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Grant writing skill building: a business administration curriculum proposal

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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the need for grant writing skills within various types of organizations and the resulting proposal for including grant writing within business administration curriculum at the undergraduate and/or graduate levels. An introduction precedes the results of a survey regarding current grant writing courses within AACSB schools of business and is followed with a specific grant writing curriculum proposal.

To grant is to give, and thousands of government agencies, corporations, foundations and trusts disburse billions of dollars each year. Recipients of these grants include many employers of business administration program graduates including non-profit entities, educational institutions, and business organizations. Regardless of the types of recipients, grants are largely awarded based on the assessment of grant proposals submitted. As the competition for grant opportunities increases, so does the need for grant writing skills enabling applicants to submit proposals that stand out among the submissions. Therefore, the inclusion of grant writing skills within undergraduate and/or graduate business programs is proposed.

This paper includes an introduction regarding the availability and types of grant. Secondly, a survey of all southwestern-region AACSB accredited schools of business identifies the presence of grant writing and/or related courses within current undergraduate and graduate business administration curricula. Thirdly, a proposed sample grant writing course outline is presented including a course description, and units of instruction.

Keywords: Grant Writing, Business Administration Curriculum, Texas Grant Writing Courses

INTRODUCTION

The number of organizations that qualify for grant funds has risen sharply over the last three decades. Nearly 90,000 trusts, foundations, government agencies and other organizations provide over \$40 billion annually in awarded grants to various applicants (The Foundation Center, 2008). The Federal Government, alone, includes over 1,000 grant programs available through 26 Federal Agencies. Grants are awarded for various purposes in 21 categories ranging from agriculture to transportation (Grants Policy Committee, 2008).

Regardless of the source, most applicants for grant funds are government agencies or private, nonprofit entities which have received the 501c3 status from the Internal Revenue Service. This 501c3 designation indicates organizations have qualified for the charitable tax-exempt status. Limited funding opportunities within the private for-profit sector also exist. Private for-profit organizations may also consider collaborating with a nonprofit organization. Private organizations may also apply to obtain the necessary legal tax-exempt status and thus revise their structures (Hall and Howlett, 2003).

Additional grant opportunities for private organizations exist through the Small Business Administration. Although the Small Business Administration provides more loans to small businesses than grants, limited grant opportunities do exist. The Small Business Administration's Office of Technology, for example, provides competitive-based funding to small, high tech, innovative businesses through the Small Business Innovation Research Program and the Small Business Technology Transfer Program. The Small Business Innovation Research Program supports proposals from small businesses that meet the research and development needs of the Federal Government. The Small Business Technology Transfer Program also supports proposals from small businesses that partner with nonprofit research institutions in order to introduce new products into the market place (Small Business Administration, 2008).

Most grants are awarded based on the review of proposed grant applications by individuals referred to as grant reviewers. Grant reviewers are the gatekeepers who decide which proposals are funded. In 2003, for example, The National Science Foundation alone utilized 54,000 grant reviewers to evaluate over 40,000 proposals. Regardless of the source or specific purpose, grant proposals should be viewed as marketing documents. Those documents that sell their ideas to the grant reviewers are the proposals that are funded (Porter, 2005).

Due to the growing presence of grant fund opportunities for both public and private organizations, graduates of business administration programs may gain employment within related organizations including non-profit entities, educational institutions, and private businesses. Table 1 displays a listing of current grant writing courses within either undergraduate and/or graduate AACSB accredited schools. Table 2 displays a listing of current grant writing courses within non-AACSB accredited schools.

To that end, the curricula of all institutions with AACSB accreditation in the southwestern region (Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas) were reviewed and noted. Table 1 indicates there are 17 institutions in this southwestern ASBBS accredited region that offer grant-writing courses. Within those institutions, nine offer undergraduate level grant writing courses although only two of those nine are within the Business curriculum. Also, 11 institutions offer graduate level grant writing courses although only within the Business curriculum. Therefore, out of the 35 grant writing courses identified in this table, only four of these courses reside in a Business related curricula.

