   - Technical Expertise
   - Institutional Resources
   - Societal Benefit

Bottom Line: Self promotion can be difficult.

DEVELOPING TECHNICAL CONCENTRATION
Best practices of Grantsmanship

ELEMENTS:

- Abstract – *Be Explicit.*

- Impact Statement – *Who cares?*

- Project Narrative –
    - *Introduction*
    - *Background*
    - *Problem Statement*
    - *Significance*
    - *Evaluation*

- Budget – *Reasonable*

- Timeline/ Gantt

TIPS for SUCCESS:

- *Write the abstract and introduction last.*

- *Careful with titles – be as explicit as possible.*

- *Assume sophisticated peer readers but may not be in exact niche field.*

- *Write for skeptics*

- *Preempt reviewer questions*

- *Reviewers make up minds quickly*

- *Writing style – declarative, short sentences.*

- *Include a cover letter where a specific peer-review panel or section is requested.*

DEVELOPING TECHNICAL CONCENTRATION
IMPACT STATEMENTS

Broader Impacts

How well does the activity advance discovery and understanding while promoting teaching, training and learning?

How well does the proposed activity broaden the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic, etc.)?

To what extent will it enhance the infrastructure for research and education, such as facilities, instrumentation, networks and partnerships?
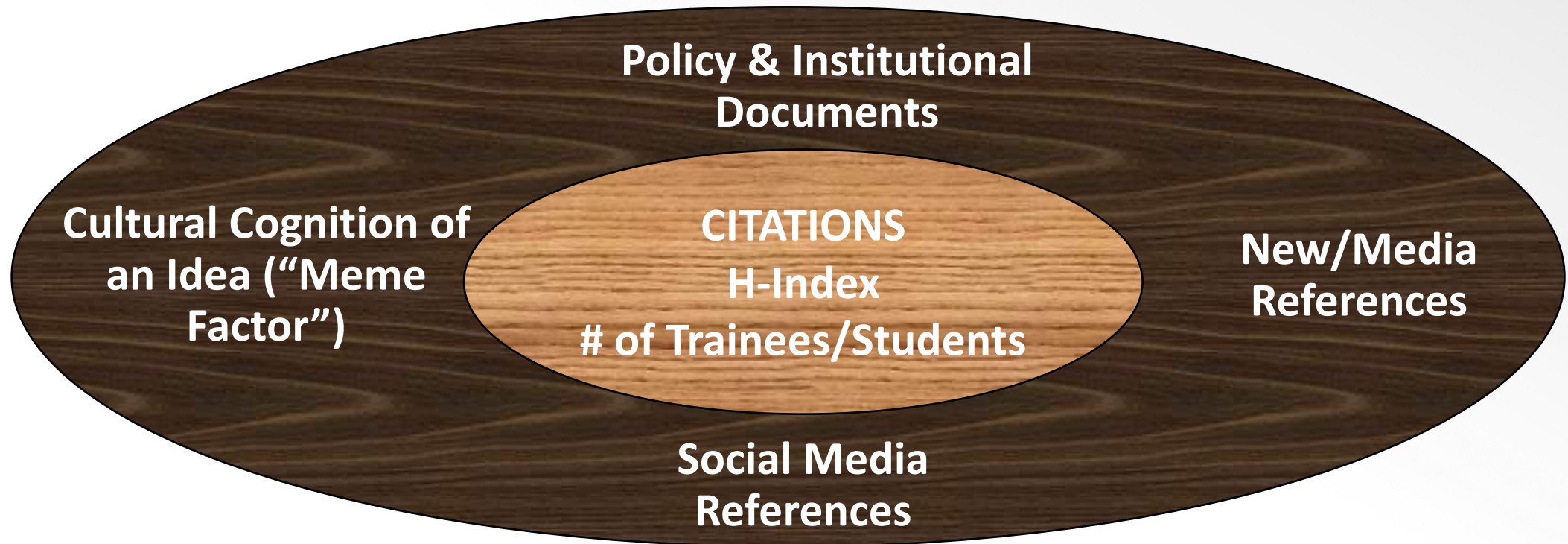
Will the results be disseminated broadly to enhance (scientific, technological, etc.) understanding?

What may be the benefits of the proposed activity to society?

