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NEW FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND BUSINESS FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Innovation in curriculum development is difficult to accomplish anymore without the pursuit of external funding. My own experience began with an ultimatum back in 1987 when, as a junior faculty member, my chair instructed me to generate grant funding matching my annual salary in order to be reappointed. I had no idea what a grant was and needed to look up the word in the dictionary. Fortunately, with help from colleagues, I was able to generate grant funding worth twice my annual salary. Thus began a career in the pursuit of external funding to create curriculum development opportunities for my university and my students.

Many of us were raised with the belief that the dean or provost should provide any new funding needed for program development. After all, doctoral programs taught us how to produce research—not grant funding. After gaining a modicum of maturity I came to realize that a dean was similar to a parent handcuffed with nine children and only three ice cream cones. Instead of deciding how to split the three ice cream cones, I realized that external funding would allow me to generate my own.

“Ice cream cones” come in the form of external funding opportunities, spearheaded by the US Department of Education Title VI and the Fulbright-Hays Programs. These programs have funded hundreds of business foreign language and international business programs since the early 1980s. Within recent years, other federal, foundation, and corporate sources have joined the US Department of Education to sponsor curriculum development, faculty development, and student scholarships.

Why should institutions of higher education (IHEs) seek external funding? External funding can contribute to the development of a new international business program within a business school sporting few international education assets. Conversely, grants can also fund the upgrading of a mediocre international business program. Some business schools are developing other types of forward-thinking global education programs such as a NAFTA-focused MBA, a major in global entrepreneurship or a certificate program in international agribusiness. These types of programs are the vanguard of the global education movement among US business schools designed to safeguard America’s economic pre-eminence.

For business language educators housed in modern languages departments, many funding sources are eager to fund new and innovative majors, minors, or certificate programs along the lines of those designed by US business schools. These programs include the development of a double major in French and Business, German and Engineering or Spanish and Healthcare Sciences. They also include, on a smaller scale, the development of a minor in Business Spanish, a certificate program with a European Union or NAFTA focus, or the expansion of Business German offerings from one to three courses. With the recent national call for an influx of language experts in critical languages such as Chinese, Arabic, and Portuguese, grant funding can also introduce or strengthen one or more of these languages for a modern language department as long as the applicant IHE agrees to support the offering of the critical language after the term of the grant.

Within any grant project, there exist ancillary activities designed to support the new major, minor, or certificate program. Faculty development, for example, enables an IHE to prepare faculty for global education on a large scale. Week-long faculty development programs such as the one sponsored by the University of South Carolina-Beaufort enabled the sponsoring institution to globalize a large percentage of its faculty, thus expanding the number of participating faculty. Faculty development also entails training junior language faculty to teach Business French, for example. Grant funds will defray the costs of sending one or more faculty to summer training workshops sponsored by the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry as well as follow-up CIBER-sponsored workshops held at the University of Memphis CIBER in February or the Ohio State University CIBER in October. Other ancillary activities include the development of symposia and conferences, travel to locate or launch a study abroad or internship program, the support of visiting professors, the purchase of foreign film DVDs, and in some cases, student study-abroad scholarships.

Numerous funding sources are available to attain our curricular objectives. They include:

1. Federal government sources
2. Foundations
3. Corporate and individual giving
4. State appropriations
5. Contracts

The goal of this paper is to identify and discuss new funding sources that will provide additional sources to modern language departments and professional schools.

NEW FUNDING SOURCES: THE FIPSE PROGRAMS

In past workshops and presentations at CIBER business language conferences, I have discussed the three top programs available to IHEs in terms of facility and availability. These include three US Department of Education programs: the Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Program (UISFL), the Business and International Education Program (BIE), and the Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad Program. Details of these programs can be found on the US Department of Education website or in Loughrin-Sacco (“Redefining”). The USDE also provides abstracts of all funded projects over the last three or more years. These three USDE programs are the first grant programs business language and international business educators should target. The USDE allows IHEs to be awarded four grants each before discouraging further proposals.

The first set of federal grant sources that are underutilized by business language and international business educators are also US Department of Education-driven. The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) offers four potential programs focusing on global education. Although FIPSE is a part of the same department as the Title VI programs such as UISFL and the BIE Programs, FIPSE possesses its own cultural norms, mores, and taboos that must be learned to receive their grants. FIPSE is “risk-taking in its willingness to support new and unproven ideas as well as proven ones” and espouses “action-oriented” projects “involving new ideas or approaches” (FIPSE, Programs/Initiatives 1). FIPSE is thorough in its evaluation of grant applications, using not only external reviewers but its own staff of eight program officers in the review process.

