



# Bringing the Funder to Campus:

## Tips for Hosting Site Visits and Campus-based Networking Days

Amy Carroll, Brown University  
Susan Gomes, Harvard University  
Marley Bauce, Columbia University



# Overview

- Campus Visits
- Site Visits
- Visit Motivations and Goals
- Campus and Site Visitors
- Challenges
- Case Studies: DARPA, NEH, NSF
- Common Themes

# Types of Research Events

- Campus Visits
- Site Visits

# What is a *Campus Visit*?

- The institution explores potential matches between their research interests and those of the sponsor
- Can be proactive networking, not tied to an RFP
- A vehicle to develop an institutional relationship with a sponsor
- Can be initiated by the sponsor or the university

# Why Should I Host a Campus Visit?

- Develops an *institutional* relationship with sponsors
  - Institutional relationships are different than individual PI relationships
- Helps the institution secure information not publicly available
- Raises the sponsor's institutional awareness
- Raises PIs' awareness of the sponsor
- Benefits PIs with research development support in establishing sponsor relationships (logistics, strategic planning, branding)
- Campus visits are a tool in the research development toolkit

# What is a *Site Visit*?

- **After You Apply:** A sponsor evaluates you in-person, *alongside* evaluating a written proposal
- A formal evaluation stage tied to an RFP
- The sponsor may notice *everything*, including phenomena not under your control

# Why Should I Host a *Site Visit*?

- Required by the sponsor

# Visit Motivations and Goals

- Is your project cutting-edge, innovative, and potentially high-impact?
  - Science
  - *Non-Science*: Administrative Infrastructure, Outreach, Education, etc.
- Does your PI team possess sufficient expertise?
- Does your community possess the necessary infrastructure to administer the project?

## **Goals**

1. Showcase your research strengths
2. Develop institutional and PI relationships with the sponsor
3. Demonstrate competency
4. *Optional*: Showcase your non-science strengths (infrastructure, outreach, partnerships)

# Who Might Visit Your Campus?

National Science Foundation	National Institutes of Health	Department of Defense	Department of Energy	Other
Engineering Research Center	C Series: Research Construction Programs (C06)	Multidisciplinary University Research Initiative	Computational Materials Sciences	National Endowment for the Humanities
Partnerships in International Research and Education	G Series: Resource Programs (G20)	DARPA Special Initiatives	Energy Frontiers Research Centers	NIST: National Network for Manufacturing Innovation
Science and Technology Centers	P Series: Research Program Projects and Centers (P30, P50, P60)	Regional Federal Laboratories	Advanced Research Projects Agency – Energy	National Nanotechnology Initiative
Research Traineeship Program	T and F Series: Research Training and Fellowships (T32, T34)			IARPA Special Initiatives
Materials Research Science and Engineering Center	U Series: Cooperative Agreements (U19, U54)			
Innovation Corps				

\*The above are examples of potential visitors. This list is not exhaustive.



# Unique Challenges

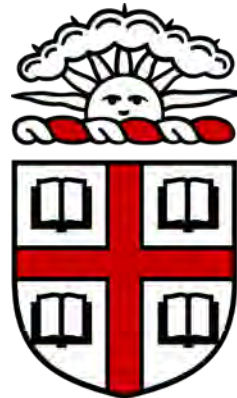
<u>Both (Campus and Site Visits)</u>	<u>Pre-Application Campus Visits</u>	<u>Post-Application Site Visits</u>
Corralling Internal Groups (Faculty, Administrators, Students, Leadership)	Anticipating Funder Expectations	Extremely Complex Logistics
Motivating External Partners (Community Organizations, Industry, Schools, Governments)	Staying on Target	Unpredictability, and Being Evaluated for Factors Not Under Your Control
Setting and Adhering to Deadlines	Equal Treatment of PIs	Branding and Communications
Day-Of Unexpected Delays	Few Rules and Minimal Guidance	Following All Rules Following Many (Many) Rules
		Stress-Induced Lassitude

