Graduate Research Funding:
Funding Searches and
Strategic Proposal Writing

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OFFICE OF RESEARCH

Developing Your Research Plan

- Know prospective research in your field
- Start writing/discussing as soon as possible (float these ideas); don't let proposal be the first time you address

Forms of funding

- Fellowships
  - Submitted by individual (you)
  - Funded to individual
  - One-size fits all payment to be used at your discretion (no itemized budget)
  - You manage your funds
- Examples:
  - NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP)
  - Ford Foundation Diversity Fellowships

Forms of funding

- **Research Grants**
  - Submitted by institution (submitted via ORU/Office of Research)
  - Your advisor serves as PI in some cases
  - Funded to institution
  - Often requires detailed budget
  - ORU grants manager manages and monitors funds
  - Reporting required
  - Unexpended funds returned to funder
- **Examples:**
  - NSF Dissertation Improvement grant (DDIG)
  - UC Multi-Campus Research Programs (Pac Rim, UC Mexus, etc.)
  - Wenner-Gren
  - NIH
  - Spencer
  - SSRC

Finding Funding Sources

Steps in fund source seeking

- Find out who funds the work you admire
- Do electronic database and internet searches
  - Electronic searching (IRIS, COS, GRAPES, Grants.gov, etc – refer to handout
  - Electronic distribution lists/Alert service (COS, grants.gov, NSF, Grad Div.)
- Narrow the list, determine feasible targets
- Research each funder thoroughly

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- Need to be searching from UCSB computer to access subscription
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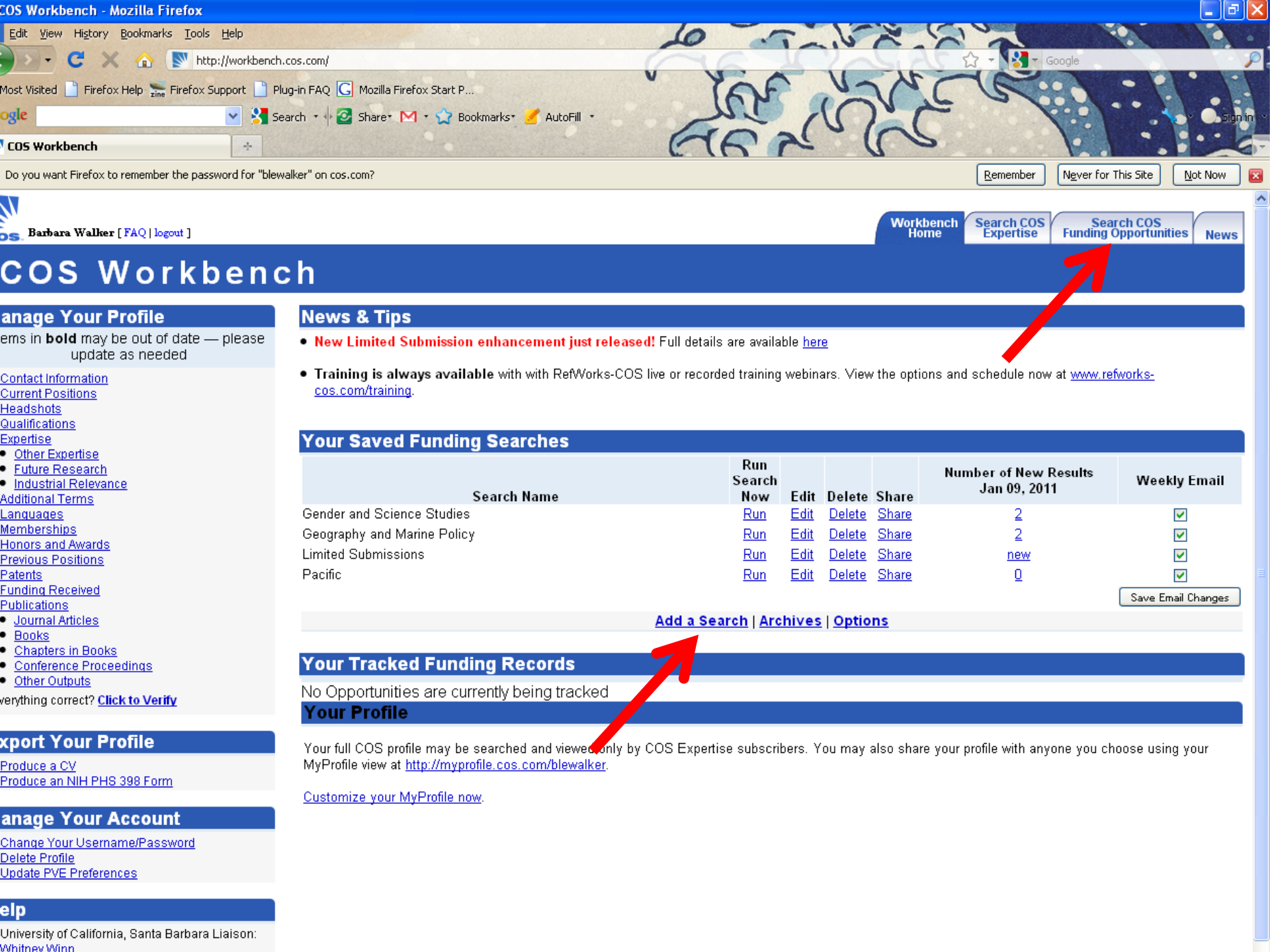
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University of California, Santa Barbara Liaison:
Whitney Winn

News & Tips

• **New Limited Submission enhancement just released!** Full details are available here

• **Training is always available** with with RefWorks-COS live or recorded training webinars. View the options and schedule now at www.refworks-cos.com/training.

