NCA’s Monthly Teleconference Series
CARD Calls: Communicating About Research and Professional Development

Seeking Grants Effectively

Featured Speakers:
Susan Morgan, Associate Professor, Department of Communication, Purdue University;
J. Michael Sproule, Emeritus Professor of Communication Studies, San Jose State University; and
Brian Humes, Program Director, Political Science, Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences, National Science Foundation

Moderator:
Dr. Nancy Kidd, Associate Director for Research Initiatives
National Communication Association

Thursday, December 11, 2008
3:00pm Eastern time
Seeking Grants Effectively: Perspectives from a PI

Susan E. Morgan, Ph.D.
Purdue University
Research Board
National Communication Association
Background

- Research Assistant as a grad student.
- Co-Investigator on projects as an assistant professor
  - Helped write proposals
  - Not all proposals were funded
- Principal Researcher (Co-PI) on another funded project
- Principal Investigator on subsequent projects
- Total funding has been over $9M
Three big myths about funded research

• The government dictates your research agenda
• Assistant professors can/should bring in federal grant funding
• Grants keep you from publishing
“The Government Dictates Your Research Agenda”

• Grant proposals are the vehicle you use to convince the feds that you can do something that they want done.
• If you meet that objective, you can “slip in” a lot of basic research in other areas.
• Some agencies DO encourage (or require) theoretical research before applying your principles to a “practical” problem (e.g. NSF)
“Assistant professors can/should bring in federal grant funding”

• This is a position sometimes adopted by a university administrator who has never written a successful grant proposal (as PI) or who is coming from outside of the social sciences
  – Assistant professors usually do not have the publication record to demonstrate the expertise needed for a good score on a grant proposal when applying as a PI
  – Assistant professors do not have a record of funding (i.e., as a co-Investigator) needed to demonstrate competency to run a large project
  – It’s generally not helpful in generating publications quickly enough for tenure
  – Can go for New Investigator types of mechanisms but these are extremely competitive—time would be better used publishing
“Grants keep you from publishing”

- Conversely, some administrators or departments discourage faculty from applying for grants because of the perception that writing proposals and running large projects interferes with publication.
- Careful planning of data collection (including formative or baseline research) will allow you to publish interim results in a timely fashion.
However: Be careful what you wish for

- Problems with community partners who are used to doing things “the old way” but who wanted grant money to help achieve their mission
- Problems with co-Investigators who don’t do their work or meet deadlines
- Problems with vendors or other subcontractors who don’t deliver on promises
- Personnel issues: Research assistants who go AWOL, project managers who fail to attend to important details, outreach workers or other employees who compromise intervention fidelity
So Why Do This at All?

- Real people benefit from the research (and sometimes you get to meet them).
- Other researchers and practitioners benefit from the principles that you develop from the findings: You can change “best practices” on a national or even international level.
- You get to do large-scale projects and gather data that would be impossible without funding.
Developing a program of funded research: Step 1

• Start as an RA or do an independent study on a funded project.
  – Even if you have to volunteer, the experience is invaluable
  – Pledge 5 hours a week of work to the project
    • After you have demonstrated your dedication and contribution, consider trying to negotiate for some co-authored conference papers or publications
  – After volunteering your time, you are more likely to be offered a paid RA-ship if one becomes available
Funded research, Step 2: Offer your services to a PI

• With a PhD, you can offer your services in your area of expertise as a co-Investigator for a grant proposal.
  – Getting on a team of funded researchers, you learn about getting and managing grant projects through osmosis
  – You are able to participate in the writing of a small section of a proposal based on your expertise
  – You get to see what a finished (and hopefully, successful) grant proposal looks like
  – You build your expertise in an area through the resulting publications, which will help you get funded later
Funded research, Step 3: Recognize that being Co-I great!

• A Principal Investigator may get more of the glory, but they also get all of the headaches
  – Budget management
  – Personnel and subcontractor hiring (and firing) and management
  – Agency progress reports
  – Grant renewal applications

• The data belong to the whole team and you can negotiate to take the lead on some publications

• As co-I, you are building your vita and learning the process of large project management.
Funded research, Step 4: Develop your proposal ideas

• Research funding agencies and download program announcements and RFAs (Request for Applications).
• Look at ideas that have been funded in the past by each agency you’re interested in
  – CRISP database maintained by NIH
• Look for holes that your research can fill or a new angle you can take
• All proposals are an exercise in persuasion
• It’s not about your “cool idea” for research, it’s about how you can help the feds achieve their most important objectives (through your “cool idea”!)
Funded research, Step 5: Apply for your own grant

