GUIDELINES FOR WRITING RESEARCH PROPOSALS
Deans’ Summer Research Fellowships

A research project addresses a question - not an interest

I. SUGGESTED CHRONOLOGICAL PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION:

- Background of the proposed project, i.e., previous work on the topic.
  When done well, this provides context for non-expert readers, and it also proves to experts that you are prepared to do the project. An effective presentation begins with general background and moves rapidly, in one or two paragraphs, to the particular background for the proposed project.

- A statement of the specific research question or goal of the proposed project.
  Make it clear it can be accomplished in the time period proposed.

- A description of the research approach to be used.
  Provide sufficient information for a non-expert in the field. Projects involving human subjects must address IRB protocols.

- A section on the relevance of anticipated outcome.
  This is not a prediction of what results you will achieve but a discussion of what the results will mean, one way or the other.

- Budget justification.
  Itemize the budget needs and, if not obvious, provide a justification for using award funds toward their purchase or travel.

II. TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN PREPARING A PROPOSAL

- Are you eligible to apply?
- Is your proposed project suitable to the mission of the funding program?
- Have you exceeded the maximum length?
- Are certain budget items not allowed?
- Have you completed all questions and put the information where it is requested on the form?
- Have you checked format requirements – font size, margins?
- Have you checked submission requirements, i.e., recommendation requirements.
- Does the project involve human subjects? Indicate status of IRB application or approval.
- Is permission needed for archives visit or document access? Indicate status of request.
- Does the methodology include administration of surveys? Attach copy or provide name of instrument.
- Have you stated what other funding has been or may be received?

III. STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS WHEN PREPARING A PROPOSAL

- How competitive is the program? Are there priority factors for making awards? For approving budget items?
- Read the evaluation criteria, if available.
- For student proposals, the recommendation from the faculty research advisor should address issues of human subjects, survey instruments, access to research facilities, etc.
- Always anticipate that the review committee has a mix of experts and non-experts. Write the proposal text accordingly.
- Indicate other funding received and any applications pending.
- Avoid fishing expeditions.