**NSF Conference 2017**

**CAREER Program Tips**

**Overview:**

* Entry program for brightest stars in ed research.
* Need ***strong research component and integrated education component***.
* ***Need to be in a position where you’re expected to do both research and education***
* Write it as a partner with your organization. It’s a contract between you and your organization.
* For t*eacher – scholar*. Contributes to STEM ed of any group…To create effective educators.
* 5 years gives you time for education component, not just research.
* Very competitive. This is used by the institution for prestige. You’re helping WSU (notoriety).
* Offered for all directorates. Funds for CAREER come from core programs.
* CAREER proposals are reviewed by PO’s for that program. *Therefore, award sizes vary*.

**SINGLE PI projects only**

* Majority of responsibilities should be for PI.
* You can have collaborators, but they are subordinate to your leadership.
* Can be hardest to receive since it’s single PI.
* If you’re a natural at the education piece, it may be easier.
* Sets trajectory for combining research and ed in your career

**Details:**

* Before you submit, make sure your institution is on board.
* CAREER awards are a lot of work. Must do research and education, report on both.
* Part of your job requirement is to educate: K-12, undergrads, public, informal ed, etc.
* Tenure track equivalency, expected to last through the grant period.
* Proposed project and job responsibilities relate to career goals under which you were hired.
* Need dept. letter from chair to state this.

**CAREER Tips:**

* It’s better to be at a mature point in your work before submitting. (Only 3 chances).
* Discuss with PO to help hone your ideas and limit the scope.
* Focus the education component so that it’s meaningful and synergistic.
* Intellectual merit applies to both research and ed piece for this grant.
* Most common mistake is to promise too much or too little.
* Demonstrate what you can achieve
* Show what you can do with lemons. How will you deal with unexpected results, issues?
* Preliminary data is important (lit review, etc.).
* Can you leverage successful activities from your institution, nearby or partner institutions?
* Demonstrate what you’ve accomplished, effectiveness, who showed up, evaluations, etc.

**More Tips:**

* Can resubmit (can apply to CAREER up to 3 times)
* Your career should be ramping up. What’s your capacity to be the next leader in this area?
* A recent article in good journal, recent award, etc. looks good.
* Don’t be shy about contacting PO. That’s their job!
* If PO doesn’t respond, talk to a division representative. Then talk to a project director*.*

**Good CAREER proposal ingredients:**

* Ambitious but feasible
* Integrate research and education in a focused plan.
* The education component should boost your research trajectory.
* Articulate how the synergy works between research and education
* Balance between education and research should be consistent for scope.
* See examples of successful projects in directorate pages.

**Merit Review**

* Varies across directorates.
* For ad hoc proposals, reviewers are close to your area of expertise.
* For panel review, some may be less closely aligned w your area of research.
* Panel-only proposals must be conceptually strong.
* EHR and SBE are less competitive…(Higher acceptance rate than other CAREER programs)

**Letter of Support from Dept. Chair:**

* Show that project and activities relate to career goals under which you were hired
* Show that it’s the right time for you in your career
* Show that you have experience trying different educational activities
* Show that you understand the landscape of the institution

**Dept. letters**:

* 2 pages
* Shows chair is committed to your career development
* Shows that project aligns well with the goals of the dept. or organization.

Letters of collaboration: Prove you have access to resources.

Co PI’s: Not allowed on cover sheets, but you can include others as senior personnel in budget sheet, and can have funds for personnel. Must be limited role…You must be leader…It’s your brain-child.

Budget:NSF wants to make more awards, so lower budgets are better. Use realistic budget / scope.

Once you get award, you can keep it if you get tenure *(e.g., you can apply, get the award and get tenure 2 weeks later. You can also take the award with you).*