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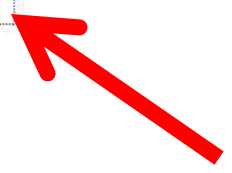
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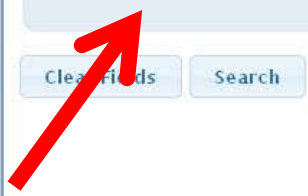
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	R	▼Grant Title	▼Sponsor	▼Deadline	▼Amount
1.	**** ☐	Predoctoral Fellowships	Smithsonian Institution (SI) Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI)	Jan 15, 2012	$30,000
2.	**** ☐	Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grants in the Directorate for Biological Sciences (DDIG) - NSF 08-564	National Science Foundation (NSF) Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO)	Nov 18, 2011	$15,000
3.	**** ☐	Doctoral Fellowships	Schering Foundation, Ernst / Ernst Schering Stiftung	Apr 30, 2011	see record
4.	**** ☐	Lewis and Clark Fund for Exploration and Field Research in Astrobiology	American Philosophical Society (APS)	Feb 01, 2011	$5,000
5.	**** ☐	Research Fellowships - JRF Competition	University of Cambridge St. Catharines College	Nov 05, 2011	see record
6.	**** ☐	WMRS Graduate Student Research Awards	University of California White Mountain Research Station (WMRS)	Feb 01, 2011	$2,000
7.	**** ☐	Magdalene College Research Fellowships - Nevile Fellowship and Lumley Fellowship	University of Cambridge Magdalene College	Nov 22, 2011	see record
8.	*** ☐	Kenyon College Dissertation Fellowship	Kenyon College	Dec 15, 2011	$32,500
9.	*** ☐	TOP Grants - Free Competition of the NWO Division for the Earth and Life Sciences (ALW)	Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) / Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappeli	unspecified	see record
10.	*** ☐	Furniss Foundation/American Orchid Society Fellowship	American Orchid Society (AOS)	unspecified	$27,000
11.	*** ☐	AOS/Normans Orchids Masters Scholarship	American Orchid Society (AOS)	Feb 28, 2011	$10,000
12.	*** ☐	UNCF/Merck Graduate Science Research Dissertation Fellowships	United Negro College Fund (UNCF) UNCF/Merck Science Initiative (UMSI)	Dec 01, 2011	$53,500
13.	*** ☐	Graduate Student Research Grant	Mazamas	Feb 04, 2011	$1,500
14.	*** ☐	Internships	Smithsonian Institution (SI) Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI)	Mar 15, 2011	see record
15.	*** ☐	Laboratory-Graduate Research Appointments	United States Department of Energy (DOE) Argonne National Laboratory (ANL)	continuous	see record
16.	*** ☐	John Hope Franklin Dissertation Fellowship	American Philosophical Society (APS)	Apr 01, 2011	$30,000
17.	*** ☐	Hewlett Foundation/IIE Dissertation Fellowship	Institute of International Education (IIE)	Mar 04, 2011	$40,000

Top Sponsor Types

Academic Institution: 11
Other Nonprofit: 8
Federal, U.S.: 5
Professional Society or Association: 5
Private Foundation: 4

Top Funding Types

Dissertation or Thesis: 34
Research: 18
Training or Scholarship or Fellowship: 10
Visiting Personnel: 3
Equipment or Materials Acquisition or Facility Use: 2

Top Requirements

Graduate Student: 31
PhD or MD or Other Professional: 9
Undergraduate Student: 4
Minority: 3
Academic Institution: 2

Top Keywords

Biological Sciences: 8
Environmental Sciences: 7
Ecology: 6
Earth Sciences: 6
Engineering: 5

Research Each Funder

- Goals:
  - Learn the funder's perspective / preferences / biases
  - Learn about the review process
  - Who are the reviewers, board, advisory committee?
  - See what has been funded (Past grantees and abstracts)
  - Sample Proposals
  - Determine if your project "fits"

Contacting a Program Officer

- Goals:
  - Submit concept paper for review and feedback ("one pager")
  - As for Sample Funded Proposal
  - Discuss reviewers comments on a rejected proposal

- Do not ask questions that you could have figured out by studying the agency's website!

Strategic Proposal Writing

Timeline for preparing and submitting

- 3-6 mos. to prepare proposal
  - Circulate draft to advisors and specialist colleagues
  - Discuss proposal idea with program officer if possible
  - Write and re-write, put it away for awhile, and then come back to it again.

Human Subjects review

- Your duty as PI to obtain approval
- No funds will be released until all approvals in place
- Completion of online IRB training required
- Kathy Graham, Office of Research (graham@research, x3807) is the staff support to the Human Subjects Committee

- **Your research will be invalidated** if you conduct any field work without having approval in place!

Most Common Errors

- **Most Common Errors (less about writing and more about preparation!)**
  - Inadequate time planning
  - Failure to follow directions
  - Bad fit between project and funder

Helpful Tips

- Read directions and follow them obsessively
- Plan and stick to timeline
- Write with reviewer and evaluation criteria in mind
- Good match between your idea and agency's mission
- Understand the review process
- Clarity essential - both ideas and writing
- Certain amount of redundancy is good
- Guideposts along the way (e.g. headers, transition and summary sentences, numbering)
- White space, legible

Dealing with rejection

- It's inevitable – rejection more common than success even for the most funded researchers!
- Accept it as part of the process
- Ask for reviewer comments whenever possible from agency (whether awarded or rejected)
- Value the reviewers' comments and use them to make the project/research stronger
- Take responsibility for comments – don't write off reviewer as biased, stupid, etc.
- If resubmitting, speak to Program Officer in regard to responding to comments
- Get advice from colleagues – ask them to read review comments (don't go hide somewhere!)
- Practice is essential (exponential success curve)
- Revise and resubmit as appropriate

Good luck!