



Issue 133, October 2009

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## Grant Highlight

### ***A Science Education Center for the Third Age***

**USM Applicant:** Kali Lightfoot, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

**Funder:** National Science Foundation

**Project Period:** September 2009 - August 2010

With a potential national network of collaborating science centers, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute National Resource Center (NRC) will develop a nationwide Science Education Center for the Third Age (SECTA) that will assess, assist, develop, evaluate and help promote science education tailored to the distinctive approach to learning that characterizes the older adult. This collective endeavor was essentially launched in June 2006 at a "Working Conference" convened by Russell Morgan, Director of the SPRY Foundation, entitled *The Longevity Revolution: How Science Centers Engage an Older America*. The project emerged from conference attendees as a way to address low utilization of science centers by older adults, and encourage STEM education for this underserved population.

This effort is led by the NRC, based at the University of Southern Maine, which coordinates the national network of 122 Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes (OLLIs). OLLIs provide informal education for approximately 80,000 adults over the age of 50, through multi-session courses and other learning

activities that are non-credit and designed to promote learning for the joy of learning in community. At the core of the planning partnership are three OLLI directors representing the Southeast, Midwest, Far West; the Director of Extended Learning at the Exploratorium in San Francisco; and the director of the NRC housed in New England. Science centers and OLLIs in other locations will be important collaborators.

In a contemporary society where science literacy is essential, an increasing portion of older adults are disengaged because they lack technological enlightenment. Mature adults have a different learning process and different motivations for learning. The SECTA will seek to articulate these differences, apply them to the construction of learning environments, and create curricula and programs. Models will be culled from a critical study of adult education research findings and documented best practices. The planning grant will support intentional and strategic development of SECTA so that creative, achievable, and sustainable objectives and activities can be proposed.

# University of Southern Maine

## Extramural Awards

The Office of Sponsored Programs reports the following extramural awards to the University of Southern Maine totalling over \$7.6M in sponsor funding.

The NEW AWARDS are as Follows (Listed by Principal Investigator, Co-Investigator(s), School or College, Title, Funder):

Colgan, C., Muskie School of Public Service & Andrews, B., School of Business, *Maine Turnpike Authority-Gorham East-West Corridor Feasibility Study*, HNTB Corporation

Dorsey, C., Muskie School of Public Service, *Maine Juvenile Justice Task Force*, Maine Department of Corrections

Hartley, D. & Ziller, E., Muskie School of Public Service, *Maine Rural Health Research Center*, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, HRSA

Jacobus, M., Lewiston-Auburn College, *USM LACares for YOUth*, Maine Department of Corrections

Jacobus, M., Lewiston-Auburn College, *LAC General Education Engaged Department Initiative*, Maine Campus Compact

Kaley, L., Muskie School of Public Service, *Team Nutrition*, Maine Department of Education

Kelley, M., College of Education & Human Development, *Occupational Therapy to Grow, Play and Learn*, Occupational Therapy to Grow, Play, and Learn

Lahti, M. & Dean, A., Muskie School of Public Service, *Child Care Research and Data Capacity*, Maine Department of Health & Human Services

Langley-Turnbaugh, S., School of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology, *SCITEC Network*, Maine Mathematics & Science Alliance (R&D)

Lightfoot, K., Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, *A Science Education Center for the Third Age*, National Science Foundation

Olsen, L., Muskie School of Public Service, *LA Automated Audit Tool*, Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals

Rubin, M. & Dorsey, C., Muskie School of Public Service, *Probation Violations and Revocations Research & Technical Assistance*, Justice Research & Statistics Association

Rubin, M., Muskie School of Public Service, *Technical Assistance for Improved Probation Decision Making*, Maine Department of Corrections

Zanghi, M., Muskie School of Public Service, *Transition Planning*, University of Oklahoma

CONTINUATION or SUPPLEMENTAL AWARDS Include:

Curry, C., Muskie School of Public Service, *Communities for Children and Youth AmeriCorps VISTA Projects 2009*, Maine State Planning Office

Davis, L., College of Education & Human Development, *Upward Bound-Sanford/Biddeford*, U.S. Department of Education

**Dean, A., Muskie School of Public Service,** *Early Care and Education Career Development Center 2009*, Maine Department of Health & Human Services

**Delisle, M., School of Business,** *Maine Enterprise Option FY 2010*, Maine Department of Labor

**Delisle, M., School of Business,** *Maine SBDC 2010*, Maine Department of Economic & Community Development

**Delisle, M., School of Business,** *Maine Small Business Development Center 2009*, U.S. Small Business Administration

**Dorsey, C., Muskie School of Public Service,** *Victims of Crime Assistance Training Initiatives 2009-2010*, Maine Department of Health & Human Services

