The New Rules of NSF for Graduate Students: Dissertation (DDRI) Grants and Research Fellowships (GRFP).

Thomas Janoski, Mary Boulton,

Christia Brown, Mark Peffley, Sara Compion

DOONESBURY, Gary Trudeau last Wednesday
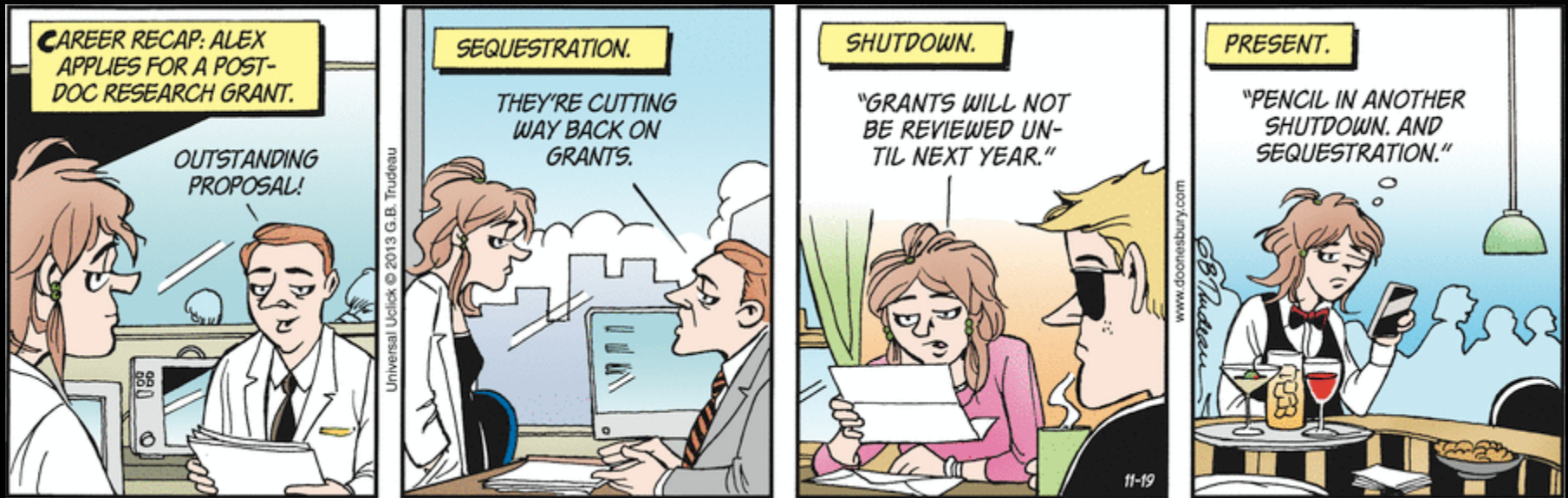
AGENDA

Introduction   Tom Janoski, QIPSR

11:40-11:55: Mary Boulton, A&S Grants Officer
          Applying for NSF Grants & Budgets

11:55-12:20: Tom Janoski, Sociology Department.
          NSF Grant Mechanics and the Viewpoints of Reviewers
          Sara Compion, Grad Student, Sociology NSF DDRIG Application

12:20-12:40: Christia Brown, Psychology Department.
          Experiences in Applying for NSF Psychology Grants

12:40-1:00:   Mark Peffley, Political Science Department *NSF Proposals in*
          Political Science

TYPES OF NSF GRADUATE STUDENT GRANTS

(1) Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grants
DDRIG: Up to $12,000 for research directly related to dissertation expenses (i.e., not stipend for support).
Deadline: January 15 for PS, February 15 for Soc

(2) Graduate Research Fellowship Program
GRFP: 3 Years of support with $32,000 per year and up to $12,000 to the institution (amount varies by discipline with more in the hard sciences).
Deadline: November 2014.

National Science Foundation
WHERE DISCOVERIES BEGIN

SSRC

(3) Dissertation Proposal Development Grant (DPDF) The This grant provides $5,000 to develop a dissertation proposal in the summer including attending a seminar on one of the four topics of the year designated by SSRC.
(4) International Dissertation Research Fellowship (IDRF) The IDRF provides about $20,000 for funding on a dissertation topic for one year. It relies heavily on language competency certified by language instructor at your institution.

SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE PROGRAMS

Social Science: archaeology, biological anthropology, cultural anthropology, communications, decision-making and risk analysis, economics, geography, history and philosophy of science, international relations, law and social science, linguistics, linguistic anthropology, medical anthropology, political science, public policy, science policy, sociology, urban and regional planning, other social sciences (but not social work).

Psychology: cognitive, cognitive neuroscience, computational psychology, developmental, experimental or comparative, industrial/organizational, neuropsychology, perception and psychophysics, personality and individual differences, physiological, psycholinguistics, quantitative, social psychology.

FASTLANE

The NSF's all purpose computer program for processing grants.

 1-Applications for faculty and graduate student grants
  a. Body of proposal needs to be finished &
  uploaded. Other forms can be *typed* in FASTLANE
  b. Budget self-calculates so it is rather convenient
  c. A&S Grant Officer actually pushes the
  button and they need at least a week lead time.
 2-Administration of grants and budgets, amendments of budgets.
 3-Reviewer panel evaluations of proposals.
 4-Final reports and other materials

WHAT THE REVIEW PROCESS LOOKS LIKE

1-Resident Program Officer -- lives in Washington for 10 years to life

2-Rotating Faculty Program Officer -- lives in Washington for 2 years and then goes back to their university.

3-Panel Reviewers -- travels to Washington to make decisions on grants. Usually serves for 3 years with a third of the panel rotating off each year.

PANEL ROOM FOR 3 DAYS WITH ABOUT 20 PANELISTS IN ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

Each panelist chooses 25-30 proposals with about 100-115 proposals being evaluated in the meeting. Recuse yourself from current and former university applications.

screen

P O

P O

Visiting
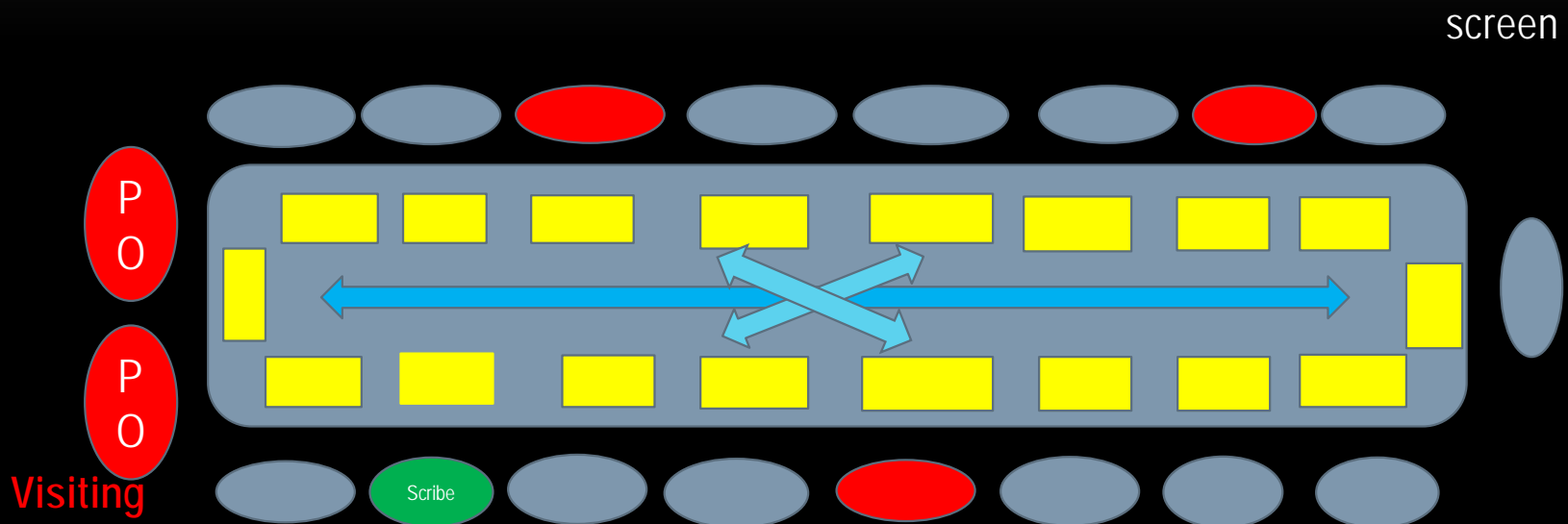
Scribe

A IBM Thinkpad in front of everyone connected to internal FASTLANE with instant communication between everyone. 3 Primaries on your proposal with 1 panelist as a Scribe.

