ADVANCE Project TRACS Grant Writing Bootcamp

Following on the heels of the highly successful EHHD bootcamp, this six-week training is designed to facilitate the production of a solid, review-ready grant proposal. Participants will have the opportunity to submit proposals to a mock panel review in order to receive helpful feedback from grant successful facilitators.

In each weekly two-hour session, participants can expect to interact with grant successful faculty to learn the skills and insights required to develop competitive grant proposals. Groups will be divided by funding agency and each participant will be expected to share their writing progress each week.

The first hour of the session will be devoted to lecture or discussion, and the remaining hour will consist of hands-on participatory writing and workshop activities. At the end of the session, grant submitters will have gained knowledge of developing narratives and budgets, funding agency and university requirements, and the process of the grant review panel for their respective funding agency. The most significant product of these sessions will be a review-ready grant proposal.

Required Reading and Registrations:
1. Register for funding database, SPIN by signing up for a GENIUS profile at: http://spin2000.infoed.org/GeniusSearch/genius.asp. It takes 24 hours for profiles to validate, so please sign up a day in advance before the bootcamp begins.
2. Access the ADVANCE Bootcamp dropbox folder for weekly course resources. See information on each session (below) for dates by when documents need to be read.
3. Register for your respective agency application portal (i.e. fastlane for NSF, eRA commons).

Assignments and Expectations:
1. The bootcamp format works best when participants attend regularly to share their work, ideas, and progress and to give feedback to other participants. We request that you make every effort to attend each weekly session, and commit to writing and reading for at least 30 minutes per day in order to make satisfactory progress on your proposal.
2. Completion of the fundamental pieces of a proposal including the project summary, biosketch, budget, and project narrative (research strategy, project description, etc.).

3. Participants should expect to have a plan for proposal completion by October 28th, 2013.

Schedule

Week One (9/16/13: Noon to 1:00 pm): Introduction and funding at MSU
The first meeting will introduce bootcamp participants to one another, provide an overview of how the sessions will progress in time and format, and introduce them to funding resources at MSU.

Assignment Due Before Next Session: Run a funding search in the SPIN system and locate at least one promising opportunity. Print out the Request for Proposals or Opportunity Description and bring to the next class. Begin to think about how you will approach this opportunity in terms of resources needed, planning the workload, etc. Familiarize yourself with the registration process for the funding agency whether it is fastlane, eRA Commons, etc. and register before 10/4/13.

Week One (9/20/13: 10:00 am to 12:00 pm): Reviewing Request for Applications or Request for Proposals and preparedness (talking with mentors)
Assignment Due Before Next Session: Make sure you have read through and notated your RFA/RFP and consult the administrative guide for your agency to familiarize yourself with the format. Skim through the OSP PI guide to familiarize yourself with the contents (you can refer back to it later). Write a one-page letter to your department head or prospective mentor that describes your project and the specific support you will require. Send it and be prepared to share your experience.

Week Two (9/27/13: 10:00 am to 12:00 pm): Letters of Intent, preparedness for process, mentors, and program officers
Assignment Due Before Next Session: Complete the draft of your project summary or specific aims and upload it to the dropbox drafts folder for your group to review at least two days before the next session. Survey the Geoscience Department “Carving out Time” webpage for helpful time saving tips. Locate the cognizant Program Officer or organizational contact for your opportunity and make a note to yourself to contact them with your project summary after the group provides feedback and you revise.

Week Three (10/4/13: 10:00 am to 12:00 pm): Assembling your proposal team, campus resources
Assignment Due Before Next Session: Revise your project summary using the review commentary you received and begin the basic application for your funding agency, whether it is forms or documents. Finish filling out (at least) the basic information and format your biosketch according to the requirements of the administrative guide. Use the biosketch samples from the previous week as a model. Make sure these are uploaded to dropbox for the Grant Coordinator to review. Before the next class, watch the NIH and NSF review panel videos and the NSF submitter’s experience video. If you are
submitting to NSF, take a moment to run your cursor over the NSF Proposal Review and Processing Diagram to get a better idea of how the NSF review process works.

