

RESEARCH *News*

DIVISION of RESEARCH PROGRAMS and PARTNERSHIPS

HUMANITIES MENTORS ADVISE PERSISTENCE

The Division of Research Programs and Partnerships hosted a Humanities Junior/Senior Luncheon on 20 February 2002 (a palindromic day). Attendees were treated to three illuminating discussions of the benefits of the grant application process from faculty whose innovative projects were selected for prestigious national sponsorship.

Leah McCoy, Associate Professor of Education, received a Spencer Foundation grant to assess ways to improve mathematics education in some of the nation's most troubled schools. Building on longstanding professional relationships with K-12 math teachers in six diverse public school districts in Louisiana, Arkansas, and Mississippi, McCoy conducted interviews and observed classroom methods to determine how poverty and race affect K-12 teaching. She broke down what she'd learned about grant-getting into **ABCDs**.

ASK FOR HELP. McCoy had a clear idea of what she wanted to do and the contacts to make it happen, but she didn't know what sources might fund the project. Community of Science keywords suggested several approaches, from the general "educational research" to "elementary education," "mathematics education," "rural education" to "teacher education" and even "teacher attitude." Spencer Foundation programs emerged as the best choice. RPP's Edelson was helpful in the search and editing the proposal, and Stephen Williams invaluable in building a budget and submitting the grant.

McCoy advised applicants to look at the **BIG PICTURE**. Is there a way to tweak the project so that it appeals to a broader array of sponsors? For example, public school classrooms welcome input from the university; can you find a way to share your insights or students with local schools and teachers? Alternatively, does your project involve technology? Perhaps the means is sufficiently novel or easily packaged to interest a federal agency or a company that produces educational software.

CONNECT ALL ASPECTS OF THE ENDEAVOR. While research may be the primary aim, the information gleaned can't help but influence your teaching, writing, and service. Each of these components strengthens the others and the project generally, from conception and presentation to execution and dissemination.

DO IT! It's easy to put your research interests on the back burner in the face of immediate teaching commitments, but dedicate some time, perhaps one day a week or three hours on Friday afternoon, when you are not allowed to work on anything but your project – no grading, no phones, no laundry!

Janis Caldwell, Assistant Professor of English, wanted to be in Boston both to work on her book, *Romanticism and the Clinic: Early Nineteenth-Century British Literature and Medical Ethics*, and to be with her husband. She applied to two programs and on the third try, won a Bunting Institute Fellowship.

ARCHIE GUIDELINES

2

PO IS A PILL

3

WFU FUNDED RESEARCH

6

WAKE FOREST
UNIVERSITY

The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study annually awards approximately forty residential fellowships to female scholars, artists, creative writers, and activists of exceptional promise and demonstrated accomplishment. Dr. Caldwell had what she called “a magical year.”

She advises prospective applicants to **persist**. She feels that writing each application improved her project. Applying to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) is particularly valuable, because you get feedback. When drafting a proposal, **ask** the Program Officer (PO) for a model in your field. The one that she was sent was so on target that although the author’s name and institutional affiliation were blacked out, she knew exactly who had written it. If you are rejected, **ask** the PO to send you the reviews; you only get them if you ask. She learned how subjective the process is and which of contradictory responses weighed more. She learned that you have to make a case both for the **national importance** of your work and for your **expertise in the field**. A meticulous bibliography is requisite.

In the same vein, **ask** scholars in your department to critique your proposal. Dr. Caldwell called RPP’s Edelson, “a great editor.”

For the Bunting Fellowship, Caldwell made sure she was completely versed in the relevant library collections and the backgrounds of the review panel. She “ate, slept, and dreamed” the buzzwords in their guidelines and **listened** to how they expressed their focus so that her proposal would speak their language.

Also **ask** for enough money to do the project properly. Don’t be timid! You don’t want to live like a student, and you don’t want to scrounge for books you need or miss valuable conferences.

