

CDI PROPOSAL WRITING

organized by
Sally Koutsoliotas

Workshop Summary

AIM hosted a 3-day workshop, December 17–19, 2007, intended to assist groups planning to submit to the new *NSF Cyber-Enabled Discovery and Innovation Program*. The purpose of this workshop was to bring teams of researchers to AIM to plan and prepare their pre-proposal submission to the program, which was due about three weeks later. The pre-proposal document was to follow from the Letter of Intent which was due on November 30, 2007. Consequently, this workshop was timed to occur shortly after the submission of the Letter Of Intent and the end of the academic year.

The purpose of AIM's CDI workshop was to provide groups of researchers the resources necessary to plan, prepare, and write a competitive CDI pre-proposal. To accomplish this, AIM assembled a set of facilitators who worked with each team on an individual, hands-on basis. In addition to working with facilitators who are experienced proposal writers and reviewers, Al Thaler, a Program Ocer from the Division of Mathematical Sciences of the National Science Foundation was present to offer assistance, both technical and advisory, about the specific details of this new CDI initiative.

The workshop was a combination of individual team meetings to discuss specifics of their proposal and more general informational sessions from both the facilitators and the NSF representative. There was a focus on addressing the essential elements of the CDI program, planning a collaborative long-term project, the preparation of the budget, etc. We scheduled a substantial amount of time committed to writing, with the goal of having a draft of at least the first two pages of the 6-page pre-proposal prepared by mid-afternoon of the second day. (To accommodate this schedule, a box-lunch was planned for the second day.) Drafts were to be copied and distributed to all participants for review later in the day. At the end of the second day was a mock panel discussion where all proposals were reviewed and discussed.

A comment from a participant is presented here:

This rocks; I expected to only stay 1 day or even 1/2 a day, but kept coming back for more, not wanting to miss the next activity. The feedback from AIM staff is so constructive and they give so many ideas I'd never have thought of, and they come up and approach us. Even if I did not know I had questions, they would come up and tell me some questions I have and then I realize I need guidance. And there they are! That they read anything you have or talk through ideas with you is awesome. I also like the whole idea of the workshop as a retreat for the co-PI's. Hearing exactly what CDI is key. Al Thaler is awesome. His presentation was very clear. The AIM staff is so talented at drawing people out, acting as a good mirror for ideas, bringing up needed

structure/big picture/mass appeal for the proposal. Having to be accountable (not just for time, but opinions, and actual writing) to a variety of people so early on in the writing process is so valuable. Thank you. Having to verbalize and write everything concretely is a great exercise and get instant feedback. I wish I had done something like this for every grant I've written. I like all the resources here and the space.