Panel: Faculty Diversity & Retention: Best Practices

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HUNTER COLLEGE GRANT WRITING BOOTCAMP

On Tuesday, January 6th, 2015, the First Quarterly Grant Writing Boot Camp was held. The boot camp was an intensive, all-day affair designed to help Hunter College faculty develop, improve, and near completion of grant proposals that would be submitted within the first 2-3 months of 2015. Further, the boot camp’s aims were not merely theoretical but were practical to focus on the actual writing process in situ. Eleven faculty members attended the event. The attendees came from three schools within Hunter College, including five different departments within the School of Arts and Sciences. Attendees included:

1. Lorie Goshin, School of Nursing
2. Mandë Holford, Chemistry Department
3. Akira Kawamura, Chemistry Department
4. Frida Kleiman, Chemistry Department
5. Shahana Mahajan, Medical Lab Sciences Department
6. Wenge Ni-Meister, Geography Department
7. Thomas Preuss, Psychology Department
8. Jayne Raper, Biology Department
9. Peter Serrano, Psychology Department
10. Mariann Weierich, Psychology Department
11. Jeanne Weiler, School of Education

These researchers represented a variety of main funding sources already obtained for their laboratories with diverse success rates and most had a grant deadline within 1 month of the Bootcamp:

grants applied for during the past 3 years: 5.9 grants/3 years;
received during the past 3 years: 1.3 grants/3 years

Also present were Mark Hauber, Acting Associate Provost for Research and Alexis Brewer, Provost’s Office. The Provost’s office provided breakfast and lunch for the attendees.

All of the boot camp attendees had identified at least one funding source to which they will submit a proposal, such as NIH, NSF, and DOD. The Agenda (appended below) was followed with flexibility:

1. The meeting opened with introductions over a light breakfast. Faculty members described their research focus and their potential funding source. During this time, faculty members connected on shared research interests, potential collaborations, and with potential mentors and proposal reviewers.
2. After introductions, individuals were given 1 hr to finalize and prepare a one page summary of their grants.
3. Immediately after writing and polishing these summary pages, the group reconvened for the Instant Peer-Review session. The group composition was diverse enough to cover individuals’ research topics in general sense, including a Geographer and Nursing school faculty. The grant synopses were distributed among the group, focusing on shared research specialties and pairing more experienced grant writers with newer faculty. The reviewers analyzed the proposal outlines and critiqued the summary page for the entire group.
4. During a working lunch, group members offered support by sharing their stories of grant successes and trials during the working lunch.
5. After lunch the group had additional time to revise their summary pages
6. Faculty resubmitted their updated summary/specific aim pages for a second round of peer review and received one-on-one feedback.
7. The day ended with a round-table discussion of important questions and addressed the needs of the group. This discussion included the types of support that the grant writers needed in terms of boilerplate language and other university support. In this spirit, existing boilerplate language was provided for all Boot Camp attendees, regarding Undergraduate Research, Postdoctoral Mentorship, and Data Management policies at Hunter College.