

Windows of Opportunity

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MSU Grantsmanship Celebrated

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On April 15, the Second Annual Grant Recognition Reception spotlighted faculty and staff who pursued external sponsorship during 2013 in support of their research, scholarly, and service activities. The event was attended by representatives throughout the MSU community.

Jointly hosted by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

(ORSP) and University Advancement, the reception celebrated an impressive year of grants and gifts at MSU: more than 185

awards were received with a total of approximately \$13.2 million. Federal sponsorship increased by 15.3 percent, while corporate giving rose almost six percent and foundation giving saw an almost 35 percent increase.

This year's reception included a new component presented by Willard Gingerich, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Vice President for University Advancement, Jack Shannon: grant recognition awards for faculty and staff who distinguished themselves through their grantsmanship. Gerard Costa (pictured) was the recipient of the Provost's Grant Recogni-

tion Award and the late Robert McCormick was honored for his sustained external sponsorship. Special Grant Recognition Awards

were presented to Sandra Adams and Douglas Larkin, Anna Feldman and Jing Peng, Jen-

Sam Wolverton
Sponsored
Programs
Coordinator,
ORSP

nifer Robinson, Jedediah Wheeler, and Bryan Murdock, recognized in their respective schools or division for the largest externally



sponsored award received in 2013.

Attendees received refreshments, a commemorative pen, and a special event booklet that recognized all of 2013's grant recipients and proposers. ORSP is delighted to report that the feedback on this year's event has been overwhelmingly positive.

Thanks to all the staff and the attendees who made the Second Annual Grant Recognition Reception a success. We look forward to hosting all of 2014's proposers and awardees next year!

**FOR PICTURES OF ALL
AWARD RECIPIENTS,
PLEASE VISIT ORSP'S
WEBSITE**

Profile: MSU's New Awardees



The Spencer Foundation recently awarded Dr. Alina Reznitskaya (Educational Foundations, CEHS) \$50,000 for her project "Measuring Argument Literacy Skills of Elementary School Students." We asked Dr. Reznitskaya to explain the project and share her insight into the proposal submission and award process.

What are the major aspects of your awarded project?

The goal of this project is to design and validate a set of measures to assess argument literacy skills of elementary school students. Argument literacy is defined as the ability to comprehend and formulate arguments when reading and writing. We will develop and validate two sets of measures that will allow teachers to measure students' growth over time. The measures will be suitable for use in a typical classroom and have desirable psychometric properties.

What were your first thoughts after having received the news that you were awarded?

It is both very exciting and a bit intimidating to be awarded a grant. Of course, I am looking forward to working on this project. I also worry about making our project a success. Yet, my previous experience has taught me that these worries are best addressed by breaking the project into small steps and starting to work on it, one step at a time.

What are some of the challenges involved in a project like yours? How are you tackling these?

One challenge for us is recruiting teachers to take part in the project. Teachers are now working under a lot of stress and they are simply too busy. Our strategy has always been to invest in establishing long-term relationships with local practitioners by treating them as collaborators, rather than as research subjects. I now know quite a few teachers from several districts that are enthusiastic about continuing our collaboration.

How would you advise colleagues interested in submitting a grant application?

Just do it! You have 100% chance of never getting funded if you DON'T submit an application.

Also, don't be shy about calling the program officer if you have questions, and make sure to get feedback from your peers before submitting.

What, if anything, do you believe MSU can do to make grant submission and management more appealing and less intimidating?

The institutional commitment to research is absolutely essential in order for the faculty to stay competitive. Over the past several years, MSU has greatly improved its support for grant submission and management. This made the grant application and management much easier, and allowed me to focus my efforts on the substantive aspects of the funded projects. I especially would like to thank Megan Delaney and April Serfass from CEHS for always willing to go that one extra mile to help me with new and already funded projects.

Featured Awards



Jedediah Wheeler (Arts & Cultural Programming, CART) received an award of \$25,000 from the National Endowment of Arts in support of two projects. The first piece is "Atomos," a new commissioned work from choreographer Wayne McGregor|Random Dance, which made its American premiere at MSU's Alexander

Kasser Theater in March 2014. The second piece will be "Orlando," a multidisciplinary theater production from Glasgow's Cryptic and Cathie Boyd, which will have its American premiere at MSU in April 2014.



The Spencer Foundation awarded \$155,008 to **Helenrose Fives** (not pictured) and **Nicole Barnes** (Educational Foundations, CEHS) for "Teachers with Expertise in Data Use: How Do They Engage in Data Driven Decision Making from Student Performance Data to Influence Instruction?" which will investigate whether

(and under what conditions) fifth grade English Language Arts and Social Studies teachers with expertise in data use engage in a data based decision making process and what if any subprocesses and microprocesses they evoke to convert classroom student performance data into actionable knowledge for long-term and short-term instructional decisions.

Valerie Sessa and **Jennifer Bragger** (Psychology, CHSS) were awarded \$10,000 by the C. Charles Jackson Foundation in support of "Longitudinal assessment of students participating in leadership development programs." The study will longitudinally assess college stu-

dent leaders at five universities during their college years plus two years post-college. The research seeks to determine which students pursue leadership development opportunities, which opportunities they choose, what they are learning, how these opportunities build on each other, and the impact of the process on student leadership competencies, success in college, and post-college experiences and leadership activities.