# Today's Presentation

- Case Studies:
  1. Campus Visits from DARPA (Brown University)
  2. Campus Visits by the NEH (Harvard University)
  3. Site Visits from the NSF (Columbia University)
- Focus on highlighting research and organization, *not compliance*
- Summary of experience, then practical recommendations
- Questions at the very end

# Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency Campus Visits

Amy Carroll, Director of Research Development  
Office of the Vice President for Research  
Brown University



# Overview

- DARPA Overview
- Sample Agenda
- Setting Goals
- Agency Personnel Selection
- Faculty Participant Selection
- Preparations
- Day-Of
- Timely Follow-Up



# DARPA Overview

*“Creating Breakthrough Technologies for National Security”*

- Funding mechanisms:
  - 1. Seedling
  - 2. Program
- How to get funding:
  - 1. Talk to program officer
  - 2. Respond to Office-wide BAA
  - 3. Respond to program BAA



# Campus Visit Sample Agenda

- Breakfast with senior research officer, deans
- Seminar
- One-on-one meetings
- Lunch
- Group discussion
- One-on-one meetings
- Dinner/depart



# Setting Goals

1. Expose faculty to new agency or program
2. Discuss specific research proposal
3. Showcase institutional strength
4. Collect strategic intelligence
5. Many others....



# Agency Personnel Selection

- Follow new program managers
- Follow agency priorities, strategic plans
- Alumni connections
- Faculty self-identify





# Faculty Participant Selection

- Institutional priority
- Agency priority
- Faculty self-identify



# Campus Visit Example: DARPA – BTO

- Faculty self-identify
- New agency/program
- Specific proposal
- Strategic intelligence



# Recommendations

and Brown's Hard-Earned Lessons



# Preparations

- Determine date and prepare logistics
- Confirm faculty participants
- RD staff prepare agendas
- Faculty prepare white papers
- Send reminders with agenda to all participants
- Confirm logistics
- Hard copies of agendas, white papers
- Cell phone numbers



# Day-Of

- Ask strategic questions
- Take detailed notes
- Be ready for anything



# Timely Follow-Up

- Build time in your schedule day after event for compiling notes and initiating follow-up
- Don't lose momentum



# National Endowment for the Humanities Campus Visits

Susan Gomes, Director of Research Development and Strategy  
Faculty of Arts and Sciences  
John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences  
Harvard University



# Overview

- NEH Overview
- Sample Program
- Setting Goals
- Pre-Program Planning
- Day of Event
- Post-Program Follow-Up



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE

**Humanities**



# NEH Overview

- One of the largest funders of humanities in the United States
- Supports research, education, preservation, and public programs in the humanities
- Organizational structure
- How to identify the appropriate funding mechanism:  
<https://www.neh.gov/grants/match-your-project>



# NEH Campus Visit: Program Rationale

1. Raise awareness
2. Increase grantsmanship knowledge
3. Facilitate one-on-one meetings with faculty and program officers
4. Others....



# Campus Visit Sample Agenda

- Day 1: Morning program; NEH Program Officer (PO) presentation; panelist presentations
- Day 1: Noon Luncheon with PO and panelists
- Day 1: Afternoon program; one-on-one meetings
- Day 2: One-on-one meetings with researchers and community organizations



# Agency Personnel Selection

- Identify programs of interest
- Follow agency priorities, strategic plans
- Alumni connections
- Build on existing faculty relationships with program officers



# Faculty Panelist Selection

- Previous award winners
- State Humanities Councils
- Previous reviewers



# Recommendations

and Harvard's Hard-Earned Lessons



# Pre-Program Planning

- Determine date of event
- Visit potential site locations
- Select and invite panelists and participants
- Prepare program agenda/one-on-one meeting agenda
- Send reminders with agenda to all participants; talking points to panelists
- Confirm logistics
- Hard copies of agendas
- Cell phone numbers



# Day-Of

- Run through program
- Make sure event location/room is clearly marked; place event poster outside of event in a visible location
- Have staff on hand to greet attendees; caterers
- Designate a note taker; designate someone responsible for tech issues
- Designate a photographer to include pictures of event in RD newsletter or annual report