There are four FIPSE programs of interest to international business and business language professionals:

1. The US-Brazil Higher Education Consortia Program
2. The Program for North American Mobility in Higher Education
3. The European Union-United States Atlantic Program, and
4. The FIPSE Comprehensive Program.

The US-Brazil Higher Education Consortia Program is a grant competition administered jointly by Brazil and the United States. The purpose of this program is to “promote student-centered cooperation between the United States and Brazil to increase cross-national education and training opportunities in a wide range of academic and professional disciplines” (FIPSE, Purpose 1). The US-Brazil Program functions in the form of consortia comprising at least two IHEs from each country. FIPSE and its Brazilian counterpart, the Fundação Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES) provide four years of funding for a total of \$200,000 coming from each country. The Program fosters university partnerships through the exchange of undergraduate and graduate students as well as faculty and staff with the goal of bilateral curriculum development. FIPSE and CAPES have proposed the following tenets to their program (FIPSE, Purpose 1):

1. “the mutual recognition and portability of academic credits among US and Brazilian institutions;
2. the development of shared, common, or core curricula among US and Brazilian institutions;
3. the acquisition of the languages and exposure to the cultures of the United States and Brazil;
4. the development of student apprenticeships or other work related experiences; and
5. an increased cooperation and exchange among academic personnel at US and Brazilian institutions.”

FIPSE is in its fifth year of operation, and its 40 consortia represent varied academic disciplines such as business, marine biology, nursing, veterinary medicine, environmental studies, agribusiness, and mineral technology. My grant, “The US-Brazil Consortium for International Business Management,” was a joint project between San Diego State University, the University of Florida, the Universidade Federal do Parana, and the Pontificia Universidade Catolica do Rio de Janeiro. The goal of the program was to strengthen US-Brazilian commercial ties through the development of two joint programs: a joint MBA sponsored by the University of Florida and an undergraduate transnational dual-degree program in international business sponsored by San Diego State University (SDSU).

SDSU’s program is worthy of note here. Students either enrolled in a one-semester exchange or a three-semester transnational dual-degree program. All courses offered at Brazilian universities were taught in Portuguese as required

by FIPSE. Students complete five business and regional studies courses in Curitiba or Rio de Janeiro in the semester program and 15 courses in the dual-degree program in Rio. An equal number of Brazilian students completes coursework in San Diego or Gainesville. At graduation, dual-degree students received both the BA degree in international business from San Diego State University and the Brazilian bachelor degree.

A critical issue for success is Portuguese-language competence on the part of US students. In SDSU's case, heritage speakers of Spanish enrolled in a one-month Portuguese immersion course designed for Spanish speakers taught at the Pontificia Universidade Catolica do Rio de Janeiro. Students completed 120 total classroom hours of instruction and lived with a Brazilian family. Upon completion, students enrolled immediately in business and regional studies courses taught in Portuguese. At face value, it seems difficult to believe that students, with no previous Portuguese experience, could successfully complete coursework taught in Portuguese. At the end of the immersion course, however, students were tested and attained the equivalent of at least an ACTFL rating of 2 (advanced) in reading and listening comprehension. Speaking and writing skills predictably lagged behind at an ACTFL rating of 1 (intermediate). Since instruction in Brazil is teacher-centered, students had from 16 to 48 weeks to improve their speaking and writing skills.

The US-Brazil Program is an ideal option for foreign language departments seeking to enhance their Portuguese-language offerings. It is not a requirement to offer Portuguese on campus to receive this grant, even though it is highly recommended. As in the case of San Diego State University, Portuguese training can take place in Brazil. Language faculty should consider partnering with their business schools, a strategy that will expand the teaching of Business Portuguese. So far, only a handful of consortia have focused on a business theme. Other possible business themes include global entrepreneurship, hospitality and tourism management, and sports management.

In terms of other FIPSE programs, the North American Mobility Program, which requires two Canadian and two Mexican partner institutions, is an excellent tool to give a Quebec focus to the teaching of Business French or a Mexican focus to the teaching of Business Spanish. SDSU's International Business Program received a North American Mobility Program grant to develop "Project North America," a NAFTA-focused program that provided business education in French for the first semester and Spanish at a Mexican university for the second semester. Our "Project North America" expanded to a transnational triple-degree program, "CAMEXUS," as a result of a grant

from FIPSE's Comprehensive Program. Moreover, the European Union-US Atlantic Program is an excellent tool to expand exchanges with European universities.