**Week Four (10/11/13: 10:00 am to 12:00 pm): Responding to review critique and resubmissions**

**Assignment Due Before Next Session:** Visit NSF’s YouTube channel or the NIH reporter (or equivalent) and locate two videos or projects in your discipline that may have relevance to your research. Jot down a few notes about how you plan to make your project innovative and competitive. Have fun with it! **Begin drafting your main narrative.** For each agency, locate the instructions for this narrative in the administrative or policies and procedures guide. Following the instructions for your agency, draft at least five pages of the narrative and upload to dropbox at least two days before the next session. If you are interested, consider contacting NSF to see about serving as a reviewer. If you are really interested, talk to the Grant Coordinator about possible funding options for visiting NSF.

**Week Five (10/17/13: 9:00 am to 2:00 pm): One-on-One consultations with Grant Coordinator**

The Week Five One-on-One sessions are designed to give each participant time to check in with the Grant Coordinator to discuss the drafts submitted thus far, as well as begin to plan the completion of the proposal and coordinate any resources needed. Each participant will need to sign up for a 20-minute session sometime from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. A sign-up sheet will be in dropbox for this purpose. The NIH Review Panel will also be happening on this day, so those with NIH proposals may plan ahead for this event. **Assignment Due Before Next Session:** Complete a rough draft of the full narrative, and upload to dropbox at least two days before the next session.

**Week Five (10/18/13: 10:00 am to 12:00 pm): The process/mechanics of proposals**

**Assignment Due:** Begin revising and re-drafting your documents based on feedback received. Upload your revised drafts and project budget to dropbox by Monday, October 28th for the Grant Coordinator to review. Make an appointment with the Grant Coordinator to plan the remainder of your submission.

**Week Six (10/23/13: 6:30 pm): Celebratory dinner and networking!**

**Other Important Information:** On October 17th, 2013, ADVANCE and INBRE will conduct a grant panel review for those with NIH research proposals. The letter of intent is due on September 20, 2013 for those interested in participating. For non-NIH proposals, two separate review panel events will be made available in November 2013 and January 2014. Having your grant reviewed by a diverse audience of grant successful facilitators will give you a competitive edge, so we encourage you to participate.

For Bootcamp follow-up, we have options. Based on how the course proceeds, the group can elect to commit to a long-term meeting schedule (meeting once or twice a month), or you may work directly with the resource team you assembled. We will vote on this a couple weeks into the Bootcamp, so continue to think about what is best for your success.
Overview

The 9/16 session is intended to introduce bootcamp participants to one another, provide an overview of how the sessions will progress in time and format, and introduce them to funding resources at MSU.

Objectives

Participants will complete the session with knowledge of who the other participants are and their interdisciplinary interests, as well as what to expect from each session. Each participant will have registered for COS/SPIN database and will be introduced to the Foundation Database in the library.

Activities

In the 9/16 session, activities will progress as follows:

1. Group introductions: name, dept., elevator speech about project, interdisciplinary interests (20 minutes)
2. Introduction to format session: discuss Tara Grey video and format of sessions (1 hour of lecture, 1 hour of hands on work, sharing drafts and progress) (20 minutes)
3. Introduction to COS/SPIN and test-run searches (sign-up for database before session) (20 minutes)

Homework

1. Run a funding search independently and locate at least one promising opportunity. Print the Request for Proposals or Opportunity Description and bring to class. Begin to think about how you will approach this opportunity in terms of resources needed, planning the workload, etc.
2. Review the registration process for the funding agency submission proposal that is relevant (eRA Commons, fastlane, etc.)

Evaluation (possible questions)

Did participants feel welcomed and heard in the group? Did they see possibility in future interdisciplinary work? Do they understand the Tara Gray format and see it as valuable to their purposes? Did they obtain a profile in COS/SPIN and conduct a successful search?

Materials

Participants will need to have or review the following materials:

- Review Tara Gray’s presentation before the 9/16 session
- Receive Tara Gray’s handout (PDF)
- OSP “Finding Funding” handout
- SPIN Training Guide handout

Other Resources

Dr. Marilyn Lockhart of Center for Faculty Excellence will present the concepts and expectations of the Tara Gray meeting approach.
Overview

The 9/20 session is intended to familiarize participants with Requests for Applications and/or Requests for Proposals (or their equivalent) in order to convey the importance of reading each opportunity carefully for eligibility, requirements, determining a good fit and preparedness for the process. Dr. Beth Burroughs will discuss strategies related to discussing your project with your chosen mentor, departmental or otherwise.

