**FACULTY GRANTS TRAINING –
THE SPENCER FOUNDATION OVERVIEW**

University of Colorado Colorado Springs, October 2020

PRESENTER

CHRIS NANCE

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Chris Nance began grant writing and program development in 2002, providing freelance services for non-profit, government, healthcare, and education entities in the San Diego region. By 2004 he was working with agencies in cities and counties nationwide. In 2010 Chris was promoted into a supervisory and content management role for a national grants consultancy overseeing a team of grant professionals working on multiple varied proposals simultaneously.

During his career Chris has been involved in securing over $150,000,000 in federal, state, county, foundation, and corporate grant funding across a wide spectrum of funding areas. Chris currently serves as a Grants Consultant developing grant projects in both the health and education fields.

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AGENDA

1. Foundation grant-seeking refresher

2. The Spencer Foundation

3. Proposal rules of thumb

4. Spencer application

5. Review process

6. Example application

7. Questions

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1. FOUNDATION GRANTSEEKING REFRESHER

FOUNDATION FUNDING OVERVIEW

WHAT IS A FOUNDATION?

A foundation is a **non-governmental entity** that is established as a nonprofit corporation or a charitable trust, **with a principal purpose of making grants** to unrelated organizations, institutions, or individuals **for scientific, educational, cultural, religious, or other charitable purposes**. (SOURCE: FOUNDATION CENTER)

KEY FOUNDATION STATS

87,142
TOTAL NUMBER OF FOUNDATIONS

$55.26 Billion
TOTAL AMOUNT OF GIVING

$798.18 Billion
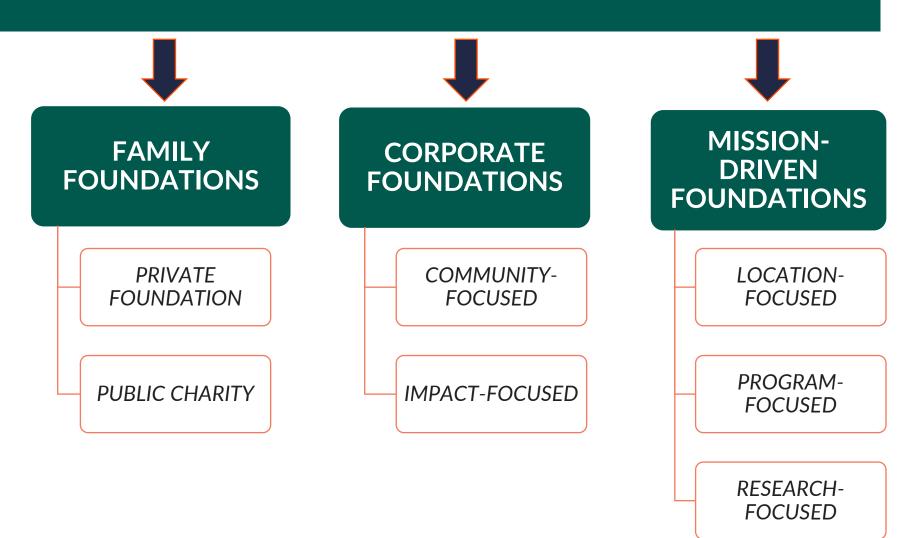TOTAL FOUNDATION ASSETS

(SOURCE: FOUNDATION CENTER)

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FOUNDATION TYPES

FAMILY FOUNDATIONS
- *PRIVATE FOUNDATION*
- *PUBLIC CHARITY*

CORPORATE FOUNDATIONS
- *COMMUNITY-FOCUSED*
- *IMPACT-FOCUSED*

MISSION-DRIVEN FOUNDATIONS
- *LOCATION-FOCUSED*
- *PROGRAM-FOCUSED*
- *RESEARCH-FOCUSED*

2. THE SPENCER FOUNDATION

THE SPENCER FOUNDATION

- Established in 1962 by Lyle Spencer, founder of Science Research Associates (SRA), the educational publishing firm's formal grant-making began in 1971.

