Writing a Successful Proposal

General Tips

- Is the project worth doing?
  - Will the project/product change the way orthopaedics is practiced?
  - Will the project/product advance orthopaedics?

- How will you do the project?
  - Develop a list of aims and research plan

- Share ideas with colleagues
  - Seek critical feedback – don’t take criticism personally

- Make it easy for the reviewers – peer review is burdensome
  - Keep it short and simple
  - State key points and basic concepts directly – keep it as non-technical as possible (avoid jargon)
  - Keep it neat, easy to navigate, clearly written

Organization

- **Abstract** – succinctly describe every major aspect of the grant – what, why, and how?
  - Section will be read by all reviewers
  - Introduce research question and brief overview of background and significance
  - State specific aims
  - Briefly describe approach and/or methods
  - Highlight the significance
  - Should be written last

- **Specific aims** – what are you doing?
  - Describe long term goals
  - Pose the research question/reason for the project
  - Focus on aims with good supporting preliminary data and scientific expertise

- **Background and Significance** – Why are you doing it?
  - State the problem
  - What have others done in this field? – use citations
  - What will this project add to the field? Gaps in knowledge this project intends to fill
  - Why is this worth doing? How’s it innovative?

- **Preliminary Studies and Results** – what you have already done and how it was done?
  - Describe recent studies relevant to proposed project that establishes capability and feasibility of accomplishing this work

- **Research Design and Methods** – How you plan to do the research, why you are doing this way, when and where you are doing it?
  - Design overview
  - Detailed description of the methods to be used
  - Describe new methodology to be used
  - Describe how results will be collected, analyzed, interpreted
  - Provide a work plan – projected task sequence and timetable
• **Budget Justification**
  o Describe duties of all personnel/consultants to be paid
    ▪ Be specific, try to identify an individual
  o Justify any equipment needed – software, etc.
  o Detail and justify travel costs
  o Be realistic – padding or under-budgeting will be recognized

**What the reviewers are looking for – see evaluation form**

• **Significance** – does the study address an important problem?
• **Approach** – Are the conceptual or clinical framework, design, methods, and analysis adequately developed, well-reasoned, and appropriate to accomplishing the aims?
• **Innovation** – Is the project original, does the project advance orthopaedics?
• **Investigators** – Are the investigators appropriately trained to carry out the work?
• **Environment** – Does the proper equipment, collaborations, and subject populations exist to carry out the proposed work?
• **Budget Justifications**
• **Inclusion of Women, Minorities, and Children**

*Be Careful, Be Persuasive, EDIT, EDIT again, Proofread.*