

# Getting a Grant from DHS University Programs: A View from the Trenches



Office of University Programs  
Science and Technology Directorate

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# Why have this workshop?

1. Describe new initiatives and competitions
2. Clarify intent and process
3. Improve quality of proposals
4. Make it easier on applicants to be successful



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# University Programs Competitions

- **Centers of Excellence**
  - COE Competition – Periodically (see next slide)
  - Quarterly Competition – Quarterly, if funded
  - **NEW** University Access Contract – 2009
  - TSCOE Competition – April (approx.)
- **Education**
  - Scholars and Fellows – November (ORISE)
  - Career Development Grants – November
  - DHS Summer Internships – November (ORISE)
- **Minority Serving Institutions**
  - MSI Scientific Leadership Awards – November
  - Summer Research Teams – November (ORISE)



| COE Timeline                                 | Research Focus   | S&T Division Affiliation           | FY07  | FY08   | FY09                                    | FY10  | FY11                     | FY12                      |
|--|--|------------------------------------|---|--|---|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| IDS-UACs                                     | Mathematical analysis                                      | Command, Control, Interoperability | Existing IDS-UACs<br>Existing RVACs                       |  | Command, Control & Interoperability COE |   |                          |                           |
| RVACs  | Visualization, Analytics,                                  |                                    |   |  |   |   |                          |                           |
| Natural Disasters                            | Natural Disasters and Emergency Management                 | Infrastructure/ Geophysical        |   | Natural Disasters, Coastal Infrastructure and Emergency Mgt. COE |   |   |                          |                           |
| NCFPD (UMN)                                  | Food Safety  | Chem/Bio                           | NCFPD   |  | Re-competed Food Security COE           |   |                          |                           |
| FAZD (TAMU)                                  | Animal Disease   |                                    | FAZD  |  | Re-competed Agricultural Security COE   |   |                          |                           |
| CAMRA (MSU)                                  | Microbial Risk Assessment                                  |                                    | CAMRA   |  |   |   |                          |                           |
| CREATE (USC)                                 | Risk and Economics   | Analysis and Operations/HSI        | CREATE  | CREATE Extension Period  |   | Recompeted Risk, Economics and Systems Analysis COE |                          |                           |
| Explosives                                   | Explosives Detection and Countermeasures                   | Explosives                         | Explosives Detection, Mitigation and Response COE         |  |   |   |                          | Recompeted Explosives COE |
| START (U. of MD)                             | Social Science and Terrorism Studies                       | Human Factors                      | START   | START Extension Period   |   |   | Recompeted Terrorism COE |                           |
| Maritime Island & Remote/Extreme Environment | Security and Safety in Island & Remote/Extreme Environment | Borders & Maritime                 | Maritime Island & Remote/Extreme Environment Security COE |  |   |   |                          |                           |
| PACER (JHU)                                  | Catastrophic Response                                      | Infrastructure/ Geophysical        | PACER   |  | PACER Extension Period                  |   |                          |                           |
| Border Security and Immigration              | Borders and Maritime                                       | Borders & Maritime                 | Border Security and Immigration COE                       |  |   |   |                          |                           |
| Transportation Security COE                  | Transportation Security Research and Training              | Multiple                           |   | Transportation Security COE                                      |   |   |                          |                           |

# The S&T Grant Process

- Research Questions = priorities of S&T divisions and DHS components
- Ideas from other sources, e.g., SLA combination of early career awards and scholarships/fellowships from MSI workshop participants
- External peer review for quality and responsiveness. Reviewers suggested by divisions, components and from a database of SMEs. Conflicts eliminated.
- Internal S&T review for relevance and fit with existing portfolio
- Site visits if needed
- Recommendation for Selection
- Negotiations and Paperwork
- Award



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# At the reviews

- **Peer (External) Review**
  - Peer review process can not be challenged.
  - Peers anonymous
  - Rating system: 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent).
  - Means and medians
  - **Rating less than 3 unfundable.** Cutoff sometimes higher.
  - Comments = points to negotiate
- **Internal SME Review**
  - Same rating system
  - Fit with portfolios (if research) and gaps
  - If COE, suggestions how the finalists can fit together
  - Suggest points to negotiate



# Characteristics of a Successful UP Proposal

- Is responsive: answers the questions asked in the FOA
- Explains clearly what the applicant will do – approach, methods, data
- Aligns with the evaluation criteria
- Is high quality scientifically or for education
- Does not duplicate other COE, S&T or Federal Project
- Has a team qualified do the job
- Has institutional capabilities
- Identifies outcomes, end users and measures of success
- Contains only requested information
- Well written – organized so it is easy to understand - no typos, grammatical errors



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# Some things to remember

- Our continued existence depends on being responsive to customer needs
- Your success is our success
- S&T knows what questions it needs to answer. Do not propose something different or only tangentially related.
- We ask a lot from S&T staff – all the time. Make reviews as easy as possible.
- Make life easy for GFAD – learn the process and requirements
- Still a work in progress for some FOAs



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