University of Saskatchewan
Grant Crafting and Writing
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THE #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

NOW A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE
STARRING
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Point of View

- Assumption of research excellence
- Simulation of multidisciplinary committee member feedback
- Provision of independent, objective, external advice without undermining researcher excellence, integrity and freedom
- Extend existing support and resources
- Grants are much more complex communications documents than ever before
Empower faculty and students to maximize grant success by strengthening the:

• Development of plans to realize their vision
• Application development process
• Communication of research programs
• Clarity of writing and narrative structure
• Addressing the instructions and criteria

Via the sharing of common sense approaches and perspectives
Session Overview

• Preparing to Write
• Developing Fundamental Elements of Your Research Program
• Drafting and Crafting
• Anatomy of a Successful Grant
• Discussion
Changing Polarity from Reactive to Proactive
Painting the Big Picture

• Plan your long term vision
• Assess passion, past phases, limits of current knowledge/approaches, focus of other researchers/teams/initiatives, discipline context, impacts beyond academia
• Strategize how to get there from here
• Break journey into phases or stages
• Identify objectives, challenges to be overcome, resources needed
• Individual Strategic Research Plan
Develop underlying approaches/models for the

- Research Program
- Translational Impacts Beyond Academia
- Training Program
- Team Skills, Expertise and Roles
- Partner Skills, Expertise and Roles
- Budget/Financial Plan
- Management Plan
Changing Polarity from Reactive to Proactive
Planning Your Research Journey

- Think visually: map out journey in a diagram
- Refine work plan, challenges, objectives, resources needed
- Identify funding agencies/programs
- Contingency plans
- Use your network to simulate expert and multi-disciplinary review
- Internal review assesses how well draft is addressing criteria and how well it communicates with target audience
Grant Writing as Communications Exercise

Communicating to Experts and Non-experts

• Being well-prepared means that grant writing becomes a communications task to educate reviewers on your vision and plan

• Be open to:
  i) Placing research in context beyond academia
  ii) Communicating to a broader audience

• Successfully communicating to expert and non-expert audiences demonstrates mastery over research plans
Grant Writing as Communications Exercise
Know Your Audience

The review committees are your audience. Embrace their perspective, culture, language.

Review funding agency:
• Program Guide and Instructions
• Review Process and Criteria
• Background information including planning documents and media releases

Refine approach to each section based on the disconnect between instructions, review criteria and background documentation.
Preparing To Write
Planning Application Development Process

- Team approaches to grant development
- Leadership
- Tensions between strengthening application contents and team member expectations
- Communications exercise is not necessarily democratic
- Multiple Iterative drafts
- Evolving research program a sign of strength and fertility
- Iterative review
Grant Application Crafting
First Draft

Full Application/Letters-Notices of Intent
First draft of each section:
• Create a patchwork quilt of bulleted points addressing instructions explicitly communicating to experts and non-experts
• Weave in additional bullets to strengthen narrative
• Order bullets based on structure: instructions-driven and narrative-driven
• Develop connections between each section
Grant Application Crafting
Successive Drafts: Strengthening the Narrative

• The science of application development relates to assessing the strength of how each section addresses the instructions

• The art relates to the birds eye view, conveying complex ideas to a broad audience as an educational tool eliciting an analytical and emotional response

• Narrative needs to address review criteria across sections
Art of Grant Writing
Narrative Elements

• Bring research program to foreground: third (objective) person
• Bring new knowledge to foreground: third (objective) person
• Bring researcher to foreground: authoritative voice, authentic voice (narrator), third (objective) and first (subjective) person
• Continuity and clarity of section(s) narrative integrating detailed and birds eye view
Project Summary

- Summary is overture to main proposal
- Broad impacts first
- Funnel down to the research
- Use of Third Person
Research Program

- Research as catalyst for realizing broader goals
- Academic Push vs Academic Push-External Pull
- Limits of current knowledge, context of discipline tensions
- Thematic Framework
- Challenges, outcomes, integration of outcomes to meet objectives
- Include all team members and partners in relevant themes/subthemes/projects
- Context of relevant local, national, international research programs and initiatives
Team

• Team as catalyst for realizing broader goals
• Strength of team beyond strength of individual members
• All team members included in the research
  Highlight expertise, role in research program and role in other aspects e.g. management
• Team members may involve non-academics where relevant e.g. collaborators from partner organizations
Partners

• Partners as catalysts
• Include all organizations relevant to the research and realization of the impacts
• All types are valid (government, private/public sector, community, international)
• Ensure all partners involved in the research program are included in the research section
• Highlight expertise, role and commitment of partners in aspects such as management
• The university is a partner
Training

- Training as a catalyst
- Present a program of training as opposed to a series of activities
- Identify skills to be gained by students
- Identify why training is excellent
- Highlight your experience in leadership of a training program
- Identify roles of students in the research program via which the skills will be attained
Benefits to Canada

- Direct and indirect benefit: social, quality of life, cultural, environmental, health, economic
- Beneficiaries: academia, society, community, industry, local, national, international
- Research outcomes: new knowledge, new understanding, new perspectives, new decision-making models, technologies, products, policies
- Transformation of outcomes to impact
- Proactive team push, partner pull
Management Plan

- Complex proposals require a practical approach to research, team, partner, infrastructure and financial management
- Do not over-engineer
- Focus governance approach on what strategic scientific/external advice your research initiative requires
Budget

• Clearly connect budget items to research workplan
• Justify need from a research perspective
• Use budget justification to reinforce research program details
Anatomy of Well-Crafted Grant Applications

Examples

- CIHR
- SSHRC
- CFI
Discussion

All Responses, Questions, Thoughts and Ideas are Valid!