Table 1: Southwestern AACSB Region Institutions with Grant Writing Courses and Areas of Study

University	Graduate (G)/ Undergraduate (UG)	Course	Area of Study
Oklahoma State University (OK)	UG	LEIS 4943 Grant Writing and Nonprofit Management	Leisure Studies
Oklahoma State University (OK)	G	CIED 6503 Doctoral Seminar	Curriculum and Instruction
	G	G5053 Planning Management	Regional and City Planning
Northern Arizona University (AZ)	UG	AM 210 Introduction to Arts Management	Arts Management
	UG	AM 310W Development and Marketing for the Arts	Arts Management
Arizona State University (AZ)	UG	RTM 451 Grant Writing for Human Service Professionals	Recreation and Tourism Management
The University of Arizona (AZ)	G	PA 533 Nonprofit Management	Public Administration and Policy
	G	PA 597G Grant Writing	Public Administration and Policy
Abilene Christian University (TX)	UG	SOCW 444 Management and Funding of Human Services	Social Work
Abilene Christian University (TX)	G	SOCW 744 Management and Funding of Nonprofit Organizations	Social Work
Baylor University (TX)	G	SOC 6391 Grant Writing and Proposal Development	Applied Sociology
	G	EDC 6338 Grant Writing (cross-listed as EDC 6338)	Educational Psychology
	G	SOC 6338 Grant Writing and Proposal Development	Sociology
	G	5350 Project Management	Business
	G	ENH 6106 Research Seminar	Exercise, Nutrition and Preventive Health
	G	ENH 6362 Design of Outcome-Based Health Interventions	Exercise, Nutrition and Preventive Health
	G	HED 5350 Assessment and Planning in Health Education	Health Education
Baylor University (TX)	UG	HED 4333 Program Evaluation in Health Education	Health Education
University of Houston (TX)	UG	ENTR 4340 Entrepreneurial Organizations, Capitalization, and Funding	Entrepreneurship (Business)

Lamar University (TX)	G	6313 Proposal Writing	Education
Sam Houston University (TX)	UG	POL 438 Grant Research and Writing	Political Science
University of Texas at Arlington (TX)	G	SOCW 6389 Grant Proposal Development Seminar	Social Work
University of Texas at Austin (TX)	G	393T Topics in Advanced Macro Practice: Grant Development and Fund-Raising in Human Services	Social Work
	G	GRS 390W Publishing, Theses and Dissertations, and Grant Writing	Professional Development and Community Engagement
University of Texas at El Paso (TX)	UG	4356 Grant Writing for Development	Public Administration
	UG	4312 Grant Writing I the Health Professions	Health Promotion
University of Texas at El Paso (TX)	G	CHSC 6350 Seminar in Scientific and Grant Writing	Interdisciplinary Health Sciences
	G	5313 Grant Writing	English
University of Texas at Permian Basin (TX)	G	MPAL 6330 Principles of Fund Raising	Non-Profit Administration Specialization (Public Administration)
University of Texas at San Antonio (TX)	G	5953 Grant Development and Proposal Writing	Public Administration
	G	6513 Grant Writing	Education and Human Development
Texas A & M University at Commerce (TX)	G	653 Professional Writing	Curriculum and Instruction
Texas A & M University at Corpus Christi (TX)	UG	ENGL 4320 Professional Writing Workshop	English
	UG	ENGL 4321 Grant Writing	English
Texas Tech University (TX)	G	63801 Grants and Project Funding	Nutrition, Hospitality and Retailing

Table 2 displays a listing of current undergraduate and/or graduate grant writing courses within all post-secondary institutions that do not hold ASCSB accreditation in the southwestern region of Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. As Table 2 indicates, there are 18 institutions in this region that offer grant-writing courses. Within those institutions, 11 offer undergraduate level grant writing courses with six of those 11 within the Business curricula. Ten institutions also offer graduate level grant writing courses although only two within the Business curricula.

Therefore, out of the 30 grant writing courses identified in Table2, only eight of these courses reside in Business related curricula.

Table 2: Non-AACSB Southwestern Region Institutions with Grant Writing Courses and Areas of Study

University	Graduate (G)/ Undergraduate (UG)	Course	Area of Study
Amberton University (TX)	UG	COM 4466 Writing Grants & Research Proposals	Communications
DeVry University-Dallas (TX)	UG	TC430 Proposal and Grant Writing	Technical Communications
Our Lady of the Lake University (TX)	G	SOWK 7345 Program Planning and Management	Social Work
Texas Wesleyan University (TX)	UG	ENG 3334 Proposal/Grant Writing	English
Texas Woman's University (TX)	G	FS6433 Grants Writing in Family Sciences	Family Sciences
	G	OT5032 Systematic Inquiry in Occupational Therapy III	Occupational Therapy
	G	OT5302 Professional Paper in Occupational Therapy III	Occupational Therapy
	G	OT5423 Grantsmanship in OT	Occupational Therapy
	G	NURS6003 Grant Writing	Nursing
University of Incarnate Word (TX)	UG	BFIN3340 Financial Management of Non-profit Organizations	Banking and Finance
A T Still University of Health Sciences (TX)	G	AT537 Proposal and Grant Writing	Health Science
	G	HEd914 Proposal Preparation/Public Relations	Health Education
Arizona State University Polytechnic Campus (AZ)	UG	RTM451 Grant Writing for Human Service Professionals	Recreation and Tourism Management
	G	SWG686 Developing Grants and Fund Raising	Social Work
DeVry University-Phoenix (AZ)	G	PUB5015 Grant Writing	Business
Northcentral University (AZ)	UG	BSHS 452 Program Design and Proposal Writing	Business
University of Phoenix (AZ)	G	NUR543 Advanced Nursing Management: Communities	Nursing
	UG	HSM270 Program Planning and Grant Proposal Writing in Human Services	Human Services