NEW FUNDING SOURCES: THE STATE DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS

The Bush Administration has made a recent push to support the teaching of critical languages through the proposal of two new programs through the US State Department that should be of interest to international business and business language educators. These include (1) The National Security Language Initiative and (2) The Summer Language Institute for American Youth Program.

The National Security Language Initiative, though not yet active as a funding source, has three goals (State Department 1):

1. "Expand the number of Americans mastering critical-need languages & start at a younger age.
2. Increase the number of Advanced-level FL speakers with an emphasis on critical languages.
3. Increase the number of FL teachers & resources for them."

The Summer Language Institute for American Youth Program is active, and the Program recently funded its first group of four projects at around \$150,000 each. The program is designed to improve the ability of Americans (aged 15 to 18) to speak Chinese or Arabic, as it requires the development of a one-month immersion program in China or Taiwan for the study of Chinese or the study of Arabic in Egypt or Jordan. All 15 to 30 students must be housed with local families and participate in classes and excursions as well as pre- and post-language testing. This may be an excellent program for modern language departments to recruit high school students into Business Chinese and Business Arabic programs.

NEW FUNDING SOURCES: THE FOUNDATIONS

Although the Coca-Cola Foundation and the Freeman Foundation are far from new, they have been underutilized by modern language departments and business schools. The Coca-Cola Foundation has been a major supporter of postsecondary and global education for decades (http://www2.coca-cola.com/citizenship/foundation_guidelines.html). The Foundation sponsors four grant cycles per year and has provided \$124 million in support of these

three initiatives during the last several years, with large gifts flowing toward global exchange programs and minority study-abroad scholarships. The one limitation to applying to the Coca-Cola Foundation is that an IHE must sell Coca-Cola products exclusively on campus.

San Diego State University received two Coca-Cola Foundation grants in 1999 and 2000. The first of these funded 36 study-abroad scholarships for a total award of \$25,000, while the second grant, "Keeping Kids in School," provided SDSU's College of Business Administration with \$300,000 to teach business, ethics, and global business to area high schools. The ideal first step is to have your campus foundation officer contact the Foundation and discuss your potential project. Coke's program officers are very responsive and they will provide guidance as you prepare your application.

The Freeman Foundation specializes in the development or strengthening of forward-thinking Asian studies programs. Of relevance to modern language department chairs, Freeman's initiatives include the development of critical Asian languages such as Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and so on. Grant allotments often consist of six or even seven figures. Given the nation's desperate need for the strengthening of critical languages such as Chinese, modern language departments should carefully explore the opportunities offered by the Freeman Foundation.

NEW FUNDING SOURCES: STATE APPROPRIATIONS

It is a rare academician who would even consider state appropriations as a means of garnering financial support for program development. Ohio is the rare state that provides a line-item appropriation in support of global education. Bowling Green University continues to receive support in the area of \$300,000 per year for its Canadian Studies Program. Additionally, the University of Akron and the University of Toledo both receive funding in support of their International Business Institutes. All three have made strong arguments that state appropriations benefit the state of Ohio as well as their IHEs. A Modern Language Chair, for example, working in conjunction with an IHE's legislative liaison, could make a strong argument to support a translation and interpreting institute capable of producing Arabic translators desperately needed by the FBI, NSA, and CIA. Funding here would come in the form of a "pork barrel" allocation that is regularly awarded each year to local constituents. If Congress provides such monies in support of sheep research and the study of mating patterns of Capistrano swallows, why not global education projects that would enhance national security?

NEW FUNDING SOURCES: CONTRACTS

Modern Language Departments and Business Schools house pods of talent needed to globalize local and regional businesses (Loughrin-Sacco, “Redefining”). In my days as Chair at Boise State University, the Modern Language Department provided language instruction at Hewlett-Packard and translation services to regional companies. Western Illinois University’s Center for International Education offers ESL instruction to agribusiness companies throughout western and central Illinois. Business Schools regularly offer their MBAs abroad. All of these contracts have brought in thousands of dollars to be used for student scholarships and faculty and program development. San Diego State University’s International Business Program, for example, has been asked to offer its award-winning degree to students at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and to other mainland Chinese universities. Once implemented, a portion of the revenues will be used to fund Chinese-language study abroad.

GRANT PREPARATION: FUNDING SOURCES AS CULTURES

Volumes abound on the preparation of grant proposals, but I would like to add some thoughts and strategies not found in these volumes. First, think of grant agencies as “cultures” in that each has a definite compilation of its own norms, values, mores, and taboos. This perception gives us an advantage since who knows more about analyzing cultures than we do? As such, the applicant must vigorously study the agency in question in order to understand its values, norms, and mores and to avoid pitfalls and taboos.