David Weinstein, Associate Professor of Political Science, was awarded a 1998 NEH summer stipend to work on his forthcoming book, *Utilitarianism and the New Liberalism*. Since then, he has served on NEH summer stipend review panels and advises others to do the same: what better way to see firsthand how the merit criteria are applied and what the competition is submitting? Reviewers are asked to “apply only the highest standards,” and Weinstein has found himself choosing only **2 out of some 30** submissions. He graciously volunteered to read proposals from Wake Forest’s summer stipend nominees this fall. In any case, he stressed, if you are rejected by the NEH, **ask** for the referees’ assessments.

He echoed Caldwell’s impression that the application process itself is beneficial. While skeptical of the idea that a third try is charmed, he feels that each proposal refines the project to a more attractive and compelling work. Persistence pays off indirectly, if not in two months at the Liguria Study Center.

Weinstein also addressed questions about book publication, since without a solid publication record, it’s difficult to meet sponsor standards. He recommended checking out the latest *American Association of University Presses Directory* for the names and phone numbers of acquisition editors. Establishing personal contact is helpful; even if editors can’t publish your work, they may suggest another house that might and let you use their names when inquiring. Approach editors at conferences as well, especially early in the morning of opening day, when you’re the first, not the umpteenth. Bring along a 2-page CV and your book prospectus.

The deadline for NEH Fellowships for College Teachers and Independent Scholars is 1 May. WFU applies in this category rather than University Teachers, because we award no PhDs in the humanities. The fellowship award is a \$40K stipend requiring no extramural residency or travel. The deadline for Summer Stipends is 1 October. The Dean’s office will choose two nominees, preferably one junior and one senior, from brief abstracts submitted at a date to be announced. Summer Stipends provide \$5,000 for two consecutive, uninterrupted months of full-time, independent research. See <http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/fellowships-stipends.html> for details.

MAY 1 DEADLINE for NEH Fellowships for College Teachers and Independent Scholars

CLARIFICATION OF ARCHIE GUIDELINES

At the recent Humanities luncheon, we were asked to clarify some questions about the Archie Fund. Many faculty are under the impression that Archie grants are exclusively for travel. This is not the case. The fund seeks to promote “faculty excellence,” and applicants may ask for help in pursuing individual research or developing a course. Research grants do not pay salary stipends but can be used to purchase supplies, books, photocopies, student assistance, and to defray other costs related to the fulfillment

OUTSTANDING PROJECT PROFILE

of a project deemed worthy by the review panel. Travel to study a manuscript collection or to interview the subject of a paper is an allowable expense, but expenses related to conference attendance must be covered in part by the applicant's department or external sources.

There is no limit to how often you can apply. Reviewers look at what you've done with previous Archie grants to determine whether to award another; if you parlayed your last project into an external grant application or a publication, you stand a good chance of success on the next.

Nontenure-track faculty may apply to the program if their appointments will continue the next year. If a visitor is awarded a grant but then moves on to a new position, prospective Archie funds will not go along.

Calloway faculty are welcome to apply for Archie grants. Faculty in such departments as Education, Political Science, or Psychology should apply for Archie funds rather than Social and Behavioral Science Research Funds if their proposed work is more qualitative than quantitative.

Please note that the form that accompanies an Archie proposal asks, "Have you applied for external support for this project? If yes, please provide the names of the funding sources to which you have applied and the status of your application (i.e., pending, funded, or rejected)." The Applicant Information sheet asks, "Have you applied to any University source for faculty development funds over the last five years? Please describe briefly the outcome of the project(s) supported above, in terms of both (a) publications, papers, outside funding received, etc., and (b) contribution to your overall professional development on a separate, attached page." Several recent applicants did not record this information, even when they *had* received such funds. Perhaps they felt the questions had been answered in the abstract. Nonetheless, if you neglect any items in an application to an external sponsor, the request will be summarily chucked, and internal reviewers are weighing the importance of conveying this message by rejection.

WAKE FOREST EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WINS NATIONAL AWARD

The Wake Forest Department of Education's Teacher Preparation Programs are among six winners of the first National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) Distinguished Achievement Awards. Sponsored by the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) and funded through the US Education Department's Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology (PT3) initiative, the primary goal of the NETS Project is to enable stakeholders in preK-12 education to develop national standards for the educational uses of technology that facilitate school improvement.