- Awarded over $500M since inception supporting areas including **education-focused research projects, research training fellowships, and additional field-building initiatives**.

- Spencer is the only national foundation focused exclusively on supporting education research.

- The Spencer Foundation funds, **"high-quality, innovative research on education, broadly conceived."**

Spencer Foundation Motivation, Goals, and Core Commitments: https://www.spencer.org/about-us

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THE SPENCER FOUNDATION

- Between 2013 and 2020 the Foundation awarded 867 grants to 295 PIs totaling $82M.

- Of that total, 692 grants to 220 PIs totaling $58.7M were awarded to colleges.

- Colorado received 23 grants to eight organizations totaling $1.9M.

- One grant in El Paso County, Colorado in 2013 for $39,880.00.

- The Spencer Foundation's most common grant amount is $40,000.

(SOURCE: FOUNDATION CENTER)

- Spencer maintains a searchable database of all awards made between 1984 and 2019.

- Announced a "new direction" for the Foundation in April 2019.

President's "New Direction at Spencer" Blogpost:
https://www.spencer.org/news/a-message-from-our-president-new-directions-at-spencer

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- **Research Grants**

  ➢ <u>Field-Initiated Research Grant Programs</u>

    - Lyle Spencer Research Awards to Transform Education

    - Research Grants on Education – Large *New*

    - Research Grants on Education – Small

    - Research-Practice Partnerships – Collaborative Research for Educational Change *Reintroduced*

Spencer Research Grants:
https://www.spencer.org/research-grants

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SPENCER FUNDING TYPES - TRAINING

- **Training Grants**

  ➤ Fellowships for Scholars & Journalists

    ▪ NAEd/Spencer Dissertation Fellowship

    ▪ NAEd/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship

    ▪ Spencer Education Fellowship

Spencer Training Grants:
https://www.spencer.org/training-grants

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- **Field Building Grants**

  ➢ Programs Promoting Collaboration & Cross-Disciplinary   Learning

  - ▪ Conference Grants

    - ❖ Provide support to scholars to organize small research conferences, focused symposia, or other forms of convenings around important issues in education.

    - ❖ Program supports proposals with budgets of $50,000 or less.

Spencer Field Building Grants:
https://www.spencer.org/grant_types/conference-grants

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RESEARCH GRANTS ON EDUCATION - SMALL

CURRENT OPPORTUNITY

DESCRIPTION: Intended to support education research projects that will contribute to the improvement of education (i.e. broadly conceived projects ranging from 1 to 5 years).

GOALS: This program is "field-initiated" in that proposal submissions are not in response to a specific request for a particular research topic, discipline, design, method, or location. The goal for this program is **to support rigorous, intellectually ambitious and technically sound research that is relevant to the most pressing questions and compelling opportunities in education.**

INTENT TO APPLY FORM REQUIRED: No

FULL PROPOSAL DEADLINE: 11/03/2020 by 12 NOON CT

DURATION: up to 5 years

TOTAL AWARD AMOUNT: $50,000 (indirect costs not allowed)

Spencer Program Deadlines:
https://www.spencer.org/application-deadlines

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SPENCER FOUNDATION GRANT ARCHIVE

Title: Learning Through Practice: How Teachers Engage Students in Gender and Sexual Diversity- Focused Instruction

- Principal Investigator: Sara Staley | School of Education | University of Colorado at Boulder

- Principal Investigator(s): Bethy Leonardi | School of Education | University of Colorado at Boulder

- Grant Type: Small Grant

- Research Area: Teaching, Learning, and Instructional Resources

- Grant Amount: $50,000.00

- Year: 2018

Spencer Grant Archive:
https://www.spencer.org/grant-archive

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RESEARCH GRANTS ON EDUCATION - SMALL

- **Learning Through Practice: How Teachers Engage Students in Gender and Sexual Diversity- Focused Instruction**

- **Principal Investigator:** Sara Staley | School of Education | University of Colorado at Boulder

- **Principal Investigator(s):** Bethy Leonardi | School of Education | University of Colorado at Boulder

