Writing a Great Research Proposal

Goal of Proposal Writing: Persuade people who have money or control your time (i.e., supervisor, funding agency, sponsor, etc.) to give you money or time to complete a project. **Synonyms: work plan, scope of work**

Key Ideas for Developing a Purpose in Proposal Writing
- Write a proposal logically and clearly
- Make a proposal visually appealing (think spacing, use of bullets, formatting, etc.)
- Know your audience and tailor your wording as appropriate, by considering:
    o Describe your research proposal in non-technical terms and avoid jargon as appropriate
    o Provide enough background information to frame the research
    o Explain why your research is important and why this reader can relate to the topic

How to Write a Project Description
- Length will be defined by solicitation
- Typically includes:
    o Introduction and background information
    o Research questions and hypotheses
    o Methods
    o Evaluation plan (i.e., How will you measure success?)
- Clearly define your specific goals for this project
- If there are multiple people working on the research, clearly state each person's distinct role and expertise

Create a Budget and Reference it in Your Proposal
- What items are you going to purchase?
- How much does each item cost? How many of each item will you need? What is the total cost of that item?
- What is each item be used in the project?
- Is your budget realistic? Credible?
- Include both a table of costs of the project as well as a written description of what will be purchased and how it will be used in the research (i.e., the Budget Justification)

Reasons for Not Getting Funded
- Missing information or not following instructions
- Weak scores due to: lack of clarity in research goals, vague research plan, weak background info, incomplete budget, etc.
- Proposed research does not align well within the goals of the program
- Poor ideas
- Lack of funding or misaligned with program

How are Proposals Evaluated?
- Varies with funding agency, but often similar process
- Reviewed/scored by several experts in field (either by mail or in person)
- May include a review panel discussion, where experts discuss the proposals and update their scores
- Agency "Program Director" or similar compiles scores based on budget and areas of interest to the agency

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OUR Project Award Evaluation Process:
- 2 to 3 UWF faculty review each proposal
- Use standard rubric based on 5 areas of focus:
    o Context/background
    o Research questions or objectives
    o Methodology and project design
    o Mechanics/grammar/spelling
    o Itemized budget
- The score ranges from 0 (absent) to 3 (exceptional)
- Total score from each reviewer (0 to possible 15)
- **OUR Director makes final decisions based on faculty scores and budget consideration**