

Let's Talk NSF (Sessions for Interaction and Engagement)

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Abstract

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is the essential U.S. federal funder for basic science in a variety of fields including those closely related to the research interests of iSchool faculty and students. In particular, a small handful of key NSF programs - such as Cyber-Human Systems and Science of Organizations - have provided funding for projects proposed by individuals working for iSchools. The processes of preparing and submitting a proposal, while familiar to many seasoned researchers, are both time consuming and complex. In this interactive session, the hosts will facilitate a wide ranging discussion with attendees about obtaining NSF funding for iSchool research projects. The discussion will cover tacit knowledge needed for success, such as how to reach out to program officers. The hosts have experience in a variety of roles including: former NSF program officer, experienced NSF reviewer, successful NSF proposer, and research dean.

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1 Key Participants

This session includes additional program officers as well as other individuals who have prior experience with NSF funding.

2 Purpose and Intended Audience

The session will be of interest to early career faculty and others who have not previously submitted to NSF or who have had their proposals rejected.

3 Proposed activities including agenda, ramp-up (development), and follow-through

The agenda for the session is straightforward: The hosts will provide a list of frequently asked questions to participants and then prompt participants to discuss those questions or additional questions of their own. The frequently asked questions will appear in several distinct categories to encourage discussion of the full funding lifecycle. The hosts will serve both as facilitators and as sources of relevant knowledge for answering participants' questions. The discussion will be segmented into two sections: one concerning factual knowledge of the NSF programs that are most appropriate for iSchool faculty to submit to and a second concerning tacit knowledge needed for success in proposing to NSF. The session will conclude with distribution and a walk-through of a resource sheet that includes contact information.

4 Relevance to the Conference/Significance to the Field

Obtaining extramural research funding is a key activity for faculty and students at many iSchools. Relatedly, NSF prioritizes some program activities based on the flow of quality proposals. For these reasons it makes sense to promote, among iSchool faculty and doctoral students, the submission of quality proposals to the most appropriate NSF programs.