

Merging professional development and science: Constructing a successful grant proposal

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Particularly for young scholars, but even for highly experienced senior researchers, planning, constructing, submitting, and revising a grant proposal is a difficult process with many uncertainties, whether the goal is a fellowship for pre or post doctoral research, a dissertation grant, or a small or a large research grant. Funding organizations provide helpful information on the more formal aspects of the grant submission process and a wealth of handbooks and guides describe the mechanics of constructing and writing the grant proposal. However, many of the questions scholars face in writing a grant proposal are less about the procedure per se, and more about the science and about the research culture as all come together in structuring and composing a successful proposal.

For many scientists, it is not clear how to begin to think about crafting an innovative proposal whose scope meets the demand for transformative (NSF) or translational (NIH) research. When and how should they incorporate a clinical perspective and must the proposal include the use of neuroscience methods? Can a basic research program succeed on its own or must one collaborate with clinicians? If one does behavioral research and has not gone the neuroscience route, is the outcome doomed in the review process? More generally, how essential is converging evidence from more than one methodology? For junior scholars, many of these questions are linked to the general issue of transitioning from advisor-directed to independent research.

The goal of this meeting is to discuss solutions to the intricacies of the grant submission process. There will be a panel of speakers who will focus on four topics:

1. Spanning translational (NIH) and transformational (NSF) research
2. Transitioning from advisor-directed to independent research
3. Collaborations across domains of expertise

We will bring together program officers/directors of major granting organization and researchers (both senior and junior) who have been successful in getting grant support (and who, given the severe funding restriction in the past

years, have also dealt with rejections and developed strategies for revision and resubmission). The unique value of the proposed event is that 1) its focus is information about grants in the domain of cognitive science and 2) it addresses issues of particular relevance to junior scholars who are embarking on their scholarly careers in this period of transition and expansion into interdisciplinary science.

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