

WHAT WORKS - A PKAL ESSAY

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE: SECURING, ALLOCATING, AND REALLOCATING RESOURCES

Your department's mission and goals are based on the needs for both majors and non-majors. Undoubtedly, the needs of the department arise because of gaps in fulfilling the department's goals. As a department chair, one of your main responsibilities is managing your department's resources. Those resources consist of staff (faculty, laboratory technicians or laboratory administrators, and administrative assistants), instrumentation (scientific instrumentation, computers, and computer software), facilities (research laboratories, teaching laboratories, faculty offices, and classrooms), and the department budget (capital and operating budgets).

Knowing people and processes

The following is a list of university support and processes of which you should familiarize yourself. You should know:

- ♦ your grants office
- ♦ the process for requesting operating and capital budget items
- ♦ the process for requesting new staff (both faculty as well as support staff)
- ♦ the process for renovating space or requesting additional space
- ♦ the process for obtaining matching funds in support of grant purchases
- ♦ the location of regional consortia (for equipment, research groups, etc)
- ♦ the process for approaching donors (alumni, foundations, and corporations)
- ♦ your colleagues in other departments and their needs since several departments may mutually benefit from obtaining resources
- ♦ the process for requesting computer technology or obtaining gently used computers
- ♦ the process for curricular changes, particularly when expanding your department's curriculum.

Beth A. Cunningham
Associate Dean of Faculty
Bucknell University
PKAL Faculty for the 21st Century
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Arnold Ostebee
Associate Provost
St. Olaf College

KEY ISSUES IN GETTING SUPPORT

- ♦ Seek the advice of people on campus familiar with funding agencies.
- ♦ Balance your budget and time with teaching and research.
- ♦ Consider all other expenses that are necessary for carrying out your idea.
- ♦ Be familiar with the funding agencies' guidelines, qualifications, and RFPs.
- ♦ Work with the dean and faculty in finding ways for the department and institution to benefit from your grant.

- Excerpted from Peter Facione's "Getting support and budget for your great idea, part III", *PKAL Volume IV: What works, what matters, what lasts*, November 15, 2004.

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Questions about resources

Before seeking additional resources, you should ask yourself and your department the following questions:

- ♦ does the request have multiple functions such as supporting both lower-level and upper-level courses?
- ♦ do other departments have interest in your request?
- ♦ does your request reach many students?
- ♦ does your request affect most of your departmental colleagues?
- ♦ does your request support your current situation?
- ♦ how does your request fit into your current budget?
- ♦ can you give up some of your budget to at least partially support your request without damaging your department or the curriculum?

Tips and recommendations

Do not be afraid to ask for resources whether this involves approaching other department chairs, your dean, your provost, or your president. They may know about other university resources or opportunities for obtaining the resource. You need to be prepared to argue your case and provide supporting evidence. Use local or national benchmarks (most departments like ours have this piece of instrumentation, we graduate more majors than our frame of reference schools, etc.) as leverage.

You also need to be persistent. Ask several times, each time providing additional supporting information. Keep in mind that your request must support your institution's mission and your students.

Also, make sure that the administration knows your department's "story" well before making a request for additional resources. A well-informed administrator understands your department and its needs, oftentimes before you formally make a request.

Finally, if your request is funded by the dean, the provost, or the president, treat them like a donor and send them a note of appreciation for their support. ■