Relationship Building between Principal Investigators and Research Administrators

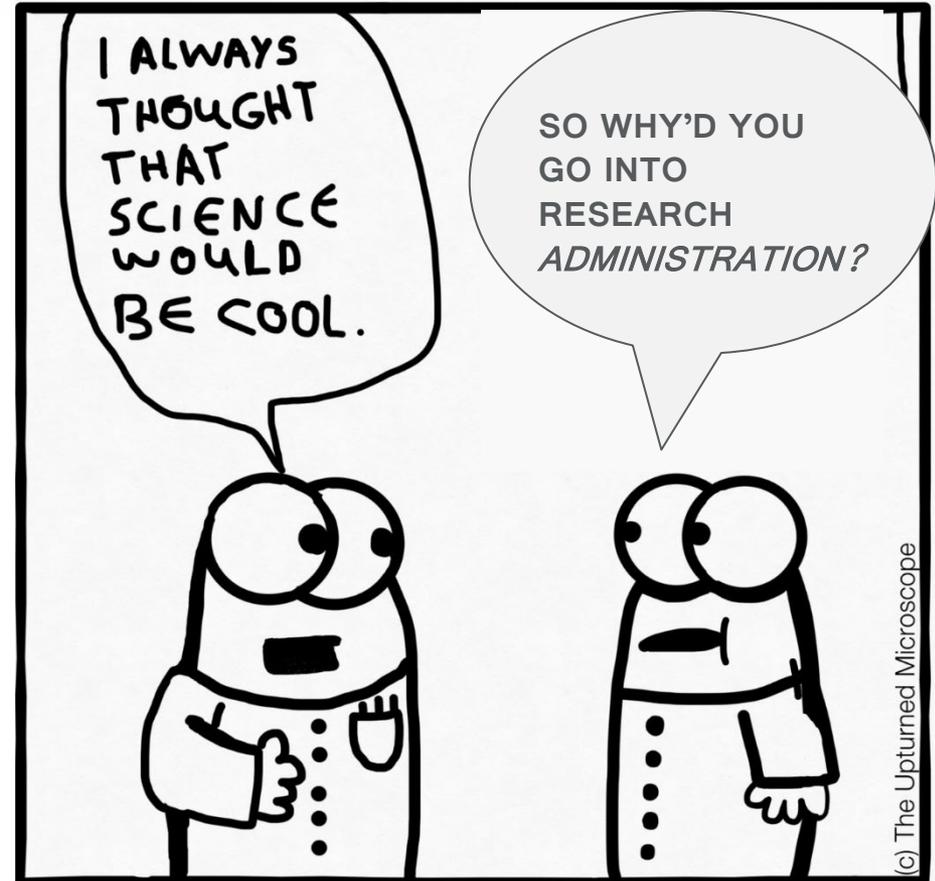presented by:

Kevin Titus
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Allergy & Immunology Division
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Kayly Lembke, PhD,
Grant Proposal Coordinator,
  Washington State University

Reversed, this would be a perfectly normal conversation.

SRA INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL MEETING CHICAGO 2024 OCTOBER 26-30

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Outline

- Who's Here

- Introductions

- Formation of Relationships

- Relationship Strategies during Pre-Award times

- Relationship Strategies during Post-Award times

- What NOT to do and course corrections

Who's in the audience?

