Looking for funding sources? ORS can help

Every year, hundreds of millions of dollars are awarded for research, service, training, and other worthy causes from governments, foundations, corporations, and other organizations. Despite the amount of available money, grant seekers do not always utilize the full range of resources available for identifying funding sources and therefore may be missing out on opportunities for financial support of their research.

- Identify contact information for a granting agency or private foundation;
- Find out grant deadlines and application procedures; and
- Download application forms.

Eva is also available to demonstrate where to find, and how to use, the grants databases available from the ORS web site located at www.sfu.ca/ors/. These databases, which can be accessed by any SFU computing services account-holder, include:

**Community of Science Funding Opportunities Database**
This database is a grants information resource for Canadian researchers. It is currently provided free of charge by the U.S.-based organization, Community of Science (COS). The database contains information about funding from Canadian sponsors, and also from non-Canadian sponsors for which Canadian researchers are eligible.

**SPIN Database of Granting Agencies**
SPIN is an international database of up-to-date national and international government and private funding sources. It is used by over 700 institutions worldwide.

**University of British Columbia ORS Program Query**
The UBC ORS Program Query V1.0 provides access to a large database of mostly Canadian (and some U.S.) research granting agencies and foundations.

“On a one-to-one basis or in a group training seminar, Eva can provide helpful and time saving tips on searching these databases,” notes Ellen Loosley, ORS Director. “Any SFU faculty member can contact Eva to discuss funding needs—anything from support for completion of a publication to a multi-university research network.”

Eva Veres can be reached at: telephone: 291-5373 or by email to evaveres@sfu.ca.

Coming soon!
On-line SFU research grants applications

The Office of Research Services (ORS) is currently setting up PRG, SSHRC Small, and other SFU research grant application forms on the web. The objective is to allow faculty members to file their internal grant applications directly without sending multiple paper copies. Web-based forms will automatically total budget items, cross-reference each section on screen to related regulations, and allow for cutting and pasting from other documents. Applicants can then print the final version and simply press the “send” key to electronically submit their application. The applicant, ORS, or an evaluator can print a copy or review it on screen if they wish.

see “on-line applications” on p. 3
CFI provides infrastructure grants to SFU

The Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) is an independent, not-for-profit corporation established in May 1997 with what has now become a one billion dollar endowment to fund research infrastructure in the fields of health, environment, science, and engineering. CFI supports 40% of the total cost of selected infrastructure projects. The remaining infrastructure costs must be supported by funding partners in the public or private sector. So far, CFI has provided $57.6 million in funding for research infrastructure across Canada. Another $385 million could be awarded this summer to projects which were submitted originally in May of 1998.

Q: What is meant by “infrastructure”?  
A: Infrastructure costs refer to purchase of equipment and cost of renovation and installation. CFI does not support ongoing operating costs, but asks applicants to provide evidence that support for operations will be obtained from other sources.

Q: What are the categories of support offered by CFI under which SFU may apply?  
A: CFI supports the infrastructure needs of faculty who are in their first position in a Canadian university under the “New Opportunities” category and also supports other faculty-led projects under the “Institutional Innovation Fund.” SFU will continue to participate in these two CFI programs over the coming four years and will also join other universities this Spring in a consortium-led proposal by Canadian research libraries for electronic delivery of scholarly periodicals.

Q: How well did SFU do in the first round of the CFI competition?  
A: SFU received a commitment of approximately $1.6 million dollars from CFI, which represents 40% of project costs totaling approximately $4.1 million.

Q: How does SFU’s success rate compare to those of other institutions?  
A: An analysis of the competition results shows how very well SFU performed. Out of 5 New Opportunity applications, SFU received 5 awards. Under the Institutional Innovation Fund (under $350,000), the CFI approved the investment of $7.8 million for 67 infrastructure projects at 26 institutions. The national success rate in the under $350,000 category was 54%. Simon Fraser University submitted 9 proposals in this category, of which 6 were funded, for a success rate of 67%. Under the Institutional Innovation Fund (over $350,000) and Regional/National Facilities categories, CFI received 296 proposals; 5 proposals were submitted from SFU. The Board approved 16 projects nationwide totaling $8.1 million for immediate funding including 2 proposals from SFU. The CFI committees concluded that they had sufficient information on these highly rated projects to recommend that they be approved at this time. The Board also approved another 159 projects to proceed to the next stage of the review process. This includes one proposal from SFU.

