

SUCCESSFUL GRANTSMANSHIP

“NEVER GIVE IN, BE PREPARED AND MAY GOOD LUCK BE YOUR FRIEND”

We were very pleased to have our first Department Research Seminar on the topic of “Successful Grantsmanship” on March 17th, 2016. Although the number of attendees was modest, it was an enjoyable evening of sharing, laughing, learning and vibrant group discussion. All that was missing was the campfire, marshmallows and twinkling stars.



The evening started with a presentation from Dr. Suraj Unniappan, Associate Professor, Veterinary Biomedical Sciences, WCVM. He gave a warm and informative presentation, drawing from his own experiences, on the disappointment of applying for a grant and not being funded and how important it is to persevere and reapply, reminiscent of Sir Winston Churchill's famous speech to never, never, never give in¹. Dr. Unniappan also emphasized that success doesn't just come over night and it take a lot of hard work. He discussed many strategies that he employed to transform a previously non-funded grant application into a fundable one. He also provided several great resources for grant writing^{2,3,4,5,6} and highlighted many funding sources relevant for surgeons to apply to do their research e.g., CIHR Project Scheme grant⁷, NSERC Discovery Grant⁸, SHRF Collaborative Innovation Development (CID) Grant⁹, etc. He also pointed out CIHR's Embedded Clinical Researcher Salary Award¹⁰ that is designed for early and mid-career health professionals to pay their salary to spend part of their time on research.

Dr. Unniappan's talk was followed by an expert panel session composed of three successful U of S researchers to give tips on grant writing. Dr. Terra Arnason, Faculty, Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology, Faculty of Medicine, as a MD/PhD researcher, gave us rich and deep insights into all the preparation it takes to write a successful grant. Similar to the Boy Scouts of America's motto "Prepared. For Life"¹¹, she provided many tips to be "Prepared. For Writing" including using a grant skeleton to write, following the funding agency criteria to the letter, choosing your team wisely, including the 'wow factor' when writing your application and never sending out anything that hasn't been read by a colleague. Dr. Mike Kelly, one of our own surgeons from the Division of Neurosurgery, recounted his personal story, often humorous at times, about how through serendipity & luck and hard work, he launched his successful research career reminding me of the Irish phrase that says "May Good Luck be Your Friend"¹². Dr. Kelly went on to elaborate on how critically important released time for research is necessary to balance clinical and research duties. He gave very useful advice that Research Fellowships are another great way to get help to start or maintain a research program. Lastly, he strongly asserted that he believes the Saskatchewan Patient Oriented Research funding available through the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation will be the driving force for surgery faculty to get money to drive their research programs forward. Dr. Unniappan wrapped up the expert panel session by asserting that the best thing a clinician can do to catalyze their research career is to collaborate with a biomedical researcher. His last point spoke to the issue of work-life balance when he ended by saying that to be a successful researcher that you must have your team (e.g., wife and children) behind you.

Karen E. Mosier

REFERENCES

1. Churchill W. S. (December, 1974). *Winston S. Churchill: His Complete Speeches, 1897 – 1963*. New York, New York: Chelsea House Publishers/R. R. Bowker Company. Retrieved from URL: <http://www.wscbooks.com/Guide42.php>
2. Johnson, A. M. (April, 2011). *Charting A Course For A Successful Research Career: A Guide for Early Career Researchers 2nd Edition*. Retrieved from URL: https://www.elsevier.com/_data/assets/pdf_file/0013/90040/charting-a-course-for-a-successful-research-career.pdf
3. McInnes, R., Andrews, B. and Rachubinski, R. *CIHR Guidebook for New Principal Investigators: Advice on Applying for a Grant, Writing papers, Setting Up a Research Team and Managing Your Time*. Retrieved from URL: <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/27491.html>
4. Bennett, L. M., Gadlin, H., and Levine-Finley, S. (August, 2010). *Collaboration & Team Science: A Field Guide*. Retrieved from URL: https://ccrod.cancer.gov/confluence/download/attachments/47284665/teamscience_field_guide.pdf
5. Kraicer, J. (May, 1997). *The Art of Grantsmanship*. Retrieved from URL: <https://www.unige.ch/recherche/files/2614/1381/9038/theartofgrantmanship.pdf>
6. Guberman, J., Saks, J., Shapiro, B. and Torchia, M. Howard Hughes Medical Institute and Burroughs Wellcome fund. (2000). *Making the Right Moves: A Practical Guide to Scientific Management for Postdocs and New Faculty*. Retrieved from URL: <https://www.hhmi.org/sites/default/files/Educational%20Materials/Lab%20Management/Making%20the%20Right%20Moves/moves2.pdf>
7. Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Project Scheme Grant. Retrieved from URL: <https://www.researchnet-recherchenet.ca/rnr16/vwOpprntnyDtIs.do?prog=2237&view=browseArchive&browseArc=true&progType=CIHR-43&type=EXACT&resultCount=25>
8. Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada. Discovery Grants Program. Retrieved from URL: http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Professors-Professeurs/Grants-Subs/DGIGP-PSIGP_eng.asp
9. Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation. Collaborative Innovation Development Grant. Retrieved from URL: <http://shrf.ca/saskatchewan-health-research-foundation/Collaborative%20Innovation%20Development%20Grants>
10. Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Embedded Clinical Research Salary. Retrieved from URL: <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/49644.html>
11. Boys Scouts of America. Retrieved from URL: <http://www.scouting.org/Home/Marketing/Brand/logos/PreparedForLife.aspx>
12. 101 Irish Blessings. Retrieved from URL: <http://www.arizonacap.com/mgame/irishblessings.htm>