

# About to Write a Proposal?

Consider these Top 10 (+1) Tips

1. **Get to know the program or grant officer.** A quick call to the grant officer can provide insight that may help you identify the important points in their evaluation rubric.
2. **Connect to the funder's desired outcomes.** Describe how your research contributes to the criteria on which they (the funder) will evaluate.
3. **It's their money.** Know what they fund and how your project will add value.
4. **Show your research is urgent/timely.** Connect your research to a nationally or globally recognized issue.
5. **Tell a good story.** Grab their attention in the first paragraph. Answer the "who cares?" question.
6. **Mirror their terms.** Look for their key "buzz words" and use them in your proposal.
7. **Follow the guidelines.** Use their headings and adhere to their manuscript specifications. Answer their questions. Use boldface and italics to make headings and key terms stand out.
8. **Find a partner.** Especially for a first time proposal submission. Collaborate with a colleague with a strong publishing record/recognized gallery showing or performance. However, be

***"Good proposals begin with an intriguing idea that will advance science; take time to develop your research questions and vet them with colleagues!"***

Wendy Graham, Carl S. Swisher Chair in Water Resources  
UF Water Institute | Global Fellow Symposium, April 20, 2017

***"Complex problems cannot be solved by a single investigator; you need a team."***

Sandra Russo, Director, Office for Global Research Engagement,  
UF International Center | Global Fellows Symposium, April 20, 2017

careful, sometimes more partners mean more work. Furthermore, partnerships need to be well established before writing the proposal. Funders look for the existence of a real partnership, one that existed prior to the call for funding.

9. **Know how you will spend the money** – travel, summer salary, graduate students, equipment, computers, conferences, etc. Will the funder support your specific financial needs?
10. **Less is more.** Make it easy for the reviewer.

And one more...

11. **Make a friend in the DSP.** Contact UF's Division of Sponsored Projects (DSP) right away of your intent to submit the proposal. Writing the proposal is only half the effort. It takes almost as long to prepare the university paperwork to accompany your proposal and you will need their help in preparing the final submission.

***"Master the art of making your proposal accessible to a general audience while showcasing the depth of your knowledge."***

Fiona McLaughlin, Chair, Department of Linguistics and Associate Professor of Linguistics and African Languages  
Global Fellow Symposium, April 20, 2017