Clemson University
Handling Rejection: Turning Reviewer Feedback into A Successful Resubmission

Office of Research Development

NOVEMBER 11, 2020
11:00 AM — 12:00 PM
Program Agenda

- Panelist Introductions (10 minutes)
- Panel Questions (40 minutes)
- Audience Questions (10 minutes)
Handling Rejection

Moderator
DR. SHELIA COTTEN
Associate Vice President for Research Development

Panelists
DR. JULIA BRUMAGHIM
Professor, Chemistry, College of Science

DR. KSENIJA GASIC
Professor, Plant & Environmental Science, CAFLS

DR. MICHAEL LEMAHIEU
Associate Professor, English, CAAH

DR. JOHN LOPES
Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

DR. HARRISON PINCKNEY IV
Assistant Professor, Parks, Recreation & Tourism Management, CBSHS
Julia Brumaghim is a Professor of Chemistry, and she has had research funded by the NSF (since a CAREER award in 2006), the NIH, the American Heart Association, and NASA EPSCoR. In addition, she has been a proposal reviewer and panelist for the NSF (Chemistry of Life Processes, CAREER award, Chemical Synthesis, and Major Research Instrumentation programs), NIH (NCCAM and NIEHS), American Heart Association, NASA, and other organizations. She has experienced her share of proposal rejections (with more than ten in one year), had many proposal acceptances (four in a row once), and has occasionally been successful revising a proposal that was rejected and then was funded. From her experience on both sides of the process, she has learned a few things about reading between the lines of proposal reviewer comments and determining when a proposal is worth the effort of revising.
Ksenija Gasic is a Professor of Horticulture. Her research is focused mostly on application and is funded by the USDA (AFRI, SCRI, SCMBG). She has been a proposal reviewer and panelist for the USDA (SCRI and AFRI programs), BARD (Plant program) and others. She has had various successes with proposal submissions, from being funded the first time to successful resubmission and rejection. Experiencing both sides of the process taught her the importance of planning well ahead of time and having a grant coordinator involved in reviewing the proposal.
Michael LeMahieu, Associate Professor of English, has served as a reviewer for the Mellon Foundation / ACLS Dissertation Fellowships; Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation); Research Fellowship Committee (Arts) of Jesus College, Cambridge (UK); and the Research Awards Advisory Committee of the Leverhulme Trust (UK). He has successfully resubmitted proposals for fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).
John Lopes, Professor of Biological Sciences and Dean of the Graduate School, has served as a panelist for the National Science Foundation (10 years), the American Cancer Society (5 years), and the Leukemia Research Foundation (6 years). He has also served as an ad hoc reviewer for NIH, Austrian Science Fund, Barth Syndrome Foundation, and the Wellcome Trust. His service to NSF included 5 years on the Biochemistry and Gene Expression Panel and 5 years on the Gene Expression I panel. He has successfully submitted and re-submitted proposals for grants from NSF and ACS. As a Department Head, John developed a “chalk-talk” process for proposal development.
HARRISON PINCKNEY IV
Assistant Professor, Parks, Recreation & Tourism Management, CBSHS

Harrison Pinckney has received funding from both public and private agencies as a result of remaining committed to proposals following initial rejections. As an Assistant Professor he has already secured close to $500,000 in external funding. Through his projects funded by the Heinz Endowment and National Science Foundation, he has learned the value of understanding the vision of the funding agency and remaining in close communication with program officers. Rejections are primarily viewed by him as learning opportunities for fine tuning his theoretical framework and methodological approach to research.
Panel Questions

- What factors should investigators weigh in determining that a proposal is worth revising?
- What are you looking for in reviewer comments?
- After ascertaining that a proposal is worth revising, what is the first thing investigators should do?
- How can investigators garner the most useful comments from program officers?
- What techniques should investigators adopt in revising proposal narratives?
ORD Team

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