# Timely Follow-Up

- Build time in your schedule post-event for compiling notes and determining action items
- Promptly write thank you notes to PO, panelists
- De-brief with team members
- Send written brief evaluation form following event (Qualtrix); prepare event report



# National Science Foundation Site Visits

Marley Bauce, Manager of Research Initiatives  
Office of the Executive Vice President for Research  
Columbia University in the City of New York



# Overview

- Engineering Research Center Overview
- Agenda
- Recommendations
  - Listen to the Sponsor
  - Assemble your Administrative Team
  - Identify your Resources
  - Practice!
  - Overestimate
  - Murphy's Law
  - Document, Anticipate, Appreciate



# NSF Engineering Research Center

- Interdisciplinary research hubs that require:
  - One lead and multiple partner universities, with seamless integration
  - “*Close partnership with industry*”
  - Novel undergraduate, graduate, and international education components
  - Multiple administrative infrastructures:
    - Strategic Research Plan
    - Diversity Plan and Culture of Inclusion
    - Three Education Plans (Pre-College, Undergraduate, and Graduate)
    - Workforce Development Plan
    - Innovation Ecosystem
- Provide \$15 – 20 million for five years, with possibility of renewal
  - Required to show industry *and* institutional support
  - Annual post-award site visit



# NSF Engineering Research Center

- 17 current centers spanning four themes:
  - Advanced Manufacturing
  - Microelectronics, Sensing, and Information Technology
  - Energy, Sustainability, and Infrastructure
  - Biotechnology and Health Care
  
- NSF ERC 15-589:
  - 170+ pre-proposals
  - 17 full proposals
  - “*Close to 9 or 10*” pre-award site visits
    - Columbia’s site visit: October 31<sup>st</sup> – November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016



# ERC Site Visit Organization

- Who comes to your campus?
  - 4-5 NSF Program Directors
  - 5-10 Site Visitors
    - Disciplinary Experts
    - Outreach and Industry Experts (Without Disciplinary Expertise)
  - Site Visitors may not have previously evaluated the proposal

## **Available Guidance Materials**

Your Proposal

Agenda

ERC Best Practices Manual

Current ERC Websites

Word of Mouth



# ERC Site Visit Agenda

## First Day

- Executive Sessions
- Overview of the Center (Presented by Director and Deputy Director)
- Research Program by Thrust (Presented by Thrust Leaders and others)
- Lab Tours and Test Beds (Optional)
- University and Pre-College Education
- Industrial/Practitioner Collaboration and Private Meeting with Industry
- University Officials
- Executive Session
- Evening Work for the Site Visit Team and the ERC

## Second Day

- Breakfast and Discussions
- Site Visit Report Writing



# Recommendations

and Columbia's Hard-Earned Lessons





# Listen to the Sponsor

- Be creative, but... demonstrate your commitment to following rules
- Remember: The sponsor must objectively compare your team to other candidates – make this easy to do
- Read and re-read (and re-re-read) everything the sponsor provides... then read it again one week before the event
- Translate the long RFP and associated documents into an abbreviated checklist of “*Must Do*” and “*Should Do*” items
  - Logistics checklist
  - “Substance” checklist



# Assemble Your Administrative Team

- Critical Planning Roles:
  1. **Principal Investigator:** Scientific Expertise, Liaise with Sponsor
  2. **Senior Administrator:** Liaise with Internal and External Leadership
  3. **Operations:** Organize Room, Catering, IT/AV, and Travel Logistics
  4. **Finance:** Release Funds, Route Approvals, Liaise with Central
  5. **Communications and Branding:** Internal Announcements, Web Development, Graphic Design, Presentation Development
    - MB's role in ERC Site Visit, plus "handler" and oversight of Operations and Finance role



