Tips for Writing Strong Grant Proposal Narratives

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The California State University
OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR
Agenda

- Getting started
- Writing about the CSU
- Writing about student engagement in RSCA
- Articulating project rigor, merit, & impact
- Writing quality
- Questions & Discussion
Expert Panel for Questions & Discussion

11:30 – 12:00

- **Leslie Ponciano**, Director of Research Opportunities, Chancellor’s Office
- **Julia Gaudinski**, Director of Research Development, San Jose State University
- **Chandra Khan**, Faculty Director for Research Development, CSU Dominguez Hills
- **Ulrike Muller**, Professor of Biology, Fresno State University
- **Barbara Taylor**, Associate Dean for Research, CSU Long Beach
Getting Started
Think like a reviewer

- Volunteer to be a reviewer
- Read successful proposals
- Read declined proposals and review comments

Do your homework

- Review funder’s priorities
- Review eligibility criteria, proposal guidelines, and evaluation criteria
- Schedule meeting with a program officer
- Talk to your campus research office

Grant proposals are different than journal articles

- Marketing document
- Convey confidence and competence
- Create a template
Tips: Writing about the CSU System
The CSU

• is the nation’s largest four-year public university, with 23 campuses and eight off-campus centers
• educates the most ethnically, economically, and academically diverse student body in the nation
• is renowned for the quality of its teaching and preparing job-ready graduates
• educates approximately 482,000 students
• employs more than 53,000 faculty and staff
• stretches 800 miles from Humboldt in the north to San Diego in the south
• has conferred degrees on more than 3.8 million alumni
• turned 60 years old in 2020, celebrating six decades of readying graduates to fuel CA’s economy
The CSU currently has ten multi-campus collaborations, also known as affinity groups, that conduct research and share knowledge on a breadth of topics, from agriculture and biotechnology to desert and ocean life.

They are associated with field stations, provide classes for students and the community, and offer ways for faculty to connect and collaborate.

- Agricultural Research Institute (ARI)
- Council on Ocean Affairs, Science, and Technology (COAST)
- CSU Program for Education and Research in Biotechnology (CSUPERB)
- California Desert Studies Consortium (CDSC)
- CSU Shiley Institute of Palliative Care
- Moss Landing Marine Laboratories (MLML)
- Ocean Studies Institute (OSI)
- Social Science Research & Instructional Council (SSRIC)
- Science Technology Engineering Mathematics Network (STEM NET)
- Water Resources and Policy Initiatives (WRPI)
Project Rebound

Project Rebound is a program that supports the higher education and successful reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals wishing to enroll and succeed at the CSU. By connecting students with critical resources, Project Rebound constructs an alternative to the revolving door policy of mass incarceration and increases community strength and safety.

The Transformative Power of Higher Education

Student Well-Being & Basic Needs

Critical to student success at the CSU, the Basic Needs Initiative takes a holistic look at students’ well-being both inside and outside the classroom, from housing and food security to mental health. We’re working together to find better ways to support our students on their path to graduation.

Tip #4 Institutional Commitment and Support
Tips: Writing about the CSU Faculty
### Faculty & Staff

#### Tip #5 The CSU Community

The CSU system employs more than 53,000 faculty and staff. Over half of all California State University employees are faculty members. Nearly 70 percent of CSU employees are women and minorities.

#### Fall 2019 Faculty Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACULTY RANK</th>
<th>WHITE MALE</th>
<th>MINORITY MALE</th>
<th>MINORITY FEMALE</th>
<th>WHITE FEMALE</th>
<th>RACE/ETHNICITY/GENDER UNKNOWN*</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>PERCENT OF GRAND TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>1,821</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>1,259</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>4,821</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>2,282</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>784</td>
<td>922</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>3,425</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure-Track Subtotal</td>
<td>3,272</td>
<td>1,949</td>
<td>1,931</td>
<td>2,825</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>10,528</td>
<td>78.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>897</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>1,037</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>2,966</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,169</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,306</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,446</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,862</strong></td>
<td><strong>711</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,494</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research, scholarship, and creative activity touch every part of the CSU – enhancing learning and preparing students for the jobs of the future. The breadth and depth of this work spans 23 campuses through shared expertise, facilities, and resources.

Tip #6
Boldly state your contribution

Tip #7
RSCA is Teaching
Tips:
Writing about the CSU Students
Tip #8 Our students are the story

STUDENTS
CSU students largely come from California and mostly remain in the state after graduation, applying the skills and knowledge they have learned to help California’s economy thrive.

- **95 PERCENT** of all enrolled students come from CA
- **94 PERCENT** of new undergraduate transfers come from CA community colleges
- **89 PERCENT** of first-time freshmen come from CA public high schools
Tips: Writing about Student Engagement in RSCA
Tip #9
Paid positions provide equitable opportunities

Tip #10
Students strengthen RSCA
Recruitment, Retention, & Evaluation

Tip #11: Culturally Responsive Strategies

Tip #12: Awareness of Implicit Biases

Tip #13: Equality, Equity, and Justice
Tip #3 Use your resources

Tip #14 UGs rock at RSCA!
Tips: Writing about Rigor, Merit, and Impact
Writing Approach

Tip #15
Provide a strong rationale

Rigor – how robust are your methods?

Merit/Significance – how will your project advance the discipline?

Impact – how and for whom will your project make a difference?

Tip #16
Be Bold!
Writing Strategies

• Tip 17: Content organization
• Tip 18: Word choice!
• Tip 19: Focused and concise
• Tip 20: Images, Tables, and Graphs
Tips: Writing Quality
Avoid Common Writing Mistakes

- Missing or extraneous detail
- Overly technical errors
- Lacking novelty or innovation
- Lacking a rationale for project decisions
- Not addressing limitations or risks
- No sustainability plan
- Lack of project management
• Utilize font type, font size, underline, *italics*, **bold**
  - Arial
• Utilize font type, font size, underline, *italics*, **bold**
  - Times New Roman

• White space
• Citations
• Headings and subheadings
• Plagiarizing RFP
• Alignment across documents
Upcoming Opportunity!

Small Systemwide Writing Groups

Three-month commitment (Feb – April, May – July, Aug – Oct)

Writing progress

Peer feedback
Questions & Discussion

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