February 2015

Dear Faculty Colleagues:

I am reaching out to you to confirm that the Office of the Provost provides access to grant-writing support consultants for all tenured, tenure-earning and term faculty members who are writing applications for external research funding. Faculty members are encouraged to use these contracted consulting services which include (a) grant-writing training sessions and one-on-one consultations in person or remotely by Dr. Ralph Pollack and (b) application consultation and editing services by Ms. Louise Wides. To learn more about available grant-writing consulting services offered through the Office of the Provost please see the link: [http://www.american.edu/provost/osp/Assistance-with-External-Proposal.cfm](http://www.american.edu/provost/osp/Assistance-with-External-Proposal.cfm)

In addition, resources exist in the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) to assist faculty members to locate appropriate funding opportunities. These resources include online search resources to locate funding opportunities ([http://www.american.edu/provost/osp/Fund-Opps-online-resources.cfm](http://www.american.edu/provost/osp/Fund-Opps-online-resources.cfm)) as well as tailored search training opportunities ([http://www.american.edu/provost/osp/Training.cfm#fun](http://www.american.edu/provost/osp/Training.cfm#fun)). The link to the OSP monthly newsletter which provides current information regarding funding opportunities and available resources to assist in the application writing process can be found at [http://www.american.edu/provost/osp/osp-monthly-newsletter.cfm](http://www.american.edu/provost/osp/osp-monthly-newsletter.cfm)

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Pollack or Ms. Wides, please contact Anita Brown at [abrown@american.edu](mailto:abrown@american.edu) or x-6333. Questions regarding funding opportunities can be directed to [osp@american.edu](mailto:osp@american.edu) or x-3440.

Thank you.

Jonathan Tubman,
Vice Provost for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies
Editorial Assistance for Proposal Writing at American University

Why Would You Benefit from Our Assistance?
- Writing a grant proposal is different from any other kind of writing.
- We have experience in developing, writing, reviewing, and editing proposals for funding.
- For more than 35 years, we have been facilitating the growth and success of professionals.
  - Dr. Pollack was a faculty member in the Chemistry & Biochemistry Department at the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) from 1970 to 2007 and has been Associate Vice President for Research at UMBC since 2007.
  - Ms. Wides was Assistant Staff Director for Information Services at the Federal Election Commission from 1985 to 2001, and has spent 40 years helping experts in a variety of fields explain their ideas to new audiences.
- There is no charge to you.

Who Should Utilize this Service?
- All faculty and administrators who prepare any type of proposal for external funding.
- In particular:
  - New faculty.
  - Faculty who have never before secured external funding.
  - Groups of faculty collaborating on one grant proposal.
  - Principal Investigators (PIs) for whom English is not their first language.

What Services Are Provided?
The kinds of support we provide depend upon the PI’s wishes and needs and upon the timing of our involvement in the proposal preparation.
- Formulation of strategy for planning and developing the PI’s proposal.
- Assistance in meeting the funding agency’s application requirements and review criteria.
- Editorial help to improve the organization, clarity, and compelling message of the application.

Whom Should You Work With?
- Dr. Pollack
  - All proposals for math, science, and business.
  - Government (state and federal) proposals for the social sciences.
- Ms. Wides
  - Foundation proposals for the social sciences, public policy, communications, and business.
  - All proposals in the arts and humanities.

The Process: What Does Dr. Pollack Do?
- Provides editorial assistance to all PIs in the sciences, social sciences, math, and business.
- Meets with PI early in the process to discuss general strategy and the fundability of the idea.
- Helps determine whether the idea is appropriate for the specific funding agency.
- Helps develop a clear objective for the proposal and specific aims to further the objective.
- Helps set a timetable for writing.
- Reviews a one-to-two page summary of the proposal.
- Helps develop a proposal outline that addresses all of the funder’s review criteria.
- Reviews the first draft—and suggests edits—of each section of the proposal.

Revised: January 2015
• Works with PI to develop overall organization and to ensure that all review criteria are addressed.
• Conducts workshops on proposal writing.

The Process: What Does Ms. Wides Do?
• Provides editorial assistance to PIs (individuals and cross-discipline teams) in the social sciences, public policy, business, communications, the arts, and the humanities.
• Meets early with PIs to learn about the proposal and to strategize the best approach for structuring the proposal.
• Ensures that the proposal satisfies the particular requirements and criteria of the funding organization.
• Works with PIs to clarify the purpose, focus, and “pitch” of their applications.
• Establishes consistent use of punctuation, grammar, syntax, and word choice.

Why Is Editorial Assistance Important?
• Competition for grant funding is intense. An exceptionally well-written proposal captures the reviewer’s attention and interest immediately. That is your goal.
• The more effectively your proposal communicates the purpose, importance, and uniqueness of your project, the better your chances of receiving a serious review and securing the grant.
• Reviewers associate a clear, well-written proposal with a thoughtful, organized mind.
• Accurate and consistent language demonstrates the PI’s ability to give attention to detail — which reviewers regard as necessary to the successful execution of a grant project.

What Don’t We Do?
• Develop budgets or provide other parts of proposal, e.g., draft letters of recommendation.
• Carry out supportive functions provided by OSP and other AU departments and offices.

How Much Time is Necessary Before the Due Date of the Proposal?
• We recommend that you initiate discussions with us at the earliest stages of proposal preparation.
• It’s best to begin two months before the due date, if possible.

Contact Information?
To schedule an appointment, contact Ms. Anita Brown (abrown@american.edu) in the Office of Graduate Studies for a referral to either Dr. Pollack (pollack@umbc.edu) or Ms. Wides (lwides@verizon.net).

Tips for Success
• Allocate sufficient time for writing the proposal and having it edited by a third party.
• Obtain the funder’s guidelines and review criteria before you begin to write the proposal.
• Comply with the funder’s requirements as to categories of information, their order of presentation, and length of each section.
• Work with one “master” copy.
• Establish a timetable early on, or ask one of us to help you establish a timetable.
• Communicate with proposal colleagues (including us) often and clearly.
• Do not give up — resubmissions are often necessary.  1.29.15