



Article

Assessing the Library's Grants Program

Beth Sandore Namachchivaya
Associate University Librarian for Research,
Associate Dean of Libraries and Professor
University of Illinois Library
Urbana, Illinois, United States of America
Email: sandore@illinois.edu

Jamie McGowan
Assistant Director, Global Collaborations
Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC)
Champaign, Illinois, United States of America
Email: jmcgowan@staff.cic

Received: 17 Mar. 2015

Accepted: 13 May 2015

© 2015 Namachchivaya and McGowan. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons-Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike License 4.0 International (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly attributed, not used for commercial purposes, and, if transformed, the resulting work is redistributed under the same or similar license to this one.

Abstract

Objective – The authors analyzed seven years of sponsored research projects at the University of Illinois Library at Urbana–Champaign with the aim of understanding the research trends and themes over that period. The analysis was aimed at identifying areas of future research potential and corresponding support opportunities. Goals included developing institutional research themes that intersect with funding priorities, demystifying grant writing and project management through professional development programs, increasing communication about grant successes; and bringing new faculty and academic staff into these processes. The review and analysis has proven valuable for the Library's institutional practices, and this assessment may also inform other institutions' initiatives with grant-writing.

Methods – The authors performed a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses of the University Library's grant activities that enabled us to accomplish several goals: 1) establish a baseline of data on funded grants; 2) identify motivations for pursuing grants and the obstacles

that library professionals face in the process; 3) establish a stronger support structure based on feedback gathered, and through collaborations with other groups that support the research process; and 4) identify strategic research themes that leverage local strengths and address institutional priorities.

Conclusions – Analysis of Library data on externally funded grants from the University’s Proposal Data System provided insight into the trends, themes, and outliers. Informal interviews were carried out with investigators to identify areas where the Library could more effectively support those who were pursuing and administering grants in support of research. The assessment revealed the need for the Library to support grant efforts as an integral component of the research process

Introduction

For over a decade the University of Illinois Library at Urbana-Champaign has sustained a track record of successful external grant funding. Grants support many types of activities, including research by librarians in library and information science and other fields, collection acquisition and processing, preservation, new user service programs, digitization, digital library development, assessment and evaluation, and professional development and training programs. In difficult economic times, libraries rely increasingly on grants to fund innovation and research. The impetus for this assessment study stems from the Library’s desire to identify ways to support librarians and professional staff who were successful at garnering grant funds, and to provide incentives and an ongoing support infrastructure that would encourage more librarians and staff to seek grants. This paper describes an analysis of the grants “landscape” in the Library and the resulting data helped the Library to better support librarians and other professionals to develop successful grants. In conducting this work, we sought answers to several core and thought-provoking questions:

- What are the recent funding trends for the University Library?
- What can the University Library do to encourage success and minimize obstacles to grant submission?

- What can the institution do to support success after the award?
- In what strategic areas could the Library expand its grant activities?

In today’s challenging economic climate, faculty and researchers are both motivated and expected to pursue external funding as a means of developing and sustaining institutional research and service functions. As Cuillier and Stoffle (2011) note, university libraries are no exception, with librarians seeking funding to support a variety of innovative new programs and to perform research. Given these professional and economic drivers, libraries are positioned either to initiate or to be partners in grants and sponsored research. Beyond a climate in which grant funding is good for the institution, grants support a number of the University of Illinois Library’s innovations. Grant funds incubate initiatives that extend the library’s core activities, projects and programs, and this infusion of support is critical to their success. A 2004 ARL SPEC Kit survey (Mook, 2004) on grant coordination reported that of 65 respondents, 62 libraries indicated that they pursued grants. Roughly half of those 65 libraries reported an increase in grant funding within the previous 5 year period, and 40% reported that they had no change, and 10% reported a decrease in grant funding. Further, nearly two thirds of the libraries reporting vested the responsibility for managing grants in the librarians who were the grant’s principal investigator (PI). To this scholarship we

introduce a new thread -- assessment of grant programs. This study is unique from the standpoint that it has not been represented in the current literature.

Method

In deciding to conduct a baseline evaluation, we were mindful of the value of assessment to our organization and processes. Extending a "culture of assessment" to grant funding is a signal of its importance in the broader scope of library work (Lakos and Phipps, 2004). At the organizational level, this initial assessment also signals a commitment within the institution and among its leadership to prioritize external funding for evaluation. While it appears that libraries seek grants increasingly to support programs, services and research, the literature revealed scant analysis of grant funding programs in libraries. The average number of grants and level of grant funding at the University of Illinois Library has risen steadily over the past decade. This trend suggested that grant funding is evolving into a mainstream program area for libraries, which, like other library programs, should clearly be subject to assessment. As Lakos and Phipps (2004) reiterate, "what gets measured gets managed." Quantitative and qualitative measures enable libraries to target support for individuals in their grant-writing, through enhanced infrastructure, and the development of a culture of institutional research support.

Three common themes emerged from the literature on grant-writing and librarianship. First, there are works that are more or less instructional, guiding one through the steps of writing a grant proposal (Landau, 2011; Herkovic, 2004; Zambare, 2004;). A second grouping outlines potential sources of funding (Cuillier and Stoffle, 2011; Taylor, 2010). The third highlights the value of grants for career development (Herkovic, 2004). The data analyzed were drawn from a University database that tracks grant proposal information, and from interviews conducted with a librarians

and professional staff who are actively engaged in grants that support research and service programs.

The first source of data, from the University's Division of Management Information Proposal Data System, provided current and historic proposal data dating back to 1996. Using this database, we accessed the University Library's proposal data to provide the primary quantitative data. The data maintained by this database are sponsored research processed by the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research Administration, and they only represent grants submitted to external entities rather than institutionally based competitions. The database includes information about the status of grant proposals (awarded, declined, and pending), the principal investigators names and affiliations, the title of the proposals, the funder, and the amount of money proposed, awarded, and spent, and the length of the awards.

