



NORDP Great Lakes Region Virtual Retreat

Roundtable Discussion: Implementing Effective Proposal Writing Cohorts

Presenters: IU Proposal Development Services

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IU Proposal Development Services

1. Purpose: To maximize the competitiveness of IU Bloomington and selected regional campus proposals by supporting faculty as they plan, prepare, and perfect research grant applications for external funding
2. Proposal development and grantsmanship services: Consulting and project management for individual faculty (early, mid, and senior level faculty) and collaborative teams
3. Professional development: Capacity building workshops and resources focused on various funding agencies



2020 / 2021 NSF CAREER Support Mechanisms

1. Three-part Workshop Series

- Overview of the NSF CAREER
- Expert panel with previous NSF CAREER winners
- Guidance for Writing the NSF CAREER proposal

2. Virtual Writing Cohorts via Zoom

3. Online Resources

- Shared Box folder of recorded presentations, templates, and links

4. **New to 2021** 30-minute consultation sessions during dedicated office hours



PDS Goals for NSF CAREER Workshops and Writing Cohorts

- Familiarize early career faculty with the NSF as a funder (audience)
- Scaffold writing / creating the components of the proposal to assist faculty with each piece of the proposal
- Provide easily accessible resources for faculty related to the proposal components and on-campus support mechanisms
- Provide virtual community and accountability supports for faculty as they write
- Enable faculty to learn from one another through peer review and accountability supports
- Allow PDS staff to work with faculty in both group and one-on-one settings, hopefully making them more effective and efficient



PDS Approach to Peer Review Support via Writing Cohorts

- Faculty input on number of pages to review and schedule for document share
- Participants limited to 3 faculty members per cohort with 1 PDS staff member facilitator
- PDS set expectation on participation and commitment to review
 - PDS provided guidance for participants to encourage productive feedback and to focus review
- PDS dictated what content from proposal was shared for 1st review session and was open for the 2nd review session
- PDS remained flexible with faculty, allowing members to participate in discussion even if they did not have materials to share



Overview of NSF CAREER Writing Program

Date	Weekly Writing Topics with Guidance to be shared by PDS	Group Check-in: Monday @ 12pm (via email)	Additional Activities
Week 1 - Jun 1	Proposal Introduction: Overview, Proposal Objectives, & Significance; Dept Chair letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email your team your weekly goals and writing schedule 	<i>Check-in with group and PDS specialists about scheduling peer reviews and draft sharing plan.</i>
Week 2 - Jun 8	Research Methodology, Research Objectives, and Associated Hypotheses, (as needed: Dual-use Research of Concern Parameters, Human Subjects IRB, Compliance Considerations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email your team your weekly goals and writing schedule Email a brief review of your progress and any reflections about altering goal setting for the upcoming week. 	
Week 3 - Jun 15	Integrated Research and Education Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email your team your weekly goals and writing schedule Email a brief review of your progress and any reflections about altering goal setting for the upcoming week. 	<i>Submit proposal draft for Integrated Research & Education peer review; submission date will be determined by group</i>
Week 4 - Jun 22	Broader Impacts Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email your team your weekly goals and writing schedule Email a brief review of your progress and any reflections about altering goal setting for the upcoming week. 	<i>Integrated Research & Education Plan Peer Review Session with your peer/s and PDS specialist</i>
Week 5 - Jun 29	<i>July 4th recess</i>	<i>July 4th recess</i>	<i>Submit proposal draft for individually-directed peer review; submission date will be determined by group</i>
Week 6 - Jul 6	Budget & Letters of Collaboration; List of Suggested Reviewers; Forms and Other documents: COA, Current & Pending, Facilities Statements, Data Management, Postdoc Mentoring Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email your team your weekly goals and writing schedule Email a brief review of your progress and any reflections about altering goal setting for the upcoming week. 	<i>Individually-directed Peer Review Session with your peer/s and PDS specialist</i>
Week 7 - Jul 13	Project Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email your team your weekly goals and writing schedule Email a brief review of your progress and any reflections about altering goal setting for the upcoming week. 	
Week 8 - Jul 20	Finalizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email your team your weekly goals and writing schedule Email a brief review of your progress and any reflections about altering goal setting for the upcoming week. 	



Accountability Support via Writing Cohorts

Sample email

Hello fellow NSF CAREER applicants / future awardees!
Hope you both had a nice weekend. Here's my schedule for the upcoming week:

- Monday:** primary child caregiver from 8am-1pm
2-5pm: Outline Research methodology section
- Tuesday:** no writing time, virtual conference all day
- Wednesday:** 8-10am: begin drafting Research Methodology Section (write Step 1 with summary paragraph and highlighted significance section summary paragraph, objectives, and highlighted significance)
2-4pm: continue drafting Step 1 (must complete today, even if I have to write after putting the kids to bed)
- Thursday:** primary child caregiver from 8am-3pm
4-6pm: draft Step 2 with summary paragraph, objectives, and highlighted significance section
8-10pm: draft Step 2 with summary paragraph, objectives, and highlighted significance
- Friday:** 8-10am: draft Step 3 with summary paragraph, objectives, and highlighted significance
10:30am-12pm: department meeting, may go longer than 1.5 hours
2-4pm: finish drafting Step 3 with summary paragraph, objectives, and highlighted significance
- Saturday:** 8-10am: revise Introduction section and Dept Chair letter from last week, prep for sharing for Peer Review

Last week, I found that not having an outline or broken-down goals really made me feel a little at a loss when I sat down to write. Usually before I write an article, I always do a heavy outline of each section, so I thought I might try that tactic to see how it goes. I already have bits and pieces of this research plan crafted, which I did not have last week. I am a little nervous about how much I will be able to accomplish this week because my partner and I are trying a new schedule for child care, and I have an all-day conference that is going to eat into my schedule for writing.

Best of luck to you both!

Future NSF CAREER Awardee



Strengths

- Enable staff to work with groups of faculty
- Build community among faculty
- Scaffold the components of the proposal for faculty
- Introduce early career faculty to PDS office
- Ability to offer a suite of support to faculty
- Easily shift to virtual programming

Weaknesses

- Initial time commitment to set up programming
- Less one-on-one with individual faculty members
- Potential for information overload
- Faculty hesitation in group work
- Large portion of support suite requires faculty initiative to engage

Opportunities

- Provide faculty with multiple perspectives of review, including from peers in similar fields
- Connect faculty to on-campus resources as a group
- Potential to ramp up their engagement with the proposal / funding opportunity
- Potential to assist faculty in creating a writing practice / accountability

Threats

- Perception of competition among faculty
- Perception of helpfulness / large time commitment among faculty
- Dominate multiple staff members' calendars for entirety of July
- Inability to ensure accountability and retention



Additional potential outcomes

- Can proposal development teams help transform a cohort into an emergent social group, support network for minoritized faculty, or community of practice
- Can we leverage the workshop series to set up and better reinforce motivated, accountable cohorts? How?
- How might we measure success, and from whose perspectives?
- Do we introduce phased cohorts over the course of the semester to enable schedule flexibility?



Some issues for consideration, and welcoming input

- How do you achieve faculty buy-in?
 - Structuring the cohort materials for a wide range of engagement styles
- How do you manage trade-offs from individual to cohort support?
 - Is there added value via peer review/discussion, accountability?
- How do you enhance or ensure accountability?
 - Does motivation shift in a cohort model?
- How do faculty perceive cohort outcomes?
 - How do we measure satisfaction and success?

