Finding Funding and Writing Proposals

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Agenda
- Finding funding opportunities
- Planning
- Choosing a grant or fellowship
- Writing the proposal
- Benefits of proposal writing
- Q & A

Finding funding opportunities
- Think broadly about yourself and your project
- Start NOW – use the internet...AND your feet!
- Consider your colleagues to be resources
- Be a resource yourself!

Plan ahead
- Pre-order transcripts and other documents
- Start master tracking document for funding, presentations, publications, etc.
- Foster relationships with faculty (and be respectful!)
- Create a degree/post-degree timeline
- Create a funding timeline/resource list
- Create a master budget

Choosing a grant or fellowship
- Learn about the organization
- Read the Call for Proposals thoroughly
- Make a list of key concepts and words
- Check that you are eligible and a good fit
- Read fine print

Writing the proposal: General Guidelines
- Be considerate of your audience
- Respond to three basic questions (see Bartlett)
- Make concurrent arguments:
  - Argue conceptually for your research position
  - Argue practically that you and your work should be funded
Writing the proposal: Organization

- Tailor your application to each individual grant
- Make sure to include all sections and answer all questions
- Use sub-headings, as appropriate
- Use their language
- Respect their formatting guidelines
- Look at sample winning proposals in the IED/CIE program office

Writing the proposal: Introduction/project summary

- Provide a compelling context
- State a problem/debate
- State your solution or argument
- Be explicit why your topic is important: suggest possible implications for theory and/or practice

Writing the proposal: Methods

A methodology is not just a list of research tasks but an argument as to why these tasks are the best approach to the problem.
- Specify the research operations you will undertake (how, when, where)
- Tell specifically how you will spend your time: if possible, include a table or timeline
- Include a data analysis plan
- Include your preparation to carry out the methods: language skills, previous research experience, statistical training, etc.

(Adapted from Bartlett: “Suggestions for Crafting a Funding Proposal”)

Writing the proposal: Grabbing your audience

Consider the following introduction to a winning proposal:

After two decades of conflict between north and south in Sudan, 2005 marks the beginning of peace and a chance to rebuild. Despite political progress, many socioeconomic challenges lie ahead. More than 90% of the population lives on less than one dollar a day (NSCSE, 2004). In response to this poverty, humanitarian agencies have allotted large budgets for relief and development. For example, the UN estimates spending $1.7 billion in 2006 on Sudan. This funding is based on the uninvestigated assumption that aid supports peaceful socioeconomic and political reconstruction. However, some scholars believe that aid engenders a non-productive dependency that prevents long-lasting peace (Dichter, 2003; Duffield, 2001). Unfortunately, little academic or practitioner research illuminates this phenomenon empirically. As a Boren fellow, I will use quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the nature of aid dependency and the impact of international funding on community-based reconstruction efforts in southern Sudan. If certain forms of aid are found to actually stunt local sociopolitical and economic initiatives, this study may indicate a radical readjustment of the assumptions upon which current policy is based. (Chris Pagen, Boren Fellowship Application)

Benefits of Proposal-Writing

- Planning ahead keeps you organized across your student experience.
- Helping your classmates with resources and drafts allows you to develop a strong cohort of colleagues. You will learn a lot that you can’t learn in classes.
- Developing relationships with multiple faculty members is positive.
- You learn how to make your ideas accessible.
- You can often rewrite based on feedback from an organization.
- You now have a record of your academic thought development.