



Funding Your Research

Nancy Alvarado

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

The Grant-Seeking Mind Set

- External funding is not a “quickie” source of funds – it is a way to support long-term programmatic research.
 - ✓ Think of it as a career-long endeavor.
- Govt funding is a slow process of building from starter mechanisms to larger, longer-term projects.
- Successfully completed small projects lead to larger ones.

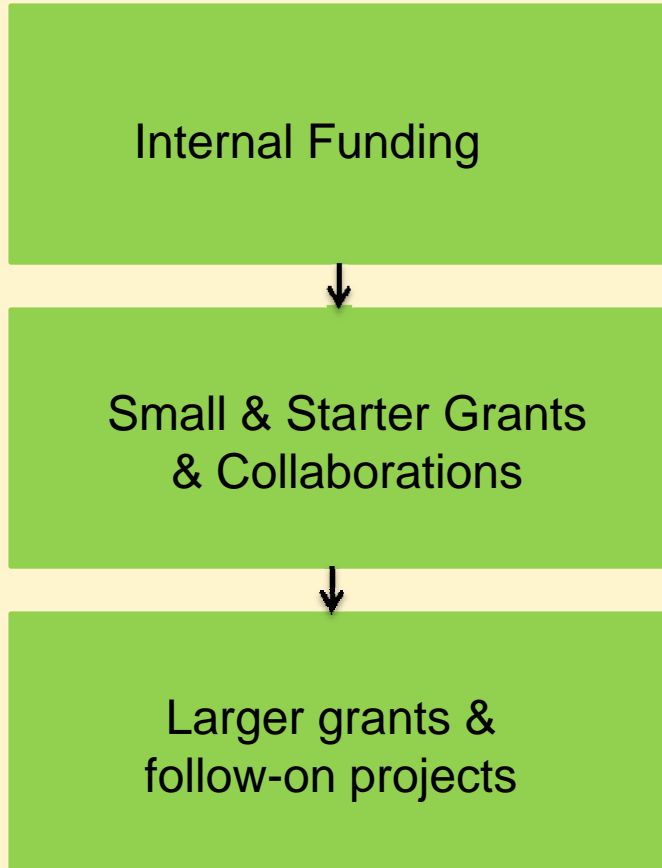
Do the Best Job You Can

- **Never submit a half-baked proposal.**
- **A good proposal will take all summer to prepare – don't rush it.**
 - ✓ **Find collaborators if possible – especially established researchers.**
- **Your proposal will be the basis for the papers you'll write later – it is time well-spent if you do it thoroughly.**

Basis for Evaluation

- **Your ability to complete the work.**
 - ✓ Consider your training, publications and management experience.
- **Technical quality of the proposal.**
- **Can the project be completed with the resources and timeline proposed?**
- **Fit with the funding agency's priorities.**
 - ✓ Look at what they've funded already.

Continuity



Lay a foundation by publishing a paper in the area you want to study more intensively.

Establish your viability as a researcher or demonstrate the promise of a project idea.

Generate a stream of publications and ideas that lead to the next grant.

Finding Resources

- **To get started, take advantage of internal funding to do preliminary studies and draft your grant proposals.**
 - ✓ Ask for release time.
- **Be reasonable in your expectations for your work – slow but steady.**
 - ✓ Hasty projects waste time and hurt your reputation.
- **Recruit students to help.**



Internal Support

- **Most institutions offer small grants for limited projects.**
 - ✓ **Be very specific in your proposals.**
 - ✓ **Manuscript preparation is a legitimate project – build publications in an area of interest.**
- **Your students can apply for grants to purchase equipment and supplies (McNair, CSU Predoctoral program, Sigma Xi).**

External Support

- Start with <http://www.grants.gov/>
 - ✓ Campus staff may also help identify private funding sources.
- Most funding mechanisms have starter grants for pilot projects and earmarks for new researchers.
 - ✓ Try to fit your project into an existing priority.
 - ✓ Discuss your ideas with project officers.
 - ✓ Attend workshops conducted by agencies.

Use CRISP to Find Viable Topics

- CRISP Database: <http://crisp.cit.nih.gov/>
- A good topic has already attracted funding.
 - ✓ Avoid proposing a totally new idea -- extend.
 - ✓ Existence of similar projects shows viability.
- Through CRISP you can also find out who is already working in your proposed area.
 - ✓ Make sure they are in your lit. review – they may be your reviewers.
 - ✓ You can contact them for advice – offer them a \$100 honorarium to review your draft.

Generating a Proposal

- If your research must be theory-based, find an existing theory in the literature.
- Each proposed experiment must include specific methods and a data analysis plan.
 - ✓ If you are vague, reviewers will complain.
 - ✓ One expt. per year is plenty.
- Add consultants or collaborators if you need specific expertise.
- Pilot data strengthens the proposal.
 - ✓ Do a small study first, if possible.

Things I've Learned the Hard Way

- **Make sure you discuss space needs before submitting the proposal and list the specific room number(s) in the grant.**
 - ✓ **Don't submit the proposal without space.**
- **Include sufficient paid staff to do the work.**
 - ✓ **You will be busy with administration – don't expect to do major work yourself (except perhaps during summer).**
- **Be realistic in timetables and budgets – don't ask for too little to do it right.**

When You Get a Good Score...

- **If your merit score is good, don't wait.**
 - ✓ **Immediately seek IRB approval for the first experiment -- the funding agency will not release the funds until you have it.**
 - ✓ **Tentatively identify personnel & write job descriptions while waiting to hear if you'll be funded.**
 - ✓ **Talk to your dept or college about transitional funding to run ads, etc.**

If Your Proposal is not Funded

- Many proposals do not succeed at first but are funded as resubmissions.
- Carefully read the review comments and improve your proposal.
 - ✓ Consider adding consultants or senior collaborators if the problem is not technical merit.
- Be persistent! Try again.



Presentation posted at:
<http://www.csupomona.edu/~nalvarado>