GRANT WRITING

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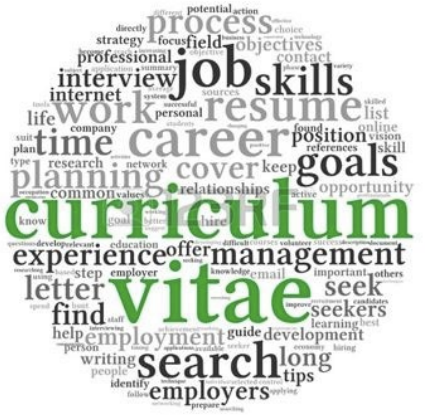
Why apply for grants?

- Funding your research.
- In addition:
  - Part of your academic record.
  - Impress potential supervisors/employers.
  - Sunk costs or funding begets funding.
  - Focus your research.



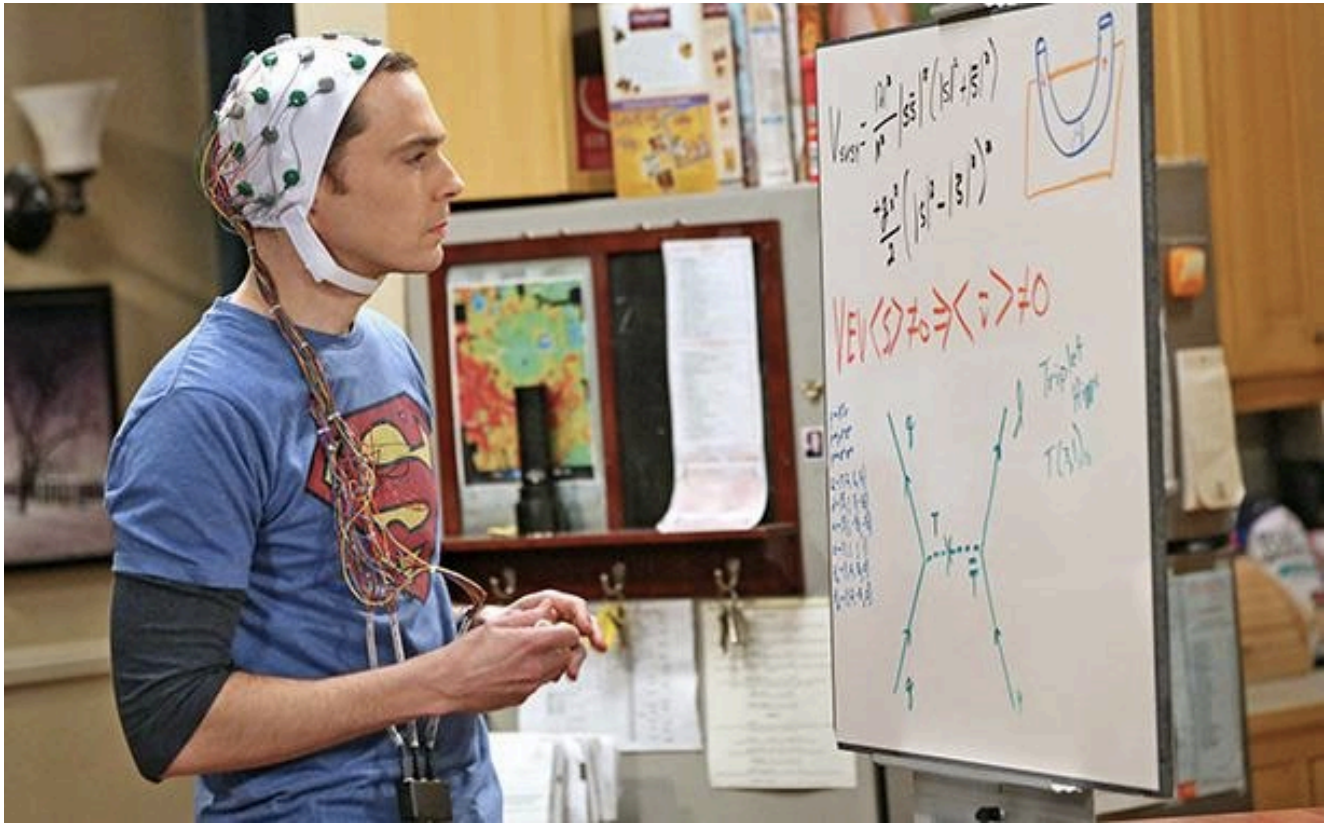
Why are academics sometimes so bad at grant writing?

