

Developing STEM Educational Grant Proposals: Best Practices

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Abstract

Many programs at the National Science Foundation (NSF), and other funding agencies, have a goal of the improvement of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. Funding opportunities exist for laboratory development and curricula reform in support of improvement in student learning and STEM educational pedagogy. Understanding all facets of the grant proposal process, from inception through proposal review and, ideally, to grant awarding is critical in the development of nationally competitive grant proposals. With many components required for a successful grant proposal, it is important for a potential grantee to develop a set of best practices when undertaking grant proposal writing efforts.

The author of this paper has written a successful NSF Adaptation and Implementation grant proposal [1] entitled "An Integrated Internet-Accessible Embedded Systems Laboratory" and a successful NSF Department Level Reform grant proposal [2] entitled "Developing a Modern Computer Engineering Curriculum Focusing on Embedded Systems." The goal of this paper is to suggest best practices for proposals for people considering writing similar grant proposals. Considerations include properly addressing program solicitation requirements, proposal organization, proposal readability, and related issues.

Introduction

NSF supports STEM education through many programs [3-6]. These programs span multiple directorates and divisions including, most notably, the Division of Undergraduate Education (DUE). Programs currently supported in DUE fall under the categories of Curriculum, Laboratory & Instructional Development and Workforce Development. The well known Course, Curriculum, and Laboratory Improvement (CCLI) program one example. With the numerous programs and solicitations supported, many opportunities for STEM educational grant proposals are available.

Other, often cross directorate, STEM programs include Grants for the Department-Level Reform of Undergraduate Engineering Education (DLR), Centers for Learning and Teaching (CLT), Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU). Many of these programs are a part of the Division of Engineering Education and Centers (EEC). In developing a STEM proposal, selecting the correct program, and the correct solicitation, is the first step in the successful proposal process. A proposal that does not fit the program/solicitation, however well conceived, may stand little chance of funding. A well thought out plan that not only addresses the correct program, and the correct solicitation, but that also plans for future related proposal development to other programs is more likely to be well received.

Sample Stem Grant

Richard Stember

A red circular graphic with a gradient, appearing as a stylized arrow or a partial circle, located to the right of the name Richard Stember.

Sample Stem Grant:

Sample Stem Grant Book Review: Unveiling the Magic of Language

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<https://crm.avenza.com/data/Resources/Documents/Red%20Fern%20Grows%20Lesson%20Plans.pdf>

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