Opportunity Knocks

Special points of interest:

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Opportunity Knocks Once Again!

Last month I had the opportunity to attend a National Science Foundation (NSF) and a National Institutes Of Health (NIH) 2-day seminar at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center in Worcester with two faculty members from WSU; Heidi Bohler from Movement Science and Kelly Anne McKeown from Biology.

Seminars like this give faculty members who are interested in conducting additional research in their discipline an opportunity to learn what federal funders from NSF/NIH expect from Principal Investigators and their proposals for new and inventive research.

We learned about recent and future funding opportunities and hot topics. But, the most valuable outcome, especially for me, was an opportunity to go back to the basics in writing for these very individual agencies along with how important partnerships and working relationships are for our Grants Office, our faculty, staff, and librarians. Our presenter also emphasized the importance of connecting with program officers and to be readers/evaluators on other grant applications.

The best advice I heard over and over at these seminars was to write, write, and then write some more. Submit to as many different programs as possible that may be interested in your research ideas. Don’t get frustrated if you don’t get funded the first time around. Call your program officer and ask questions, and read your reviewers’ comments. These comments may be invaluable as you develop your next proposal into a winning proposal. As always, any help I can provide, please don’t hesitate to contact me. I am here to help each and every one of you.

Any presentations or printed materials provided during these seminars are available to WSU faculty, staff, or librarians who would like to find out what the current trends are.

Until next time, opportunity knocks every day. When is your day?

Louann D’Angelo

SPIN: Create Your Interest-Specific Profile Now!

SPIN is a grant research tool subscribed to by Westfield State University through InfoEd, Inc. It contains solicitations from both public and private sources. Faculty and staff at Westfield State University who are interested in accessing SPIN may contact the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs (OGSP) for directions how to register, or may go directly to the GENIUS component of InfoEd to create a profile for themselves. After creating a profile, only opportunities that match your interests are sent to you. A SPIN "Getting Started" Powerpoint Presentation and A SPIN Users Manual (PDF) can be found on the Employee Resource tab in the WSU Portal in Odyssey under Academic Affairs. Training is also available through the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs.
**Innovative Pedagogical Initiatives Grants 2012—2013**

What is an IPI Grant? An IPI grant is offered to Westfield State University educators, librarians and staff, who identify, and apply non-traditional methods of instruction. Innovative pedagogy is student driven, and believes that alternative methods of instruction can co-exist with traditional methods in order to tap into a given student’s learning style or achieve a more interdisciplinary framework. Innovative Pedagogy believes education should be flexible and adaptive, and geared toward energizing, inspiring, and generating interest at the individual level. The IPI Grant Program is an internal Westfield State University grant program designed to stimulate instruction in this way.

The grant is awarded for developing a new program of instruction, introducing a new technology into the classroom, attending a workshop or conference to learn more about innovative pedagogy, or other demonstrations which foster the ideals of innovative pedagogy.

Recent IPI awards have included travel and registration for an IDEA conference, stipends for visiting Native American writers to an English class, a collaboration to develop an El Sistema model program in Berkshire County, and a service learning project in Movement Science.

The next IPI application cycles: January 1 with a due date of February 1 and March 1 with a due date of April 1.

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**Massachusetts Cultural Council and Music**

The Music Department, thanks to Ernie Iannaconne of Media Services who spearheaded the proposals, is the recipient of two grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, through the Westfield Local Cultural Council.

One of these grants is for the Westfield State University Festival Chorus and will support the Spring Chorale and Festival Chorus concert in April. The other grant will support Westfield State University’s Music Theatre production of “Cabaret” to be produced also in April 2013.

The Local Cultural Council (LCC) Program is the largest grassroots cultural funding network in the nation supporting thousands of community-based projects in the arts, humanities, and sciences annually.

Administered by 2,400 municipally appointed volunteers, the LCC network consists of 329 councils serving all 351 Massachusetts cities and towns. Each year, local councils award more than $2 million in grants statewide.