Wake Forest will be featured on the ISTE NETS website (<http://cnets.iste.org/>) and in a forthcoming issue of *Learning and Leading with Technology*. Ann Cunningham, Assistant Professor of Instructional Design in the Department of Education, said, "I think this will be great for us in terms of grant leverage and recruiting candidates into our graduate programs...WFU does an outstanding job supporting our technology needs, and we have an energetic and forward-thinking group of faculty in our department who recognize the potential of using technology to support teaching and learning. It's the accomplishments of the department and the university's technology initiatives that have earned this award."

"It's the accomplishments of the department and the university's technology initiatives that have earned this award."

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR PROGRAM OFFICER IS A PILL

The standard advice to all grantseekers is "talk to the Program Officer," or "the Program Officer is your friend." However, sometimes the Program Officer is not your friend. We have known the pure brush off ("It's all in the

... the time to develop a good relationship with the PO is before the grant is submitted.

guidelines”); the complaint (“I’m always too busy!”); the excuse (“If only we had the staff!” “I don’t have the authority ...”); the side-step (“I’ll get right back to you”).

So I contacted a friendly Program Officer at NSF and Lynn Miner, Director of Sponsored Programs at Marquette University and editor of *Grantseeker Tips*, to ask for advice. They both felt that the time to develop a good relationship with the PO is before the grant is submitted.

For example, prior to contact, NSF advised:

- look at the agency’s web page to determine who the program officer is, and ask colleagues who have worked with this individual for a head’s up before calling (“Don’t mention your cat!”);
- script your calls; have detailed information ready;
- ask for copies of the letters that go to your reviewers; especially for unsolicited programs, it’s vital to tailor your proposal to the specific questions reviewers must answer;
- follow up a first call as questions arise; don’t call only once;
- go to DC, because a PO is more likely to be forthcoming face-to-face than on the phone or via email, where it’s easy to brush someone off; however much you spend on the trip, if you’re asking for a \$300K, 3-year grant, it’s well worth it.

If the PO remains cold or dithering, look around at other programs; it may be possible to apply to another. Remember that POs spend most of their time fielding calls from people who have been declined again and again.

At other agencies, familiarize yourself with the PO’s role. NIH’s Scientific Research Administrators (SRAs) can answer questions about the review process, but after the review, the priority scores and reviews are handed off to a Program Director who makes recommendations to the Council. The Program Director, in conjunction with the Council, has some leeway in making decisions about marginal proposals. If you believe your proposal has a marginal priority score, you should contact your Program Director and ask if it is possible to send a progress report on your pending project.

At Defense Department agencies, POs have discretion; they control their own budgets and don’t have to send applications out for external review. You’re wasting your

time if you don’t go to visit them. At the NEH, you can ask the PO for model proposals, information on your review panel, and, if you are rejected, their assessments, but you must ask – they won’t send you anything automatically. At the NEA, you will only learn that they’re strapped.

Grantseeker Tips no. 77 (21 January 2002) focused on the initial phone call. It isolated two key parts: the opening statement and follow-up questions. The opening statement’s purpose is to create a good relationship so you can move on to questions that will shape your proposal. It should answer three questions in the listener’s mind in less than thirty seconds: Who are you? Why are you calling? What’s in it for me?

Suppose you are calling a local private foundation. Your opening statement might be as follows: “Hi, Mr. Dollar. I’m Jane Addams, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Wake Forest University, and I’m involved in a project called Women’s Welfare. I’m calling today because, depending on your interest in battered women, we might be able to reduce the difficulty they face in getting jobs, while at the same time strengthening their self-image. If I’ve caught you at a good time, I’d like to ask a few questions to see if our ideas would be of value to you.”

It will take you less than 30 seconds to speak those 81 words. You’ve answered three primary questions and set up a segue to learn more. And offering to share your ideas on a topic of mutual interest is hard to resist.