1. Training
2. Modesty

"The facts, Ma'am. Just the facts."

Grants—Aim High

Unifying theory of everything



Big picture

- Even though you may not solve any of the world's big global challenges you can at least show you're aware of them and show that you can see where your research may ultimately play a role in dealing with some of the challenges of the day.

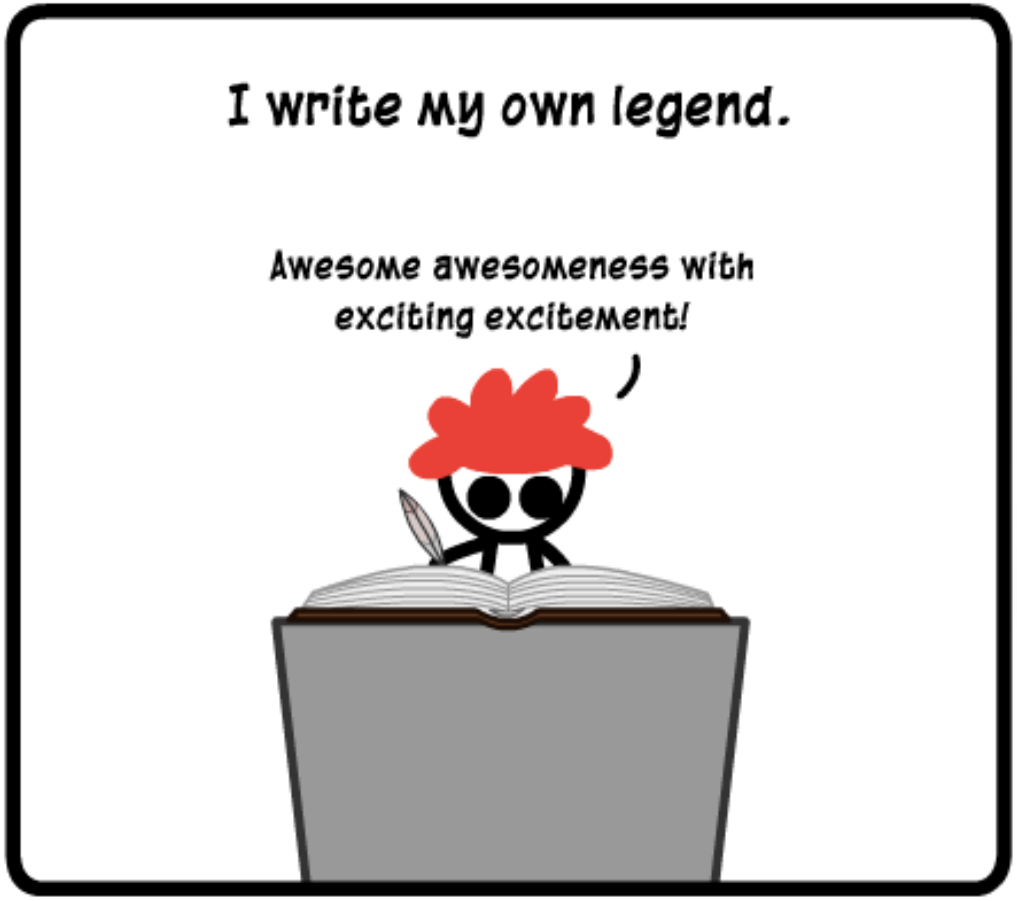
On the other hand…short-term goals

Very specific, detailed, do-able within the grant period.

Built on previous careful work.

