

## SSHRC Insight Development Grant Workshop #2

January 9, 2017

1:30 – 3:30 pm

Murray 102

### Panelists:

Dirk Morrison (Education)

Leah Ferguson (Kinesiology)

Kalowatie Deonandan (Political Sciences)

### Question 1: How do you move your grant proposal from “Very Good” to “Excellent”?

- Conduct research in areas (aside from the main project) in which you are not strong (e.g. Research Mobilization) so you can be abreast of latest developments in that area rather than make things up
- Try to talk about “buzz words” in both summary and detailed application. Find these words in SSHRC website.
- You are not an island – make use of those around you. The best ideas in your head might not be the best in actuality. Additional eyes on your grant catch your mistakes/errors/omissions/etc.
- Tailor your co-applicants to meet the needs of your grant application (e.g., need a stats whiz – forego your best bud colleague, and make a new connection). Also, dictate to your co-applicants about the importance of this grant.
- Writing tips:
  - 1) Have self-imposed deadlines and stick to them.
  - 2) Tell an interesting story and engages the reader.
  - 2) Make the reviewers’ lives easy!
- Ensure that your application makes sense (e.g., order of information, definitions, etc.)
- Make sure your application is consistent (purpose/objectives don’t change)
- Avoid redundancies (your research facilitator can be very helpful here – don’t waste space discussing something if there is space allocated for it later)
- Have an excellent idea. Something you are passionate about, something that will keep you motivated, etc. PLUS sounds like an excellent idea to others; talk to your colleagues about it, your friends, family, people in line ups at Starbucks (kidding).
- Start early. You will need more time than you think you do, this is more work than you think it is.
- Work closely with your research facilitator; get help on areas of the grant application you’re not strong on (e.g., budget, timelines).

### Question 2: How do you OR what steps do you take when addressing feedback (whether from Internal Review, Co-applicants, or SSHRC Peer Review of previous application)?

- It is not the matter of being right or wrong. It is the matter of negotiation and applying best ideas.
- In the end, the responsibility is yours to take and apply good ideas.
- Not all reviews are equal. Positive feedback may not improve your application.
- Make use of those around you – research facilitators (mine was exceptional with helping me sift through some very thorough, and sometimes conflicting between research facilitator and faculty member, internal review feedback), or colleagues (in your area and outside your area), mentors, etc.
- Request follow-up with reviewer (research facilitator and/or faculty member) if anything is unclear or you need insight into their concern, etc.
- Take the time to go through the feedback line-by-line. Read all the comments carefully and be sure that it is a challenge to receive feedback on your own ideas.
- Be willing to reject as well as accept feedback but let the process sharpen your thinking and writing.

**Question 3:** What is your number one piece of advice or tip for polishing your grant?

- Do not become personally attached to what you have written so that when you receive the reviews and critiques you do not become frustrated and disillusioned.
- Find your critical friend (research facilitator, colleague, co-applicant)
- Keep it simple (always remember to make the reviewers' lives as easy as possible – cover all topics that need to be addressed, label with headings and subheadings, don't leave them guessing)
- When you are at your second last draft (near the finish line, before that, free-write), take each part separately, look for coherence and flow and edit as much as you can.
- Edit, edit and more edit. Be ruthless.
- Have a final read, send it off to your research facilitator for a final check, then stop working on it. Give yourself a week prior to submission date.