Welcome to today’s presentation:

More Paper Out the Door
Ten Inexpensive Ways to Stimulate Proposal Development
with
Dr. Robert Porter, Director of Research Development at the University of Tennessee

Join the conversation during today’s webinar:
#In4Webinars

www.in4grants.com
Today’s Reality

Multiple activities, platforms and applications

17 data sources searched

103 emails

38 document versions

11 Excel spreadsheets

Resulting in delays, frustrations, lost opportunities and inefficiencies
More Paper Out the Door
10 Inexpensive Ways to Stimulate Proposal Development

Robert Porter, Ph.D.
Proposal Development Team
University of Tennessee
(865) 974-3053
reporter@utk.edu
Research Development: A Leadership Challenge

• Research Administration has traditionally been a “downstream” function
• Competition is increasing; smaller percentage of proposals are funded
• Universities increasingly reliant on external funding
• More focus is needed “upstream”

GOAL:
More faculty writing better proposals!
Expensive Solutions

- Consulting firms on campus
- Send individuals to a Grant Writing Institute

Outcome:
Busted budgets!
Building upstream competence and confidence!

- Grant writing skills
- Culture of sponsored research

Remember:
1. Many junior faculty have no help with this
2. RA’s role as coach and cheerleader
Money Stretchers

1. Home grown workshops
2. Visits by program officers
3. Awards newsletters
4. Proposal collections
5. Department retreats
6. Mentor matchmaking
7. Research forums
8. Online tutorials
9. Recruit for review panels
10. Coaching and editing
1. Home grown workshops

- Can be taught by any combination of:
  a) Research office personnel
  b) Faculty development specialists
  c) Grant savvy faculty

- Beginning workshops offered on a regular basis
- Agency specific (NSF, NIH, etc.)
- Program specific: NSF CAREER, NIH “K” Awards

**TIP:**
Distribute successful proposals!
2. Visits by Program Officers

- Researchers are interested in updates from major sponsors
- PO’s are encouraged to visit campuses (especially multi-institutional gatherings)
- Contact RA’s at nearby campuses
- Send inquiry to high ranking officials
- Mix it up: AM presentations followed by 1:1 consultations with researchers
- Require an abstract beforehand
- Combine with other events (Grant writing workshop, Mock Review Panel)
3. Awards newsletters

- Monthly hard copy newsletter listing recent awards by PI, sponsor, amount
- Group listings by department or college
- Periodically, compile data to show key trends: # proposals, total awards, comparisons with last year
- Each year, publish list of top award winners
- Can also be used to reinforce important announcements (policy changes, upcoming deadlines, etc.)
3. Awards newsletters (cont’d)

Major benefits:

1. Successful PI’s are recognized, celebrated
2. Researchers learn about new funding sources
3. Administrators compare performance of their units
4. Institution gains heightened sense of research portfolio
5. Research office credited with disseminating data

Warning: Researchers and administrators with low ratings will question how data are compiled and reported!
Sample U Tenn newsletters
4. Successful proposal collection

- A powerful influence on beginning writers
- Best way to pick up effective writing techniques
- Can start a mentoring relationship with PI
- Use a committee to select well rounded samples
- Request permission from PI’s to post on secure web site
- Promote!
- UTenn Grantseekers Tool Kit: http://research.utk.edu/pd/toolkit.shtml
- Freedom of Information Act request (4 – 6 wks)
5. Departmental retreats

- Department heads eager to expand research portfolios

- Possible topics:
  - Updates on funding opportunities
  - Proposal and award data
  - Support services offered by research office
  - News from recent NSF/NIH grants conferences
    (much of it can be obtained online)

- Do funding search beforehand (COS, InfoED, etc.), distribute hard copies
6. Mentor matchmaking

- Junior faculty often in “sink or swim” environment
- Most senior investigators willing to share lessons learned
- BUT they are jealous guardians of their time!
- To be effective:
  - Help young investigator clarify research themes, explore funding
  - Contact potential mentor, request meeting
  - Facilitate dialogue: Does research idea appear fundable? Which specific program(s) should be targeted? Any personal contacts? Suggestions for improving research design? Willing to look at 1 – 2 page summary?

- Junior faculty follows up with well written “Thank you!”
- Monitor, prod, NAG if necessary!
7. Research forums

- Sponsors increasingly interested in broad interdisciplinary themes
- Many departments remain locked in silos
- Research office = Executive Producer
- Convene Planning Committee, tap faculty leaders
- Speakers: Agency reps, Academics, Public officials
- Include poster sessions
- Not expensive, but labor intensive. Required for success:
  - Strong capacity to plan ahead
  - Great attention to detail
  - Consistent follow through
  - Excellent communication skills

Precisely what most research offices possess!
Deans’ Task Force on Energy Security and Sustainability

Deans’ Forum on Energy Security and Sustainability

Monday, October 16
9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

The Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center
Blacksburg, Virginia

Submit poster proposals by Sept. 11 at www.research.vt.edu/energy/posters/

Direct questions to:
Jack Lesko
jesko@vt.edu, 231-0519
or Richard Hirsch
richard@vt.edu, 231-5501

Objectives of the forum:

- To encourage awareness and foster synergy of research, education, and outreach efforts at Virginia Tech in the energy and energy-related environmental fields.
- To provide perspectives from policy leaders on energy-related needs so the Virginia Tech community can position itself as a major participant in addressing these needs.
- To bring attention to the year-long series of events that Virginia Tech is planning to address concerns about energy and the environment.

For more information, see www.research.vt.edu/energy
8. Online tutorials

- Many good tutorials online (quite a few posted by research offices)
- Guide researchers to most helpful web sites
  - NIH: www.niaid.nih.gov/ncn/grants/default.htm
  - Foundation Center Short Course: http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/shortcourse/index.html
- Research office web site should provide hot links to best materials
9. Recruit for Review Panels

- Serving on review panel: graduate education in grant writing!
- Agencies need 1,000’s of new reviewers each year; seek to enhance diversity
- Start by helping PI initiate 1st contact with PO(s): test for fit
  - 2 or 3 paragraph project summary
  - follow up with e-mail expressing interest in serving
  - attach one page cv (with picture)
- Encourage researchers to visit with PO’s
  - most are accessible and responsive
  - it will change PI’s thinking about the proposal
  - best possible investment of PI time
10. Coaching and editing

- Academics struggle with shift to effective grant writing style
- Skilled editor can turn failure to success
- Effort is labor intensive at first, less so later
- Administrators often resist hiring grant writers ("They’re Ph. D.’s—they should know how to write.")
- Attitudes change when you help with a big hit
- English majors are excellent recruiting pool
“The meek may inherit the earth, but not the grant dollars.”
- J. Paul Getty

“God gives every bird his worm, but he does not throw it into the nest.”
- P. D. James
Thank you for joining the discussion today!

More Paper Out the Door
10 Inexpensive Ways to Stimulate Proposal Development

Robert Porter, Ph.D.
Proposal Development Team
University of Tennessee
(865) 974-3053
reporter@utk.edu