We initially sought to represent 10 years of grant data. However, the accuracy of the proposal database deteriorated with legacy data from a system migration that occurred eight years ago. Hence, we focused on seven years of data, presented here. In analyzing these data, we opted to focus mostly on successful proposals, mapping between the award data, the Library as an organization, and more nuanced data about each proposal's focus or intent.

The second source of data was informal interviews with 10 library faculty who have written and/or are actively writing external grant proposals. The informational interviews offered rich qualitative data that added depth to our quantitative assessment. For instance, interviewees highlighted the professional and institutional value of grants, the context in which such grants emerge, and suggested avenues for improving the grant-writing process.

Combined proposal data and interviews provide insights that guide institutional practices – such

that the University Library is well-placed to develop strategic research initiatives, support initiatives underway, and cultivate grant-writing interests and skills across the library. We present a summary of the quantitative data next followed by the qualitative data. Following our analysis, we outline our responses to these findings. Again, one of our core goals is to support the development and success of grant-funded initiatives. These steps, assessments, and our initial responses are described in greater detail below.

Results: Quantitative Analysis

At the summary level, librarians and other professional staff in the University of Illinois Library submitted 146 grant proposals during the past 7 years. There were 85 of these grants awarded, yielding a success rate of 58.2%. The Library's track record of garnering external funding compares favorably with the University of Illinois campus, which sustained a 48.4%