	G	EDD580 Applications of Action Research	Technical Communications
College of Santa Fe (NM)	G	EDU 509 Community and Parents: Program Development and Evaluation	Education
	G	EDU 561 School Finance and Facilities Management	Education
	UG	ENG303 Technical Writing Research Methods	English
	UG	PSC470-479 Topics in Public Administration	Political Science
New Mexico Institute of Mining & Technology (NM)	G	ENGL501 G Writing Seminar	English
New Mexico Highlands University(NM)	G	SW547-647 Resource Acquisition and Grant Writing in Human Services	Social Work
East Central University (OK)	G	HURES5123 Grant Writing in Human Services	Human Services
Oklahoma City University (OK)	UG	4181-3 Internship in Writing/Editing	English
	UG	4933 Development and Philanthropy for Not-For-Profit Organizations	Marketing
Southwestern Christian University (OK)	UG	ABUS4513 Fundraising	Business
University of Central Oklahoma (OK)	UG	KINS3632 Grant Writing and Fundraising	Kinesiology

Over 110 post-secondary institutions’ course offerings were reviewed within the southwestern regional states of Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. From these institutions only 35 offered grant-writing courses or had grant writing included within their course descriptions. Only 34 percent of these courses were offered in the business curricula. Therefore, this data may imply that although important within the business curricula, grant writing is not predominantly required. Further studies including additional universities may support this proposal.

PROPOSED GRANT WRITING COURSE OUTLINE

Using information taken from the different course descriptions found in Tables 1 and 2, the following is an example of what a proposed grant-writing course could contain:

Topic	Description
Introduction to Grant Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of course objectives; • Overview of course assignment (write a grant proposal);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the World of Grants • Local Community Organizations Guest Speakers describe their organizations and needs
<p>Parts of Grant Applications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and define the parts of most grant applications; • Review various grant samples. The Abstract, Introduction, Problem Statement, Objectives, Plan-of action/Method/Program/Proposal, Evaluation; • Future Necessary Funding; Budget; Cover Letter; • Overview of grant proposal sections required in this course. • Students select community organization and program area for grant preparation; Working Teams formed for grant preparation; Review grant criteria,
<p>Grant Criteria, Funding Sources and Agency Needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review grant criteria; • Identify and selection potential funding source; • Define and identify agency needs, and articulate concerns, issues, needs, and problems into “problem statement(s)”; • Compose meaningful and measurable objectives for a problem statement; • Develop a strategy, method, and/or a solution approach to a problem statement; • Develop criteria for assessing the problem statement
<p>Critique and Edits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the criteria to critique a problem statement; • Edit problem statement; • Develop a strategy, method, and/or a solution approach to a problem statement; • Maintain proposal continuity – connect problem statement with objectives; • Review logical structure; • Separate means from ends; • Partnership and collaboration; • Summative evaluation; Comprehensive evaluation design; • Organizing evaluation design information and data;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sources of data and information; • Connect proposal objectives with summative evaluation results
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use criteria to critique, edit and select evaluation design and strategy; • Proposal Organization: The Budget; Develop estimate of cost; • Budget format; • Budget summary; • Budget detail; • Fringe benefits; • Personnel; • Budget checklist; • Match
Proposal Abstract and Cover Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use criteria to critique, edit and select budget and justification; • Proposal Organization: The introduction, proposal abstract (summary), and cover letter; Score sheet – neglected scoring items; • Quality of key personnel; • Simulation grant scoring
Proposal Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use criteria to critique, edit and select introduction, proposal abstract,(summary), and cover letter; • Proposal Organization: Guidelines for review preparation and submission; • What funders are looking for
Analyzing Grant Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzing Grant Application: Use criteria to review and revise grant application
Submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit grant application
Wrap-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concluding Discussion and Student Evaluation of the Course • Discuss what you learned from this course

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