Tanya Blacic (Earth & Environmental Studies, CSAM) was awarded a \$31,435 grant for "New US-South Korean Collaboration: 2-D Ocean Temperature from Seismic Oceanography Data" by the National Science Foundation. The project will initiate a new international collaboration with Dr. Changsoo Shin at Seoul

National University in South Korea to apply his method of obtaining background sound speed models in the solid earth from marine seismic data to the ocean itself. Extracting ocean sound speed models from conventional seismic data will enable us to calculate high-resolution 2-D temperature images of the ocean which can lead to a better understanding of ocean mixing--a process that is not well understood or quantified yet forms a key input to all global climate models because the oceans exchange heat and gases with the atmosphere.

Collaboration: A Research Administrator's Perspective

Attending any research administration conference will confirm that the “collaboration” trend is continuing to gain momentum. Even Dr. Cole discussed, [in her recent speech](#), the centrality of collaboration at all levels of our institution. It’s a recurring theme in higher education across the country: more is expected to be done with less. This article will outline collaboration from a research administration perspective, explaining what is involved in multi-institutional collaborations, and also how our office participates in this trend.

Our faculty members partner with colleagues in different departments within MSU, but what does it mean and what is involved in collaborations outside of the University? Here are some possible scenarios:

- A faculty member collaborates with a colleague at another institution, and one of them takes the lead on a grant from a funding agency. The non-lead is issued a subaward from the total award received by the lead institution. In this case, the lead institution assumes primary fiscal/programmatic responsibility and the subawardee reports to the lead institution.
- Both institutions assume equal responsibility in the collaboration. In this case, an award is issued directly to each institution. (The National Science Foundation allows for this type of multi-institution grant award.)
- One of the collaborators serves a discrete and often limited role in the project. That individual is identified as a consultant, usually has a limited-term, and is responsible for a specialized role/task in the project. Their role is minimal in terms of effort and is calculated by the number of days/hours times a rate for their involvement in a given year.

For each collaborative scenario above, the research administrator’s role is to establish a relationship with the partnering institution, ensuring the success of the partnership on an administrative level. An essential part of

this is to seek that the interests of our faculty and University are protected throughout the grant period. Depending on the particulars of the project, this can range from making sure a potential collaborator is not debarred or suspended from receiving grant funds, to recommending that a memorandum of understanding or research agreement be utilized to lay out the exact terms of the collaboration, to requesting a letter of commitment from a consultant that stipulates their exact role and payment for their participation. All of these partnering initiatives are typically established during the proposal development stage, and are managed throughout the award period.

In a time of tight budgets and limited resources, research administrators have also been collaborating more to stretch the impact of educational and outreach activities. ORSP has partnered with administrators in the region (e.g., William Patterson, Fairleigh Dickinson, Seton Hall, Rutgers) to share proposal development education and grant management best practices.

Recently, Seton Hall invited our office to attend Dr. Francisco Sy, Director, Office of Extramural Research Administration, NIH/National Institute on Minority Health/Health Disparities, [present on best practices in applying to NIH](#). Since it is not often that one gets the opportunity to speak with a director of a large federal funding agency in person, ORSP took advantage by advising with him on specific grant issues related to MSU. In turn, we invited many of our sister school research administrators to our recent Keith Crutcher workshop on submitting to the NIH (see page 7), which attracted some fifty participants.

Due to the effort and finances required to organize educational events, collaborating with other institutions in our region is an efficient and effective way to spread best practices in research administration.

Marina Aloyets
Assistant Director,
ORSP

“Subrecipient” or “Consultant”: Which Is It?

Catherine Bruno
Post-Award
Officer,
ORSP

The sponsored research world is full of terms: grant, contract, cooperative agreement, subawardee, subrecipient, consultant, etc. Most of the time, terms are used interchangeably without much consequence. However, there are times when substituting one term for another can lead you down a very different path.

This is very true for the terms “subrecipient” and “consultant.” The big difference comes when confusing subrecipient for consultant, which may lead to holding the entity/individual to federal requirements when it’s not necessary.

Let’s start by outlining the typical characteristics of each. OMB circular A-133—the federal rules that deal with audit of federal grants—categorizes each by the following criteria:

A **subrecipient** typically:

- determines who is eligible to receive what Federal financial assistance;
- has its performance measured against whether the objectives of the Federal program are met;
- has responsibility for programmatic decision making;
- has responsibility for adherence to applicable Federal program compliance requirements; and
- uses the Federal funds to carry out a program of the organization as compared to providing services for a program of the subrecipient.

In comparison, a **consultant** typically:

- provides services within normal business operations;
- provides similar services to many different purchasers;
- operates in a competitive environment;
- provides services that are ancillary to the operation

of the Federal program; and

- is not subject to compliance requirements of the Federal program.