- **Summary** - In order to create safe, affirming learning environments in which lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth can thrive, research widely recommends that teachers take proactive approaches by explicitly addressing gender and sexual diversity through the curriculum. However, little is known about what happens when teachers engage in that complex work. In particular, it is unclear how teachers enact practices that affirm gender and sexual diversity and negotiate demands that arise in the act of teaching. Dr. Staley and Dr. Leonardi are leveraging an opportunity-rich research context in one local school district to examine what enactment of inclusive, affirming practice looks like. By observing and video recording enactments of gender and sexual diversity-focused instruction and conducting post-observation interviews with teachers, this research aims at identifying and explicating moves that teachers make moment to moment in the classroom. Specifically, this project asks, How do educators enact practices that engage students in learning about gender and sexual diversity? What do they attend to in moments of classroom activity? What moves do they make? What do they say and do? What teaching demands do they negotiate along the way?

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3. PROPOSAL RULES OF THUMB

DEVELOPING YOUR PROPOSAL

Grant format and structure are often strictly prescribed.

- Always check formatting requirements (e.g., font, margins) before you begin drafting, to avoid problems later.

- Structure your proposal transparently around the funder's required elements, even if the funder doesn't ask you to do this.

- Use sub-headings to make all elements visible.

- Remember that reviewers are working with a checklist: everything on their checklist should be easy to find.

- Remember that reviewers are often tired. Make their lives easy!

Although it may be tempting to use a creative structure, in most cases grant proposals should be predictable and conventional.

ACADEMIC WRITING VS GRANT WRITING

Academic Writing versus Grant Writing: Contrasting Perspectives

Academic Writing	Grant Writing
Scholarly pursuit: *Individual passion*	**Sponsor goals:** *Service attitude*
Past oriented: *Work that has been done*	**Future oriented:** *Work that should be done*
Theme-centered: *Theory and thesis*	**Project-centered:** *Objectives and activities*
Expository rhetoric: *Explaining to reader*	**Persuasive rhetoric:** *"Selling" the reader*
Impersonal tone: *Objective, dispassionate*	**Personal tone:** *Conveys excitement*
Individualistic: *Primarily a solo activity*	**Team-focused:** *Feedback needed*
Few length constraints: *Verbosity rewarded*	**Strict length constraints:** *Brevity rewarded*
Specialized terminology: *"Insider jargon"*	**Accessible language:** *Easily understood*

Source: http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ902223.pdf

REMEMBER THE RULE OF 40

"Always assume that your proposal is the 40th in a stack, that the reviewer has 40 other things they'd rather be doing, and they haven't had a good night's sleep in 40 years."

Foundation Program Officer

4. SPENCER APPLICATION

ELIGIBILITY & RESTRICTIONS

SMALL RESEARCH GRANTS – ELIGIBILITY

- Must propose an academic research project that aims to study education.

- Anything else is ineligible (curriculum development, program evaluation, etc.)

- Principal Investigators (PIs) and Co-PIs applying for a Small Research Grant on Education must have an earned doctorate in an academic discipline or professional field, or appropriate experience in an education research-related profession.

- Graduate students can be involved but cannot be PI or co-PI.

- The PI must be affiliated with a non-profit organization (e.g. university, school district, research facility) that is willing to serve as the administering organization if the grant is awarded.

Spencer Research Grants on Education - Small:
https://www.spencer.org/grant_types/small-research-grant

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ELIGIBILITY & RESTRICTIONS

SMALL RESEARCH GRANTS – RESTRICTIONS

- No awards to individuals.

- Budgets limited to $50,000 and may not include indirect.

- No projects longer than five years in duration.

- PIs and Co-PIs may only hold one active research grant from the Spencer Foundation at a time.

- PIs and Co-PIs may not submit more than one application for a given deadline in this program.

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HOW TO APPLY

- The application process begins with a full proposal.

