The Power of Collaboration

Collaboration: a word that generally causes professionals in all fields to cringe and run far, far away. However, it is valued and encouraged for a reason, and may be a distinguishing factor that sets your proposal apart from others, and makes it easier on you in the long run.

Collaboration can be with another professional, with a separate department, institution, or academic community. Whomever you decide to collaborate with can lend a supportive hand in terms of research assistants and idea-persons, thinkers, and brainstormers.

Collaboration also helps to identify your research proposal as one that will benefit a larger portion of the community, thus increasing its value and necessity because it involves more professionals from different fields, as well as students of different majors.

Considerations when Collaborating

- **Organize an efficient working team:** identify each individual’s academic strengths and what part of the project/research he or she is most passionate about, and delegate accordingly.

- **Distribute tasks:** make sure that each project member has a specific role within the project that he or she is comfortable with and understands clearly. State what needs to be done, by when, and how in as concise of terms as possible. Clear instructions assure team members that they will not be doing needless work, or going head-to-head with another project member, creating a comfortable and efficient work environment for all.

- **Develop a firm schedule:** discuss with project members their ideal dates of completion, and set a timeline for everyone to follow from the very beginning. Give your team plenty of time for revision and evaluation while still attempting to stick to the deadline as closely as possible.

- **Remember:** the more organized a group project is from the very start the more efficient and effective a group functions overall. Give ample opportunities for constructive criticism, explain all tasks simply and clearly, and allow team members to develop their own rhythm for working.

*Information found on nasf.gov