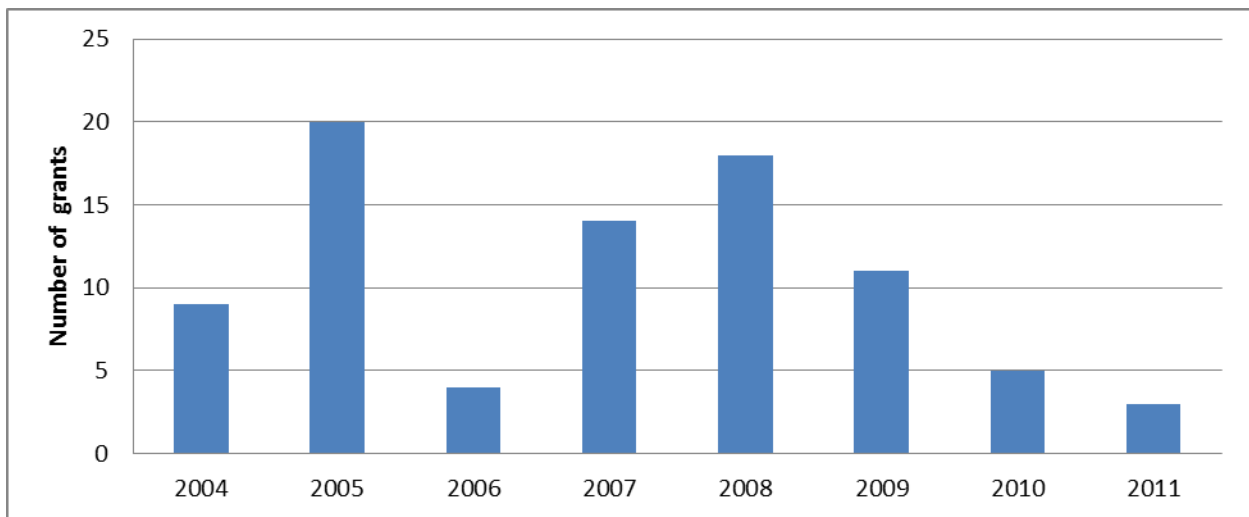


Figure 1
Number of Grants Awarded

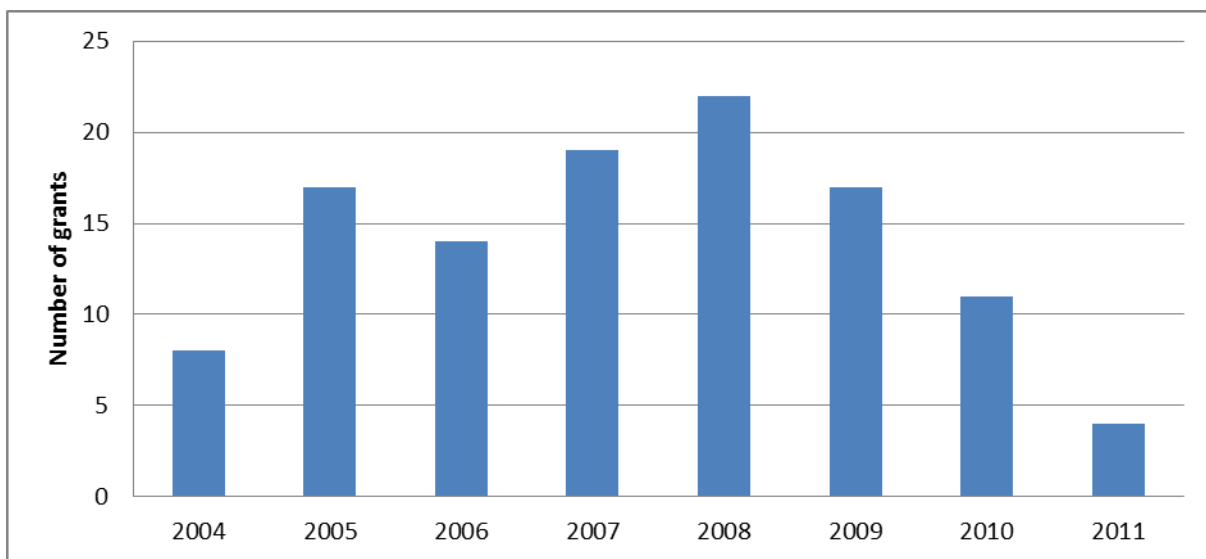


Figure 2

Grants Reflecting Multi-Year Funding, 2004-2011

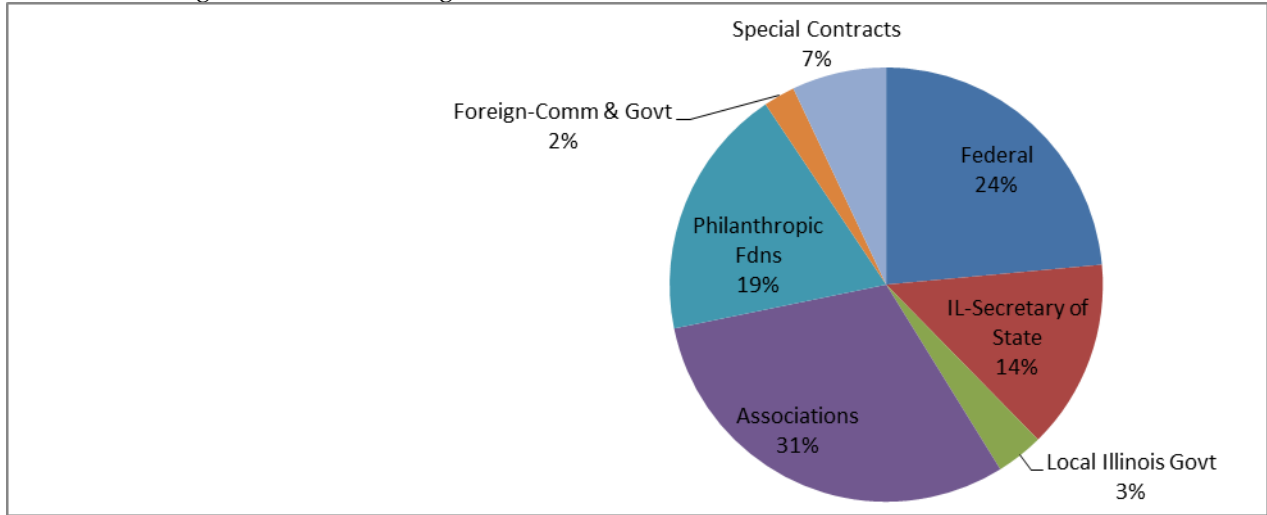


Figure 3
Number of Awarded Grants by Sponsor, 2004-2011

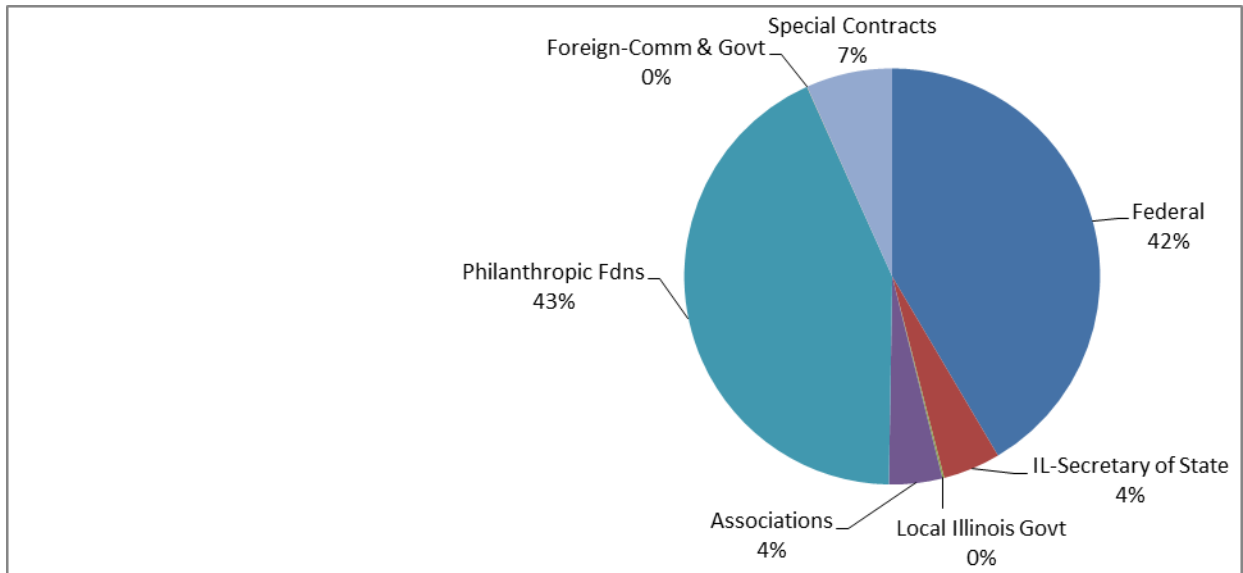


Figure 4
Grant Award Amounts by Sponsor, 2004-2011

success rate during the same period. For the Library, new proposal success fluctuated from year to year (Figure 1). However, when multi-year grants are factored in, the distribution of grants levels out by comparison (Figure 2).

On the whole, funding represents a well-balanced blend of sources with the largest

number of grants coming from associations (e.g., membership organizations such as the Digital Library Federation (DLF), and the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR), and professional associations such as the American Library Association (ALA)), followed by federal agencies, philanthropic foundations, the State of Illinois, and other lesser sources.

In contrast, looking at the breakdown of actual funding dollars, foundations and federal monies accounted for the vast majority of the grant monies generated (Figure 4). Associations, such as the ALA, DLF, CRL, LAMA, and the State of Illinois offered many smaller grants that totaled 4% of the total amount. Special contracts, funding mostly archival initiatives, accounted for a 7% portion of the total.

To get a sense of faculty participation in grant-funded initiatives, we looked at the number of people serving as principal investigators (PI) or co-principal investigators (co-PI) on grants. Figure 5 represents these figures for the seven year period. On an annual basis, approximately 10% of librarians and professional staff serve as either a PI or co-PI on grants; however, over time, grant awards go to approximately 30% of the total library professional staff. The data indicated that a small and slowly growing number of librarians were repeatedly successful at getting grants.

Through this analysis, we also sought to understand how funder’s strategic agendas influenced programs and research that were initiated with grant support, and how Illinois’ institutional strengths were enhanced through programs that were consonant with the Library’s and the institution’s strengths. To assess grant focus, we broke down the grant awards into several key categories of interest detailed in Figure 6. The professional development and training grants support the University Library’s Mortenson Center for International Library Programs, which provides training to librarians globally.

