PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT:
Constructing a Funding Proposal

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Office of Research & Sponsored Programs
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Today’s Overview

• ORSP Role
  – Who can assist?
• GENERAL Guidelines for what a funding proposal MIGHT need to contain
• Each sponsor is DIFFERENT—there is no “standard format”
• If you need detailed guidance on a specific sponsor, we can do a workshop on that topic
**ORSP Role**

- ORSP acts as the Authorized Organizational Representative for all proposals from and awards to the University
- We are here to assist you in proposal development
- At the same time, we work to make sure federal, state, and University rules and requirements are met
Office of Research & Sponsored Programs (ORSP)

Departmental Assignments:

Lesha Agnew
http://www.research.olemiss.edu/proposal-development#Lesha

Ken Sleeper
http://www.research.olemiss.edu/proposal-development#Ken

Mickey McLaurin
http://www.research.olemiss.edu/proposal-development#Mickey
Proposal Guidelines

Agency Requirements

- Guidelines
Read the Guidelines
Read the Guidelines
Read the Guidelines

- Deadlines

- Submission Process?- Electronic by Email, Agency Web site (e.g. NSF FastLane)

Who submits?
The University-ORSP
Parts of the Proposal

- **Project Abstract** (Summary of the entire proposal)

- **Project Description** (narrative)
  - Problem Statement (hypothesis)
  - Project Objectives (expected outcomes)
  - Methodology (detailed plan of action)
  - Project Personnel (who is involved)
  - Institutional Resources/ Facilities
  - Evaluation (Your Success)
  - Dissemination (spread the word)

- **Budget and Justification**
Project Abstract (Summary)

- Can be the most important part of the proposal
- Forms the reviewer’s first impression
- Be Clear and Direct
- Match the content to the sponsor requirements
Project Abstract

• The following topics can be addressed:
  ✓ **Subject**
    What is the project about?
  ✓ **Purpose and Significance**
    Why is this project being undertaken?
    What is to be accomplished?
    Why is this important?
  ✓ **Activities**
    What will be done?
    What methods will be used?
  ✓ **Target Population**
    What group is being studied or served?
  ✓ **Expected Outcomes**
    What findings or results will be produced?
    To whom will these be useful?
    How will they advance knowledge in your field?
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  - Evaluation (your success)
  - Dissemination (spreading the word)
- **Budget and Justification**
Project Description

• Types of Questions you may want to address:
  ✓ What is the problem/need?
  ✓ Why is it a problem/need?
  ✓ To what extent does the problem/need exist?
  ✓ Who is affected?
  ✓ What has already been done to address this problem/need?
  ✓ Why is this not sufficient?

• Begin with the broad problem--relate to a smaller problem
  - differentiate between problem/need on a state/national level and at the local level
Problem Statement

• Provides documentation to establish need
  - be specific: cite statistics or other relevant data
  - be analytical: describe strengths, weaknesses, comparisons
  - demonstrate your familiarity with the field (establish your credibility)
  - if no literature available: Offer explanation for the vacuum, cite closest relevant sources

• Tips:
  - DON’T BURY THE LEDE
  - grab the reader & make him want to continue reading
  - relate to some larger problem, or a greater social benefit
  - be of reasonable dimensions
  - be supported by statistical evidence
  - NO UNSUPPORTED HYPERBOLE
  - ***minimize the jargon***
Project Goals and Objectives- Defined

✓ Goals
- **desired results that a person envisions**
- Goals may already be developed by the funding agency

✓ Objectives
- **actions taken to attain goals**
- specific, achievable, measurable statements
- describe expected results/benefits
Project Objectives

- **Questions to be addressed:**
  - What do you propose to do about this problem?
  - When?
  - Where?
  - How?
  - With whom?
  - To what extent?
  - With what expected results?

- **Objectives are:**
  - clear, precise, measurable statements
  - statements of the expected outcomes of the project
  - questions to be answered
  - Hypotheses (proposed explanations) to be tested
  - presented in a form which directly parallels your problem statement
Methodology

• Questions to be addressed:
  ✓ What is your specific plan of action?
  ✓ How and why did you choose this particular plan?
  ✓ Is it the only way to solve the problem?
  ✓ Did you consider other methods?
  ✓ Can you do what you propose?

• The methodology section:
  - is the heart of the proposal
  - details the methods you will use to reach your objectives
  - clearly describes (in detail) program activities
  - should include justification for the choice of method
  - specifies the time frame for completion of the project
  - is presented in a format which directly parallels the stated objectives
Project Personnel

• Two Parts:
  ✓ Related qualifications of key project personnel
  ✓ Biographical data sheets (resumes) of key personnel

• Should include:
  - key project participants- PI and/or co-PI
  - academic or other research qualifications
  - how each participant’s expertise will enable them to carry out the specified objectives
  - percentage of time each participant will be working on the project
  - other participants: Postdoctoral researchers, technicians, graduate and undergraduate students.
Facilities - To do Your Project

Office
• Computers, scanners

Laboratory
• Equipment, bench space, fume hood

Classroom
• Computers, video

In the Field
• UM Field Station, other laboratory space
Institutional Resources

- Shows fit between an institution and project
- Shows how this institution is the “ideal” place to conduct your project
- Describes the institution’s qualifications or “credibility”
- Information to possibly include:
  - Background history of institution
  - Statement of the institution’s mission, purpose, goals, philosophy
  - Specific facilities
  - Available equipment
  - Administrative & support services available
  - Associations with other agencies
  - Institution’s competency in project area
Project Evaluation/Assessment

- **Questions to be addressed:**
  - How will you know if your objectives have been reached?
  - What will you do to measure the results?
  - What type of evaluation will you conduct?
  - How will evaluation data be collected?
  - How will you analyze this data?
  - What statistical methods will you use?
  - When will the evaluation occur?
  - Who will perform the evaluation and what are their credentials?
Project Evaluation

• **Who Can Help?**

  UM Center for Educational Research and Evaluation (CERE), [Dr. Marie Barnard, Interim Director](mailto:Dr.%20Marie%20Barnard%2C%20Interim%20Director)

  1. Review an evaluation plan and provide feedback.
  2. Serve as a paid “external evaluator” for UM sponsored projects.

  Contact CERE **early** during your proposal development stage.
Dissemination

- Dissemination is the act of making the results known:
  - to the funder
  - to the project participants
  - to your own institution
  - to other professionals in your field (locally & nationwide)
  - to the general public

- Questions to be addressed by PI:
  ✓ How will the results of this project be disseminated?
  ✓ To Whom?
  ✓ When?
  ✓ Where?

