**HW 9 - Proposal Peer Review - directions – WIS 5496**

**December 2, 2018**

**Reviewer: Melissa Moreno**

**Reviewee: Alex Pepper**

**\*\* The proposal to review was given to me Sunday, December 2, 2018, at 8:30 PM.**

Swap proposals with another person – so that everyone gets a review.

Answer all these questions with clear direction to your author as to what you mean, and how they can fix it. Indicate where in the proposal your comments apply by using the number of the question –

* If you have a paper version, then write the number in red and circle it, everywhere that it applies.
* If you are using track changes – then insert a comment with the appropriate number every place it applies.
* Don’t re-write things for the author – just explain each issue, then use a number comment to mark the places where your explanation applies.

First – skim this assignment, the proposal, and the proposal guide. Eyeball issues you see and begin formulating a plan to help the author improve the most. ***Make notes in a separate doc for your use*** later – to remind you of anything you think needs a comment, so you can make sure it gets said.

***Questions associated with mark-up numbers.***

1. Are all the parts of the proposal in place? Is there a numbered section in the proposal for each section in the proposal guide? What is missing? What sections are underdeveloped? -- place a 1 everywhere that a piece of the proposal is either missing or not yet fully written.

Yes all of the parts of the proposal were in accordance to the research proposal outline. Not missing a section. Each section does seem to be “long” enough. I would say that each section is fully written out.

2. Check the title page, page numbers, font choice, and/or spacing issues – if any of these can be improved, mention how (here) and mark spots where there are issues in the proposal with a 2.

No spacing issues, but lacking some information in the title. The font choice and size are good, Cambria in size 12. No page numbers, added a note.

3. Go directly to the Research Design section. Which of the following are present or absent?

***Explain*** any issues you find (and mark)

* A concise statement of research objective(s)
  + Objective 1: yes
  + Objective 2: yes
* A design narrative for each objective stated.
  + Objective 1: yes
  + Objective 2: yes
  + Objective has a design narrative, mentioned in the study design area.
* Does each design narrative include the following?
* A statement of the research question (as a causal or predictive hypothesis or a descriptive statement of what will be described).
  + Objective 1: yes
  + Objective 2: yes
* Is the study design stated? (experiment?; comparative (cross-sectional, longitudinal)?; descriptive? Predictive? Case control (or use-availability or ?)?; What is the design?
  + Objective 1: Descriptive
  + Objective 2: Comparative
* Predicted outcomes?
  + Objective 1: yes
  + Objective 2: yes
* Critical Assumptions? Are they discussed in terms of how they will be checked?
  + Objective 1: yes assumptions, but not how these assumptions will be checked
  + Objective 2: yes assumptions, but not how these assumptions will be checked
* Alternative hypotheses / confounding variables? Will they be controlled via measuring them, or ?
  + Objective 1: yes, not controlled
  + Objective 2: yes, not controlled, but using a chi-squared from the data to analyze
* What type of inference is sought and why?
  + Objective 1: no specific inference mentioned
  + Objective 2: no specific inference mentioned

4. Move now to the **Methods** section, specifically the **sampling design portion**. Check which things are missing.

- Sample unit(s) defined?

* Sample units not defined exactly, but can be listed that each individual surveyed is a sample unit.

- Randomization – of what?

* Might need randomization for Objective 2, if it is found that Objective 1 data requires replication.

- Replication? Of what?

* Replication of interviews, surveys.
* Is there a power analysis?
* There is no mention of a power analysis. Made a notation.

- Scale issues (in time or space) described?

* Scale seems fine. Looking at specific Florida agencies.

- Standardization? Of what?

* Not mentioned.

- Sample size estimation?

* Not listed.

- Bias avoidance? Is it discussed?

* Yes it is mentioned, and that with careful word choice it will reduce the bias.

- Will preliminary data be available? How will it be used?

- Is the data analysis described?

* Yes the data analysis is described. He mentions he will need to use chi-squared.

