How to Write a Successful NIH R15 Application

Susan L. Brown and I-Fen Lin
Department of Sociology
Preparation

• Conceptualize your project
  • Discuss with colleagues, NIH Program Officers
  • Revise and refine over a period of time

• Simple is better
  • Simple language
  • Straightforward ideas

• Specific Aims section is key
  • Use GWSW template as a guide
  • Review funded applications
• Write for the reviewers

• Reviewers probably won’t be experts in your area

• Reviewers are overworked and underpaid

• Make it easy for reviewers to prepare their evaluation of and advocate for your application
  • Draw attention to sentences that speak directly to the review criteria by using bolded text
The goal of R15 is to provide research experiences for undergraduate students and enhance the research environment at the institutions.

Emphasize this focus in three separate sections:

- Specific aims
- Research strategy
- Facilities & other resources
Specific Aims

• Train undergraduate and graduate students to conduct research

• Enhance the BGSU research environment
Research Strategy

• A specific plan about how to incorporate graduate and undergraduate students in all stages of the research process
  • What skills to learn
  • How to ensure student involvement
  • Outcomes of the training

• Enhance the research environment at BGSU
  • Describe existing research activities and resources
  • Provide students and colleagues research opportunities
  • Promote grant activities
Facilities & Other Resources

• Profiles of students and academic programs at BGSU
• Plans to recruit well-qualified undergraduate students
• Why is BGSU appropriate for an AREA grant
• The likely impact of an AREA grant on the PIs and students
• The likely impact of an AREA grant on the institution
• Support and resources at BGSU
Renewal Applications

• Renewal applications are essentially new applications predicated on the work you’ve performed to date

• Competitive renewal R15s show:
  • High productivity during current grant period
  • Results that provide a clear pathway to the new project
  • New project stands on its own merits
Make It Rain!