



From the North
American Primary Care
Research Group

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A REFLECTION ON THE GRANT GENERATING PROJECT

Shortly after becoming a scientist with the C.T. Lamont Primary Health Care Research Centre, I was encouraged by our senior research advisor to apply to the Grant Generating Program (GGP). In reviewing the application criteria and program benefits I found myself thinking that the program was just what I needed at the time. As a junior researcher, I had plenty of ideas worth exploring, but little experience shaping these ideas into viable questions, and little money to carry out investigations. GGP offered the promise of enhancing my research skills, building a research team, and crafting a competitive grant application; through workshops, mentoring, and peer review. My journey through GGP has taught me some valuable lessons and given me the confidence to be a successful researcher and academic. I am now in the position, as GGP faculty, to be able to share the valuable skills and lessons I learned as a fellow with those who are beginning their own research careers.

GGP is a year-long grantsmanship training experience open to family medicine researchers and clinician researchers in the United States and Canada. In my fellowship year, I was one of ten fellows with research interests ranging from medical education to health services. The first task was to develop a concept paper. For those not familiar, a concept paper is a generic description of an intended research project. It contains an identified knowledge gap in the literature, research aims and objectives, project design, research team qualifications, timetable, and budget, etc. Once finalized, the concept paper can be used to develop a specific grant application.

The first few months of GGP is all about developing and refining your concept paper and writing my grant proposal. I attended workshops on formulating research questions, developing a concept paper, writing a research summary and proposal, and a seminar given by a librarian on managing the literature. This was all accompanied by resources which included checklists and descriptions of funding opportunities. However, for me, the most valuable part of these formative few months was the mentoring and feedback I received by the GGP faculty, my home institution mentor, and my peers. I quickly discovered what made perfect sense to me was not necessarily clear to others. The GGP faculty in particular were able to guide me in shaping my writing so

that grant reviewers would be able to clearly understand my rationale, research design, and analysis plan.

By the time I had crafted a solid concept paper and had an idea of where I wanted to apply for funding, GGP held its second workshop and writing session as part of the North American Primary Care Research Group (NAPCRG) preconference. All fellows were encouraged to attend the NAPCRG annual conference and to connect with other researchers. I attended that year and presented a poster—so glad I did because it was there that I connected with a senior researcher and eventually together, along with a few others, published a paper related to the topic of my poster. Collaboration has continued, and since that time, we have partnered on a national level project. The networking opportunities presented through GGP are invaluable and not to be missed.

At about the 6-month mark, GGP held its final workshop and writing session. By this time, I had drafted a grant proposal and was ready to write the budget for the project. At this session, we heard a seminar by a grant administrator on tips and tricks for creating your grant budget. I was now ready to submit my application to the final stage of the GGP process.

The mock study section is the culmination of the final GGP process. Your proposal is reviewed by a number of volunteer study section reviewers. Fellows sit in on the study section presentation and discussion during the final GGP session which is held as part of the Society for Teachers in Family Medicine (STFM) preconference. Essentially, fellows get to be a “fly on the wall” and see how their grant proposals are being viewed by reviewers. The feedback from this session is then used to improve your proposal for the real funding application.

And now I participate in GGP on the other side of the table and assist fellows in crafting their art. It gives me great satisfaction to build on my own learning and by sharing with others the same knowledge, skills, and advice I had received when I went through the program. It is a pleasure and honor to be part of GGP.

The GGP is now accepting applications for 2017-2018 fellows. If you would like to learn more about the program or to apply visit the NAPCRG website. Have some questions? Please contact Hannah Bruins, GGP Program Coordinator at hbruins@napcrg.org or Daniel Longo, GGP Program Director at daniel.longo@vcuhealth.org or (804) 828-9652.

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Douglas Archibald, PhD
GGP Class of 2012-2013