- Is there a table of X, Y variables with units of measure and descriptions?

* No table, but X and Ys are mentioned in the study design, Research methods, but not in this section.

5. Assess the rest of the Methods – is the study system (place, time, species) well-described? Is the domain of the study clearly identifiable here? Is there a chronology or timeline?

The time is not described, such as when the sampling will take place or why it would take place at a certain time. The place is also not referenced, but might be a specific place that will have to be surveyed.

6. Go to the **Introduction** & pretend you are a non-ecologist (like a dentist, or an ad executive). Can you understand what the proposal is about? Can you understand what the author proposes to do (generally)? Does it seem like the research is worth doing (to you as a random member of society)?

Is it too long or too short?

I can understand what the proposal is about. From reading JUST the Introduction, it would be that it is a group of interviews to find out why there is a lack of interaction between the two groups. I would say the general purpose of the proposal is outlined well enough. If I were a random member of society, I wouldn’t understand why this is so important, because I wouldn’t know enough about invasive species of the implication of an invasive species problem or poor management. It is long enough in my opinion. Can maybe have another paragraph about invasive reptile/species implications.

7. Now, for the background (take your time!). The main purpose of the Background section is to provide a clear rationale / justification for spending money on each of the research objectives you have already assessed.

- **7a**. Does the background start out broad (but not too broad) and draw in the trained scientist to an argument for the overall type of study question being addressed?

* The topic does not start out broadly. It basically goes right into the issue of the proposal.

- if the study species and system is mentioned **before** at least two paragraphs have gone by then the background is not starting broad enough.

* The study system is mentioned right away. In the paper it would mention what is discussed in the meetings or what goes on in the meetings, when the meetings are held, etc.

- **7b** Does the Background establish a body of base knowledge related to the research objectives to clearly underscore what IS known in the field of study and why this information is important (before saying anything about what is not known)?

It is mentioned why this research is important to the overall impact on invasive regulation. There should be more background into when the meetings are held, how many people go, what are the specific meetings, etc. I mentioned this in the notes of this section. This is somewhat mentioned toward the end of the Background section, but I think should be flipped with what he current has written out , i.e some paragraphs switched for better flow.

- if the background starts out by saying – nothing is known on subject X, therefore I will fill this gap… Then you should mark up the section! You can’t know the holes until the body of research at issue is defined. (And the statement ‘nothing is known… is never true anymore and I will take 5 points off for that phrase showing up anywhere in the final version!).

- **7c** Does the background lead you cleanly and logically to the statement of research Objectives? RO’s should be presented at the end of the background and there should ***be no surprise*** when you get to them – by then it should be clear what the HOLES are in understanding. The background should lead the reader naturally to understanding why and how the research objectives are reasonable and important. After reading the background, you should be able to understand how the study will advance the field and/or solve a specific problem.

Yes the last paragraph does state the main research objective. Some holes my understanding are to what extent we plan to see change in attendance? Maybe are we trying to see if the social problems are identified, we project that X% of people will now attend? I suppose that would be additional data analysis that would need to be done. Also with that, is X% of people are now attending, is that a good representation of the groups to make valid decisions for regulations and policies?

8. Feasibility.

Revisit the methods with the objectives in mind, now. *How likely on a scale of 1-10* is it that the project will achieve what it says it will in the time allotted?

I believe that there is enough time to complete the research in the allotted time. I would rate the feasibility about a 8-9 out of 10. That is, to say, for Objective 1. Objective 2 is optional. So I would say if both Objectives need to be completed, then the feasibility would be about a 6-7 out of 10.

9. Synthesis and significance. This section should say / summarize clearly ***what the research proposes to accomplish*** and ***why this is important***. What conceptual advances will be made? What data and insights will be produced? Who will benefit from this information and how likely is it that these benefits to society will be realized?