- Small Research Grant proposals must be submitted through an online application form following the steps below:

  ➢ Step 1 – Register

  ➢ Step 2 – Create Profile

  ➢ Step 3 – Start Proposal

Spencer Grant Portal:
https://spencer.smartsimple.us

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HOW TO APPLY

SMALL RESEARCH GRANT PROPOSAL ELEMENTS

- Project Personnel

- Proposal Summary

- Budget & Budget Justification

- Proposal Narrative

- Project Timeline

- Project Team

- Supplemental Course Release (Optional)

- Appendices A & B (Optional)

- Project Data

- Signature from Authorized Representative

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5. REVIEW PROCESS

REVIEW PROCESS OVERVIEW

- Small Research Grants use a peer review process. Each proposal is reviewed by both external panel reviewers and internal staff. The review process takes approximately 5-6 months from the deadline.

- Review panel is made up of scholars in the field of education research with expertise across many disciplines and methodological areas. Panelist rate and comment on the following criteria:

  ➢ **Significance:** Reviewers evaluate the centrality of education in the research, the importance of the topic to its field, and the quality of the research question(s) and/or direction of inquiry.

  ➢ **Connection to Research and Theory:** Reviewers evaluate the adequacy of the description of how other researchers have treated the same topic and how well the proposal responds to prior work and theory.

  ➢ **Research Design:** Reviewers evaluate the overall quality, sophistication, and appropriateness of the research design as well as its alignment with the research question(s) and/or conceptual framing.

  ➢ **Budget and Timeline:** Reviewers evaluate the adequacy of the budget and timeline.

  ➢ **Project Team:** Reviewers comment on the potential of the investigator(s) to complete the study as described and share the results or other findings.

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6. EXAMPLE SUBMISSION

EXAMPLE SUBMISSION

Summary: Sometimes the the physical campus itself and its surroundings are overlooked as a valuable asset for student success. The proposed project investigates the impact of campus environment and location on community college graduation. Retention and graduation rates have become a key component of measuring the performance of higher education institutions in recent years. The most common strategies to improve retention and graduation rates are financial and academic related strategies, such as revising the financial aid strategy, reregulating student selectivity policy, investing in academic and advisory services, while revising curricula and programs.

Objective 1. Determining the campus form factors that matters most in the success of community college students.
Objective 2. Exploring the idea of using physical campus as a tool/asset to improve graduation rate of community college students.
Objective 3. Developing practical recommendations for community college administrators and higher education policy makers, aiming at improving the efficiency of their campus planning efforts.

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Research Phases:

Phase 1: Conceptualizing the campus form factors that matters most in the success of community college students. (PI will conduct this phase)

Phase 2: Testing the hypothesis generated in phase 1. (PI will conduct this phase. Two research assistants will help PI in actions b and d)

Phase 3: Developing practical recommendations for community college administrators and higher education policy makers, aiming at improving the efficiency of their campus planning efforts. (PI will conduct this phase)

Outcome Variables:

- **Retention rate for first-time and full-time students**; Source: National Center for Education Statistics

- **Retention rate for first-time and part-time students;** Source: National Center for Education Statistics

- **Overall graduation rate;** Source: National Center for Education Statistics Location-related variables (This list can be modified after conducting Phase 1):

- **Gross population density in persons per square mile in surrounding census tracts;** Source: US Census

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SPENCER REVIEW FEEDBACK

Reviewer 1: The ability of Community Colleges (CCs) in the US to adequately and successfully educate a broad share of young adults is critical to the future economic solvency of the nation. As written, however, the proposal lacks a clear articulation of the saliency of this tier of tertiary education; the vast majority of US young adults do not enter a 4-year university upon graduation from high school, whether R1 or regional teaching colleges. Rather, if they enter the postsecondary realm, they do so through CCs, yet the review of the literature does not clearly position the relevance of the proposed work within this larger discussion. Despite the compelling potential of the proposed topic, the review of the literature is fairly weak, although the author indicates this work as part of a larger, individual research agenda. This proposal would be considerably stronger and more coherent with closer attention to the extant research literature examining the unique role and positioning of CCs in the postsecondary realm, and within U.S. society writ large.