# Assemble Your Administrative Team

- Set Meeting Frequency
  - Columbia and partners met biweekly
  - Switched to semiweekly during final month
- Extras Needed Day-Of
  - Registration Volunteers (3-4)
  - “Walkers” (to transport VIPs to cars, meeting rooms, etc.) (1-2)
  - Transcribers (1-2)
  - Timers (holding 5-, 3-, and 1-minute reminder cards) (1)
  - Firefighters (1-2)
  - **All participants must be familiar with the proposal narrative**



# Identify Your Resources

- What *Internal* Offices Need to Know?
  - Research Administration
  - President/Provost
  - Deans from Relevant School(s)
  - Communications and Outreach
  - Government Affairs
  - Finance
  - Events Management
  - Facilities
  - Public Safety/Security
  - Parking
- **Financial Commitment:** Columbia spent ~\$40k
  - Consistent with previous NORDP presentation's PIRE estimates
  - Ask for large amount upfront



# Identify Your Resources

- What *External* Groups Need to Be Leveraged?
  - Partners
    - Partner Universities
    - City, State, and/or Federal Government(s)
    - Middle Schools, High Schools, and Community Colleges
    - Not-for-Profit Institutions
  - Logistics
    - Web Developer?
    - Restaurant(s)
    - Hotel
    - Transportation Company



# Practice!

- Integrating all presentations is key
- Schedule *as many practice presentations as possible*
- Have practices attended by internal evaluators
  - Other PIs (preferably who participated in other Center Grants)
  - Staff: Research development, media relations, government affairs
- **Rule of Thumb:** The more dry-run presentations, the better
  - Schedule practices early and often while calendars are open
- Script detailed and complementary speeches for leadership



# Overestimate

- The Site Visit is *extremely* demanding
- Identify a “handler” – a staffer(s) who never leaves the sponsor
- Expect longer transportation time than needed
- Create a minute-by-minute of each portion of the event:  
Who is stationed where, carrying what, and who is on-call in case of an emergency
- More is more! The sponsor will appreciate attention to detail
- Benchmark experiences with friendly institutions



# Murphy's Law

- What *can* go wrong *will* go wrong
  - Avoid the psychological disadvantage
    - Example: Transportation
- Create Contingency Plans
  - *"If we are late, cut this"*
  - *"If someone goes missing, dispatch this person"*
  - *"If she falls ill, substitute him"*
- Stay calm → the sponsor will be judging your grace under pressure
  - *"If they can handle a Site Visit, they can handle the project"*





# Document, Anticipate, Appreciate

- Take photographs
- Designate administrators to translate the swaths of planning information into two condensed checklists:  
*“Must Do”* and *“Should Do”*
- Utilize institutional knowledge from prior Site Visits
- Involve internal colleagues who may plan future site visits
- Make friends with your program officer
- Care for your collaborators – thank you notes, dinner celebrations, gift certificates – to ensure their continued support and involvement
- Take time off post-event (!)



# Common Themes

Across All Three Presentations



# Common Themes

- Start Planning Early – Overestimate the Time Commitment
  - No Such Thing as “Too Much”
  - Arranging Logistics Will Take Twice as Long as You Think
- Send Too Many Internal Reminders
- Be Flexible, Be Resilient, and Create Contingency Plans
- Follow-Up Immediately – and Send Thank You Notes



# Common Themes

- Document: Note-Taking, Question Recording, Photographing
- Develop a “How To” Guide for Institutional Memory
  - Your *next* event likely won't be your last
  - Make sure this doesn't already exist!
- Know Your Sponsor
  - Campus Visits: Know Sponsor Funding Priorities... Time is Precious
  - Site Visits: Know the People Evaluating You
  - Do Your Homework; Read the RFP!
- Identify a Host Person



# Common Themes

- Know the Sponsor's Reimbursement and Gift Policy
  - Governments may not receive funds or complementary gifts **ever**.
    - No hotels or travel (or, they must be fully reimbursed)
    - Meals in pre-prepared and itemized invoices
    - No "thank you" gifts
    - No frills
  - State institutions may be exempt – just ask
- Have Fun! Be Enthusiastic!



# Questions?





