



# Academic Support & Success/Career Development



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## STRATEGIES AND SKILLS FOR SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL WRITING

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48<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Alaska Anthropological Association

March 4, 2021



NSF Grants  
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# OUTLINE

- Snapshot of my growth as a successful proposal writer
  - \$500 travel grant to million dollar cruise
- Strategies for Success
  1. PLANNING
  2. COLLABORATIONS
  3. REVIEWERS ARE PEOPLE TOO
  4. SYNERGISTIC OUTCOMES
- Questions and Discussion

# Where I started.....

## 2006 - the \$500 travel grant

- A trip to NH – 1<sup>st</sup> conference – hotel –dining inspiration
- At the pub I found myself eating, drinking, and laughing with grad students and professors
- The combination of science, adventures, and fun was exhilarating
- Start small – proposal writing is a learned skill



**The pub where it all began  
Dover, NH**

# Success comes from perseverance...

## So many declined proposals! Each one a learning experience building from the last

1. National Science Foundation Coastlines and People, June, 2019 (PI). *CoPe RCN – Designing the Foundation for an Arctic-focused Coastlines and People Hub*, \$500,000
2. National Science Foundation, 2019. *NNA Track 1 – Collaborative Research- Integrating Indigenous knowledge and interdisciplinary science to create a decision-making framework for risk management and relocation*. Funding Request: \$521,000.
3. National Science Foundation – Arctic Natural Science, June 2018. *Collaborative Research: Developing high-resolution records of storminess from the southern Bering Sea*. In collaboration with WHOI and UNCW. Funding Request \$303,000.
4. National Science Foundation – Arctic Natural Science – CAREER, submitted July 2017. *Late Holocene frequency of Bering Sea storm activity and coastal science education programs to promote informed decision making and pathways to higher education*. Funding Request \$734,219.
5. National Science Foundation – Marine Geology and Geophysics, submitted January 2017. *Collaborative Research: Developing high-resolution records of storminess from the southern Bering Sea*. In collaboration with WHOI and UNCW. Funding Request \$480,787
6. National Science Foundation – Arctic Natural Science – CAREER, submitted July 2016. *Late Holocene frequency of Bering Sea storm activity and coastal science education programs to promote informed decision making and pathways to higher education*. Funding Request \$634,601.
7. National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Alaska Fish and Wildlife Fund, submitted December 2016. *Development of stressor assessment of essential fish habitat in Cook Inlet*. In Collaboration with NOAA Fisheries. Funding Request \$125,000.
8. North Pacific Research Board, submitted December 2016. *BeringWatch: Enhancing the Capacity of Tribal Environmental Programs in Western Alaska*. In collaboration with the Alaska Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys and the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island. Funding Request \$47,706.
9. UAF-URSA, submitted March 2016. *Getting Muddy with Coastal Education and Research: Dynamic Alaskan Coastlines Spring 2016 Field Trip*. Funding Request \$5,000.
10. UAF-URSA Mentor Award, submitted February 2016. *Building on Success: Mapping Our Path into the Future with Real-Time Kinematic GPS*. Funding Request \$5,000.
11. North Pacific Research Board, January 2016. *Flooding and Erosion on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta: Community Coastal Geohazard Assessment of Tununak, Alaska*. Funding Request \$16,945
12. National Park Service – Alaska Region Natural Resource Project, submitted December 2016. *Unlocking sediment archives containing 10,000 years of environmental change, James Lagoon, Kenai Fjords National Park*. Funding Request \$81,879.
13. Coastal Marine Institute, submitted May 2015. *Development of sedimentary, geophysical, and geospatial datasets to decipher extreme storm event chronology, frequency, and environmental impact, Norton Sound Alaska*. Funding Request \$799,550.
14. National Science Foundation, submitted December 2014. *Pre-Proposal: A Science & Technology Center (STC) for Sustainable Ecosystems in Ice-bound Coastal Environments (SE-ICE)*. Funding Request \$250,000.