According to this section, the advances that will be made will be toward to identify and treat the attitudes of both parties, so that both parties can be in agreement regarding regulation and policies of invasive species. The data insights will produce a reduction of legal opposition. Who will benefit will be the lawmakers and law enforcement officers. This research will increase the likelihood of achievement that there will be “successful implementation of invasive species regulation/management”.

**10**. Writing. Indicate which of the following are issues in the ms (check them here, and mark the proposal with numbers and letters).

Sometimes the sentences can read convoluted, such as in the Project Summary. The writing style, is ok, has a lot of run of sentences, and I think it should be broken up more for better reading. The Background section is dense, which is should be, but should have more citations. Where are all the citations being cited?

10 a***. Poor paragraph development*** – each one should be a minimum of 4-5 sentences and one major point dealt with per paragraph (with opening, body, closing-transition sentences.

Yes in the Project Summary section, this paragraph should be more concise. There are a lot of “fluff” words, and redundant phrasing. I would also break up the sentences, they seem to run on. I would say most work has to be done on the first 2 sentences. This should be a little bit more of a grab here, not too much! Sentences are a little confusing.

Yes in the Background section some paragraphs should be switched around, to have the broader topics first , and then the more narrow topics later. This is mentioned in the notes.

10 b***. Poor sentence structure*** – can’t understand what the author is saying?

Yes in the Project Summary section, this paragraph should be more concise. There are a lot of “fluff” words, and redundant phrasing. I would also break up the sentences, they seem to run on.

I would also add a lot more commas, and semi-colons to break up long sentences.

10 c. ***Words misspelled or wrongly used.***

None really that I found. Words spelled correctly and used correctly.

10 d. **Other issues with writing?** Define them here and use this number and letter to ID them in the ms.

ID 10b

I would say that there is a an issue with run on sentences. I would break them up.

11. ***Issues with figures and tables?*** Figure or table needed? Figure legend needs work? Figures and tables not readable/interpretable? Figs and tables not used properly in the text?

Figures and tables were captioned. Captions have a good explanation on what is going on with the figure. Only had 1 figure. I would recommend to add another, possibly showing the data management and analysis. Figures are used properly in the text.

12. ***Literature cited.***

- Literature not broad enough?

* Literature could be more broad. Most of the citations are specific to reptiles or invasive management. Could have more citations that are just on regulation or policy not related to conservation.

- Does it include Exemplars, methods, non-study species taxa papers?

* This research is not a specific species, but I would say the citations are not on a specific species.

- Are there enough references (minimum 30)?

* Yes.

- Are they used appropriately?

* They are used relatively appropriately.

13***. Logic flow*** – are there places where the flow jumps too far or in an illogical way?

Reading the proposal, there are not crazy logical jumps. Alex follows a slow flow, which is good for the reader to understand what he is trying to achieve.

14. ***Completeness?*** Is there anything missing that you were hoping for?

Reading this, I believe it is complete. The background section is hefty. Probably what I would want more of , is specific data analysis mentioned. Possible equations and how the data will be exactly categorized. There is mention Likert Scale from 1 to 7, which is great, but just a little more of the data analysis interpretation.

I think I would also like to add some pictures, maybe of the invasive species these groups talk about (i.e tegu, Burmese python). That might give this proposal a little more “oomf”.

**LAST question.**  How many revisions are still needed? **(# at least 2 ).** Judging by its current condition, how many more times would YOU need to see it (minimum) before this proposal can be submitted for funding?

I would need to see it at least 1 more times, but it would have to be edited by Alex least 1 more time. I would say a total of 2 revisions, 1 by myself.

**Summary of major weaknesses** (in your own words – be clear, concise and thorough)

Just long run of sentences. Need to go over and reread all of the text and remove the filler words. Possibly find other words that will give a more exact meaning.

**Summary of major strengths** (in your own words – be clear, concise and thorough)

Well thought out background and methods, generally. I would say the strength of this paper is a clear objective of what Alex wants to accomplish.