Objectives

Participants will bring an RFA or RFP that they have reviewed to learn more about important sections to note in an RFP. Participants will learn more about how to determine eligibility, note important areas, and plan for approaching the opportunity (scheduling time to work, consulting dept. head or mentor), and the best way to approach mentors or the dept. head for project support.

Activities

In the 9/20 session, activities will progress as follows:

1. Review and discuss the important sections of common RFA’s: directorate or institute (go to each one!), any policy changes (consult admin guides!), eligibility (NIH has wizard, NSF review opp.), budget, due date, program description, etc. (15 minutes)
2. Discuss registration process for eRA Commons and NSF fastlane, foundations, AOR role, registrations not needed (DUNS, Grants.gov, etc.) (15 minutes)
3. Dr. Burroughs to discuss best practices for consulting with mentors and/or dept. heads about your project (30 minutes). Topics: how to propose project and ask for support, etc.
4. (workshop activity) based on your RFA (or equivalent) make a list of the resources, support, and assistance you need from your mentor or department. Discuss (with your group) any barriers you anticipate in getting these needs met, and how you will deal with those barriers.

Homework

1. Register in the system for the agency of your choice (fastlane, eRA commons, etc.)
2. Write a letter to your department head or mentor that describes your project and the specific support you need (see sample letter). Send it and be prepared to share your experience!

Materials

Participants will need to have or review the following materials:

- An RFA from their funding search
- Sample RFA’s from NIH and NSF
- NSF and NIH admin guides
- OSP PI Guide
- Sample mentor letter

Other Resources

Dr. Beth Burroughs of Mathematical Sciences will discuss her experiences with successful mentoring and offer tips and best practices for getting the support you need for your project. Q&A will be available for specific questions.
Overview

The 9/27 session is intended to provide participants with successful samples of letters of intent and pre-proposals that are required for many programs, and to discuss the merits and possible areas for improvement for each document. Participants will also encounter samples of successful one-page project summaries that they can use as a model for their own summary to provide to Program Officers and mentors. Dr. Mogk and Dr. Christopher will talk about best practices for approaching Program Officers and making the most of mentor-mentee relationships.

Objectives

Participants should expect to complete this session with greater knowledge of how to draft a successful project summary and letter of intent. They will also have a firm understanding of how to use these drafts to approach Program Officers and mentors for advice on how to proceed with their project, as well as how to get the most out of a relationship with a Program Officer or mentor.

Activities

In the 9/27 session, activities will progress as follows:

1. (Follow up from last week/mentor response) Review and discuss critical elements of successful letters of intent and pre-proposals and where to access these documents (GFN, NIH reporter, agency websites) (15 minutes)
2. Review and discuss samples of successful and almost successful NSF, NIH, and USDA project summaries and specific aims (15 minutes)
3. Dr. Mogk to discuss approaching NSF Program Officers and how to make the most of this resource (30 minutes).
4. Dr. Suzanne Christopher to discuss approaching NIH Scientific/Research institute contacts and how to best manage the mentor-mentee relationship (30 minutes)
5. (workshop activity) use the remaining time to draft your project summary or improve your existing draft.

Homework

1. Complete the draft of your project summary or specific aims and upload it to the dropbox drafts folder for your group to review at least two days before the next session. Survey the Geoscience Dept. “Carving out Time” webpage for helpful time saving tips.
2. Locate the Program Officer or organizational contact and make a note to yourself to send them your project summary after the group provides feedback and you revise.
Assembling your proposal team, campus resources

Overview

The 10/4 session is intended to inform participants of their various options for research support on the MSU Campus. Each participating program will discuss an overview of their program and the research capacity support it has to offer, especially in regards to proposal and project development.

Objectives

Participants will leave this session with a thorough understanding of research support options available to them. They will also have a clear idea of the distinctions between each group, and who to contact for what.

Activities

In the 10/4 session, activities will progress as follows:

1. Each group – in the following order - (ADVANCE, OSP, CFE, INBRE, and Extended U) will discuss their program and its research capacity offerings and leave enough time for Q&A (15 minutes per group = 75 minutes)
2. Open the discussion for Q&A (15 minutes)
3. (workshop activity) discuss your project summary with your group and go over your review notes with them. Plan to talk outside of class via email or phone to finish any feedback.