A further analysis of the Access, Management and Preservation category reveals that grants were made across the board for several sub-categories of activities related to access, management, and preservation. These sub-categories included technology development, digitization and microfilming, and the specific area of access, management, and preservation. (Figure 7)

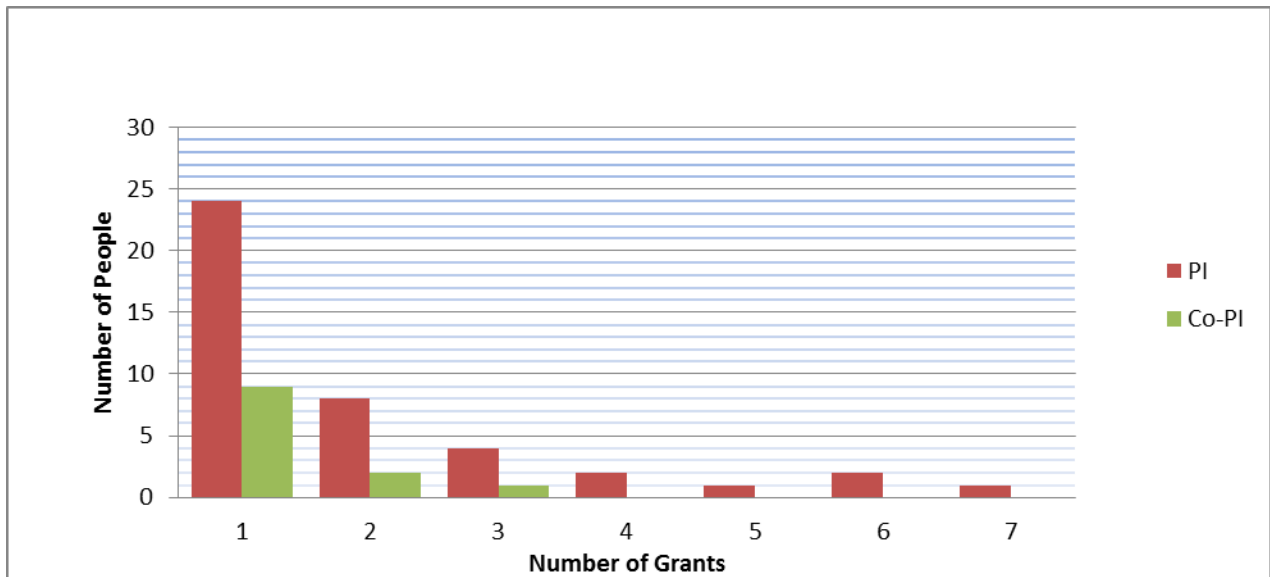


Figure 5
PIs and Co-PIs on Grants, 2004-2011

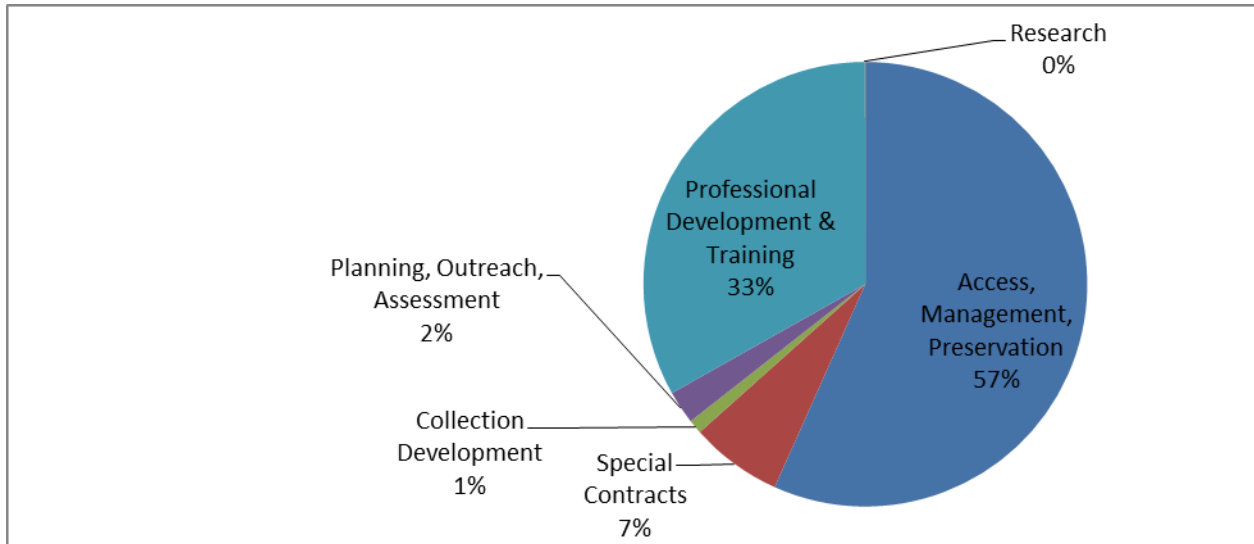


Figure 6
Funding Amounts by Grant Categories, 2004-2011

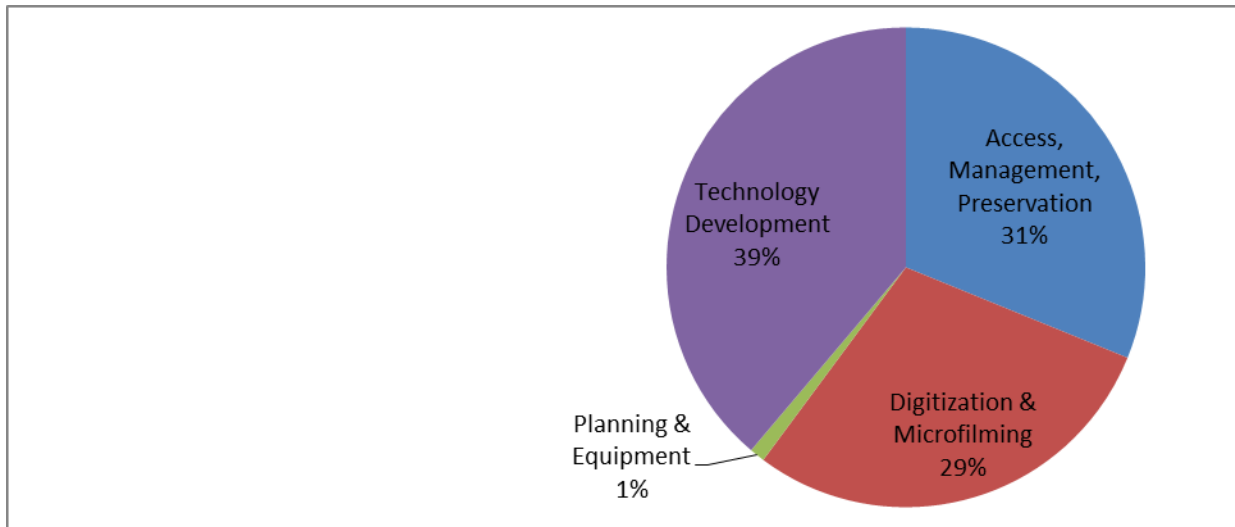


Figure 7
Access, Management, Preservation Grants: Funding by Sub-Categories

To assess funding levels over time, we reviewed the average funding level in each of four categories per year over each of the seven years. The following graph represents average funding levels over time, divided up by the grant focus (Figure 8).

These results illustrate the lower levels of funding for collection development as compared

to access, management, and preservation or professional development and training. The external state-sponsored collection acquisition grants dwindled to nil by 2009, which reflects the reduction of funds from the LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) federal funding that is allocated to states. Also the dip in funding in 2010 is striking across most areas of funding. This dip can signal multiple changes.

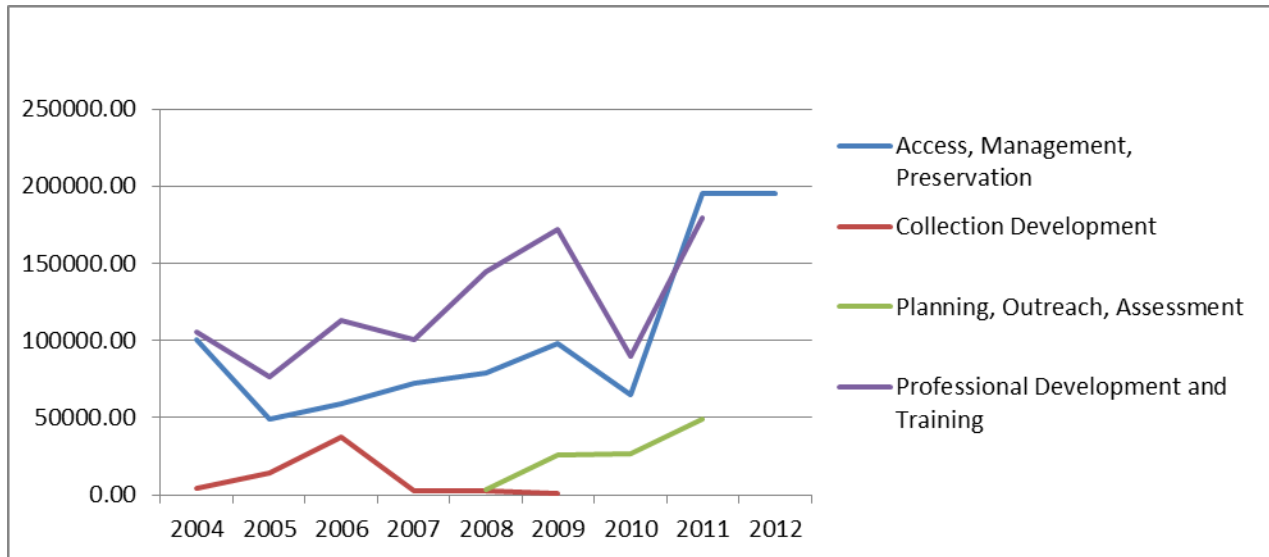


Figure 8
Average Funding Levels from 2004-2011

First, internally, several major grant initiatives ended in 2009. This meant that faculty were actively engaged in wrapping up their commitments to projects in 2009, and they were less involved in writing and submitting new project proposals. Second, the global economic crises also led to increased competition for funds, and University of Illinois Library was one of many institutions competing