

K-State Women in Economics (WIE) Trip to KU NSF Day:

Selected Comments (October 5, 2010)

*It is a great experience to attend the NSF workshop at KU. I attended one of the concurrent directorate sessions, and the proposal preparation 101 session in the afternoon. From the concurrent directorate sessions, Dr. Thomas J. Baerwald gave a talk about the basics of the NSF and focused on the fields for the social, behavioral, and economic sciences. Dr. Baerwald explained the access and tips about the NSF's funds. For those who are not familiar with the NSF, the first step is to browse the NSF website. They provide clear descriptions of various funds. We can check the awards by program or keyword, so that we can have a better understanding about what NSF supports. NSF also provides the doctoral dissertation research improvement grants (DDRIs or DDIGs). It is to support doctoral students' dissertation research. Note that this grant supports dissertation costs only. It does not provide cost-of-living or other stipends or tuition. There are more instructions about the dissertation research grants in economics via the web page, <http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/ses/econ/ddrip1.jsp>. Proposals should follow their directions for submissions in the Doctoral Dissertation Program Announcement and Grant Proposal Guide. Dr. Baerwald kept saying that we need to read the website instructions carefully, which can help us to write the proposals. We need to think like those who will review while writing the proposals. Also, he suggested we email or call a program officer with specific questions if needed. Hope this information is useful for those who are interested. **Jenny Wu (WIE President)***

*It is quite an event. I wish we had it here at K-State! **Yuting Li (WIE V.P. and Treasurer)***

*I attended the morning portion of the NSF workshop at KU. The conference provided an overview of the Foundation and its mission, priorities, and budget. It also covered the NSF proposal and merit review process. I learned that we should find some original ideas which are flexible and responsive first, and then there are organizations like NSF can support us to accomplish them if the ideas are valuable. **Yunyun Lv (Club Secretary)***

*The Women in Economics Club had a very good time at the KU NSF day. Each of the participants took something new and interesting from the experience. We felt that this workshop was useful not only for writing NSF proposals, but it was more generally helpful for writing other types of large grant proposals and generally good advice for how to write good work for peer review by others. I think that all graduate students and beginning professors should attend this type of conference to give them a better sense for how to start on the proposal writing and generally writing for peer-review process. **Florence Neymotin, Ph.D. (WIE Adviser)***

*My trip to the NSF Day at Kansas University was very productive. I attended a presentation about the review process of grant proposals at the NSF. This review process is grounded in the "merit review" philosophy used at the NSF. Under this merit review a proposal is judged according to its intellectual merit (creativity, potential to advance field, qualifications of investigators) and its broader impact (promotion of teaching, education infrastructure, and results dissemination). As junior faculty, I will have to write grant proposals in the near future, and since the NSF is very competitive, any information about the assessment process is valuable. **Philippe Belley, Ph.D. (WIE Participant)***

*I was part of group that went for the later portion of the conference. Jael, Jenny, Dr. Neymotin and I were able to make it for the Concurrent Directorate Sessions that were held in smaller breakout rooms. Thomas Baerwald, the Senior Science Advisor for the Division of Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences, spoke to the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences group. His talk was very informative. Much of his advice for preparing NSF research proposals will likely be applicable to the preparation of other research proposals. For example he repeatedly emphasized keeping research narrowly focused but still grounded in a larger theoretical framework. He provided a structure for organizing a proposal that would probably be a good general format for other proposals as well. In addition to this general information there was some NSF specific information that was valuable too. For example: Normative studies do not fare well at NSF; avoid excessive use of jargon, pay attention to the technical requirements for a proposal (length, font, format etc.). He also mention that the NSF website has a search engine function that allows you read the abstracts of recent awards made through each program, which I think would be interesting to read through. He also discussed some of the special programs such as Grants for Rapid Response Research (RAPID), Early Concept Exploratory Research (EAGER), Career Proposals, and Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grants. Following this Session we went to a seminar on Proposal writing that answered some of my more general questions and provided information on grant writing. While a portion of the information discussed in the conference was available on-line, I think it was important to be able to get a feel for the culture of NSF. For example, both speakers said that if you have specific questions that can not be easily answered by the information online, then you should just call them and ask. They also discussed the important of the "intellectual merit" and "broader impacts" review criteria, which could be glossed over. **Jessica Boulware (WIE Member)***