Navigating the Foundation Funding Landscape

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Neilson Society
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Ever feel like obtaining funding for your research is more work than actually doing the research??
Foundation support accounted for about 6% of total funding coming into VUMC in 2012.
Foundation Awards: Things to Consider

- Often focused on advancing research into a particular disease
- Very interested in supporting young investigators
- Looking for Impact and Return on Investment
- Opportunity to forge a long-term relationship
- Many foundation awards carry prestige and can enhance recognition in your field
Our Teams Can Assist In Your Search for Private, Non-Federal Funding Opportunities

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Our Teams Can Assist In Your Search for Private, Non-Federal Funding Opportunities

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What Do We Do?

- Serve as a matchmaker between Vanderbilt and foundations and corporations that may provide support
- Work closely with faculty and leadership to identify funding opportunities that fit well with faculty interests
- Facilitate grant submission (Proposal Dev, Inst Processes)
- Facilitate Limited Submission Opportunities (LSOs)
- Enhance Ability to Compete successfully for funding
- Build strong collaborative partnerships with foundations and corporations
- Work with leadership to develop an institutional strategy that will result in greater philanthropy for Vanderbilt
- Coordinate Stewardship efforts on behalf of Researchers
Different Types of Foundations

- **Independent Foundations**
  - Gates Fdn
  - A.P. Sloan Fdn
  - Ellison Med Fdn

- **Public Charities**
  - Amer Heart Assn
  - Susan G. Komen
  - Alzheimer’s Assn

- **Corporate Foundations**
  - Genentech Fdn
  - Pfizer Fund

**Can vary greatly in size and scope**
Why do Foundations Offer Grants for Medical Research?

- Advance research into a particular disease
- Grow the number of researchers in the field
- Enhance awareness of a specific medical issue
- Promote collaboration among Nat’l and Int’l researchers
What Types of Grants Are Offered by Foundations?

- Research: tenure/non-tenure track, (all levels)
- Institutional
- Training: post-doc/fellowships/graduate student
- Mentored/Career Development (junior faculty)
- Distinguished Faculty (senior faculty)
- Drug/Therapy Discovery
- Clinical Trials
Organization of Foundations

- Board of Trust /Directors
- Senior Management: CEO/President
- Scientific/Medical Advisory Committee or Board (SAC/SAB)
- Staff- may include a Scientific Director
## Advantages and Disadvantages of Foundation Awards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Preliminary data may not be required</td>
<td>• Dollar amounts may be smaller than Gov’t awards</td>
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<td>• Applications often shorter/less complicated</td>
<td>• Duration may be shorter</td>
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<td>• Flexibility to do something entirely new</td>
<td>• Fewer indirect costs associated with award</td>
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<td>• Fund innovative, high-risk/high-reward projects/out-of-the-box</td>
<td>• Deadlines are unpredictable and grants can change year to year</td>
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How Can Foundation Relations Help You?

- Identify opportunities that match your work
- We may already have a relationship with foundation or can make contact on your behalf
- Can identify others at VU who have applied/rec’d funding
- Identify faculty who serve/served on SAB or other role in foundation
How Can Foundation Relations Help You?

Cont...

- May have additional info about mission or goals of foundation, or changes in direction, not available on website
- Can review proposal and give you feedback
- Can help you navigate institutional processes (LSO’s, institutional support letters, 501(c)3 designation)
- Engage in stewarding foundation on your behalf
*Play by the rules*

- Read directions carefully
- Verify Eligibility
- Watch for LOI’s
- Submission: hard copy or online, both? Postmarked by or in office?
- More isn’t necessarily better- follow space/font limits and be concise and clear
- Keep an eye on the website- can change often, incl. deadline!
Tips for Proposals to Foundations

*Do your Research*

- Know the mission of the foundation
- Research your reviewer audience
- Contact the foundation ahead of time to discuss your proposal
- Cultivate a relationship with someone who is neither a former mentor nor at your institute who can attest to your brilliance
Tips for Proposals to Foundations

*Sell your idea*

- Explain how funding will impact the area in which you are working
- Point out why foundation support is ideal for this proposal
- Demonstrate your ability to carry out the project
- If applying for a Career Dev award, Highlight how this award will impact your career-
Tips for Proposals to Foundations:

*Write it well*

- Set up Significance/Aims page like an RO1
- Don’t ask the reader to “figure it out”- make your rationale clear
- Shorter sentences aren’t always better
- Use jargon appropriately
- Every sentence should contain “old” info in it to help lead the reader to the next idea.
Tips for Proposals to Foundations:

*Stand out among others*

- Submit your progress report on time
- Remember to cite their support in your manuscripts and posters
- Write a thank you letter
- Offer to help the foundation if asked- study section, review board, speak at a conference for patients etc...
- Update them on your progress after the award
Where Can I find Funding Opportunities?

- **ResearchProfessional**: [www.researchprofessional.com](http://www.researchprofessional.com)
  - Institutional subscription
  - Funding for all disciplines
  - Federal, corporate and foundation funding
  - National and international opportunities
  - Customized “push”

- **FIND grants**: [www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/findgrants](http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/findgrants)
  - In-house built and maintained
  - Tailored to biomedical research at VUMC
  - No federal opportunities
  - Minimum award: $35K
  - Email alerts available

- **Community of Science**: [www.cos.com](http://www.cos.com)
And if all else fails....

“Our funding ran out again. Whip up another batch of crystal meth.”
Thank you!

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