for reduced federal and foundation dollars. Library grant awards were smaller and the number of awards was also reduced. For each of the three years prior to this study, the University Library faculty was awarded upwards of ten grant proposals; whereas in 2010, five proposals were funded. Last, the number of grant competitions and the size of awards may have also been impacted by the economic crises, as funders had to react to the crises.

Equally striking is the bounce-back in average funding in 2011, where the level exceeds previous levels in three of the four categories. The rebound in funding levels was due to a number of continuing grants, as well as an award in 2011 of one substantial grant.

In addition to comparing grant foci and funding over time, funding amounts were assessed from different types of funders over time (Figure 9). The analysis revealed that higher funding levels came from federal agencies and philanthropic sources. Also, state sources of funding were on the increase, but they were largely curtailed by budget cuts until 2014. Associations' funding support disappeared from the Library's portfolio during this time period.

It appears from these data that philanthropic foundations funded grants at consistently lower levels throughout the past few years of the economic downturn. However funding levels have increased in the past two years, with private foundations providing the Library's highest average funding. Also, federal funding fell sharply in 2009 and 2010, but it has in recent years been on the increase. Certainly, the funding levels do not reflect funding sources alone. Grants coming to a close, application success rates, and levels of funding are primary contributors to funding fluctuations. The variables that lead to these conditions may be internal to the institutions, the competition, or the broader economic crises that led to a contraction of funding opportunities.