\$30 MILLION NIH INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE HUMAN SUBJECT PROTECTION

— from *Federal Grants and Contracts Weekly* 26, no. 10 (11 March 2002)

The National Institutes of Health invites research institutions to apply for \$30 million in grants to strengthen human subjects’ protection. The solicitation for one-time, one-year grants identifies 174 eligible institutions, which accounted for 90 percent of NIH’s total clinical research support in 2000. Wake Forest, in Tier 1, is among those receiving the most funding and may request up to \$250,000 in this competition. While NIH could make up to 174 awards, depending on the merit of the proposals, no institution is a shoo-in. **“We’re gonna review this stuff,”** said Anthony Demsey, senior policy adviser for extramural research.

NIH says demands on institutions to ensure patient safety have intensified in the aftermath of subjects’ deaths. Applicants are asked to come up with creative, replicable,

and sustainable improvements in procedures, systems, and infrastructure. Examples include development of:

- Educational initiatives for investigators, administrators, and institutional review board (IRB) members;
- Tracking systems for reporting adverse events;
- Infrastructure/technology for computer tracking of human subject protocols, secure records retention, and electronic protocol submission;
- Equipment to facilitate IRB activities, such as teleconferencing or computer support; and
- Systems for coordinating activities of multiple IRBs during multicenter trials.

As for program requirements:

- The principal investigator must be “an appropriately high-level institutional official, such as a vice provost for research or medical school dean.”
- A final report must document accomplishments and include an evaluation of their usefulness, impact, and feasibility for other institutions.
- Grantees must meet at the end of the program in the Washington, DC, area to share successful strategies.

CONTACT: For details, www.nih.gov. Click on “Grants and Funding Opportunities,” then “NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts” and March 8. Refer to RFA OD-02-003.

HOW DO YOU JUDGE A BOOK?

— from *Grantseeker Tips* 80 (4 March 2002)

Reviewers tell us that a proposal’s appearance weighs heavily in their evaluation. Beyond obeying the guidelines, such design considerations as font size and type, headings and subheads, white space, bullets, and lists can considerably enhance the readability of your proposal and the reviewers’ sense of your preparation, organization, and professionalism.

People who start their proposals at the last minute and write under deadline pressure often overlook the proposal’s aesthetic appearance, because they are trying desperately to include all of the required content. Getting an early start will give you time to improve your proposal’s appearance. A densely formatted proposal more often implies, not seriousness or a wealth of information, but a PI bogged down in details who cannot prioritize.

WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?

— from *Grantseeker Tips* 78 (4 February 2002)

A grant without a problem statement is a waste of time. No sponsor will offer funding if your work does not clearly resolve some discrepancy between the way things are and the way they should be. The need is not *your* need—summer salary, a postdoc, operating money, or new computers—but rather what injustices, gaps in the knowledge, inadequate theories, techniques, or resources are important to the sponsor.

Grantseekers must not only write accurately, both in terms of grammar and spelling as well as research content, but they must also write persuasively. In drafting a powerful need or problem statement, use dynamic verbs and objective adjectives. A good verb needs no adjective, and one can do the work of many hedging, eddying words. Between subjective adjectives, such as best, major, important, preeminent, leading, and objective adjectives—first, newest, biggest, oldest—reviewers find objective adjectives more persuasive. If possible, find the numbers or percentages that express exactly how big, how many, how much. In asserting your originality, what can you say about your work that no one else can? What specifically sets you apart?

Using subjective adjectives—our work is the best or most famous or most important—raises questions. Who says it’s the best? Important in what way and to whom? Objective adjectives are factual, distinctive, and more easily accepted by reviewers.

CREATING A COS PROFILE

The Community of Science database, to which all Wake Forest faculty have access from the Research Programs and Partnerships’ web page (<http://www.wfu.edu/RSP>), is the best place to search for funding opportunities in all fields.

In addition, if you add your profile, COS will send you weekly email messages about programs that respond to your keywords. It can also be used to generate a CV or a PHS 398 BioSketch and provides the evidence of an “updated profile” requested by some WFU internal funding programs.

At the COS home page, click on *Promote Your Research*, and on the left side of the next screen, *COS Expertise*. On the next screen, again on the left side, click on *Add Your Profile*, and fill in the requested information. You can cut and paste elements from other documents into the COS profile. Note that as part of the COS expertise database, researchers at other institutions can seek your advice or collaboration or gain insight into your department’s strengths by searching your publications.

