



# Center for Teaching Excellence Hampton University Teaching Matters

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## Message from the CTE Faculty Associates

Welcome to the inaugural Newsletter of the Hampton University Center for Teaching Excellence and our first communication to the faculty. As CTE faculty associates, we have the distinct honor of representing our group of highly qualified and experienced faculty practicing their profession within the University. The Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE), a faculty resource facility, carries out comprehensive programs for professional development, focuses on the improvement of instruction in all disciplines, and develops teaching and assessment approaches to improve student performance on standardized examinations and other measures of competence and growth. CTE is committed to promoting outstanding educational exchange between Hampton University faculty and students to foster an academic environment in which both can achieve their full potential. The Center is also committed to offering institutional and global outreach services so as to address the most current faculty development issues. Likewise, CTE is committed to stimulating the faculty's creativity, collegiality, and exploration for a common goal: teaching excellence. Your input will be essential to achieve the goals and objectives of the CTE. Please take a moment to jot down any comments or suggestions and send them to us. We look forward with pleasure to working with you.

Spencer Baker, Assessment and Evaluation, 727-5128, [spencer.baker@hamptonu.edu](mailto:spencer.baker@hamptonu.edu)

Lillie Calloway, Pedagogical Issues, 727-5864, [lillie.calloway@hamptonu.edu](mailto:lillie.calloway@hamptonu.edu)

Zina McGee, Research and Grantsmanship, 728-6913, [zina.mcgee@hamptonu.edu](mailto:zina.mcgee@hamptonu.edu)

Arun Verma, Research and Technology, 728-6983, [arun.verma@hamptonu.edu](mailto:arun.verma@hamptonu.edu)

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## Main Article

### **Effective Grant Writing at Hampton University by Zina T. McGee and Arun K. Verma**

Decisions to write grant proposals should be based on knowledge about the competition and funding agency. As you decide what you want to do, consider your expertise, interests, and available resources. Develop proposals that are related to your professional strengths, your current activities, and the strengths of your institution. The first step to preparing a proposal is conceptualization, which will allow you to summarize your entire project. Development of a preliminary or draft proposal depends on your ability to conceptualize your project by considering the following elements:

- Problem the project will address
- Goal(s) of the project
- Objectives the project will achieve to accomplish the goal(s)

- Anticipated, measurable outcomes
- Procedures or methods for determining accomplished goals and objectives
- Population served
- Theoretical or conceptual framework that the project is based upon

Several key references discussing the theoretical or conceptual model must be reviewed in preparation for a full proposal. Reviewers will expect you to know the literature pertaining to related research. They are critical of vague constructs and weak background references. Find reliable sources and thoroughly review the published research. Use bibliographies to further assist you in your literature searching. As you develop a budget for your project, be certain to include personnel costs, fringe benefit rates, consultant costs, travel (including staff and consultants), equipment and materials, supplies, and institutional direct cost rates. Allow enough time for your institution to review and approve submission of your proposal at the department, dean and administration levels. Competitions with high probability success rates are usually those where few proposals are submitted, many proposals are submitted, and there is a high ratio of projects funded to submissions. After you have conceptualized your project, become familiar with funding sources. Spend time reviewing what certain agencies and foundations support, and compare your project with the purpose and objective of the funding source. Utilize your campus resources and be aware of your institution's eligibility for the award. Discuss your project with colleagues, especially those who have been successful proposal writers. Your proposal must be substantive, and should be written in a manner that convinces the reviewers that you have strong theoretical and methodological skills. You must also demonstrate that you have obtained adequate university support for your project. Reviewers want to be certain that you will be able to successfully complete your project at your institution. Include as many letters of support from university officials and external consultants as possible. Finally, you must place your proposal within the context of previous work. Provide as much preliminary data as possible in your initial proposal. Discussions of how your project is supported in the literature are extremely important as you relate the goals and objectives to existing sources. Remember that the more comprehensive your information, the more you will be able to accomplish as you complete the initial draft of your proposal. Among the more common proposal weaknesses are:

- Vague constructs and weak background references
- Too many variables, many of which are unspecified
- Theoretical or conceptual frameworks that are too simple
- No specific hypotheses, or hypotheses that are not measurable
- No alternate hypotheses (this often occurs with poor literature reviews)
- Errors in design or feasibility
- Incomplete proposals, limited detail
- Serious human subject concerns
- Inadequate requests for funds and unrealistic time scales given the scope of the project
- Insufficient rationale for items defined in the budget

The significance of the proposal will be based primarily on your literature background, context for the problem, and anticipated outcomes. Be persistent. Expect to be successful. After you receive your initial reviews from the funding source, revise and resubmit until you are funded.