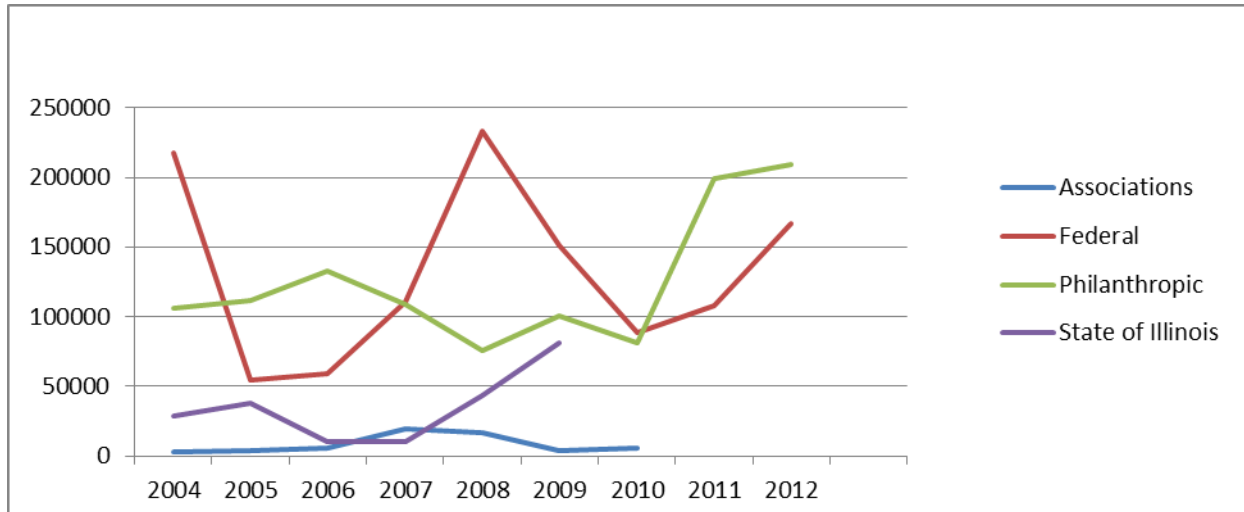


Figure 9
Average Funding Levels by Source, 2004-2011

Qualitative Analysis

The baseline assessment also incorporated qualitative data obtained from informal interviews conducted with ten librarians and one academic professional at the University Library to learn more about their perceptions of library grant-writing, the support provided, and processes. All of these individuals had participated in externally-sponsored grant projects, either as principal investigators, co-principal investigators, or as a part of a team. Their comments can be classified into one of three categories – opportunities, challenges and concerns, and needs or issues that were specific to the context of a particular grant. In the cases where needs or issues applied to specific grants, the Associate University Librarian for Research worked with the faculty and staff who expressed concerns to address them.

Opportunities

Expanding Library Strategic Programs. One of the most frequently reinforced viewpoints articulated by the interviewees was that grant funding provided the opportunity to carry out research and to develop new services, technology, and training programs. In the Mortenson Center for International Library

Programs, grants support a high percentage of the programs in that unit, supporting librarians world-wide. External funding is essential to the Center's programs, enabling librarians to participate in international collaborations and professional development. In other areas, several of the principal investigators pointed to the expansion of collections, services, access, preservation, cataloging, and technological innovations that resulted from grant funds. A specific example of this development is the "EasySearch" locally-developed federated search system that supports searches by title, author, or keyword in a broad selection of freely-available as well as licensed e-resources. A healthy mix of private foundation and federal agency funding has supported the development and use of EasySearch as a research tool to increase understanding of user interactions with federated search systems.

Sense of accomplishment. Another factor mentioned by librarians involved in sponsored research was that they enjoyed the autonomy and the sense of accomplishment that came with crafting and carrying out projects. Participants noted, in particular, that faculty status of librarians is important to their role in securing grant funds, and they cited the status in securing

external support. The Library supports librarians and academic professional staff to initiate research projects that identify and build on institutional strengths. As a result, their grant activities are an important component of their professional identity and career trajectory. One librarian described her grant-funded projects as a “career highlight.”

Professional Advancement. Those who participated in the interviews pointed to professional advancement as another important outcome. Sponsored research contributed to skills development, research and publications, and everyone interviewed noted that they were recognized for their grant successes in their annual evaluations and in promotion and tenure reviews. A number of librarians also indicated that grant funding helped them to develop their research agendas in new directions, ranging from new approaches to managing collections to launching projects that resulted in new research findings. One interviewee described a situation where he developed an unsuccessful grant proposal into a case study that resulted in a publication.

Enhancing Reputation. Another positive perspective on grant writing is that funded projects enhance the reputation of the Library, on campus, nationally, and internationally. Grants can help build awareness and support within and across professional networks, and the outcomes and services reach multiple audiences within those networks as well. Grants can provide important services and outreach on campus, and many funded initiatives reach constituencies at other institutions. Several of the grantees noted that their grants supported diverse communities including the university, academic, and public libraries, state and local government, K-12 schools, and the media.

Positive Feedback and Community-Building. Most grants require an evaluation component, and periodic reports that provide useful feedback for the individual as well as the library. In the instance where the reports are publicly

available, they increase awareness of the project and enhance the visibility of the institution within and beyond the library community. The data from the evaluation can generate informative baseline information and new tools for ongoing assessment. The University Library also benefits from the grants as the funds support positions for visiting staff and students, who have the opportunity to build skills and experience, and to contribute to research, publications and conference presentations. Many of the librarians interviewed noted the growth of stronger communities that emerge from the collaboration brought about through grant-supported projects. Interviewees indicated that grant project collaborations with library and campus professionals produced positive outcomes. Additionally, the processes involved in proposal submission, reporting, and budgeting draws on the expertise of support personnel as well. Involving a wider community of library staff in proposal review and project implementation is an important avenue towards building wider professional relationships within the library community.

Challenges and Concerns

While most of those who were interviewed emphasized positive outcomes, a number of librarians expressed concerns. Analysis of these concerns, and the suggestions to remedy them, can help to build successful future outcomes.

Balancing grants with primary responsibilities. Some who were interviewed expressed the concern that the institutional culture of the library does not promote grant-writing and the associated research. They commented that the pressure of their primary responsibilities detracts from the time available to pursue research. Librarians at the University of Illinois are required to undergo campus review and evaluation for tenure and promotion. Research and publication are required elements of a librarian’s tenure and promotion review. For pre-tenure librarians, the enthusiasm to pursue a grant in support of research is tempered by the

high initial effort required to prepare a grant proposal that may or may not be funded.