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSALS:
POOR--FAIR--GOOD--VERY GOOD--EXCELLENT

A strongly fundable proposal is usually: VG—VG – EX
An "in the ball park" fundable proposal: VG – VG – VG
An "upwardly mobile" proposal: *   VG – EX – VG/Fair
A "downwardly mobile" proposal: *   VG – VG/Good – Fair
Unfundable proposals: VG – Good – Fair
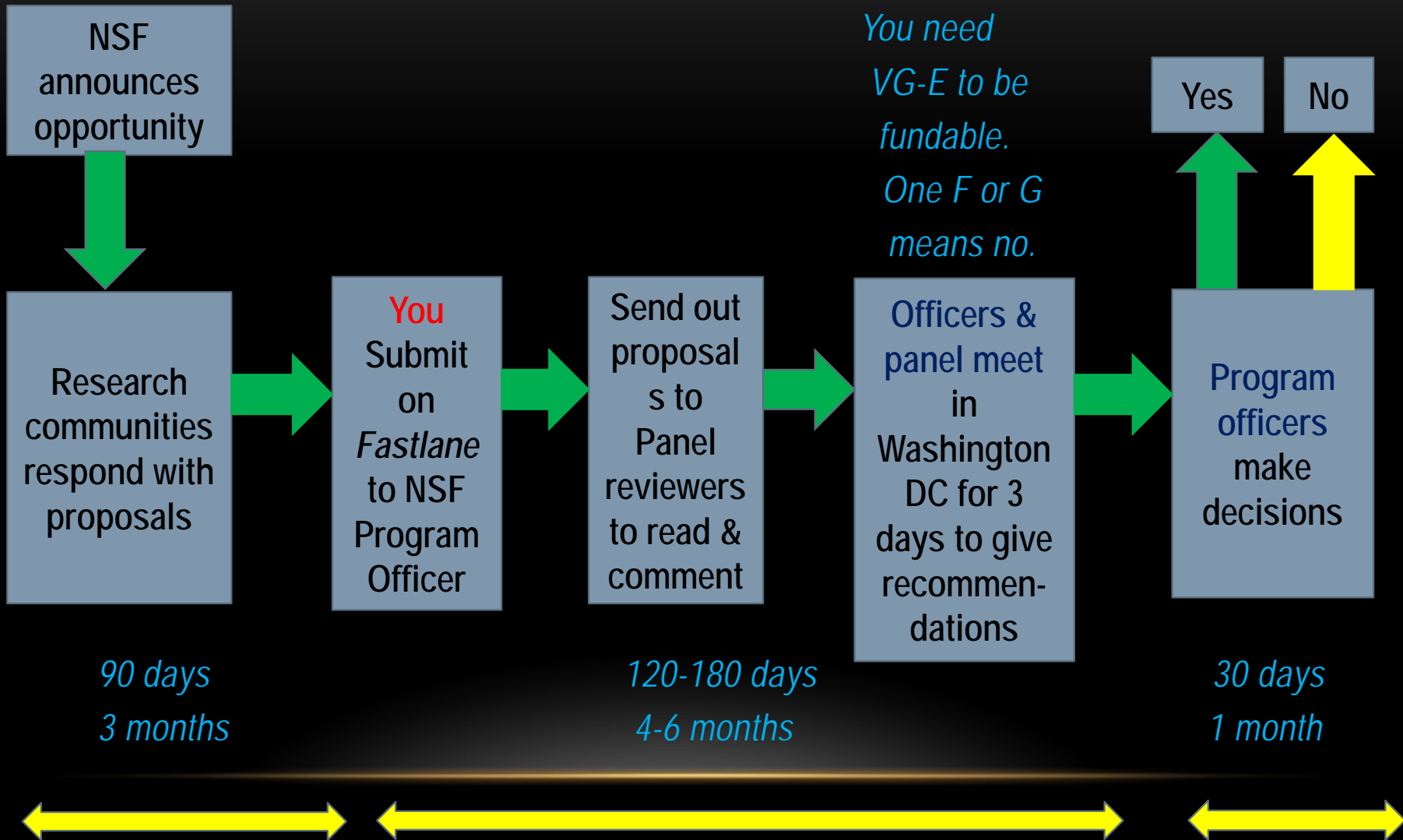   Good – Good – Fair
                                             Good – Fair – Fair