On a more specific note, graduation is framed as the core goal of CCs, a perspective that disregards transfer as a targeted outcome. In fact, CCs were designed to facilitate students' transfer to 4y institutions, making it not necessarily surprising that only 30% leave having earned a "certification" when one accounts for transfer, and for initial intent to degree (i.e., ESL and adult ed programs are not degree-bearing). Ultimately, the proposal lacks solid grounding in the community college research literature.

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SPENCER REVIEW FEEDBACK

Reviewer 2: The main difficulty with the research design is the lack of an adequate conceptualization of selection into a campus versus retention. For example, the first research question asks what are the campus form factors that matter the most in the success of community college students. This question implies that students on some types of campuses will do better because of the campus itself. However, it does not take into account selection. It may be that students with a greater commitment to their education are also more likely to peruse several campuses and select one with greater aesthetic appeal; and thus it is their greater commitment, and not the features of the campus, that determine success.

I realize the author intends to control for some student level variables, but I am skeptical that these controls would be sufficient for ruling out this explanation. The author also intends to explore the idea of using the physical campus as a tool to improve graduation rates, but little detail is provided about how this question will be addressed by the proposed study.

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SPENCER FOUNDATION TIPS & TRICKS

- Reviewers consist of experts in the field of study/methodology as well as generalists in educational research.

- Receives about 2,000 proposals annually
  - Funds between 5-10% of them at most

- They do attempt to return written feedback on as many of them as possible

- Take the time to review, revise, and resubmit
  - Create a proposal planning timeline that offers you deliverable targets
  - Give yourself plenty of lead time

- Consider adding a new collaborator, an expert, a colleague with more experience

- Use available resources online, e.g., *A Guide to Writing Successful Field-Initiated Research Grant Proposals*

Spencer Resources and Tools for Applicants:
https://www.spencer.org/for-applicants

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SPENCER POTENTIAL APPLICANT WEBINAR

- **Spencer Foundation Webinar for Potential Applicants**

- **Date: Wednesday, Oct. 14**

- **Time: 2:00-3:15 MT**

- This webinar is open to anyone interested in learning more about Spencer's programs and opportunities for research funding and the elements of successful proposal writing. The webinar will include a welcome from Spencer President Na'ilah Suad Nasir, presentations from program officers, and an opportunity to ask questions about the grant writing process.

- If you are unable to attend, a video copy of the webinar will be available on the Spencer website.

- Webinar registration page.

Spencer Applicant Webinar Announcement:
https://www.spencer.org/news/register-now-for-informational-webinar-for-potential-applicants

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UCCS SUBMISSION PROCESS

- **Consult Foundation website for specific guidance.** *Do this early!*

- *Consult UCCS' Office of Sponsored Programs and Research Integrity (OSPRI) for budget and submission support*
    - Training – Offers variety of training for responsible research
    - Budget – Must use UCCS budget template (*https://osp.uccs.edu/resources/forms*)
    - Supporting documents – (IRB, IBC, export controls, etc.)
    - Proposal routing – Must submit the budget and justification to OSPRI well before the agency deadline
        - *OSPRI requires complete proposal 5 days before due date*

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7. QUESTIONS

"KNOW YOUR FUNDER" WEBINAR SERIES

**Don't miss these upcoming events in UCCS's fall "Know Your Funder"
grants webinar series!**

Know Your Funder: NIH
November 2 @ 2pm Mountain

Join us for an overview of NIH structure, funding mechanisms, and review policies. This is your chance to learn more about how to prepare a competitive proposal from concept to resubmission, and how to navigate NIH resources to help you excel.

Know Your Funder: NSF
December 2 @ 2pm Mountain

This one-hour webinar training will include an overview of NSF agency structure, proposal review and award processes, and pre-application best practices. Join us for tips on developing a strong NSF proposal that describes significant advancement in the field of inquiry (intellectual merit) as well as benefits for students, collaborators, institution, and other public and private stakeholders including the general public (broader impacts).

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Thank you.

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