

Proposals, competitive at the next level

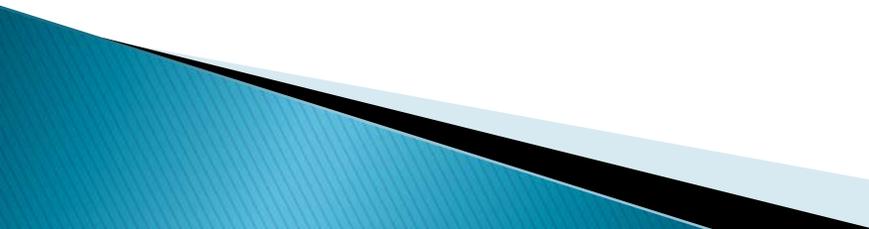
Barbara Crutchley
Director
Research Services
University of Manitoba
TRU August 2014



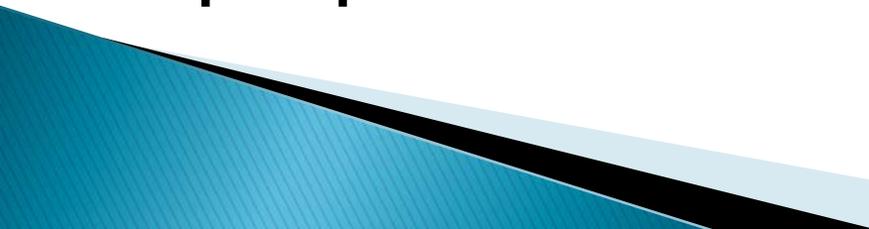
Increasing effort in research

- ▶ What does it mean for you?
 - ▶ How will it affect your institution?
 - ▶ How will it affect your colleagues?
 - ▶ How will it affect your students?
 - This takes strategic thinking
- 

There is a disconnect: understanding the tensions

- ▶ How do we reward academics and how do we reward research activity?
 - ▶ What different supports are needed to ensure success? Can the institutional operating budget carry this?
 - ▶ What changes in behaviours and policies may occur?
- 

The Changing Research Environment

- ▶ Understand what impact the new complexity will have on the institution.
 - ▶ No longer just a researcher managing the initiative.
 - ▶ Bring the other departments into the mix early on.
 - ▶ New levels of accountability: be prepared.
- 

Sustainability

- ▶ The individual researcher's ability to sustain research activities depends largely on the ability to develop a continuum in the team of expertise at all levels
 - ▶ Project funding puts the individual at the mercy of the market place and depending on timing can mean a significant amount of time lost in training new research assistants with each new grant.
- 

Project Funding

- ▶ This is an important first step for every research program
 - Allows you to get your feet wet in managing HR issues, equipment purchases and managing an award in general
 - Shows you what areas you need to seek other experts in if you are not interested in that particular skillset

Program funding

▶ Pros

- Allows the researcher to continue to use the same individuals on the team and expand their expertise
- Permits sufficient research activity to get a paper pushed
- Gives you a cushion

▶ Cons

- Requires the researcher to become much more aware of the differing regulations required by the multi sources of funding
 - Larger effect on the team when unsuccessful
 - More application effort – even this out with larger requests
- 

Build a Roadmap

- ▶ Start from the beginning using your research plan and your research track record to guide you. What gaps need to be filled in
 - ▶ A useful tool is a milestone listing
 - ▶ Remember always that program funding is long term and where you can be assessed mid stream on your progress
 - ▶ Be prepared to adapt to environmental changes as you go
- 

Two “must haves”

- ▶ A research profile that demonstrates impact on your discipline
 - ▶ A good training environment
-
- If your track record does not demonstrate these two things then work at building these up first
- 

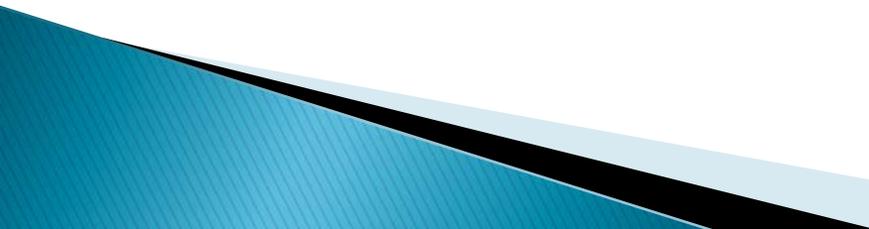
The basis for every successful proposal narrative –enlarge on these for a program

- ▶ Who says?
 - ▶ So what?
 - ▶ How?
- 

What do you need?