DEVELOPING TECHNICAL CONCENTRATION IMPACT STATEMENTS

Broader Impacts

Measurement of Impact

Policy & Institutional Documents

Cultural Cognition of an Idea ("Meme Factor")

**CITATIONS
H-Index
# of Trainees/Students**

New/Media References

Social Media References

DEVELOPING TECHNICAL CONCENTRATION
ADDITIONAL TIPS

- Use "editing services" and/or colleagues to review
- Pay attention to formatting
  1. Biosketches/CVs
  2. Mentoring Plans
  3. Letters of Support
- Relationship building with Program Officer (PO) is KEY!!
- Based on the agency, find out who makes the funding decision. For example NSF, peer-review panel meets and makes recommendation, but PO makes actual decision. NIH is different – funding decisions are based on a point scheme earned by peer-review panel.
- Faculty commonly afraid of making missteps or mistakes – but shouldn't be!
- <u>DON'T</u> ask questions that are already addressed in RFP/FOA

DEVELOPING TECHNICAL CONCENTRATION
ADDITIONAL TIPS

- Researchers should review funded abstracts.
    - Often available online – i.e. REPORTER (NIH), NSF database.

- REPORTER is a great tool to use during Proposal development:
    1. what fits within the agency's mission
    2. view assignments for study sections (always complete this "requested study sec " in proposal; don't assume CSR will assign it correctly)
    3. view <u>funded</u> abstracts.

- Pay Careful Attention to Titles:
    1. Should be descriptive enough to indicate the topic of proposal
    2. Avoid clever taglines or other aspects.

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ACTIONS TO AVOID

➢Act like the funder owes you

➢Act like the funder owns you

➢Fail to do homework

➢Get lost between money and goal

➢Claim unmitigated success

➢Too-aggressive cultivation

➢Not asking for or ignoring feedback

➢Over-reliance on jargon

Sources:
http://www.hewlett.org/friday-note-pitch-persuasive-or-how-to-maybe-get-a-grant/
http://www.hewlett.org/friday-note-pitch-imperfect-or-how-not-to-get-a-grant/

DEVELOPING TECHNICAL CONCENTRATION
learning to use new forms - federal

FOA – Funding Opportunity Announcement

CFDA- Catalog of Federal Defense Acquisitions

PA – Program Announcement

PAR – Program Announcement with Special Receipt, Referral and/or Review

RFA – Request for Application

RFP – Request for Proposal

Top Tip: Annotated RFP.

DEVELOPING TECHNICAL CONCENTRATION
The New Federal Forms

NIH "Parent R01"

SF424 Forms

INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION – U.S. FEDERAL QUICK START GUIDE

- Basic Registrations
  - Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet
  - Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service – Not always Required
  - Registers with the new System for Award Management (SAM), [which replaced CCR in July 2012]
  - NATO Commercial and Governmental Entity (NCAGE) code

- Systems:
  - Grants.gov
  - Agency System Profile (e.g., NIH Electronic Research Administration – eRA - Commons)

Basic Application Components

Cover sheet	Abstract or project summary	Statement of work	Budget
Budget Justification	Biosketch	Current & Pending Support	Required Approvals
	Resources	Checklist	

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Statement of Work

Specific Aims	• Should answer questions about the research being proposed.
Why	• Is this research being studied?
Who	• Will be studied?
What	• Will be studied?
How	• Will it be studied?
When	• Will it be studied?
Where	• Will it be studied?

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Proposal Planning, Developing, Submitting

Encourage preparation of preliminary proposals

Facilitate contact with potential Sponsors

Provide proposal preparation guides and tools

Offer targeted workshops

Interpret proposal guidelines

Assist with proposal submission

Formal Proposal Components

Title/cover page

Abstract

Narrative

- Needs/Significance
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Evaluation

Personnel Vitae

Detailed budget with justification

Facilities/resources available

Appendices

Formal proposals are constructed according to sponsor guidelines.

Third Party Agreements

Subaward
- Written agreement with third party to obtain substantive programmatic effort under sponsored award
- Sub responsible for programmatic decision making, provision of research/research services, measurable performance and compliance requirements
  - *When you issue a subaward, you become the awarding agency*

Purchase Order/Vendor Agreement
- Legally binding agreement
- Engaging external vendor
- Acquisition of goods or services
  - Usually, commercially available
- Normally, handled through Purchasing Department

Consulting Agreement
- Vendor agreement
- Services too urgent, temporary, specialized, or highly technical
- Not issued to obtain substantive programmatic work
- Independent contractor without close supervision
- Usually participate on a work for hire basis
- NOT an employee

Consultant vs. Subrecipient

Questions to ask the PI to distinguish between a consultant or subawardee relationship:

