Planning and Implementing Your Research Proposal from A to Z

Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe.

– Abraham Lincoln

In preparing for the upcoming OER workshop, "Planning and Implementing Your Research Proposal from A to Z", I consulted the National Institutes of Health (NIH) website, http://grants.nih.gov/grants/grants_process.htm. There I was shocked to see the following: "Applicant often begins writing application several months prior to application due date." As a statistician I sure would like to know the average time spent on writing an accepted proposal compared to a rejected proposal! Planning, developing, and writing a proposal takes both a village and a whole lot of time.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of proposals are rejected (at least on the first attempt). In "NIH Peer Review of Grant Applications for Clinical Research" (JAMA; 2004; 291:836-843), Kotchen et al. reported the following reasons why NIH proposals are rejected: approach to the problem (39%), competence of investigators (38%), nature of the problem (18%), and conditions of the research environment (5%). The "approach to problem" is further broken down into the following reasons: greater care in planning is needed (25%); the research plan is nebulous, diffuse and not presented in concrete detail (8%); the planned research is not adequately controlled (4%); a more thorough statistical treatment is needed (1%); and the proposed tests require more individual subjects than the number given (1%).

There is much we can do as a research community in the College of Education to improve proposal planning and writing. We hope you will join us on Thursday, Oct 18 from 11 am to 1 pm in the Terrace Room/Research Commons. We will offer a crash course on proposal planning with materials to

guide the process. Please BYOL (bring your own laptop) and email Cyndi

Garvan (cgarvan@ufl.edu), Statistics Director of OER, if you have any questions.