

Shraddha Murali Navale

INYO 504 – PO1

Professor Zach

03/05/2018

Activity Reflection #2 on Planning and Writing Successful Research Grant Proposals

I attended a workshop on ‘Planning and Writing Successful Research Grant Proposals’, which focused on how to write efficiently in order to get funds for one’s research. The activity took place on Friday, February 23, 2018 at the Fenwick Library, situated on the Fairfax Campus of George Mason University. The event was presided by three knowledgeable speakers such as Ms. Rebekah Hirsch, Dr. Ramin Hakami and Ms. Ruth who gave their insights regarding the protocol for writing grant proposals. One of the most important advices that they gave us, the graduate students, is to talk to the program officers and explain to them why our research is unique when compared to those conducted by others. Ms. Rebekah Hirsch spoke about the three different teams namely blue team, pink team and red team that review a research paper and the order in which they review before they grant the funds, while Dr. Ramin Hakami spoke about the need to provide as much quantitation as possible while talking to the program officers. The different agencies that offer funding are National Science Foundation (NSF), National Institutes of Health (NIH), Social Science Research Council (SSRC), United States Department of Education (USDE) and so on. Few of the tips given to the graduate students were to look for a funding agency by having an appropriate topic in science, to review its criteria to be fulfilled and to have a preliminary research data of at least 10% ready to provide a substantial proof or publish/collaborate an article to make it seem a better credential to avail funding from grants.

A research paper may get rejected many number of times when applying for grants, but one should not be disheartened and lose hope of being successful, as it makes a person academically and fundamentally strong at the foundation of their research, as one can work on the feedback and comments given by their advisors, peers and the program officers in charge of granting the funds, to help one defend his/her research project in a better manner in the consecutive attempt. Another essential advice by Ms. Ruth, based on her personal experience, was to create a partnership with the funding agency, by asking them questions as to what to work on and what criteria should one fulfill, with that being the research exigence, would have a better hand at being accepted for funding.

By listening to the experiences shared by the above mentioned eminent speakers and keeping in mind the important aspects what funding agencies would scout for, I have a fair idea of how to go about while applying for grants in the future. It is to be told as a narrative, giving them the understanding of why I am passionate about that particular topic which I chose having a major portion of the research dedicated to methodology. The key to successful grants is the proposal writing which includes the ideologies, methodologies and grammar. I would like to conclude by saying that ‘no proposal for grants is a waste of effort’.