- Did the individual/organization help develop the Scope of Work (SOW)?
- Will the individual/organization independently be responsible for carrying out a portion of the SOW?
- Will the individual/organization likely be a co-author on publications?
- Will the individual/organization own the intellectual property it develops?
- *The more "yes" answers to these questions, the more likely the relationship is that of a subawardee. Likewise, the more "no" answers, the more likely the relationship is that of a consultant or vendor.*

Vendor vs. Subrecipient

Factors to consider in making a determination

- Vendor
  - Provides goods and services within normal business operations
  - Provides similar goods and services to many different purchasers
  - Operates in a competitive environment
  - Provides goods or services that are ancillary to the operation of the Federal program
  - Is not subject to compliance requirements of the Federal program
- Subrecipient (Subaward)
  - Has its performance measured against whether the objectives of the federal program are met
  - Has responsibility for programmatic decision-making
  - Has responsibility for adherence to applicable federal program compliance responsibilities
  - Uses the federal funds to carry out a program of the organization as compared to providing goods and services for a program of the pass-through entity

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Subaward Process Requirements

Formal Proposal Stage

- Letter of intent from proposed subrecipient signed by authorized organizational representative (AOR)
  - Statement of work
  - Period of performance
  - Budget and justification of costs
  - Certifications/assurances
- May or may not be incorporated into final proposal

Special Budget Considerations for NIH: Salary Limits

NIH salary cap on grants, contracts and cooperative agreements is part of NIH's annual appropriation from Congress

Effective 1/1/15 limitation: $183,300 per year for 100% effort (tied to Federal Executive Schedule, Level II)

Consultants are exempt, but payments must meet the test of reasonableness

Could be imposed by other sponsors as well

Institutional salary may be supplemented with non-federal funds

NIH Salary Limits

Proposals reflect actual institutional base salary:
Example

	Gross	With Cap
Salary	$225,000	$183,300
Effort	50%	50%
Requested	$112,500	$ 91,650
Benefits (25%)	$ 28,125	$ 22,913
F&A (47%)	$ 66,094	$ 53,845
Total	$206,719	$168,408

FCOI – Financial Conflict of Interest

Existing federal regulations regarding the financial conflicts of interest (FCOI) of investigators require reporting on such conflicts to promote accountability, add transparency, enhance compliance and improve oversight on the institutional level. The regulations establish standards that provide a reasonable expectation that the design, conduct and reporting of research will be free from bias resulting from investigator financial conflicts of interest.

https://era.nih.gov/services_for_applicants/other/fcoi.cfm

"What conflict of interest?! I work here in my spare time."

Budget: Summary of General Points

Include both direct and F&A costs

Should be detailed (at least in first year)

Include only allowable costs

As required, include matching or cost-sharing (if cost-sharing is proposed it should be proportional between direct and F&A)

Example NIH Budget Page

Certifications, Representations, & Assurances

Other public policy requirements include:

- Lobbying
- Debarment and Suspension
- Delinquent Federal-Debt
- Drug-Free Workplace
- Drug and Alcohol Free Schools
- Trafficking in Persons
- Plus individual agency requirements

Additional Certifications required for contracts

- Procurement Integrity
- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Utilization of Small and Small Disadvantaged Business Concerns
  - >$650,000 – small business contracting plan required prior to contract award
- Certificate of Current Cost and Pricing Data
  - Submit with best and final offer

Certification Signatures

Authorizing Official: Chief Executive or those delegated authority

Supported by internal approvals and signatures: PI, department, dean, business officers

Signature indicates acceptance of requirements

Program guides/forms provide more info on regulatory requirements (including PI responsibilities)

Checklist for Proposal Review

✓Page limitations

✓Type size limitation

✓All elements of proposal included

✓Correct rates used

✓Budget correct

✓Signatures

✓Subcontractor commitment letter

✓All certifications included

✓If RFP, is exception letter needed?

✓If foundation/corporation, is it on "restricted" list?

✓Requirement for state review ascertained

✓Correct number of copies, deadline date, mailing address

✓Method of transmittal, packaging instructions

✓Limitation on number of proposals from institution

Electronic Proposal Submission

Grants.gov
- Currently lists all federal financial assistance opportunities
- Intended to be a common face to the government for submission of financial assistance applications
- Eventually all federal financial assistance applications will be submitted via Grants.gov

NSF FastLane
- Proposal Review
- Proposal Preparation & Submission
- Checking Proposal Status

NIH eRA Commons
- Electronic Streamlined Noncompeting Award Process (RPPR)