Building Connections with NIH Program Officers: Myths and Realities

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Federal Agencies Focused on Biomedical Research

- National Institutes of Health (NIH)
- Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)
Federal Agencies With a Stronger Focus on Healthcare Delivery

- Agency for Children and Families
- Health Resources and Services Administration
- Administration on Aging
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- Food and Drug Administration
Other Federal Agencies With “Interests”

- Department of Energy
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- National Science Foundation
The President’s First Visit to NIH
September 30, 2009

- Acknowledged NIH’s $5 billion-plus expenditures for American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding
- Recognized NIH’s pivotal role in biomedical research leadership for the nation and the world
- Challenged NIH to make the outcomes of its research map more quickly to needs in healthcare
- [Link](http://videocast.nih.gov/Summary.asp?File=15315)

President Obama’s overall goal is ‘better health outcomes at lower cost’
Five Priorities of New NIH Director Francis Collins

1. Taking advantage of advances in high-throughput technologies to understand the fundamentals of biology and how specific diseases are activated
2. Emphasizing the translation of research into medicine
3. Putting science to work for the benefit of health care reform through:

Comparative effectiveness research
Behavioral science
Health information technology
Health research economics
Research on health disparities
4. Placing a greater focus on global health
Five Priorities of New NIH Director Francis Collins

5. Addressing the extramural research community’s needs via:
   - Future budgets
   - Training
   - Peer review
   - Workforce diversity
The Culture of NIH
Scientists and Research Opportunities

- Those who:
  - Watch things happen
  - Make things happen
  - Wonder what happened
What You Should be Doing

MONITOR AGENCY WEBSITE & FEEDS
What You Should be Doing

SIGN UP TO RECEIVE REGULAR UPDATES
What You Should be Doing

KNOW NIH Policies For New and Early Stage Investigators
New and Early Stage Investigators (ESI)

An ESI is generally someone within ten years of completing terminal research degree or medical residency

What does this mean?

> clustering of ESI R01 applications during review
> more rapid return of review critiques and faster review cycle
> potential special funding consideration by the awarding institute

Specific Opportunities

Pathway to Independence Award (K99/R00)
NIH Director’s New Innovator Award
Career Development Awards (K series)
Research project grant program (R01)
NIH Loan repayment programs
What You Should be Doing

Stay up to date on NIH grants policies and application procedures.
Peer Review Changes: Plan Early!!

- **Already implemented:**
  - Enhanced review criteria (overall impact + 5 core criteria)
  - New 1-9 scoring system (‘exceptional’ to ‘poor’)
  - Scoring of individual review criteria
  - Templates for structured critiques
  - Clustering of new/early stage investigators for R01 applications
    > Update your record in eRA Commons profile!

- **For ALL due dates on or after January 25, 2010:**
  - Shorter page limits (6 or 12 page research plans!)
  - New forms available for download in December 2009

http://enhancing-peer-review.nih.gov/restructured_applications.html
What You Should be Doing

Note how the peer review system describes fields of science.
“Grand Opportunities” That NIH Highlighted for Potential ARRA Funding

- Groundbreaking, innovative, high impact, cross-cutting research projects
- Enhanced integration of activities in multiple laboratories
- New and creative collaborative partnerships
- Novel tools, technologies, and services to overcome barriers
- Accelerated multi and interdisciplinary research
What We Can Learn From

NIH’s recent funding of

- Transformative R01s
- Pioneer Awards
- New Innovator Awards
So, What is a Researcher to Do?
Program Officers are Great Resources!
Program Officers are Great Resources!

Contacts by Research Area

- Bioinformatics and Computational Biology
- Cell Biology and Biophysics
- Genetics and Developmental Biology
- Minority Opportunities in Research (MORE)
- Pharmacology, Physiology, and Biological Chemistry
- Research Supplements
- Training Grants
- Fellowships
- Career Development Awards

Bioinformatics and Computational Biology

Bioinformatics
C. John Whitmarch, Ph.D.
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Biographical sketch

Peter Lyser, Ph.D.
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Biographical sketch

Centers -- Complex Biological Systems Not Related to Trauma and Burn
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Biographical sketch
Program Officers are Great Resources!

Links to PDF file with detailed listing of areas and program officer interests
“Challenges” That NIH Highlighted for Potential ARRA Funding


BEHAVIOR, BEHAVIORAL CHANGE, AND PREVENTION
BIOETHICS
BIOMARKER DISCOVERY AND VALIDATION
CLINICAL RESEARCH
COMPARATIVE EFFECTIVENESS RESEARCH
ENABLING TECHNOLOGIES
ENHANCING CLINICAL TRIALS
GENOMICS
HEALTH DISPARITIES
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY FOR PROCESSING HEALTH CARE DATA
REGENERATIVE MEDICINE
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS EDUCATION
SMART BIOMATERIALS - THERANOSTICS
STEM CELLS
TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE
Program Officers are Great Resources!

The Art of Background

“Similar sailboat, different harbor... different story.”
WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?
Optimists Club -- Open Mornings

Pessimists Club -- Closed Afternoons
And finally... 

- Contact program officers!  [e-mail is best]
- Ask questions!
- Find your creative niche that maps to funding opportunities!
- Be persistent!