Are you a(n):
   a. Administrator
   b. Principal Investigator
   c. Other

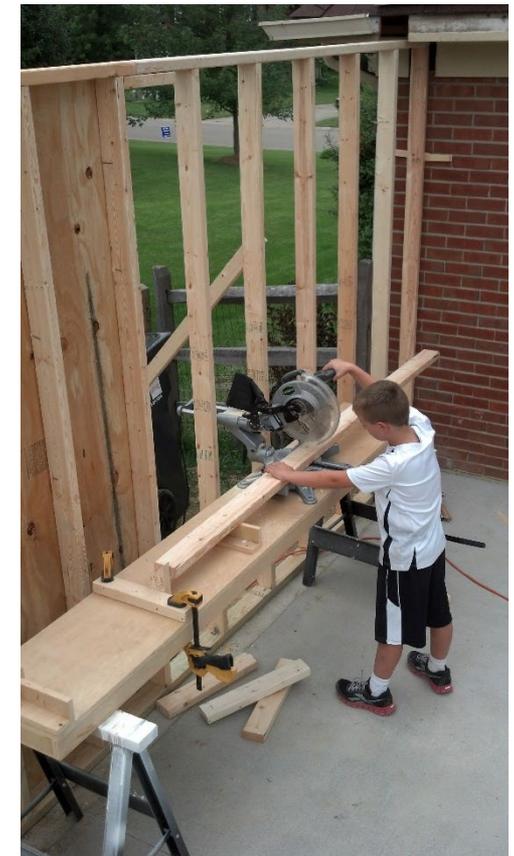# How long have you been in your current role?

Years of experience:
a. 0-1 year
b. 1-3 years
c. 3-5 years
d. 5-10 years
e. 10+ years **(I look so young because I started before child labor laws existed)**

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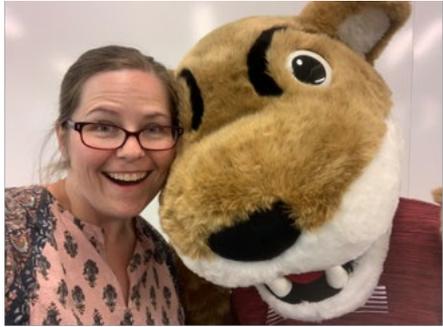
What types of institutions are represented?

I work at a:
a) Research Institution
b) R1 University
b) Hospital
c) Medical School
e) PUI
f) Non-profit
g) Other

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A bit about us

Administration vs PI

Central Office vs Department

Central Office

- Signing official(s)
- 50,000 foot level
- Watch money
- Policy makers
- Official recipient of grant
- Worried about auditors

Department/College/School

- PI
- In the weeds
- Spend money
- Policy followers (we hope)
- *Think* they're the official recipient of grant
- Doers of science

Relationships with PIs (The kind HR approves)

- Trust
- Know their interests
  - Read their papers
  - Read their grants
  - Attend their seminars
  - Go to their lab
- Give them what they *think* they want
- Accounting and management are not taught in med school, natural sciences, chemistry, physics, etc.

Research is Personal

- Remember, PIs are human and research is extremely personal.

- Some PIs have experienced several rounds of rejection.