Homework

1. Revise your project summary with the review you received, and begin the application for your prospective funding agency whether it is various documents/forms on fastlane or the SF-424 application forms. Finish filling out (at least) the basic information and for NIH, one of the shorter docs (biosketch, executive summary, etc.) and for NSF work on basic info and your biosketch (use biosketch sample from previous week).
2. Watch the NIH or NSF review panel videos before the next session, the NSF submitter’s Experience YouTube (if you are submitting to NSF).
3. Run your cursor over the NSF Proposal Review and Processing Diagram to get a better idea of the NSF review process.

Materials

Participants will need to have or review the following materials:

- Handouts from each group
- NIH or NSF review panel videos
- NSF Submitter’s Experience YouTube video
- NSF Proposal Review and Processing Diagram

Other Resources

Leadership from ADVANCE, INBRE, OSP, Extended U, and CFE will present an overview of their group and the research capacity support available to participants.
Overview
The 10/11 session will give participants the information they need to proceed before and after receiving review commentary from peer review panels, including how to respond to returned proposals. Information about the limitations brought about by sequestration will also be discussed in addition to tactics for submitting proposals in a highly competitive, resource limited environment.

Objectives
The main objective of this session is to prepare investigators for submitting and resubmitting in a competitive research environment by strategizing proposals and responding appropriately to review commentary.

Activities
In the 10/11 session, activities will progress as follows:

1. Discuss funding situation (sequestration, competition) and frequently asked questions about each agency, include foundations (15 minutes)
2. Discuss the importance of devising innovative, paradigm busting, responsive research projects and listening to “the voice” that tells you that it may not be as edgy as they are wanting, but you will push it through anyhow. Discuss how to sharpen the edge of your projects (interdisciplinary dialogue and partnering, surveying funded projects, thinking creatively, paying attention to merit review criteria) (15 minutes) transition to “how to respond to review criteria” (2 minutes)
3. Dr. Whitlock will discuss her experiences and share expertise on responding to review criteria and what you absolutely need to know to be successful (30 minutes)
4. (workshop) Discuss your revised project summary and the progress made on other aspects of the application. Air out any concerns about the parts that you think “may not fly” or may not be responsive to the agency. Solicit group feedback for dealing with these concerns. Consider responding to this in your next iteration (one hour)

Homework
1. Go to NSF’s YouTube channel: http://www.youtube.com/user/VideosatNSF and locate two videos in your discipline that may have some relevance to what you are doing. Jot down a few notes about how you plan to make your project innovative and competitive. Have fun with it!
2. Begin drafting your main narrative. For each agency, locate the instructions for this narrative in the administrative or policies and procedures guide. Following the instructions for your agency, draft at least five pages of this narrative and upload to the dropbox drafts folder.
3. If you are interested, consider contacting NSF to see if you can serve as a reviewer. If you are really interested, talk to the Grant Coordinator about possible funding options for visiting NSF.

Materials
Participants will need to have or review the following materials:

- Funding FAQ for NIH and NSF, “Merit Review Facts”
- NSF Video Channels (projects)

Other Resources
Dr. Cathy Whitlock of Earth Sciences will discuss responding to reviews and preparing resubmissions.
Overview

The 10/18 session represents the “tipping point” in the proposal process wherein participants have a project summary and a solid project concept. This session is intended to initiate the proposal development and completion process by requiring participants to conceive the logic models, budget, and long-term plan of their research project. Activities will focus on completing the next two large and important proposal pieces, the budget and Research Strategy (NIH) or Project Description (NSF) (or main narrative equivalent).

Objectives

The main objective of this session is to push participants through the next major phase of the proposal development process, chiefly, completing the proposal and preparing documents for submission.

Activities

In the 10/18 session, activities will progress as follows:

1. Sandy Sward and M. Young to discuss overall proposal timeline and need to know information for getting your submission in successfully (resources, ePCF, etc.) (30 minutes)
2. Dr. Elizabeth Bird to discuss project development and best practices for developing a reasonable project plan with activities and resources needed to accomplish your outcomes (30 minutes).
3. (workshop) Spend 20 minutes developing your project logic model and solicit feedback from facilitators and group members. Spend 20 minutes drafting your budget and solicit feedback from facilitators and group members. Use the remainder of the time to make improvements.

Homework

1. Begin revising and re-drafting your Project Description, Research Strategy or equivalent main narrative. Upload to dropbox by Monday, October 28th for the Grant Coordinator to review.
2. Make an appointment with the Grant Coordinator to plan the remainder of your submission.