• See what resources your university has to assist you with proposal preparation
  – Special support staff
  – Course releases

• Work with your business office to complete your budget
  – Ask for as much money as you need to do a great project, even if it goes above the theoretical maximum award

• Begin your proposal at least 9 months before deadline
  – Writing proposals is unlike the manuscript writing process
  – Letters of support from community partners can take a long time

• Get proposal finished at least 3 days before the deadline or your submission is in danger of not going through
  – Signatures from Deans, VPs for Research, etc.
  – Online submission process can (and does) crash
Maximizing Success in Humanities
Individual Applications
J. Michael Sproule

What They Ask:
[1] Who are You?
[2] What Have You Done?
[3] What Do You Propose to Do?
Who are You?

[1] Who’s Where: School or Institution
   Not a Deal Breaker but May Set Expectations

[2] Your Personal Expertise: E.g., Language or Culture
   Your Own Reputation
What Have You Done?

[1] Past Work in General
   Publications vs. Presentations

[2] Years of Relevant Progress
   Dissertation: Longer ABD status is typical (3 or more years)

   Research Progress: Better not to be just starting
What Do You Propose to Do?

[1] Data- vs. Theory-Centered Work
Easier to show need and progress if data centered (field, archive, interview)

   Historical work typically is especially successful

[2] Constraints Faced:
   Time:  Longer-term projects (e.g., 3+ yrs. ABD)

   Space:  International travel

   Material:  Non-print; non-English-language

   New line of thinking?

   New context explored?

[4] What Your References Say: Path-breaking; Top Student; Detailed Description
How to Enhance Your Chances:

[1] Practice Locally (University; Region) or Programmatically (Seminar vs. Fellowship)


[5] Circulate, Proof and Revise
Things to Remember:

[1] It’s Not about You—Rather, Your Place in the Pack

[2] Low Odds: Can be 3-10%

[3] Keep at It (Fret Not Thyself)

[4] Seek and Accept Help
NSF SUPPORT OF THE
SOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL, AND ECONOMIC SCIENCES

Dr. Brian D. Humes
Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences
Division of Social and Economic Sciences
National Science Foundation
Social and Economic Sciences & Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences

- Cultural Anthropology
- Decision, Risk, & Management Sciences
- Economics
- Law and Social Science
- Linguistics
- Political Science
- Science, Technology, and Society
- Social Psychology
- Sociology

Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences
SES Target Dates

January 15 & August 15
Economics
Law and Social Science
Political Science
Sociology

January 18 & August 18
Decision, Risk, & Management Sciences

February 1 & August 1
Science and Society
Human Subjects

- No award for a project involving human subjects can be made without prior Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval of the research activity.
How to Develop a Proposal

• Determine your long-term research and education goals

• Develop your bright idea
  – Survey the literature
  – Contact Investigators working on topic
  – Prepare a brief concept paper
  – Discuss with colleagues/mentors

• Prepare to do the project
  – Determine available resources
  – Realistically assess needs
  – Develop preliminary data
  – Present to colleagues/mentors/students
How to Develop a Proposal

• Determine possible funding sources

• Understand the ground rules
  – Read carefully announcements and instructions
  – Determine whether your project fits program scope
  – Look over prior award abstracts
  – Ascertain evaluation procedures and criteria
  – Talk with NSF Program Officer

• Coordinate with your institution and sponsored research office

• Ask PIs for copies of proposals

“Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example.” Mark Twain
Budget Tips

- **Amounts**
  - Reasonable for work -- Realistic
  - Well Justified -- Need established
  - In-line with program guidelines

- **Eligible costs**
  - Personnel
  - Equipment
  - Travel
  - Other Direct Costs, Subawards
  - Facilities & Administrative Costs
1. What is the intellectual merit and quality of the proposed activity?
   - Importance
   - Qualifications
   - Creativity and originality
   - Conception and organization
   - Access to resources

2. What are the broader impacts of the proposed activity?
   - Training
   - Diversity
   - Infrastructure
   - Dissemination/Public Awareness
   - Societal Benefits
To register for one or more of the teleconferences, please fill out this form and return it to Melissa Anderson via email manderson@natcom.org or fax (202) 464-4600. Please note that the registration deadline for each teleconference is 72 hours prior to the start of the teleconference. However, there will be a registration limit of 100 phone lines (more than one person can be participating from a single phone line), so please register for the teleconferences that interest you as soon as possible to ensure that you get spots. You will receive a registration confirmation email within 48 hours of submitting this form. Slides for the presentation and dial-in information will be sent to all registered teleconference participants 48 hours before the teleconference.