Relationship to Library Strategic Plan. Some of the librarians interviewed expressed concern that the Library should articulate areas that are priorities for institutional research in the Library's strategic plan. They suggested that the Library articulate synergies between strategic directions and institutional research priorities so that librarians and professional staff would have the opportunity to align substantial efforts to obtain grants with strategic library research and development priorities. The authors note that at the time the interviews were conducted, the Library was in the process of developing a three-year strategic plan, and these suggestions were considered in that process.

Bottlenecks and Silos. Pre-tenure faculty in particular noted that they encountered bottlenecks in the grant development process that they felt could have been avoided if they had had sufficient access to their expert colleagues and business office staff. This group noted that they expended considerable effort upfront "learning the ropes" of successful grant-writing. They felt unprepared for what seemed to be unpredictable obstacles that occurred in the course of preparing and submitting a grant proposal. Budget preparation was an area where most interviewees noted they were required to devote significant time. In particular, many commented that they were not prepared for the requirement to identify sources of "cost-sharing" in order to address an agency's requirement for matching funds, and noted that this part of budgeting was complicated and time-consuming. Yet another challenge articulated by those who were interviewed was the difficulty of identifying more experienced colleagues who could devote time to planning the grant, and reviewing drafts of the proposal narrative at various stages in its development, to provide advice on the impact of the proposed work and the clarity and completeness of the narrative. At the time of the survey, support for grant preparation was limited to the Associate

University Librarian for Research, and the Research Manager in the Library's Business Office. Other colleagues with grant expertise provided advice and support on an informal basis.

Internal Submission Timeline. Another concern expressed was that institutional requirements for grant submission did not allow sufficient time for development of the narrative and plan. Some grant opportunities have a brief turnaround time between the call for proposals and the submission deadline. The University Library and the campus require that both the completed proposal narrative and the budget and submission package are reviewed at each level. This means that the narrative and budget must be completed roughly three weeks before the funder's submission date. This time frame enables the University Library to review the narrative and the budget, to complete required paperwork, and to ensure that any commitments made in the proposal can be supported. The Office of Sponsored Programs reviews proposals to ensure that investigators comply with University regulations, as well as funder requirements. Admittedly, there is little that can be done to address the internal review requirements for grant proposals. Most proposals require iterative interaction between the PI, the Library, and the campus prior to submission to modify the proposal budget and plan of work and to strengthen the narrative, based on feedback from the internal review process.

Limited Funding Options for Collections Grants and Specific Research Interests. Several of those interviewed noted the discontinuation of state grant competitions that funded collection development. These collection enhancement grants, coordinated by the CARLI (Consortium of Academic Research Libraries of Illinois) funds, channeled LSTA funding to strengthen collections in targeted areas. Other interviewees pointed out that funding to support either their collection or research interests is very limited. These barriers hamper individual's grant

submissions. They also reflect the reality of a sponsored research environment that is driven by funders' research interests. While there are numerous opportunities, not all areas of LIS research are not considered funding priorities.

Discussion

Interviewees made several suggestions aimed at better supporting proposal development. They requested that the Library sponsor discussion sessions about grant proposal development, where knowledge and experience about grant preparation could be shared widely. They recommended involving successful grantees, who could share their expertise in proposal development. Several librarians recommended hosting a two-part series, with one session focusing on cultivation of ideas, planning, and grant submission, while the second session could concentrate on how actual projects were implemented, and strategies for success. Senior faculty suggested that working groups, organized around a research interest, could support internal proposal review and might be a rich avenue to pursue for several reasons. This suggestion was aimed at providing assistance with the development of the idea, literature reviews, and reviewing the final proposal. Several interviewees noted that they relied upon a pool of experienced colleagues to review their proposals. They developed strong linkages to faculty based in their disciplinary units or with librarians at other campuses. One librarian indicated that she had received feedback from staff in the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research, and attended grant-writing workshops led by an interdisciplinary campus unit. Interviewees also suggested that the Library provide Web-based support for writing grants. Finally, those who were interviewed wanted to see their grant projects promoted within the Library, on campus, and to other constituents with a potential interest in their research, with press releases and information on the Library's Web site. They suggested that this promotion could feature the initiative, itself, or specifically funded activities and outcomes, and

information about the research outcomes. Faculty felt that showcasing grant accomplishments could raise awareness of the project to a broader audience. Those interviewed suggested that the Library develop a Web site that featured research and grant initiatives.

Several key findings emerged from this assessment. Historical trends in Library grant funding were identified, along with areas where the Library is positioned to enhance grant efforts. Library faculty and staff identified core organizational issues that were perceived as obstacles to pursuing external funding to support research and innovative service development. The analysis revealed that faculty view grant opportunities as having extraordinary value within their careers and for the institution. Finally, this work revealed a need for the Library to cultivate an up-and-coming cadre of faculty and professional staff who can transform key research questions into compelling proposals. As part of this effort, several changes were made, including the development of professional forums aimed at faculty and staff who are interested in and ready to pursue external funding, the creation of a blog aimed at recognizing the research accomplishments of library professionals, and the institution of more frequent and consistent communication about grant and research opportunities.

These data support a number of findings. First, as an organization, the Library now has a baseline of data about grant challenges and successes. As a result of this analysis the Library has a clear idea of the number and thematic scope of grants received annually, as well as their strategic value to the institution. Data were generated that describe in detail the breakdown of grants by strategic focus and funder. The Library now has a method to assess changes over time that result in successes, and to pinpoint areas in which it ought to pursue future growth. For example, the steady stream of substantial grants awarded to the Library's Mortenson Center for International Library

Programs to support international leadership training programs served as a strong indicator of the success of the Mortenson program in the area of international library leadership training. Similarly, several grants have been awarded to support the evaluation of federated search services, which has enabled the Library to develop strong expertise in this area. The analysis also enabled us to identify areas where the Library could consider seeking external funding to augment existing programs that could be of interest to the broader research library community. Two such areas included the assessment of user-focused services, and international reference service.