- Methods of dissemination include:
  - journal articles/publications
  - presentations at professional meetings, conferences, etc.
  - media presentations
  - classroom instruction
Dissemination

• University of Mississippi Digital Repository

Provenance Archival and Retrieval System (PARS) hosted by the Mississippi Center for Supercomputing Research (MCSR) in the UM Office of Information Technology, which is a limited-functionality repository infrastructure people can use (and propose to use).

Contact: Brian Hopkins, Director
Mississippi Center for Supercomputing Research
303 Powers Hall, (662) 915-7206
bwhopkin@olemiss.edu
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  – Dissemination (spread the word)

• **Budget and Budget Justification**
What is a Budget?

- **Financial resources** necessary to implement the tasks & activities outlined in the proposal
- Should be large enough to cover proposed activities; be realistic about the scope of the work proposed, and the related costs

Preparing a Budget

- Check program guidelines for:
  - a budget template
  - allowable budget items
  - items that **cannot** be included in budget
  - average size of an award or award limitations
Proposal Budget (continued)

- Includes a **numerical budget** and a **narrative budget justification**.
- Budget items must be accounted for in the **budget justification**.

For every task/activity you have outlined, determine the following:

- **Who will perform the proposed task?**
  - **project personnel**

- **How much time will it take?**
  - **level of effort**

- **What resources will the person(s) need?**
  - **non-personnel items to include in budget (examples)**
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<th>Funding</th>
<th>Person-months</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Proposer</td>
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<td>A. SENIOR PERSONNEL, PIs/PD, Co-PIs, Faculty and Other Senior Associates (List each separately with name and title. (A.7) Show numbers in brackets)</td>
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<td>B. OTHER PERSONNEL (SHOW NUMBERS IN BRACKETS)</td>
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<td>C. OTHER</td>
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<td>D. EQUIPMENT (LIST ITEM AND DOLLAR AMOUNT FOR EACH ITEM EXCEEDING $5,000)</td>
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<td>E. TRAVEL (1. DOMESTIC (INCL. CANADA, MEXICO AND U.S. POSSESSIONS)</td>
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<td>3. SUBSISTENCE</td>
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<td>H. TOTAL DIRECT COSTS (A THROUGH G)</td>
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<td>I. INDIRECT COSTS (F&amp;A) (SPECIFY RATE AND BASE)</td>
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<td>29% Modified Total Direct Costs (off-campus rate)</td>
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<td>J. TOTAL DIRECT AND INDIRECT COSTS (H+I)</td>
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<td>K. RESIDUAL FUNDS (IF FOR FURTHER SUPPORT OF CURRENT PROJECTS SEE GP# II D.7)</td>
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<td>L. AMOUNT OF THIS REQUEST (J) OR (J MINUS K)</td>
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</table>
Budget Justification

• Describes how you arrived at the figures (calculations) included in your budget and why you need the resources

• Also referred to as a “Budget Narrative”

• All items included in the budget should be explained in the budget justification (in the same order listed in the budget)

• Sub-headings within the text to separate salaries, equipment, materials, travel, etc., helps the reviewers
Dr. XXXX
The University of Mississippi
BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

A. Senior Personnel:
Two months summer salary in each year is requested for the PI, Dr. XXXX, at a base of $XXX per year. Salary in subsequent years is calculated with a 3% increase. The role of the PI?

B. Other Personnel:
Funds are also requested to support one graduate research assistant in each year at a rate of $XXXX and one undergraduate student. The role of the students???

C. Fringe Benefits:
Fringe benefits for faculty and staff are calculated at the University’s standard rate of 32.75% of salary. Fringe benefits for graduate research assistants are calculated at the University’s standard rate of 8.0% of stipend. Fringe benefits for students paid hourly (graduate or undergraduate) are calculated at the University’s standard rate of 3.0% of wages.

D. Equipment:
Defined as an article of tangible personal property with an acquisition cost of $5,000 or more and an expected useful life of more than one year (no F&A)

E. Travel:
Funds are requested in each year for the PI and graduate assistant to travel to the XXX conference.

F. Other Direct Costs:
1. Materials and Supplies
2. Consultant- an individual hired to give professional advices or services for a fee - NOT a UM employee
3. Other
   a. Graduate Student tuition remission at the University’s standard rate of $3,330 per semester per student.

G. Facilities and Administrative (F&A) Costs:
Facilities and Administrative Costs are calculated in accordance with The University of Mississippi’s rate agreement with DHHS, dated September 12, 2011. F&A Costs for research are calculated at 44.0% of Modified Total Direct Costs (Total Direct Costs less equipment, tuition remission, and the portion of each sub-grant or subcontract in excess of $25,000).
Takeaways

• First and foremost: Follow the Sponsor Guidelines
  – Required content will be dictated by the Sponsor
• Be aware of items that can strengthen your proposal
• Avoid generalities in your descriptive writing
• BE SPECIFIC
• BE REALISTIC