**Dorsey, C., Muskie School of Public Service,** *Maine DOC-Juvenile Services Cooperative Agreement 09-10*, Maine Department of Corrections

**Ebersten, S., Muskie School of Public Service,** *Distance Education Initiatives 09/10*, Maine Department of Health & Human Services

**Edris, M., Muskie School of Public Service,** *Disability Service System Initiatives 2009-2010*, Maine Department of Health & Human Services

**Lichter, E., Meyer, K. & Thompson, D., School of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology,** *Chronic Disease and MCH Epidemiology Capacity Building 09/10*, Maine Department of Health & Human Services (R&D)

**Silvernail, D., College of Education & Human Development,** *Essential Programs and Services 2009/10*, Maine Legislative Council

**Silvernail, D., College of Education & Human Development,** *Maine Learning Technology Initiative 09/10*, Maine Department of Education

**Silvernail, D., College of Education & Human Development,** *Maine Education Policy and Research Institute 2009/10*, Maine Legislative Council

**Spross, J., College of Nursing & Health Professions,** *Building Infectious Disease Surveillance Capacity 2009/2010*, Maine Department of Health & Human Services

**Ward, S., Muskie School of Public Service,** *Adult Mental Health Workforce Initiatives 09/10*, Maine Department of Health & Human Services

**Zanghi, M., & Burns, P., Muskie School of Public Service,** *Maine Youth Development Initiative 09/10*, Maine Department of Health & Human Services

The **Institutional Review Board (IRB)** would like to remind all investigators/instructors that all research involving human subject participants, if it gathers data via intervention or interaction with human beings, or from identifiable private records, requires prior approval. Privacy and security issues of persons involved in research are also reviewed by the IRB. All applications from students or faculty/staff should be submitted to:

**Office of Research Compliance  
178 Science Building  
Portland Campus**

Application information can be found at:  
<http://www.usm.maine.edu/orc/irb/>

# Top 10 Tips on How to Get Funding

by **Julia Lane, NSF Program Director**

Dr. Lane has received numerous grants from NSF, Sloan, Sage, Rockefeller, World Bank as well as many national and international agencies. This article represents Dr. Lane's views not necessarily those of the NSF.

**1. Make a cost/benefit decision.** Decide whether you want to go after external funding. As Dan Hamermesh once told me, there are two units of academic currency: articles and grants. The opportunity cost of writing a competitive grant proposal is high, and you may be better suited to writing articles.

**2. Make yourself valuable.** Develop a set of demonstrable core competencies through your publications. Your cv is your portfolio of skill sets, and you will be judged on your ability to deliver. Don't submit a proposal before you have a few publications under your belt in the relevant area.

**3. Get to know the funding sources.** Different funding sources have different missions and different criteria. Your sponsored research office (SRO) should be able to help you get this information, and you should also peruse the foundation websites. NSF, for example, funds basic research, so intellectual merit and broader impact, are the key criteria. Foundations have specific goals in terms of advancing a particular agenda. Government agencies have specific missions. Don't forget about doing consulting work, particularly if you can turn the information gleaned from the work into an insightful publication. Identify

the funding source which has the greatest overlap with your research interest and invest heavily in getting to know more about their interests.

**4. Get to know the key people.** If you are going after grants, get in touch with the cognizant program officer. It is their job to know about their foundation, and they will often know about upcoming opportunities at both their foundation and others. But don't waste their time. A courteous email which provides a concise outline of your research idea, and connects it to their mission is a much better introduction than a phone call out of the blue.

**5. Get to know the community by presenting at their conferences.** This helps in several ways. First, a good presentation helps establish you as competent and explains your research agenda beyond your proposal. Second, the networking with others who have been successful at getting grants helps you get a better sense of the funding source's portfolio, and the style of research they support. Third, members of the community will typically be asked to review any grant proposal you submit.

**6. Submit your first few grants with senior colleagues who have been successful in getting grants.** Grant writing is a skill that is not typically taught in graduate schools, and on the job training is the best way to learn how to acquire that skill.

**7. Write well and have a focus.** In your opening paragraph, state your focus. Every sentence that you write in the grant should develop your key idea. Write clear prose that assumes the reader is an expert, but not necessarily deeply embedded in your project. You should have a clear and logical beginning, a middle, and an end to your proposal. Write multiple drafts and eliminate verbosity, jargon and extraneous sentences. Cite other research that relates to your idea, but make it clear how your work fills an important gap in that research.



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