- Some PIs are balancing research, scholarship, service, teaching, clinical time…..they can have a lot of demands on their time.
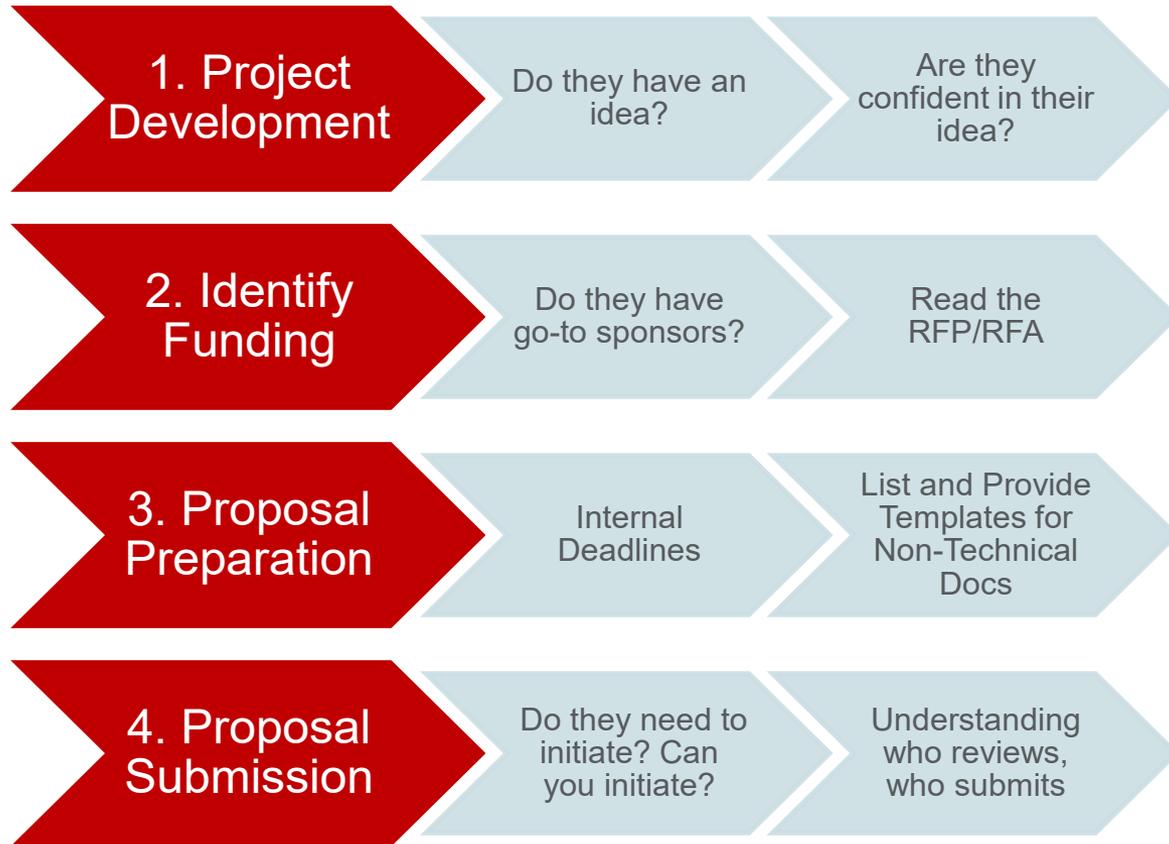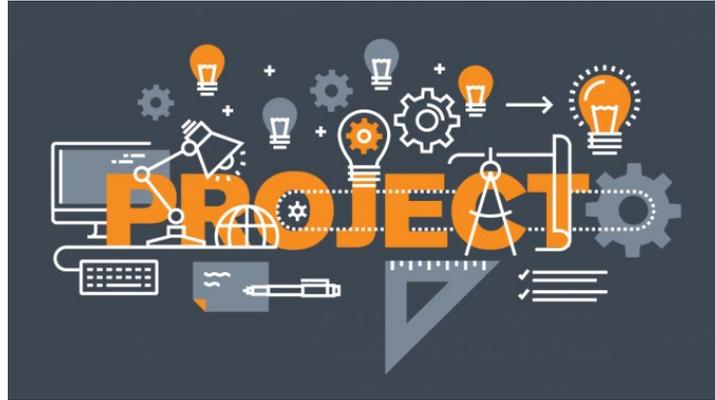
Starting the Grant Application Process

- Faculty do not always know (or remember) the details of the pre-award process.

- *Educating* them on the process can be helpful.

- Position yourself as a champion for their success.

- Empathize, but do not sympathize.

The Pre-Award Process

1. Project Development → Do they have an idea? → Are they confident in their idea?

2. Identify Funding → Do they have go-to sponsors? → Read the RFP/RFA

3. Proposal Preparation → Internal Deadlines → List and Provide Templates for Non-Technical Docs

4. Proposal Submission → Do they need to initiate? Can you initiate? → Understanding who reviews, who submits

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Project Development

- Know your limitations
- Be a cheerleader
- Call-in supervisors or colleagues to assist

Identify Funding

- Has the PI been successful?
  - Should they consider new or different sponsors?
  - Should they consider different study sections?
- Is the PI early career?
- Does the PI have regular collaborators?

