



Dalhousie Distributed Research Institute and Virtual Environment

# Finding Funding in the Sciences (and Engineering)

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“After a job and tenure, an NSERC Discovery Grant is the most important thing in your professional life.”



Director of



# Finding Funding in the Sciences

## Before and after graduation

- **Why you need funding?**
  - **travel, students and RAs, visitors, equipment**
- **What is available? (slides to come)**
- **What are the best strategies for getting and keeping funding?**
  - **view like portfolio management**
  - **some risk, some certainty**
  - **keep good records from day one**
  - **look ahead, but not too far**





Dalhousie Distributed  
Research Institute and  
Virtual Environment

D-Drive's Nova Scotia location lends us unusual freedom when interacting globally. Many cities around the world are close enough in a chronological sense to comfortably accommodate real-time collaboration.

# Finding Funding in the Sciences

## Some General Observations

- **Modern science is Global**
  - **building social networks is crucial**
- **Proposals must speak to diverse groups of readers**
  - **experts are rare; knowledge is not**
- **Success rates are low (20%?)**
  - **so ideas must be re-purposable**
- **You are your own best sales-person**
  - **but bullshit is obvious**





# Before Graduation

## Options are fairly limited

- **But you need to get on the circuit!**
  - **practice, practice, practice**
  - **friendship/familiarity counts (ref. letters etc)**
- **Some funds available within University**
  - **politely ask your supervisor (and others)**
- **Some NCE-**Networks** (MITACS) and **Institutes** (CITA, AARMS, Fields, PIMS, CRM) tie workshop funding in part to graduate students**
  - **Industrial pre-docs and MITACS internships**



"YOU CAN'T IMAGINE HOW TIGHT OUR BUDGET IS.  
WE CAN ONLY WORK WITH SINGLE-DIGIT NUMBERS."

# After Graduation I

## Options are still fairly limited

- **NSERC is committed to giving new researchers a good start!**
  - **but application growth is out-stripping funds**
- **Discovery Grants are key**
  - **they validate as well as fund (be realistic \$-wise)**
- **NSERC Industrial Funds are less used**
  - **great, if you've a real project and a live company**
- **NSERC Strategic, Network & Corporate**
  - **apply with senior partner ('track-record' counts)**



# After Graduation II

## Other Possible Sources

- **CFI** has just been given \$500m for 2010
  - (for equipment) but application growth is outstripping funds
- Many **Agencies** offer funds (ACOA, APICS, CANARIE, Ind. Canada, Genome Canada, NATO, ...)
  - make contact early in the process -- some are real, some are bogus, some are a good fit ...
- Small sums via **Foundations & Societies** but work may cost more than they fund
  - (“under-head”) pick your spots and keep your eyes open; but grant hunting is not your day job



"'BE CAREFUL'! ALL YOU CAN TELL ME IS 'BE CAREFUL'?"

# FAMILIARIZE yourself with these URLs



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**NSERC** [www.nserc.gc.ca/index.htm](http://www.nserc.gc.ca/index.htm)

- your core source

**NSERC Related Sites** [www.nserc.gc.ca/relate.htm](http://www.nserc.gc.ca/relate.htm)

- great one-stop shopping

**AAAS-Science** <http://sciencenow.sciencemag.org>

- keep up on trends and policy issues (also Nature)



Enigma

*“My morale has never been higher than since I stopped asking for grants to keep my lab going.”*

Robert Pollack, Columbia Professor of biology, speaking on "the crisis in scientific morale", Sept. 19, 1996 at GWU symposium *Science in Crisis at the Millennium*. (p. 1805 27/09/96 **Science**)