*Consultants are typically an individual independently hired to provide routine professional services on a sponsored project for a fee, but generally not as a university employee. They are typically not involved in the programmatic direction or management of a project. Please see ORSP’s **Sponsored Programs Handbook** for more details.*

For example, an individual at another university that will be collaborating with you, assisting in the design of the research, and ultimately working to meet the goals and objectives of the grant, would be considered a subrecipient. Therefore, all compliance requirements that MSU has to follow as the prime awardee will also need to be followed by the subrecipient.

On the other hand, an individual that will be providing translation services to translate marketing or enrollment materials into Spanish would be considered a consultant. Compliance requirements are not passed down to consultants.

There are other key differences under consulting agreements, e.g., consultants generally do not have claim to copyright and intellectual property as a “work for hire” for the sponsor.

Sometimes the relationships/situations are not so clear cut. For those times, always feel free to contact ORSP to help determine the best fit.

For More Information on Funding Sources, Submittal Strategies, Awards Management, and Much More,

Please Visit ORSP Online at <http://www.montclair.edu/orsp>

SBIR/STTR: What Is It, and What Are the Differences?

Ted Russo
Director,
ORSP

Increasingly, research faculty at MSU have been active in collaborating with small business enterprises in applying to the federal government's SBIR/STTR programs. The Small Business Innovation Research Program (SBIR) and the Small Business Technology Transfer Program (STTR) are congressionally mandated R&D programs designed to stimulate technological innovation and increase private sector commercialization. Each program takes place over 3 phases—Phase 1 (feasibility study), Phase 2 (R&D) and Phase 3 (Commercialization). In Phase 3, small businesses are expected to raise non-federal sources of funding to commercialize their product.

Here in ORSP, we're often asked to clarify the differences between these two programs.

Broadly, SBIR *encourages* collaboration while STTR *requires* it. There are other important differences, summarized in the table below. Beyond this, each agency may impose its own specific requirements.

	Small Business Innovation Research Program (SBIR)	Small Business Technology Transfer Program (STTR)
Principal Investigator	Must be employed by small business	May be employed by either small business or non-profit research institution (varies by agency)
Level of Effort	Phase 1: Minimum 2/3 rd effort <i>must be</i> conducted by small business. Maximum of 1/3 <i>may be</i> conducted by consultants and/or subcontractors Phase 2: Minimum 50% effort <i>must be</i> conducted by small business. Maximum of 50% <i>may be</i> conducted by consultant and/or subcontractor.	Phase 1: Requires partnership with a non-profit research institution. At least 40% of the effort must be conducted by the small business and 30% must be conducted by a non-profit subcontractor. Phase 2: Same as phase 1.
Duration	Phase 1: 6 months Phase 2: 2 years	Phase 1: 1 year Phase 2: 2 years
Funding	Phase 1: \$150,000 Phase 2: \$750,000	Phase 1: \$150,000 Phase 2: \$750,000
Number of Federal Agencies Participating	11	5

Recommended Reading: [SBIR and STTR: Do you really understand the differences?](#)

NIH Review Process Explained by Guest Speaker

Sam Wolverton

*Sponsored
Programs
Coordinator,
ORSP*

ORSP was honored to host Dr. Keith Crutcher, a former Scientific Review Officer at the National Institutes of Health, on March 28 for a half-day workshop. The overall goal was to insure fa-

miliarity with the NIH and its extramural funding programs in order to enhance competitiveness in grant proposal submissions. Prior to the event, we took the opportunity to ask Dr. Crutcher some questions of great importance to the MSU research community.

How can Montclair State University build or improve its reputation with NIH?

From an institutional perspective, you need to pick and choose where you want to focus your effort. What the NIH is looking for is some kind of focused commitment to an area of research or a particular technology that says “if you want to do ‘x’ or ‘y,’ Montclair State is the place you want to come to do that.” You build on existing strengths and then make strategic recruits and strategic alliances going forward.

What does NIH look for in early stage and beginning investigators?

You have to convince reviewers that these are individuals with the appropriate pedigree—which can be evidenced by their training history and publications—and that they are in a place where they can do what they’re qualified to do.

I would strongly encourage young faculty to collaborate as much as possible, not just within the University but—in terms of the University becoming more visible to the NIH—

collaborating outside of it as well. As long as that work is good, quality work and your name is on it, you can pull that out as evidence that you do have the qualifications for ultimately becoming an independent investigator, and I think that’s really what the NIH is looking for.

In your experience, what do NIH reviewers look for? What makes a proposal stand out?

Even though the NIH says they give high points for innovation, the reality is that they really give high points for incremental progress. Work that doesn’t fit within the existing paradigm is actually hard to get past reviewers.

Peer review still ends up being a primarily retrospective review. I think it’s important to keep in mind that reviewers are looking at if an investigator is capable of doing what they say they are going to do, and they are going to do that based on what the investigator has done in the past.

They are also going to be looking at whether the investigator has the strategic collaborations that are going to allow them

to do things they don’t already know how to do.

Is it important to talk with someone at NIH before submitting a proposal? If the PI does, will this increase his or her chance of success?

I think a much better strategy is to look at what they’ve funded. One of the websites I’m going to make sure people know about is [NIH RePORTER](#). At an institute level, you can find out what projects they’ve funded and that speaks much louder than what any program officer will tell you.