Finding Funding Opportunities

- ***Online funding websites***
  - *COS - <http://fundingopps.cos.com/>*
  - *IRIS - <http://iris.library.uiuc.edu/~iris/deadlines/grad/>*
  - *InfoEd - <http://infoedglobal.com/>*
  - *FD SYS - <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/>*
  - *FEDIX - <http://www.researchresearch.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=21&Itemid=21>*
  - *The Foundation Directory - <http://fconline.foundationcenter.org/>*
  - *Grantsnet - <http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/funding>*

Finding Funding Opportunities

- **Federal agency funding websites**
  - DHHS - http://www.hhs.gov/grants/
  - NIH - http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/oer.htm
  - ACF - http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/
  - AoA - http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/Grants/Funding/index.aspx
  - AHRQ - http://www.ahrq.gov/
  - CDC - http://www.cdc.gov/
  - CMS - http://www.cms.gov/ResearchDemoGrantsOpt/
  - FDA - http://www.fda.gov/
  - HRSA - http://www.hrsa.gov/index.html
  - NSF - http://www.nsf.gov/
  - SAMHSA - http://www.samhsa.gov/grants/
  - DOD - http://www.defense.gov/
  - Grants.gov – http://grants.gov/

Finding Funding Opportunities

- **_Non-federal sponsor funding sites (also proposalCENTRAL)_**
    - _Alzheimer's Assoc._ - http://alzfdn.org/
    - _American Cancer Society_ - http://www.cancer.org/index
    - _American Heart Assoc._ - http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/
    - _Management and Organizational Development_ - http://www.fundsforngos.org/ngo-management-organizational-development/
    - _Muscular Dystrophy Assoc._ - http://www.mda.org/
    - _National Kidney Foundation_ - http://www.kidney.org/
    - _Robert Wood Johnson_ - http://www.rwjf.org/
    - _World Health Organization_ - http://www.who.int/en/

Proposal Preparation: Reduce the Burden

- Communication is key!
  - Work closely with your faculty to ensure everyone is on the same page regarding the grant application (due dates, forms required, responsibilities, etc.)
- Read the RFA/RFP
  - The RFA/grant guidelines will provide guidance as to what is allowable/not allowable on a particular grant application
- Timeline – create deadlines with wiggle room

Proposal Preparation: Reduce the Burden

- The Budget
  - Walk through allowability, F&A, exclusions
  - Ask for details – are Participant Support Costs *really* Participant Support Costs?

- Provide templates for Budget Justifications, Facilities and Equipment, Letters of Support, Letters of Commitment, etc.

Proposal Preparation: Reduce the Burden

- Combined Application
  - Once the required forms are completed, a combined application will be created.
  - Review, review, review!
    - Even though the combined application is created….this does not mean everything is perfect.
    - Tips to watch for when reviewing:
      - Greek symbols that turn into squares in your PDF document
      - Application combined in proper order
      - Tables and Graphs are readable (not fuzzy, words are legible)

- Internal Approval Process
  - Various levels of internal approvals need to occur before a combined grant application can be submitted to the sponsor.

Pre-Award Submission, continued

- When a combined application is received by the central office, they start their review process.

    Time = Quality of Review

- What this looks like will vary from institution to institution

Post-Award Management

You got the award – Huzzah!

…….and by you, we mean the institution.

Sometimes the PI needs to be reminded of this.

Post-Award Management

- *The principal investigator (PI) serves as the primary individual responsible for the scientific integrity and fiscal and administrative management throughout the period of the award.*
  - *Not the signing official*
  - *Not the Dean*
  - *Not the Chair*
  - *Not the president*
  - *Etc.*

Post Award Management (cont)
Department is responsible for:

- Ensuring PI is aware of:
  - Restrictions
  - Limits
  - Spending rates
- Reviewing spending
- Ensuring project complies not only with sponsor policies, but also institution policies.
- Monitor effort
- Award closeout

What if the budget is cut?

(You really make friends by offering solutions here)

With this much grant money, the only experiment we can do is "Flip a Coin"!

Who is Responsible?

- At the institution
  - Authorized Organizational Official
  - Principal Investigator
  - Departmental Administrator

Tell them you're keeping them out of federal prison

Compliance is…..

- The effective management of public funds to maximize research outcomes

- The avoidance of fraud, institutional mismanagement and poor management of Federal Funds

- An institutional commitment

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What NOT to do and some fixes

- Allow un-allowability
- Turn a blind eye to compliance concerns
- Ignore PI questions
- Expect the PI to know what they are doing and/or remember what they need to do

What are your questions?

Thank you. Seriously, Thank you!

- ***Please be sure to complete survey that will be emailed from SRA.***

- Contact info:

Now, go forth and build great relationships!

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