* Debate and convincing a reviewer to switch

THE PROPOSAL PROCESS

NSF announces opportunity

Research communities respond with proposals

You Submit on *Fastlane* to NSF Program Officer

Send out proposals to Panel reviewers to read & comment

Officers & panel meet in Washington DC for 3 days to give recommen-dations

You need VG-E to be fundable. One F or G means no.

Yes   No

Program officers make decisions

90 days
3 months

120-180 days
4-6 months

30 days
1 month

PHILIP GUO'S ADVICE FROM COMPUTER SCIENCE

LOGISTICS: Get organized. This is a multiyear campaign. Also, it is largely overlooked how much of this you should do in advance.

LETTERS OF REFERENCE: Provide faculty member at least one month in advance with your vita, the work you have done with him/her, notable achievements, and hopefully a sketch of the proposal.

A CONTEST: The grant game or contest is a competition largely based on your proposal. So your proposal needs:

1-Completeness: Somewhat obvious, but get it all taken care of early.

2-Clarity: This is tricky. You need multiple readings You absolutely cannot wait for the last minute to get a decent proposal to 3-5 reviewers (go back to #1, this is a campaign). Ultimately, you may be the worst judge of clarity (at least without help).

3-Coherence: Points need to be cross-referenced throughout the proposal. This can be overdone, but it helps to get a sense of the interconnections of everything you are dong.

http://www.pgbovine.net/fellowship-tips.htm

BROADER IMPACTS or IMPORTANCE

NSF specifically looks at 'broader impacts'. You cannot blow this off as "advancing your own little area". You have to go beyond your area and he suggests:

A-Integrating research & education
B-Encouraging diversity
C-Enhancing scientific & the technical understanding: Repetitive unless you indicate that it is leading to a whole new field of discoveries
D-Benefitting society.

A version of the "so-what question"

ON THE ART OF WRITING PROPOSALS
Adam Przewoski (political science) & Frank Solomon (anthropology)

Three Aspects of Merit:

      1-Conceptual innovation -- Theory

      2-Methodogical rigor

      3-Rich substantive content

But stylistically, you must capture the Reviewer's attention. Claude Fischer used to tell us to **"Grab the reader's attention by the lapels"** in the first two paragraphs to show that this project is interesting and worthwhile.

A PROPOSAL THAT GOT ATTENTION

A student studying Hispanic immigrant communities in rural North Carolina noticed: (1) there was a great deal of friction between immigrants and the native African Americans, and (2) there were some **African-Mexicans** among the Hispanics, which she found out were all from Veracruz. She came up with a two-part research design to examine interethnic relations in North Carolina, and a contextual investigation of the origins of the African Mexicans who were involved in this process.

The proposal was well constructed, but two things stood out:

1-The Afro-Mexicans were a new group that relatively unknown.
2-They could provide a **'bridge'** between the Hispanic and African-American communities thus reducing discrimination but also increasing the possibilities of social movement organization.

This proposal got **two 'Excellents'** and was funded. It's **"broader impacts"** were very clear for reducing discrimination, and had possibilities for developing new theory in this area.

FINAL TIPS TO PRODUCING A GOOD PROPOSAL

◆ Do conduct a campaign that starts at least 12 months before the due date;

◆ Do work with faculty mentors on established but growing ideas in the field that will advance the field

◆ Do pay strong attention to broader impacts

◆ Don't include gratuitous knowledge

◆ Don't let doing your research be a bar to re-applying. A lot of good proposals have already generated information that make them stronger.

◆ If you don't get a grant, re-apply. But don't just send the same proposal.