Q: Where will the necessary matching funding for the first round of grants come from and how important is it that these sources continue to be accessed in the next round of CFI grants?  
A: If a project is to proceed, funding from all matching sources must be in place. The required matching funding for these CFI grants will come from a variety of sources including faculty start-up grants, SFU/CFI Matching Funds, industry and the BC Knowledge Development Fund. The Government of British Columbia’s Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology created the $100 million British Columbia Knowledge and Development Fund (BCKDF) in part to meet the matching funds requirement of the CFI. BCKDF is focused on creating and enhancing research infrastructure within the Province by contributing to building or improving an institution’s long-term capacity for leading edge research, provincial economic development and job creation.

SFU applied to the BCKDF for six CFI projects where there existed a possibility of the Province becoming a funding partner. An announcement of BCKDF awards is expected in the near future. “The SFU projects forward for matching funds clearly meet the criteria established by the BCKDF and, based on that, we anticipate they will be approved,” notes Dr. Bruce Clayman, Vice-President, Research.

We will continue to apply to BCKDF in the coming round of CFI proposals in each case where a proposed project can demonstrate capacity for economic

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Technology transfer on-line

Visit the new University/Industry Liaison Office web page at www.sfu.ca/ulio/ for electronic technology transfer resources. Choose the “SFU Researchers” option and you’ll find invention disclosure and Prototype Development Fund application forms, a guide to creating a spin-off company, links to University intellectual property policies, sources of applied research funding and venture capital, and much more.

“on-line applications” from p. 1

“We expect to offer an electronic application alternative for some internal grants by the Fall of 1999,” reports ORS Director Ellen Loosley. “We are looking forward to the efficiencies that will be realized both by grant applicants and by ORS staff.”

What are electronic forms?

Any form is a document containing blank fields that users can fill in with data. If such a form is supplied to grant applicants as a word-processing document, the grant applicant can complete responses to each item in the application by typing text into the document. The completed form could then be sent electronically as an e-mail attachment although normally the applicant prints and sends in multiple paper copies. Currently MS Word versions of internal SFU grant application forms and selected external agency forms are available on the Office of Research Services web site, www.sfu.ca/oris/.

Using MS Word (or any other word processing program) to complete an application form has its limitations. Although the applicant can revise and print the document, it is possible to make so many revisions to the form itself that the final version is so personalized to the applicant’s requirements that it looks nothing like what another applicant might submit. Some questions may be overlooked or the budget may be incorrectly added, thereby creating difficulties for the reviewers of the application. This method also requires that someone transfer the core data from the application (such as name, project title and amount requested) from paper to a database for record keeping and award notification purposes—an unnecessary duplication of effort.

Electronic forms completed directly on the web solve many of these problems. The form appears on the user’s computer screen and the user fills it in by selecting options or providing text. The data entered into such a form is typically processed by a Common Gateway Interface (CGI) program which enters the information directly into a database at the recipient’s end once the applicant has pressed the “send” button.

Electronic application forms are being used by granting agencies such as the Canada Council and the Canada Foundation for Innovation. NSERC, SSHRC and MRC are currently working on the development of a web version of their grant application forms. These web-based forms should be available to grant seekers in the near future. At that point, transmission of multiple copies to the granting councils will be replaced by the filing of electronic applications.

from previous page
development and job creation with a healthy dose of industry collaboration. “The support and partnership of the Province will lead to new knowledge and discoveries that will enhance B.C.’s economic potential and reputation as a centre of advanced research. The combination of CFI funding and BCKDF support promises to significantly strengthen the capacity of our researchers to conduct world-class research,” notes Dr. Clayman.

What happens next?

A: Under the New Opportunities Fund, CFI has set aside $1 million for eligible SFU projects which have a total cost of $2.5 million. Each project may request between $50,000 and $200,000 from CFI. This category is intended to help launch the research careers of new faculty members. However, because CFI funds only 40% of the total project costs, SFU must identify at least $1.5 million in matching funding from a combination of external and internal sources in order to submit requests to CFI for $1 million. Discussions are taking place amongst the Deans and Vice Presidents to identify prospective applications under this category. While there is no deadline for applications under the New Opportunities category, applications may not be submitted more than twelve months after a position has been filled.

