Faculty grant proposals requested

**Annual FPDC Deadline set: JANUARY 20 @ NOON**

The 2014-2015 PASSHE and Shippensburg FPDC Grant RFP is now available and is posted on the CFEST website.

CFEST has rebranded the “Teaching and Research Excellence” (TRE) grant program as “Shippensburg FPDC” to clarify that it and the PASSHE FPDC program share a single application, RFP, and review cycle.

Other than the name, the TRE program remains unchanged.

In order to be considered in the statewide PASSHE FPDC competition, SU faculty must submit their proposals to the Shippensburg FPDC program.

This year, PASSHE-FPDC expects to award $325,000 to support its annual grants program, with a maximum of $10,000 for each award. There will also be a separate Innovation in Teaching Grants program (RFP to be released next month). CFEST plans to fund 2-3 of the projects which were not funded in the PASSHE-FPDC review through our Shippensburg FPDC program (formerly TRE). The FPDC program is focused on faculty professional development and strongly favors projects which are likely to result in significant development of the applicant’s research and/or teaching capabilities.

If you are interested in applying for FPDC, there are several deadline of which you should make note:

- **November 14, 2014 (Noon)** – Announce your intention to apply to FPDC by sending an email to CFESTGrants@ship.edu.

- **November 20, 2014 (3:30, location TBD)** – FPDC Grant Writing Workshop. Discuss the RFP and grant review parameters with CFEST Grants committee members to help choose a project and write a competitive proposal.

- **January 20, 2015 (Noon)** – OFFICIAL DEADLINE for submitting applications for the combined FPDC grant programs.

Applications must be sent to sdlins@ship.edu in PDF or Microsoft Word form. Applications received after noon on Jan 20 will not be eligible for PASSHE or Shippensburg FPDC.

The FPDC proposal guidelines can be downloaded at [http://www.ship.edu/CFEST/Grants/Overview/](http://www.ship.edu/CFEST/Grants/Overview/). Contact Paul Taylor or Lea Adams (CFESTGrants@ship.edu) or Chris Wonders (CAWonders@ship.edu) if you have any questions.

**Environmental Ed Proposals due DECEMBER 19th**

The PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is inviting applications for Environmental Education Grants to develop environmental education programs and projects.

The application due date is Friday, December 19.

Evaluation Stories

Who assesses project outcomes?

A very commonly required element in a grant proposal is an evaluation plan and, equally important, a named evaluator. This raises a common question: Do proposal and program reviewers prefer that internal or external evaluators do your project evaluations?

Briefly, there are advantages and disadvantages to each. Internal evaluators will have great intuitive knowledge of your program and are less likely to be seen as an intruder.

Evaluation costs are usually less expensive when the evaluations are conducted in-house. The ability to communicate useful information is high.

On the other hand, internal evaluators may be perceived as being biased because of involvement with certain program aspects. Internal evaluation findings may be ignored or not seen as professional enough to be taken seriously.

External evaluations offer a fresh perspective and often see things not noticed before. They have a high autonomy and freedom. They are usually highly professional and competent. They can mediate and facilitate activities.

On the other hand, they may be seen as threatening and may require extra time to understand your program. Costs may be higher. The findings may be ignored because the evaluator doesn’t really know the program and can miss essential issues.

Our best suggestion: ask your program officers at the funding agency about their preferences.


Team Tips Part 2: Left Foot, Right

Last month, we discussed how successful collaboration are based on win-win relationships. Once those relationships are identified, how should a principal investigator choreograph the workings of the team proposal writing?

You could start out with your left foot but then your right foot would be left – and that would not be right. Therefore, it is better to start out on the right foot.

There is logic in that whimsical observation. In the past few weeks, we have observed from distant sidelines as a group has started off on the left foot to develop a competitive proposal.

Here are some of the many problems we have observed.

1. The proposal development team consists of 16 individuals, way too many. You need a small, inner core-working group that can reach out to others occasionally for feedback.

2. The PI, trying to be democratic, encourages full and equal participation by all. Many group members do a verbal data dump on each question raised and end up sending people down a rabbit hole. While contributions should be encouraged, focus must be retained on developing a persuasive proposal. You need PI leadership; this is not the time for shared governance.

3. The proposal development discussions should follow the RFP guidelines. In general terms, this means focusing sequentially on need, objectives, methods, evaluation, dissemination, and budget. I have been witnessing a Ping-Pong strategy that jumps almost randomly from one section to another without any sustained progress. To illustrate, it makes little sense to focus on methodology before pinpointing project needs.

4. The PI attempts to reach consensus on all project issues and details before putting anything down in writing. He rationalizes: “Why write it down yet; it is apt to change.” This strategy is an invitation to failure. First drafts are for getting down, not getting good. Proposals become polished through an iterative process. Putting ideas down in writing quickly identifies strengths and weaknesses and avoids so much verbal intellectualizing that often occurs in unchecked group discussions.

Tools from the Grants Resource Center & InfoEd

**Funding databases available online**

The chart below highlights the various tools included with University-paid subscriptions. If you have any questions, please give IPSSP a call, 717-477-1251. We pay institutional dues for access to these services. In an effort to not subsidize free and unethical use by others, we ask that you do not share this access outside of the institution. Thank you!

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