Materials

Participants will need to have or review the following materials:

- Logic Model Template
- Budget Narrative Template
- Proposal Process Timeline (NIH)
- Samples of successful Research Strategy and Project Description
- OSP Resource Packet

Other Resources

Dr. Elizabeth Bird and OSP Director, Sandy Sward will present on the topics of proposal/project development and considerations you need account for to get your proposal in on time.
ADVANCE Project TRACS Grant Writing Bootcamp Overview

Introduction: Following on the heels of the highly successful EHHD bootcamp, this six-week training is designed to facilitate the production of a solid, review-ready grant proposal. Participants will have the opportunity to submit proposals to a mock panel review in order to receive helpful feedback from grant successful facilitators.

Session Format: In each weekly two-hour session, participants can expect to interact with grant successful faculty to learn the skills and insights required to develop competitive grant proposals. Groups will be divided by funding agency and each participant will be expected to share their writing progress each week. The first hour of the session will be devoted to lecture or discussion, and the remaining hour will consist of hands-on participatory writing and workshop activities.

Expected Outcomes: At the end of the session, grant submitters will have gained knowledge of developing narratives and budgets, funding agency and university requirements, and the process of the grant review panel for their respective funding agency. The most significant product of these sessions will be a review-ready grant proposal.

Contributors:
ADVANCE Project TRACS, Center for Faculty Excellence, Office of Sponsored Programs, Vice President for Research, INBRE, and EHHD

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**Schedule of Events**

**Monday, September 16th, 2013**
Location: Animal Bioscience Building 145 (workshop)
Topic: Overview of writing groups, group introductions, and finding funding
Schedule: Noon to 1:00 pm (lunch provided)
Facilitators Marilyn Lockhart, Center for Faculty Excellence, Micaela Young, ADVANCE

**Friday, September 20th, 2013**
Location: International Coffee (discussion)
Topic: Reviewing Request for Applications or Request for Proposals and preparedness (talking with mentors)
Schedule: 10:00 am to 12:00 pm
Facilitator: Beth Burroughs (Math Sciences) to talk about mentee and mentor relationships

**Friday, September 27th, 2013**
Location: Animal Bioscience Building 145 (workshop)
Topic: Letters of Intent, preparedness for process, mentors, and program officers
Schedule: 10:00 am to 12:00 pm
Facilitator: David Mogk (Earth Sciences) and Suzanne Christopher (EHHD) to discuss approaching program officers and mentors

**Friday, October 4th, 2013**
Location: Animal Bioscience Building 145 (panel discussion)
Topic: Assembling your proposal team, campus resources
Schedule: 10:00 am to 12:00 pm
Facilitator: Sandy Sward (OSP), Marilyn Lockhart (CFE), Anne Bertagnolli (INBRE), Suzi Taylor (Extended U), Jessi Smith (ADVANCE)

**Friday, October 11th, 2013**
Location: International Coffee (discussion)
Topic: Responding to review critique and resubmissions
Schedule: 10:00 am to 12:00 pm
Facilitator: Cathy Whitlock (Earth Sciences) to discuss responding to reviews and preparing resubmissions

**Thursday, October 17th, 2013**
Location: Leon Johnson, ADVANCE Conference Room, 319
Topic: one-on-one consultations with Grant Coordinator
Schedule: 9:00 am to 2:00 pm (20 min. sessions)
Facilitator: Micaela Young (ADVANCE)

**Friday, October 18th, 2013**
Location: Animal Bioscience Building 145 (workshop)
Topic: The process/mechanics of proposals
Schedule: 10:00 am to 12:00 pm
Facilitator: Sandy Sward (OSP), Elizabeth Bird (EHHD)

**Wednesday, October 23rd, 2013**
Location: Copper Whiskey Bar and Grill (event)
Topic: Bootcamp wrap-up dinner, networking
Schedule: 6:30 pm
In Attendance: VPR, boot camp participants and facilitators

**Other Important Information:**
On October 17th, ADVANCE and INBRE will be conducting a grant panel review for those with NIH research proposals. The letter of intent is due on September 20th, 2013 for those interested in participating. For non-NIH proposals, two separate review panel events will be available in November 2013 and January 2014. Please contact Micaela Young, Grant Coordinator for more information or to register.