Academic Support & Success/Career Development

STRATEGIES AND SKILLS FOR SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL WRITING

Presented by Chris Maio

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NSF Grants
1848542
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1927553

https://acgl.community.uaf.edu/
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 – 1st 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.
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.
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
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
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!
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 it’s 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?