WFU FUNDED RESEARCH

December Through February 2001-2002

ANTHROPOLOGY

Ken Robinson

- *Archeological Survey, Pleasant Gardens Sewer Systems Improvement Area, McDowell County, NC*, \$15,930.87, McGill Associates
- *Archeological Study, Latta Plantation, Mecklenburg County, NC*, \$4,997.65, Latta Plantation
- *Archeological Survey, Borrow Pit, Wilkes County, NC*, \$1,744.59, Vannoy Construction

The above surveys will identify any archeological sites, assess their significance, and make recommendations regarding their avoidance or protection.

- *Archeological Investigations, Cemetery Investigations, Hopewell Church, Mecklenburg County, NC*, \$2,928.82, Hopewell Presbyterian Church

The investigation is designed to provide preliminary information about the locations of slave graves within the cemetery and, if they are found, recommendations for a complete documentation of the site.

BIOLOGY

William E. Conner, *A Multilevel Analysis of the Bat/Moth Arms Race*, \$51,200, National Science Foundation (Year 1)

Dr. Conner's laboratory will investigate how learning has shaped bat/moth acoustic interactions. The answers will not only explain the fascinating details of bat/tiger moth evolution, they will also illustrate how a critical behavioral innovation has allowed a temporary escape from predation for a clade of ~11,000 species. The results will be shared with school children through a new website on "Bats and Bugs" and added to a new ecological and environmental curriculum being developed in cooperation with Archbold Biological Station near Lake Placid, FL.

ANTHROPOLOGY
BIOLOGY
CHEMISTRY
COMPUTER SCIENCE
HEALTH AND EXERCISE
SCIENCE
PHYSICS

CHEMISTRY

Christa Colyer, *Development of a Bilimicrochip Analyzer: Shipboard Determination of Phycobiliproteins in Ocean Water Samples*, \$154,787, National Science Foundation (Year 2)

Research will provide oceanographers with a shipboard instrument that can separate and quantify phycobiliproteins, which are water-soluble, fluorescent proteins derived from cyanobacteria and eukaryotic algae. The multidisciplinary tool will conduct shipboard assays not previously established even in land-based laboratories.

S. Bruce King, *Synthesis and Evaluation of L-Arginine Derivatives as Mechanistic Probes of Nitric Oxide Synthase*, \$75,000, American Heart Association Established Investigator Award (Year 2)

The research seeks to provide a clear understanding of the biosynthesis of nitric oxide (NO) and the role it plays in cardiovascular diseases in order to develop new, NO-derived therapeutic strategies.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Yue-Ling Wong, *The Art and Science of Digital Media: A Curriculum Development Project*, \$35,296, National Science Foundation

The NSF will support software to enhance the digital media courses the Computer Science department is offering for both majors and nonmajors. Interactive tutorials and new electronic delivery formats, particularly the e-book, will be investigated to help students to learn abstract concepts and cutting-edge technologies.

HEALTH AND EXERCISE SCIENCE

Michael J. Berry

- Minority Undergraduate Research Supplement to *Exercise and Disability in COPD Patients II*, \$6,240, National Institutes of Health
A Winston-Salem State University undergraduate will participate in exercise training and testing of COPD patients that will expose her to all aspects of a randomized clinical trial.
- Minority Undergraduate Research Supplement to *Exercise and Disability in COPD Patients II*, \$10,920, National Institutes of Health
A Wake Forest University undergraduate will participate in exercise training and testing of COPD patients that will expose her to all aspects of a randomized clinical trial.

Paul M. Ribisl, *CHANGE: An Intervention to Increase Exercise Maintenance*, \$12,828, National Institutes of Health, Case Western Reserve subcontract

Dr. Ribisl serves as an exercise physiology consultant for this project, which investigates the outcomes of increasing exercise in older cardiac patients.

PHYSICS

Daniel B. Kim-Shapiro, *Mechanism and Kinetics of Sick Cell Hemoglobin Polymers*, \$90,101, National Institutes of Health (Year 5)

Using new spectroscopic techniques, the study will illuminate both the physics of polymerization and sickle cell disease and may lead to new and better treatments.

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