We expect CFI to announce a late Fall deadline for the next round of applications to the Institutional Innovation Fund. These awards are intended to “help strengthen the capability for world-class research and technology development, enabling researchers to have access to the advanced equipment and facilities needed to undertake leading edge research.” In the second round of competition, projects will have a minimum total cost of $350,000.

“The strategic planning process is now underway,” says Dr. Clayman. “I encourage anyone who is considering developing an application to contact Ellen Loosley, the Director of the Office of Research Services. In addition to coordinating consideration of possible applications, she can arrange for assistance in the preparation of applications.”

Ellen Loosley can be contacted at: telephone: 291-3842 or by e-mail to: loosley@sfu.ca.
Indemnities under exclusive license agreements

by David Foord

One of the most difficult topics in exclusive license agreement negotiations between universities and companies is the terms of the indemnity clause. An indemnity is an undertaking given by one party to hold harmless another party from losses suffered, and it is not unusual in university–industry exclusive license agreement negotiations for the University and the prospective licensee to both start from the position that the other party should indemnify in case of losses arising from the use by the licensee of the transferred intellectual property (IP). In most cases the University and the prospective licensee are able to reach agreement on the terms of the indemnity clause. However, in some license negotiations conflicting viewpoints concerning indemnity may be a “deal breaker,” especially with respect to IP infringement claims.

In the course of negotiations there are certain questions which commonly arise:

What kinds of losses might arise under a university–industry exclusive license agreement?

Losses may arise from any number of scenarios; the most likely are product liability claims (e.g., that a hearing aid product, based on software transferred from the University, caused full hearing loss) and infringement claims (e.g., that the software used in the hearing aid infringes certain copyright owned by a large medical device company). Given the nature of these kinds of losses, the amounts at issue may be quite large, possibly running to the millions of dollars.

The losses may be incurred solely by the licensee or shared between the parties to the license agreement. While manufacturers and distributors of products are routinely held liable for injury arising from their products, there is an increasing trend to hold the licensor of technology liable as well.

It is not unusual in exclusive license agreements between two commercial entities for the licensor to indemnify the licensee in the event that the licensed IP infringes any IP rights of other parties. Why is the University unwilling to offer this indemnity? Shouldn’t the University offer the same types of indemnities as a company?

The short answer is that the University is not set up to accept the same kinds of risks that a company might accept, especially given that the costs arising from an indemnity can run into the millions of dollars. In essence, the University lacks the resources (including money) to make good on the losses suffered by a licensee. The University’s insurance policy, for instance, specifically excludes coverage for claims based on the infringement of patent, copyright or trademark violation of intellectual property rights. And the University is unable to raise money in ways that companies can, e.g., a share offering, bank loans, etc.

Why does the University ask the licensee to indemnify it against certain losses?

For some losses it is customary in all contexts for the licensee to indemnify the licensor. For instance, it is reasonable in most cases for the licensee to indemnify the licensor for product liability claims.

For other losses, such as those arising from IP infringement claims, the University asks for an indemnity from the licensee. The rationale is that this risk should be allocated before the University IP is licensed, and given the inability of the University to make good in covering these losses, the University should ask the prospective licensee to assume the risk. For many commercial entities, especially small and medium sized enterprises, this will probably mean that insurance coverage must be obtained to back-up their indemnity.

For more information on these or other licensing issues, contact David Foord, telephone: 291-5717 or by e-mail to: foord@sfu.ca.

researchLinks

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fundingLinks

Keeping informed of grant application deadlines

ORS periodically publicizes granting program deadlines and other useful information via three specific, public e-mail lists. These e-mail lists are called nserc-list, sshrc-list and mrc-list. The list names are indicative of the research area of grants publicized to those signed up on that particular list. For example, the e-mail list called “sshrc-list” informs those who work in the area of social sciences and humanities. The list called “nserc-list” targets those who work in the natural sciences or engineering. The list called “mrc-list” informs its members about health related research grant opportunities.

The Office of Research Services encourages all faculty members who are interested in upcoming application deadlines to subscribe to one or more of these e-mail lists by going to the web site: http://cgi.sfu.ca/~account/management.cgi and selecting “Manage your Mailing Lists” from the menu.