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**Three New Grants on the Westfield State Campus!**

1. Westfield State University ‘s Office of Public Safety has been awarded a grant by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. Lieutenant Bernard St. George was instrumental in the successful proposal to the Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant under the Massachusetts Tactical Channel Plan Program.
2. The WSU Division of Graduate and Continuing Education was awarded a grant by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education under the Commonwealth Dual Enrollment Program to offer contract courses in Springfield Public Schools and to allow eligible Western Massachusetts high school students to take three credit hour courses at Westfield State.
3. Jennifer Propp of Social Work was awarded a sub-contract with the Onondaga County, NY, Department of Mental Health, Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare to evaluate their OnCare Program.
Innovative Pedagogical Initiatives Grants 2012—2013

Eight IPI Grants were awarded during the Fall 2012 term.

1. Vanessa Diana, English; for a project: “Bringing Artists into the Classroom” for the “Antidote to Columbus” Native American poetry reading in October.

2. Diana Schwartz, Movement Science; for a service learning project entitled “Advocacy: The Roller Coaster Ride of Women In Sport.”


4. Katherine Walsh, Social Work; for a project: “Guest Lecturer Videography for WSU MSW Program.”

5. Stephanie Grimaldi, Education; for a project: “Integrating iPads into Teaching and Learning.”


8. Brian Conz, Geography; for a project “Food Systems Planning” for field-based hands-on food systems learning and implementation.

New WSU Program! University Research Grants

There’s a new opportunity on campus for tenured and tenure-track faculty and librarians.

The aim of the University Research Grant Program (URGP) is to support research activities, including applicable creative activities. This program is intended to increase support for academic and teaching excellence and engaged scholarship. All tenured and tenure-track faculty and librarians of the University are eligible to apply; an applicant cannot receive more than one award within two annual cycles.

The program is intended to support direct costs of research activities, including but not limited to purchase of equipment and supplies; research participants; clerical assistance; data analysis; travel associated with conducting research; and costs associated with publication or conference presentation of research.

The maximum award amount is $2,500. Contact the Grants Office for more information.

Ely Library and Muslim Journeys

Ely Library has been awarded the Muslim Journeys grant, a project of the National Endowment for the Humanities in cooperation with the American Library Association. The grant will provide the Library with a collection of books, films, and other resources related to Islam and the cultural heritage of Islamic civilizations around the world. The program is intended to provide trustworthy and accessible resources to familiarize the American public with Muslim beliefs and practices and Islamic cultural heritage.

Muslim Journeys is part of the NEH’s Bridging Cultures Initiative. The resources comprising the collection were recommended, reviewed, and selected by distinguished scholars in the fields of anthropology, world history, religious studies, interfaith dialogue, the history of art and architecture, and world literature, as well as interdisciplinary fields such as Middle East studies, Southeast Asian studies, African studies, and Islamic studies.

“Muslim Journeys is part of the NEH’s Bridging Cultures Initiative. The resources comprising the collection were recommended, reviewed, and selected by distinguished scholars.”
The Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs is the department at Westfield State University responsible for the solicitation and management of funding from external sources. This includes the identification, submission, post-award management, and compliance for various types of funding (i.e., grants, contracts, sub-contracts, cooperative agreements) from corporate foundations, private foundations, and public entities at the local, state, and federal levels.

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Serving on a Grant Review Panel for the National Science Foundation

Serving as a panel reviewer for the National Science Foundation has been a remarkably valuable experience for me as a teacher, a scholar, and a Principal Investigator. It is an intense, time-consuming process, but one that I have found to be transformative.

As in serving on Tenure and Promotion committees, it is inspiring to see the tremendous work of colleagues (although you won’t know the colleagues in the review process). You learn a great deal about institutions you perhaps did not know much about, it makes you think hard about the diversity of institutions and students, and you learn about novel new approaches to teaching, education, or research. You also get to see, warts and all, the barriers and challenges faced by other institutions, providing important perspective.

For those who plan on writing a successful grant proposal, it is an invaluable experience. Having served, you know first-hand what serving on a review panel is like. This provides essential insight into the nature of the audience that you are writing for that is much less clear from a request for proposals. It makes the process concrete and gives you a real vision of what you need to provide for reviewers. It provides models of what works well as well as things to avoid.

For anyone who is considering writing a grant proposal, I would strongly encourage them to serve on a review panel if they are invited.

Julian Fleron, Mathematics

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