Improving these measures is important to the Library, especially as it increases support to librarians who pursue grants to address institutional priorities. The Library is reviewing the way it supports grant projects, so that it can enhance the success of future proposals. This assessment is also leading to opportunities that address people's concerns and obstacles to success. The Library implemented an internal review process to provide librarians with timely feedback on grant proposals. The Office of the Associate University Librarian for Research worked with the Library's Research and Publication Committee to organize workshops on grant-writing for librarians and professional staff. One workshop involved experienced grant-writers who discussed the positioning of their research to obtain grant funds. A second workshop provided information on how to apply for internal competitive opportunities and introduced other campus resource units that support research. The Library also implemented a blog called "Recognizing Library Excellence" that promotes the research of the Library's faculty and professional staff, posting periodic updates on publications, presentations, research grants, and professional awards (Recognizing Excellence at the University of Illinois Library).

Further strategies for supporting proposal writing include more presentations and Web documentation on grant preparation and

identification of grants to support strategic needs. Two workshops were presented as part of the Library's Savvy Researcher series for graduate students and faculty, focusing on grant resources and search strategies for identifying funding opportunities. This material was expanded into a LibGuide on grants, fellowships, and scholarships that presents tools for finding grants and resources for writing successful proposals (Grants, Fellowships and Scholarships LibGuide).

The issues raised by librarians and staff in the interviews helped to inform daily operations as well as strategic planning. New ideas that are incubated in grant projects have the potential to shape strategic directions. The National Science Foundation's Digital Library Initiative Phase 1 program spawned numerous creative developments, including the creation of Google. Areas that are targeted for strategic development, either in a single library or within a large professional organization like the ARL, can serve as guideposts for further exploration supported by grant funding.

The Library has several long-standing internal competitive grant programs that support research, publication, and innovation, and serve to seed external grant proposals. The Library makes available approximately \$30,000 annually that is awarded on a competitive basis to librarians in support of research and publication, juried by the Research and Publication Committee. Further, the Library supports an Innovation fund that seeds the development of innovative ideas and programs. The Library's virtual reference system—the only tool that enables management of geographically dispersed virtual reference—was developed with seed funds from the Innovation fund. The campus also supports research initiatives with funding for both research and travel, for which librarians are eligible to compete. These funds provide avenues for librarians to develop initiatives that can leverage external funding into large-scale demonstration or research projects. The analysis prompted us to recognize

the important bridge role that such a group can play in an organization to assist a researcher in moving from a local idea to an externally-vetted and funded research initiative.

Conclusion

As a result of this assessment, the Library increased its efforts to provide effective internal support in the proposal preparation process, including help with budgets, support documentation, and the review of grant proposal narratives. Several changes were initiated based on the feedback from the data analysis and the interviews. These included: collaboration with the Library Research and Publication Committee to develop and offer forums to engage more Library professionals in initiating grant proposals; developing workshops through public-facing programs; establishing a library blog that recognizes research and professional accomplishments; developing a LibGuide that focuses on identifying grant opportunities; and providing reviews of grant proposals prior to submission.

The most important outcome of the assessment was that it revealed the need for the Library to support grant efforts as an integral component of the research process. Although it appears obvious in retrospect, the assessment enabled the Library to integrate support for grants into a more cohesive research infrastructure than it had previously supported. This evaluation of grants awarded to the Library identified trajectories of funding in different areas, and opportunities that grants provide to librarians. It was clear from the interviews that librarians view grants as significant milestones in their research and program-building activities. The feedback from the interviews revealed additional ways to support funded research projects after they are awarded. Periodic meetings including the PI and other project staff, the Library's Manager for Research, and the Associate University Librarian for Research provide opportunities to review progress, confirm or revise goals, and to review the

budget and spending rate of the project. Participants in the interviews suggested that it was important for the Library to recognize the efforts of those engaged in grant activities by communicating systematically the outcomes and successes to a broad audience. The analysis and the interviews also identified areas where the Library could stimulate the development of new programs services, or new areas of research. This analysis was a key factor in the Library's decision to re-shape the position description of the Library and Information Science Librarian, incorporating substantive responsibilities for research support services into this role. Continued monitoring of these data points, and periodic interviews with investigators are ongoing organizational goals.

The review and analysis of the Library's grants program has proven valuable for the Library's institutional practices, and this assessment may also inform other institutions' initiatives with grant-writing. It can serve as a model to other academic and research libraries interested in two areas: 1) utilizing quantitative methods to understand and track the past and current trends related to research interests and grant funding and 2) using quantitative and qualitative data to design support systems for those in the Library seeking grants.

References

- Cuillier, C., & Stoffle, C. J. (2011). Finding Alternative Sources of Revenue. *Journal of Library Administration*, 51(7-8), 777-809.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2011.601276>
- Grants, Fellowships and Scholarships: Find funding support for your research or studies—A guide aimed at faculty, researchers, and students. In *LibGuides @ University of Illinois Library* Retrieved 1 June 2015 from:
http://uiuc.libguides.com/content.php?p_id=334382&search_terms=grants

- Herkovic, A. (2004). Proposals, grants, projects and careers: A strategic view for libraries. *Library Management*, 25(8), 376-380.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/01435120410562862>
- Lakos, A., & Phipps, S. (2004). Creating a culture of assessment: A catalyst for organizational change. *portal: Libraries & the Academy*, 4(3), 345-361. Retrieved 1 June 2015 from:
http://muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/portal_libraries_and_the_academy/v004/4.3lakos.pdf
- Landau, H. B. (2011). *Winning Library Grants: A Game Plan*. Chicago: American Library Association.
- Mook, C. (2004). *ARL SPEC Kit 283: Grant Coordination*. Washington, DC: Association of Research Libraries.
- “Recognizing Excellence at the University of Illinois Library,” Retrieved 1 June 2015 from: <http://publish.illinois.edu/library-excellence/>
- Taylor, C. (2010). Thinking out of the box: Fundraising during economic downturns. *Serials Librarian*, 59(3-4), 370-383.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03615261003623120>
- Zambare, A. (2004). The grant-writing process: A learning experience. *College & Research Libraries News*, 65(11), 673-676.