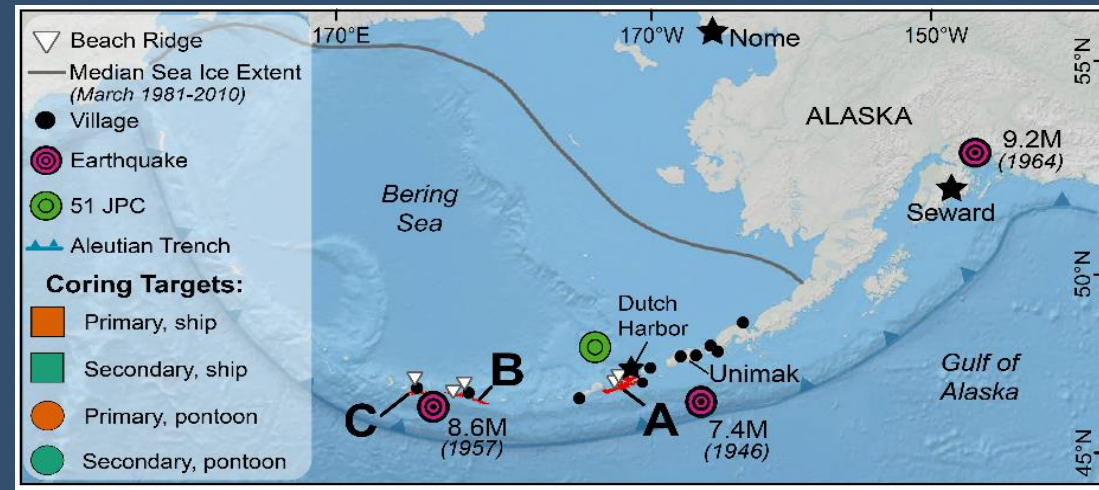


# Where I am now..... 2021 - the million dollar cruise

- The 3rd time's a charm
- 2022 cruise will be adventure research at its best
- Skills gained since 2006 contribute to this success
- The possibilities and opportunities are endless!



**New NSF funding will support a cruise from Seward to Adak looking for evidence of ancient storms and tsunamis**



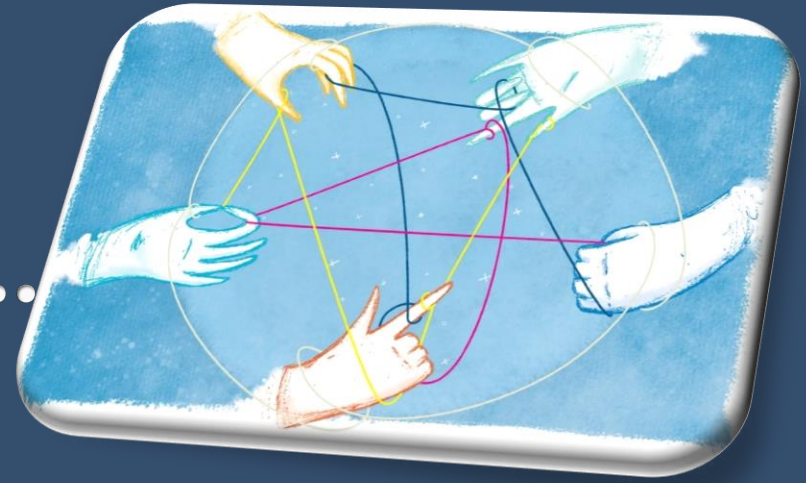
# Some Strategies for Success

# PLANNING.....



- It's stressful – so start early and plan ahead
- Study the Request For Proposal (RFP)
- ID the Hoops to jump through
- Engage with program manager!
- Embrace the “thrill” of the deadline

# STRONG COLLABORATIONS.....



- Build a team with that has the Right Stuff!
- Interdisciplinary partnerships
- Peer feedback and revision
- If possible – choose the people you want to work with – it should be fun!



# REVIEWERS ARE PEOPLE TOO....

- Make it easy for them!
- Clear goals – objectives – outcomes
- Write to the RFP
- Avoid errors in any component
- Organization and graphic design is critical
- Make the reviewer “feel” good about your proposal – looks do matter!



**These are your reviewers**



# SYNERISTIC OUTCOMES.....

- Clearly demonstrate how your work will lead to synergy
- Develop a project that leverages other activities and collaborators
- Produce meaningful outcomes and deliverables
- Not funding your proposal would be illogical



Synergy: *A group or “whole” is stronger and more effective than the summation of its individual parts*

# SUMMARY

- Get enthusiastic about grant opportunities – you never know where its going to take you
- Accept rejection – revise – and resubmit
- Do your homework – start early – and aggressively jump through the hoops
- Build awesome collaborations
- Make it easy for the reviewer to like your proposal
- Demonstrate multiple outcomes and synergy

# THANK YOU!



# QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?