

Funding

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Acquiring funding to support research and salaries can be the most daunting, stress-inducing aspect of doing science, especially given the current political climate.

1 General advice

1. Start looking for opportunities early (see funding spreadsheet)
2. Keep your project expenses trackable. You will probably be able to raise \$5000 – 10000 a year as a graduate student (\$10000 – 50000), if your project is unfeasible under that budget, reassess
3. Early on, take every opportunity you can to read successful proposals (i.e., those that were funded) written by others. Ask yourself, what makes this a good proposal? Do the same with proposals that were rejected. Ask yourself, just what is it about this proposal that kept it from being funded. (see lab grant repository for examples)
4. **Work together.** Ask others to read your grants and offer to read theirs. Be transparent about what you are applying for. Share successful grants. Though sometimes it feels like you are competing for grants since many lab members are applying for the same grants, remember we are all in the same boat. We are all working together to conserve biodiversity and expand our knowledge of the natural world. Any funding coming into the lab helps you directly or indirectly. As lab PI I would do my best to equalize funding if a few students struggle in acquiring grants
5. As PI, I will give no preference to any student/post-doc's projects. All common lab funding will be allocated equally between students based on current lab finances. If, as mentioned above, some students are more successful than others at acquiring funding, we will discuss diverting funds to the students in need of funding together, with maximal transparency.

2 How to write a fund-able proposal

1. know your audience! **Address the funding call!**
2. Find big gaps in knowledge (transformative science) (make sure it is mostly doable)
3. Tell a good story

4. be controversial, shocking and tenacious, but not too far
5. preliminary data is good, but don't give too much of a story
6. have to have the right structure for the funding call
7. **unfundable proposals** missed the mark; did not address the funding call; poorly written
8. Proposal "formula"
 - hypothesis, bolded and justified
 - methods can be cited instead of explained
 - carefully chosen display items
 - section on how results will be interpreted
 - results of previous grants (like for NSF) and be at the end it not super related

3 Salary

All graduate students on GSRs and post-docs in the lab will be funded at the same rate (and with post-docs, a increase in salary set by the UC each year). You all do equally amazing work and deserve to have the reflected in your equal salaries. If someone brings in a fellowship that pays at a higher rate, I will do my best to raise other salaries to that rate, depending on available lab funding.

Try to bring in fellowships. They will demonstrate you can fund yourself, build your CV and raise your salary

(see funding spreadsheet)

If you are constantly worrying about finances (as I was during graduate school in the Bay Area), this will affect your ability to do science! If the lab feels their salaries are not enough to cover basic expenses for living in the area, we can come together as a lab and discuss a new rate for everyone. We are all a research team, so it is important to remember I am balancing salaries with research funds. Money spent on lab salaries may take away from funds that could be used to buy research supplies and fund field assistants. Since the success of the lab's research benefits all, we all need to keep that in mind when we discuss funding allocations.

4 Safety net fund

We have all experienced the shock of having a sudden financial expense from things like a medical procedure, or needing to take care of a family member. Some of us are lucky enough to have a family or significant other or previous savings to help with that expense, others are not. Though the specifics of how this fund will work are not entirely worked out, if you have such an expense and do not have an external safety net, some talk to me and we will see if we can supplement your salary (for example though a summer GSR). It seems one of the largest impediments for students to succeed in graduate school is that they do not have outside financial support. The goal of this fund is to help equalize that support.