Name:
Affiliation:
Email Address:
Phone Number:

Registration for: (please X all teleconferences for which you would like to be registered)

• **Rhetoric and Public Address as Education for Citizenship**—Michael Hogan, Professor, Department of Communication Arts and Sciences and Co-Director, Center for Democratic Deliberation, Pennsylvania State University & NCA Distinguished Scholar—Friday, January 9, 2009—12:00pm Eastern

• **Assessing Student Learning in an Undergraduate Communication Program**—featuring Wendy Morgaine, Instructor, Child and Family Studies, Portland State University; Terrel L. Rhodes, Vice President, Office of Quality, Curriculum and Assessment, Association of American Colleges and Universities; and Helen Tate, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Communication and Theatre, Columbia College—Monday, February 9, 2009—1:00pm Eastern

• **Free Speech Absolutism: A Defense**—James Aune, Professor, Department of Communication, Texas A&M University & NCA Distinguished Scholar—Thursday, March 12, 2009—2:00pm Eastern

• **Communication in the National Research Council Doctoral Education Survey**—featuring Edward Fink, Professor of Communication, University of Maryland; Linda Putnam, Professor, Department of Communication, University of California, Santa Barbara—Friday, April 17, 2009—3:00pm Eastern

• **Study Abroad: International Education for American Students in Rhetoric and Communication**—featuring Tom Benson, Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of Rhetoric, Department of Communication Arts and Sciences, Penn State University—Monday, May 18, 2009—12:00pm Eastern time

• **Current Trends in Master's Education for Communication**—featuring James Cherney, Assistant Professor, Department of Communication, Miami University; Dan Cronn-Mills, Professor and Chair, Speech Communication Department, Minnesota State University, Mankato; and Kendall Phillips, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Communication and Rhetorical Studies, Syracuse University—Thursday, June 11, 2009—1:00pm Eastern

• If you have any questions about the teleconference series, please contact Nancy Kidd at nkidd@natcom.org or (202) 464-4622 x. 108.
Resources for National Communication Association Members

Current RFP Tracker
The Current RFP Tracker identifies funding opportunities (including research grants, residential fellowships, travel funds, awards, etc.) for communication scholars. To access the Tracker, please go to: http://www.natcom.org/rfptracker. Questions? Contact Associate Director for Research Initiatives Nancy Kidd, NCA, nkidd@natcom.org

List of Higher Education Communication Programs
The List of Higher Education Communication Programs includes detailed information about approximately 400 institutions and the various degree programs they offer ranging from Associates Degrees to Ph.D.s. This is a living document with information being updated on a routine basis. Questions? Contact Coordinator for Research and Educational Initiatives Melissa Anderson, NCA, manderson@natcom.org

Lambda Pi Eta Online Career Resource Center
This online career resource center is available specifically for Lambda Pi Eta (LPH) honor society members. It was developed in conjunction with Experience, an online career resource center for honor societies. LPH members can register at: http://www.ncalph.experience.com. Questions? Contact Associate Director for Educational Initiatives Brad Mello, NCA, bmello@natcom.org

Communication Currents
Communication Currents is an online web magazine of the National Communication Association. The site is designed to translate current communication scholarship published in scholarly journals of the National Communication Association. Questions? Contact Editor Joann Keyton, North Carolina State University, jkeyton@ncsu.edu

Journal of International and Intercultural Communication
The Journal of International and Intercultural Communication publishes scholarship for an international readership on international and intercultural communication from a range of theoretical, conceptual and methodological perspectives. The journal features leading edge inquiry that cuts across academic boundaries to focus on international, intercultural, as well as indigenous communication issues. Questions? Contact Editor Tom Nakayama, Northeastern University, T.Nakayama@neu.edu
December 11, 2008 Conference Call: Dial-In Information

• Dial the Access Number: 1.800.920.7487
• When prompted, enter the Participant Code followed by #
• Your Participant Code is 66623635#

Participant Star Commands

• *4- Volume: Pressing *4 will increase/decrease the volume

• Q &A Session: Participants press *1 to ask a question, and the moderator will take your questions in the order that they arrive

• For technical assistance during the teleconference, contact Customer Service at 1.800.989.9239