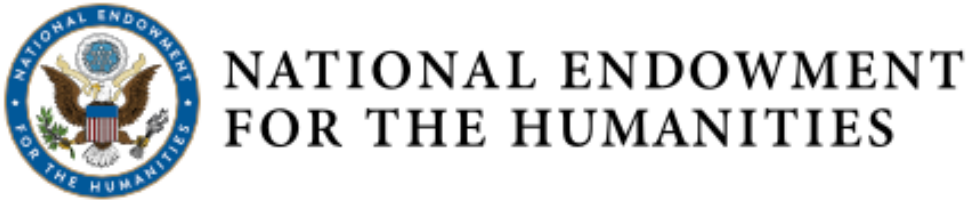
Make sure that you convince the reader that *you* can complete the research.

Self-effacing objectivity (3rd person)



Before you start

- Understand the agency's mission/priorities and select the proper agency
- Read the manual AND follow the directions
- Understand peer review



Know your audience

- NEH:

https://www.neh.gov/information-first-time-applicants

- NSF:

https://new.nsf.gov/about#what-we-support-b2a

- NIH:

https://www.nih.gov/about-nih

Reviewers want to know…

- ***Who*** you are and what you bring to the table that makes you better than all of the other candidates that you're up against.
- ***What*** else do you have? Do you have experience with research, leadership, communication?
- ***Why*** are you doing this research (impact/implications)?
- ***How*** you are going to do the research and how you feel about the research--why you're excited about it, why this is an important problem that's worth putting time and energy into.

Use their language

- Use the words in their mission and goals

Grant thesaurus

Big picture

- Fundamental research challenges
- Quality contribution
- Impact
- Advancing knowledge
- Interdisciplinary/ multidisciplinary
- Breadth and scope
- Significant progress—solid empirical basis
- Deep level of inquiry

- Novelty
  - Cutting-edge
  - Innovative
  - Creative
  - Exciting
  - Transformative
  - Advance knowledge in the field
  - Challenging
  - Outstanding potential
  - Discovery
  - Critical importance