In gathering information on an agency, permit me to introduce Sacco’s Diamond Model of Information Gathering. The first of the four tips of the diamond is the Request for Proposal (RFP), which often contains the proposal’s application information. Many unsuccessful grant applicants stop their research here, thinking that the RFP will contain all key information. In reality, the RFP contains only around 20 percent to 25 percent of the information needed to understand the agency and the application process.

The second tip of the diamond is the Program Officer. No one knows more about a particular grant program than this individual. For example, during a phone conversation or visit the Program Officer will often reveal the “hot” and “not-so-hot” project topics currently under discussion for that year’s competition. The Program Officer may also remind you of a key change in selection procedures, such as the addition of criteria in project evaluation.

The way to garner this information is through frequent phone conversations or even a visit to the Program Officer. While reviewing USDE grants in the past, I have often asked the Program Officer how many of the newly funded project directors she knew at the time of the competition. There is a virtually perfect correlation between receipt of funding and a solid working relationship between the Program Officer and the applicant.

Working with a recently funded Project Director is the third tip of the diamond. The funded Project Director obviously knows what it takes to get funded and will offer insights into both receiving and managing a grant.

Working with a former grant reviewer is the fourth tip of the diamond. The grant reviewer has experience reading and evaluating grant proposals. Consequently, this individual can offer insights that even the Program Officer cannot. I often hire a former grant reviewer who also has served as a project director to assist me in the preparation of the proposal or the management of the grant once it is received. All four information sources can help an applicant understand the intricacies of the culture of the funding source.

10 COMMON PITFALLS AND FATAL MISTAKES

As a result of discussions with former grant reviewers over the years, I have drawn up a list of the most common pitfalls and fatal mistakes committed by non-funded applicants.

1. The applicant didn't read the guidelines well enough.
2. The applicant never contacted the Program Officer.
3. The applicant presented an insufficient problem statement.
4. The applicant neglected to provide sufficient details of the project's activities.
5. The applicant didn't present a cohesive vision of the project.
6. The proposal lacked a strong evaluation plan.
7. The applicant neglected to provide a budget narrative or the budget narrative didn't match the budget proposed.
8. The applicant supplied lukewarm letters of support.
9. The applicant neglected to provide a plan of management in the section entitled "Plan of Operation."
10. Sometimes a veteran grant-getter gets sloppy and submits a poorly executed proposal.

All of these ten fatal mistakes are indications of a poorly informed applicant. In pitfall number 1, for example, the applicant may not have provided the required cost-share match. In pitfall number 2, the applicant did not benefit from the wealth of information held by all Program Officers. In pitfall 3, the applicant neglected to use statistical data in the problem statement or the applicant provided a less than compelling case, as if to say: “Wow! It would be great to get some extra money for our department.” In pitfall 4, the applicant provided little detail at a time when it was sorely needed. For example, proposing a distance-learning Business French course is a complicated venture and details must be provided to convince the reviewers that it is indeed a fundable activity. In pitfall 5, the applicant “threw mud at the wall” as former FIPSE program officer Mike Nugent once characterized a project that had no focus. In pitfall 6, the applicant mistakenly thought that course evaluations were sufficient to serve as the backbone of the section entitled “Evaluation Plan.” In pitfall 7, the applicant provided figures that did not match the budget narrative (remember that all reviewers use calculators). In pitfall 8, the lukewarm style of the support letters indicated that the applicant could not persuade his or her central administration to promise support for the proposed program after the term of the grant. In pitfall 9, the applicant provided no plan of management such as an organizational chart and a description of how the smooth administration of the proposed project would be ensured. Finally, in pitfall 10, every once in a while veteran grant-getters may submit a sloppy and ill-conceived proposal in the hope that reviewers will rely on past performance and trust them with the details. In the final analysis, reviewers are committed to selecting the best possible proposals and to protecting the interests of the funding source.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Grant-getting is, in my view, an extension of our teaching, in that business language and international business faculty are providing exciting new educational opportunities for our students. Grant-getting requires vision, as national models are cherished by funding agencies. Grant-getting requires seduction; that is, the submission of a clearly and concisely presented proposal in a competition where many fine proposals are submitted. Successful grant-getters are resourceful, bold, and persistent and they represent modern language departments and business schools that recognize today’s unlimited opportunities for global program development.

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