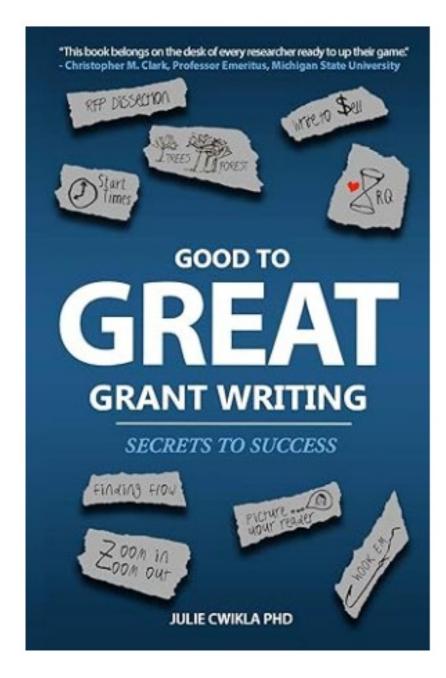
Grant Writing

USC Aiken

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Grant Writing is Marketing

The goal is to convince the reviewers that:

- 1. There is an important question that needs to be answered
 - Fits into the funding agency's goals
 - Will have a high impact
- 2. You have the skills and resources to complete the project
 - You are familiar with the topic
 - You have successfully performed similar research in the past
 - Preliminary data/ publication record
 - Logical plan including alternative approaches

Key points

- Tell the story
 - What happened in the past
 - What you plan to do
 - How this will impact the future
- Provide context for the audience
 - Don't assume they are experts in your field
 - Don't use jargon
- Refine it
 - Get others to read/edit it
 - Respond to reviewer's concerns

Organization

- Hook
 - Start with your big idea (get the reader interested right away)
- Introduction
 - Literature review (showing you know your stuff)
 - Pilot data
 - Research questions
- Work Plan
 - Methods, including alternative approaches, expected outcomes
 - Analysis plan
 - Partners and facilities
 - Timeline/Roles
- Impact

What Makes a Proposal Competitive? *The Good*

- Potential for high impact-Important, not just Interesting.
- New, original ideas
- Focused, feasible project plan
- Articulated knowledge of subject area, published relevant work
- Experience in essential methods or approaches, and/or collaborator expertise
- Sound scientific rationale
- Realistic amount of work; sufficient detail; critical approach (pitfalls and alternative hypotheses considered)
- Well written and understandable to someone not working directly in the field.

Advice for Writing an Excellent Proposal More Good!

- Start early!
- Read the solicitation!
- Identify your audience
 - Balance between general and specific subject area knowledge
- Frame a big picture
- Identify significant needs, gaps, and hypotheses
- Describe the plan to address the needs, gaps, and hypotheses

- Emphasize creative or innovative aspects
- Provide proof-ofconcept
 - Preliminary dataespecially if approach is new to you, or the field
- Speak with a Program Director



Additional Excellent Features

- Expected outcomes are described
 - Unexpected outcomes considered
- Outcomes related to original Goal(s)
- Ideally, negative results should be interpretable and meaningful

- Recognition of Reviewers
 - Easy to read
 - Neat and tidy
 - Budget is reasonable
 - All relevant and current literature is cited
 - You can suggest reviewers



Common mistakes: Scientific The Bad

- Work is too close to what has been done before i.e., incremental advance or limited impact
- Project has too large a scope or is too narrowly focused to be exciting
- Proposed methods / research plan will not yield results that address the stated goals of the project
- Experimental / theoretical / analytical design is flawed
- Aims are interdependent
- Failure to be transparent in writing
 - Disconnect between what you are Thinking and what the Reviewer Reads
- Medically motivated.
 - Carefull, OK to mention disease in Broader Impacts.



What you don't want to see in your reviews The Ugly

- The PI has not been very productive either during or since the Ph.D.
- This proposal is naïve / overly ambitious
- Potential pitfalls and alternate strategies are not described
- Alternate interpretation of data is ignored
- PI has failed to cite essential literature
- Necessary resources are not available, or the PI does not have demonstrated expertise
- Proposal is Strong in Intellectual Merit, but Broader Impacts are weak.



Common mistakes: Failure to follow guidelines More Ugly

- Essential documents are missing
 - Departmental letter (if required)
 - Letters of collaboration
- Letters of collaboration are non-compliant
- Extraneous documents are included
- Document is not easy to read
 - Margins too narrow
 - Font size too small
 - Figures too small or low res. / legends lack detail
 - Excessive use of acronyms

- Sloppy
 - Typos, misspellings, incorrect figure placement
 - Conversion from Word to PDF is inaccurate