Grant thesaurus

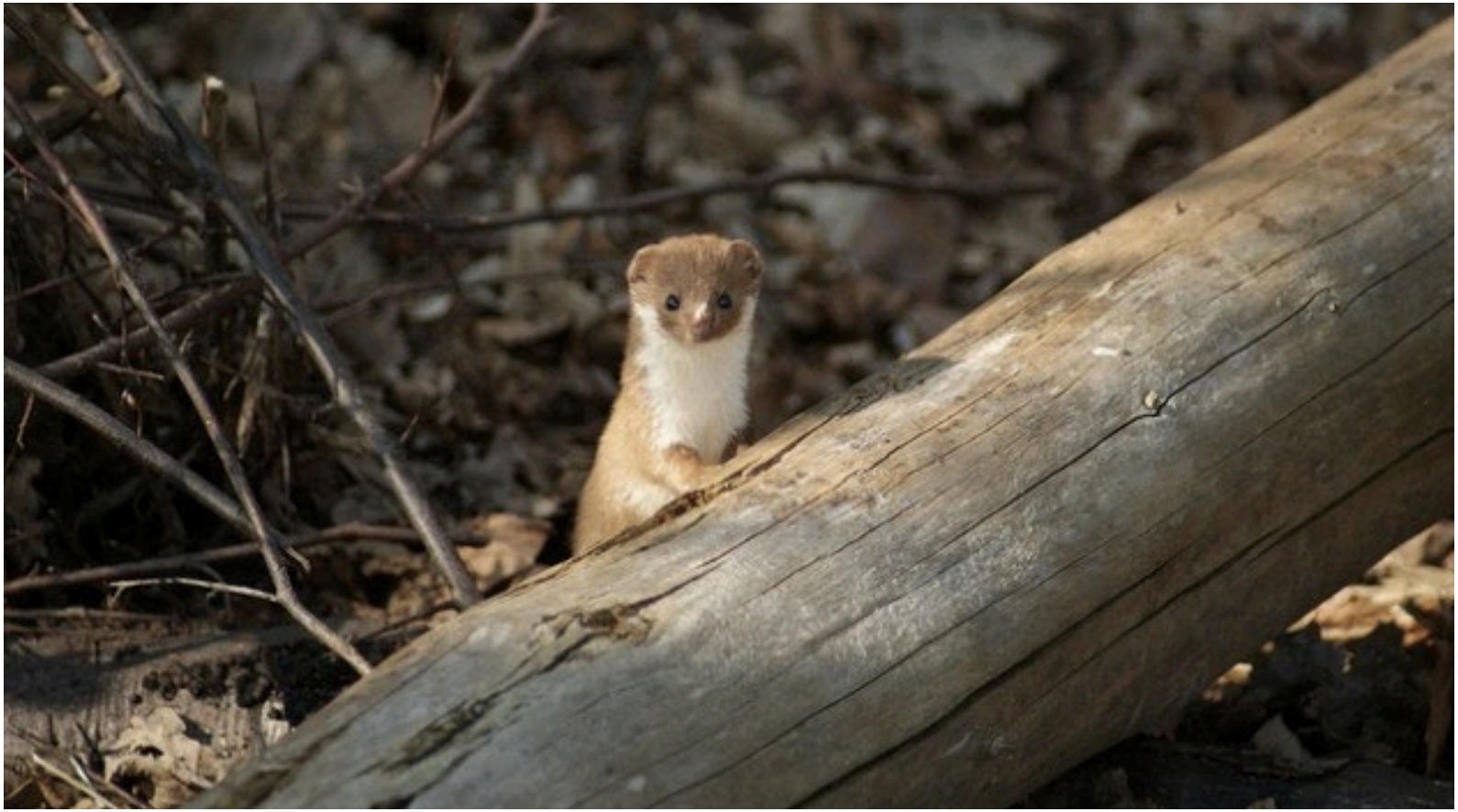
- Knowledge translation
  - Broad dissemination
  - Academic and community stakeholders
  - Common goal
- Feasibility
  - Appropriate tools/instruments/facilities
  - Necessary knowledge/experience / collaborators
  - Time line
  - Recruitment of participants

- Students
  - Stimulating environment
  - Intellectual contributions
  - Supportive environment
  - Cutting-edge training
  - Research tools
  - Fundamental training
  - Collaborative opportunities
  - Appropriate to the students' experience
  - Enhancement of training

Title

- Should be clear and descriptive
  - Don’t use jargon/buzz words here
    - “Interdiciplinary and Innovative Research on …”
  - Make sure it fits the subject matter of the agency
    - “Social interactions in dogs”
  - Imagine it being read aloud in Parliament
    - "Woodpeckers and Head Injury”
    - "Effects of Backward Speech and Speaker Variability in Language Discrimination by Rats”
    - "Ovulatory Cycle Effects on Tip Earnings by Lap Dancers: Economic Evidence for Human Estrus?”

Don’t use weasel words



Be definitive

- Don’t use "may," "might," "could," "would,” "seem,” "possibly" and "probably”--they weaken your argument and make it sound like your study is not well designed enough to result in a definitive answer to your research question.
- Avoid writing a proposal laced with uncertainties. Trust yourself to declare your hypotheses in clear and definitive terms.

Overcoming challenges

- Identify challenges and how you will overcome them:
  - Do you need access to specialized equipment or analysis techniques?
  - Do you need access to difficult-to-recruit populations?
  - Do you need expertise that you don’t have?

Use all resources necessary

- Ask someone who does not know your area to read your proposal. Ask them if they understand
  - What you are proposing to do?
  - How you are proposing to do it?
  - Why you are proposing to do it?
- Get feedback on clarity from multiple sources
- Get feedback on scientific merit

Lastly…

- Start early.
- Submit before the deadline.
- Remember, a good idea is required for getting a grant but it does not guarantee you will get it: the idea has to be framed appropriately.
- YOU are excited about your research—make that passion come across in your application.

Questions?