

The Ups and Downs of Obtaining and Maintaining Funding for Scientific Research at Argonne

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Introduction

- **Protein Biochemist**
- **Post-Doc at ANL 1978-1983**
- **ANL staff member in BIO 1983-present**
- **Study protein expression in a variety of biological systems using two-dimensional electrophoresis, mass spectrometry, computer-assisted data analysis, bioinformatics**



Sources of Funding for the ANL Protein Mapping Project

- Predominantly DOE funding through the Office of Biological and Environmental Research
- Additional funding, periodically, through:
 - The National Institutes of Health (e.g., NIEHS)
 - NASA
 - NIST



The Secret to Success in Maintaining Programmatic Funding

INFORMATION!!!!!!!

- Read the literature
- Go to scientific conferences
- Go to funding agency workshops
- Make contacts within funding agencies

**WHY? To be aware of shifts in funding agency
direction/interests AHEAD OF THE CURVE!**



A Case Study

- In December of FY98, DOE-OBER announced the “zeroing out” of all human health effects programs in FY99
- In January of FY98, DOE-OBER released a Call for Proposals in their Microbial Genome Program
- In summer of FY97, the PMG had started a collaboration with another DOE investigator in the microbial project – **PRELIMINARY DATA!!**



The Distinguishing Characteristics of a Successful DOE-OBER Proposal

- Solid justification for the project proposed within the context of the call for proposals (smart idea vs. promising project)
- Collaborators with necessary expertise – ideally individuals well established in the field(s) required for the proposed work
- **PRELIMINARY DATA!!!!!!!!!!**
- Utilization of DOE facilities (e.g., APS)
- Intellectual or collaborative links to existing (funded) projects



Non-DOE Funding Options

- **National Institutes of Health**
 - **RO1/PO1: Hypothesis-driven; preliminary data**
 - **Interagency agreement; program office contact(s)**
- **National Science Foundation**
 - **Education component required = university partner**
- **NASA**
 - **Watch for calls on the WWW; inside contacts useful**
- **Private Sector (CRADA, WFO)**
 - **Usually investigator initiated interaction with company; sometimes company makes initial contact**
- **LDRD**
 - **Innovative ideas and new starts**
 - **Necessary for generation of preliminary data!!!**



Coordinating Group Efforts

Currently, most successful attempts at attracting funding are the result of multi-investigator proposals due to calls for multi-disciplinary projects.

Rules of engagement:

- Partner with colleagues who are truly interested in the work and committed to producing a quality proposal – and who you can trust to get the job done when the project is funded!!
- Start **EARLY!!** Everyone is a procrastinator.
- Delegate responsibility for specific scientific components of the proposal, but have a single individual who takes ownership of the document and ensures coherence.
- **SET DEADLINES** and stick to them.



Funding for What You Want to Do

This is a challenge.

Stay informed.

Be creative.

Be flexible.

If necessary, do work that can be funded in order to have the opportunity to also do what you want to do on the side. Chances are, with data, you will be successful in finding a fundable niche for your true research interest.



Follow Through is Critical to Long Term Success

- Once a proposal is funded, GET THE WORK DONE!!
- Build on your success
 - Collaborations essential to the funded project can lead to new ideas and new proposals
 - Productivity in funded research will favor successful renewal applications



Summary

- **Stay informed**
(read/attend/network)
- **Make funding agency contacts** (workshops)
- **Form productive scientific alliances** (amiable)
- **Seek diversification**
- **Keep an eye on the horizon – change is inevitable!!**

