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ACADEMIC CONSULTING

Elements of a Grant Proposal

- SPECIFIC AIMS /Goals-objectives
- Proposal Narrative/Background-Research Plan
- Budget Information
- Credentials of the PI and Other Staff
- Evaluation and Dissemination Information
- Letters of Commitment
- Project Summary

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Specific Aims/Objectives

- Serves **ALL** proposal formats
- Arguably the most important component of your proposal. (first impression)
- Should be clear concise
- Convey confidence
- Complete in communicating why your idea is important and how you will successfully execute

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Specific Aims Section

- 1-2 pages
- Demonstrate significance, innovation, approach, goals, research design.....
- Provide information such that someone can have a comprehensive view of your proposal in a short read.

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Specific Aims Construction

- First paragraph
 - Powerful opening sentence that states significance and need.
 - What is known, what is unknown, what is the problem (context for your solution)
- Second Paragraph
 - Sequential focus
 - Long range goal
 - Objective of the proposal (hypothesis)
 - Justification (why it makes sense)
 - Why are you the most qualified to do the job

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Specific Aims Section

Opening Sentence

- Captures interest of the reader
- Plain and understandable to the informed reader
- Demonstrate broad significance
- Conveys relevance and importance to the field

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Specific Aims Section

Opening Sentence Style

- Declarative fact
 - Draws attention and defines significance
 - Something the reader would not know or adds data to something that was assumed
- Tell a story- draw in the reader
- Descriptive
 - Sets the stage to justify approach

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Declarative facts

- Child abuse is reported every **10** seconds.
- **5 to 6** children die each day as a result of child abuse or neglect.
- **1** in every **4** children in the United States (**28** million) are living in a household with an alcoholic adult.
- Every **9** seconds a woman is beaten in the United States.
- Over **1,750,000** workdays are lost each year due to domestic violence.
- **1** in **5** female high school students reports being physically or sexually abused by a dating partner.

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Specific Aims Section

First Paragraph

- Provide Current Knowledge
- Identify gap in current knowledge
- State the gap as an important problem

This problem then sets the stage the rest of the Specific Aims and you proposal

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Specific Aims Section

Second Paragraph

- Your long term goal (consistent with the priorities of the institute)- make the logical leap that you are well suited
- Objective of this application (within the context of your long term goal)
- Your Central Hypothesis (gap)
- Rationale

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Specific Aims Section

Third Paragraph

- State the specific Aims (2-4)
- Consistent with testing the Central Hypothesis
- Gain quick attention (Headlines)
- Should be open ended but demonstrate focus
- Avoid being descriptive (look-see)

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Specific Aims Section

AIMS/GOALS (Objectives)

- Measurable wherever possible
- Related but NOT dependent
- **Expand aims by adding text to link knowledge base and approach**
- *Make expansion text distinct from the aim*

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Specific Aims Section

Payoff Paragraph

- Sell yourself and the proposal- why are you and your team best suited
- What is the added value
- Innovation- Why is your approach great
- Expected outcomes and impact

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Background and Significance Section

- Mini review- reflect knowledge of the area and literature
- Magnify and expand on knowledge gap
- Educate the non expert informed reader **and** reflect expertise
- Restate significance (congruent with priorities of institute)
- Validate by stating potential benefits

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Preliminary Data/Information

- Demonstrate experience and abilities related to the proposed project
- Proof of concept
- Could be published or unpublished work
 - Manuscripts in appendix
 - Unpublished data need more explanation
 - Cite relevant work from potential reviewers (public information)

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Research/Program Design and Methods

- Let Specific Aims drive structure
 - Title (Specific Aim)
 - Introduction
 - Experimental Design
 - Study #1 (with appropriate titles)
 - Study #2
 - Expected outcomes
 - Potential problems and Alternate Strategies

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Research/Program Design and Methods

Critical Items for Inclusion

- Justification
- Approach
- Methods
- Reagents
- Key Resources
- Numbers of subjects/ animals and how determined
- Statistical analysis
- Controls
- Replicates needed
- Detailed expectations
- Time required
- Access to expertise (self or collaborators)

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Budget

- Check for limits and parameters
- Construct based on the needs of the project
- Determine institutional contribution (in kind)
- Make sure that the budget and figures are appropriately defined
- Determine appropriate indirect costs and if they are calculated as part of the budget limit
- JUSTIFY JUSTIFY JUSTIFY !!!!

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Before Sending the Proposal Off

- Learn About the Review Process
- Proof (by someone who is not in your field)
- Look at the **UPDATED** Program Announcement
- Proof read (aloud to yourself)
- Proof again

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Submission

- Be familiar with the appropriate submission formats
- Communicate with the Office of Sponsored Research at your institution
- Communicate with the Program Director regarding new changes and information related to those changes.

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Post Submission

- Be responsive to agency inquiries
- Upon receiving reviews/scores
 - NEVER SEND OUT AN EMAIL WITHIN A DAY
 - Think about reviewer comments and write major points and respectful responses
 - Schedule phone call with program officer
 - Respectfully mention praise/concerns (major points and responses)
 - NEVER ARGUE
 - Offer to provide written synopsis of conversation
 - THE REVIEWER IS ALMOST ALWAYS RIGHT!

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Common Mistakes in Grantsmanship

- Not enough time allocated for research, writing and pre submission review
- Writing for the expert
- Thinking that the process starts with the writing of the grant proposal
- Thinking that the work ends with the submission of the proposal
- Not knowing who the key players are and their roles

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