- ▶ Equipment?
 - ▶ Facilities?
 - ▶ What training opportunities are there?
 - ▶ What students are available? At what level?
 - ▶ Collaborators?
- 

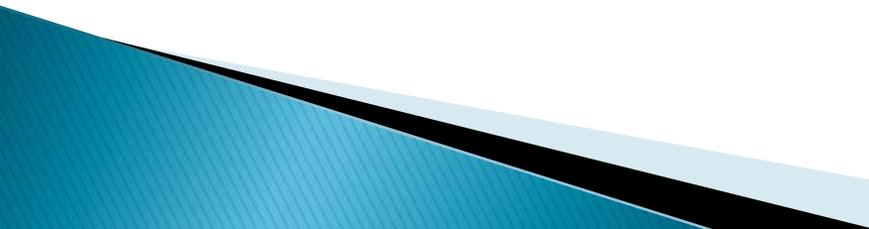
Incremental Growth

- ▶ Adding on projects to your portfolio one by one can result in a program
 - ▶ Agencies are very concerned with risk
 - ▶ The last thing they want is to have to report on having funded a project that failed (for whatever reason)
 - ▶ You have to demonstrate there is a great likelihood of success (from past success)
 - ▶ You also have to differentiate between the program and the project in your submission and know when not to mention the program
- 

Win big and avoid a spectacular mess

- ▶ Remember your portfolio includes teaching , outreach and research. Don't take on too much if you have other commitments you must honour.
 - ▶ Communication can be key for ensuring success. If things are going off track let your administration know well before the problem can't be fixed and you are left with a tarnished reputation.
- 

Necessary Preparation

- ▶ Do some strategic planning on your own
 - ▶ Have a rough sketch of what you want to accomplish in 5 – 10 years
 - ▶ Decide what kinds of funding you are going to go after and for what activities
 - ▶ Take a hard look at the current team's research profiles
 - ▶ Understand what processes your institution has and what roadblocks can cause you to lose time
 - ▶ Are there any qualifications that need to be met?
 - ▶ Any additional experience you need?
- 

You'll have a mix of activities

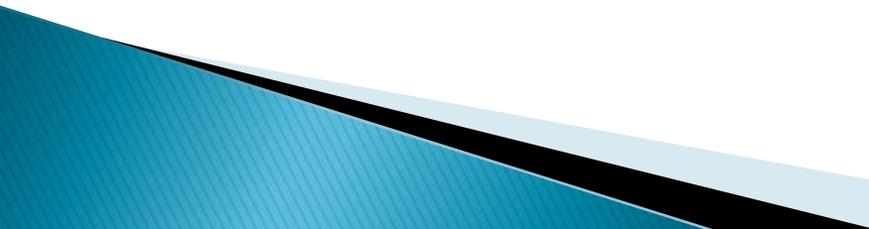
- ▶ Some service activities
- ▶ Some short term research projects
- ▶ Some longer term
- ▶ All with different reporting and rules



Program Establishment

- ▶ Just as you needed pilot data for a project grant or proof that you are well aware of the pertinent literature, you need some demonstration that you are capable of managing larger amounts of funding
 - ▶ You may want to consider asking to be a co applicant on a multi-institutional award and plan to shadow the PI
- 

Think big—and then scale back

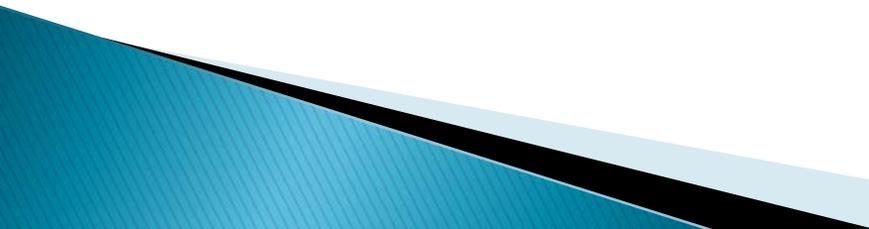
- ▶ apply probabilities to the activity or cost
 - Is a postdoc likely?
 - Does the work require the requested level of support?
 - Justify, Justify, Justify
 - Aim for flexibility, understanding that all sources may not be able to grant this
- 

Balance your workload

- ▶ You can't spend too much time applying for funding ---you actually have to do some research



Check with others

- ▶ Agency program officers
 - Either you go to them or ask them to come to you
 - ▶ Previously successful researchers at other institutions
 - Lessons learned? What was essential? What caused grief
 - ▶ Learn from Committee members
 - ▶ Partner relationships become more and more important. What indicators do you have that the relationship is not too recent?
- 

Allow others to troubleshoot before you take a misstep

- ▶ consider how you affect the work of others, while getting the support you need
 - ▶ RGS can be your champion if you keep them in the loop
- 

Relationship building

- With Sponsors
- With collaborators
- With the various administrative departments

It's ongoing



You may have a future in juggling!

Understand that you cannot expect consistency from different sponsors

- Term dates
- Eligible expenditures
- Reporting
- Ongoing responsibilities

It's important as your program grows to develop strong Project Management skills



Support for research

- ▶ Establish a strategic preparedness for the “new funding” styles (multi-institutional, multi-discipline; large initiatives) . AUCC, Industry Canada, PM speeches
 - ▶ Understand policies, procedures and their impact
 - ▶ Build a “best practices” library
 - ▶ Develop typical discipline specific research profiles
 - ▶ Develop mentoring processes and proposal review
 - ▶ Encourage attendance at proposal development workshops
- 

Discussion ideas

- *How would you describe the 'research' culture in your unit?*
 - *How do you assess a researcher's competitiveness, and thus the readiness for a given opportunity?*
 - *How do you define success at the faculty level, department, individual?*
 - *How do you support investigators to get (research/creative work) started?*
- 