

GRANTS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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When I was first asked to make this presentation on Monday, I thought that the topic of grants was so big that it would be hard to cover it in a few minutes. I would need to discuss granting agencies, as well as other sources of grant information—a big task. Then I began to actually consider the tenure and promotion process and what this conference is really about and I changed gears. What I think is the important thing for me to emphasize today is how grants fit into the picture that you want to present of yourself. The curriculum vitae that you prepare for the Personal and Budgets Committees is a picture of you and what you have done since you began employment at the City University of New York. It is a way to introduce you to members of your college community who might not know you and it is consequently important to make sure that you have been involved in as many of the activities listed on the vitae form as possible.

Grants are listed on the vitae form, but before attempting to pursue a grant there are several things to consider. Are you going for tenure or for promotion? Do you have a publications record? Do you have a research agenda? If you are going for tenure you should think first about publishing. Grants are great, but it is a process that takes some time. Later in my discussion I will talk about the PSC-CUNY Research Grants, which are good if you have never written a grant before, and a good place to start, but in my opinion better after you are granted tenure. Even if you apply for the PSC-CUNY Research grant, it takes several months for you to learn whether you will get the grant, and then you still have to wait until you can use the money set aside for you. If you haven't published anything, this should be where you begin. Danielle Hoggan in a 2003 article says: "Academic institutions generally evaluate faculty based on scholarship, teaching, and service contributions....Publication can account for up to 80 percent of a tenure evaluation, and an insufficient publication record is the most frequent reason for librarians being denied tenure."¹ You need a research agenda, which might include applying for a grant further in your research process. For example, you might first want to research and write an article on the subject. This is a good idea since this

¹Hoggan, Danielle Bodrero. "Faculty Status for Librarians in Higher Education." *Portal: Libraries & the Academy*. Vol. 3, Issue 3 (July 2003): 431-46.

would establish you as a grant candidate who has already been able to produce a publishable finished product.

If you will indulge me, I will offer a personal example of establishing a research agenda. 1997 marked the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Free Academy, at 17 Lexington Avenue. To celebrate the event two other CUNY archivists and myself decided that it would be wonderful to exhibit artifacts from the individual campuses to tell the history of the institution. This exhibit would be moved from campus to campus. What you should know at this point is that two of us were tenured Associate Professors and one of us was a Full Professor. We knew that we were going to need funding and the process began. We first sought a PSC-CUNY Research Grant, which I will explain more about later. We did get the grant, but it would only pay for a small part of the total cost of the exhibit. We then decided to involve each of the colleges and contacted each President from every campus and asked for money for the project. This required a great deal of time to do follow-ups, but in the end all but one campus contributed. We also wanted a brochure to accompany the exhibit, so we attempted to seek private funding. We selected the Wilson Company, and they did give us a grant to cover the cost of the brochure.

The exhibit was extremely successful. Not only did several campuses get a chance to view the artifacts, but also administrators and faculty from across CUNY recognized the three of us as the curators. After doing the extensive research needed to put together this exhibit we realized that this would make a wonderful book. Now we approached various publishers. Fordham University Press wanted to publish the book but again needed additional funds to make this a reality. We again approached administrators and received money from several campuses and my own campus, Baruch, provided money from the Baruch College Fund. Consequently, you can see where one idea and a research agenda can produce multiple products. In this case an exhibit, a brochure, a book and finally articles in *CUNY Matters*.

Now I will speak briefly about getting a grant at CUNY. Each campus has a Grants Officer who will guide you through the grant process. Often they will alert you to grants in your particular field if you inform them of your interests. However, the Research Foundation of the City University of New York offers the PSC-CUNY Research Grants. This a good place to start since it is a grant for individuals and not for the department. It can be used for travel or for publication expenses. As I previously mentioned there is a space on the vitae to list grants. It is impressive if you can obtain a grant because it not only is prestigious to you but also to your department and to your campus. I will speak about the PSC-CUNY Research Grants from the point of view of a recipient of a few grants, a reviewer of grant applications for PSC-CUNY and also as the Library

Liaison for three years to the research grant program. When I first came to CUNY this was a highly competitive grant, with probably about 50-60% receiving funding (approximately). The application was long and the preparation of the proposal took a significant amount of time to complete. This however has changed. Junior faculty are encouraged to apply for the grants and now a good percentage of applicants do get some funds. The applications are short and must be submitted through your grant office. All disciplines are included, so you don't have to apply to the library committee. However, a word of caution if you are considering applying for a grant in another discipline: other disciplines often don't understand the kind of projects that librarians might be interested in pursuing. As an example, when I first came to CUNY I applied for a grant from the Women's Studies division. I didn't get it. When I got the reviews I saw that some of the reviewers did not understand my project, which was to prepare an index of 19th century ladies periodicals. I applied the next year to the Library Division and I received the grant.

I am just going to briefly mention other grant funding sources. Again, I would suggest that this wait until you at least get tenure. At that point you can pursue grants from Federal and State agencies. There is the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. There are hundreds of private foundations and companies. You can find out what kind of projects foundations tend to support. The Foundation Center has a web site that can help match you with a funding source. The Center, located at 79 Fifth Avenue, provides many workshops for prospective grant seekers; and most importantly they publish the *Foundation Directory*.

In this very presentation there are research possibilities for anyone interested. I did a literature search to see whether there were any articles written on grants and librarians who are seeking tenure, and didn't find anything. Titles of articles include "Publish or Perish: A Dilemma for Academic Librarians?," "Both Sides of the Looking Glass: Librarian and Teaching Faculty Perceptions of Librarianship at Six Community Colleges," and "Evaluation of Academic Librarians' Publications for Tenure and Initial Promotion," but nothing mentioned receiving grants and whether it would help the candidate. The possibilities for research projects are endless, but my suggestion to you is find something that you are really interested in and go for it. Ask colleagues for their ideas, find a mentor or even collaborate with another faculty member on a project. I wrote articles with many colleagues over the years. Most important in my opinion is become visible. I was able to do this since one of my interests was exhibits and the 150th anniversary exhibit was not the first exhibit I did at CUNY. However, each one of you has something wonderful to contribute to the profession, and whether you pursue grants or not it is exciting to envision the possibilities that lie ahead.