Mutual Mentorship Strategies:
Communicating to and with our Graduate Students

NORTHEASTERN ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATE SCHOOLS
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Meet the Knowledge-to-Action Team!

- **Faculty**: Mark Anderson, Shannon McCoy, Caroline Noblet, Linda Silka, , Mario Teisl, Professor, Economics
- **Ph.D. students**: Stacia Dreyer, Karen Hutchins, Bridie McGreavy, Hollie Smith
- **Master's students**: Colleen Budzinski, Kate Kirby, Tony Sutton, Meredith Titterington, Lindsay Utley
- **Undergraduate student**s: Amy Becker, Emily Lavoie, Lauren Thornbrough
- **High School students**: Andria Foster, Taylor Chasse

Presentation Overview

- Introduction to SSI and the K↔A Collaborative

- Mutual mentorship approach

- Professional development strategies

Maine's Sustainability Solutions Initiative

- Sustainability science research:
  - Engaged, interdisciplinary research on pressing sustainability problems

- Three-pronged approach:
  - Understanding SES
  - **Understanding & strengthening Knowledge ↔ Action**
  - Overcoming barriers to organizational innovation & interdisciplinary integration

- Key assumption: Team as **learning organization**

Sustainability Science

Social-Ecological Systems Research

Knowledge ↔ Action Research

Organizational Innovation Research

ecological ↔ economic ↔ social

K↔A

- Research designed to improve:
  - linkages between science and decision making
  - ability to collaborate
  - work across complex boundaries
  - prepare next generation of researchers

Mutual Mentorship

- Model that encourages the development of networks through which multiple people serve as mutual mentoring partners in non-hierarchical, collaborative relationships (Scorcinelli and Yun, 2007).
  - Integrative
  - Prioritizes people's strengths and experiences
  - Continuous model of learning

"It's that piece of humility that reminds you that you don't know everything"

What does a Mutual Mentorship look like?

- Collaborative & supportive
  - *"We bring people along as we go."*

- Based on respect for diverse knowledge
  - *"There's mutual respect among the parties so we don't have this hierarchy of faculty versus grad student."*
  - *"The structure moves through all levels in academe, meaning everyone is involved from professors to high school students. This provides nearly unlimited access to knowledge and experience that you don't see in other mentorship models"*

- *Effective decision making*
  - *"The system is relatively flat, creating a supportive and productive environment, but there is recognition of and respect for hierarchy, which fosters effective decision making."*
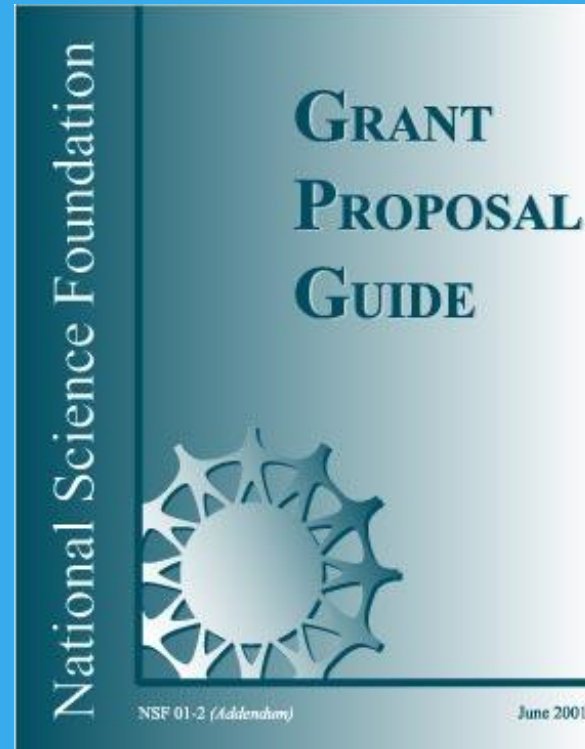
Collaborative Research

- Collaborative from start to finish
- Writing workshops
- Emphasis on co-presenting
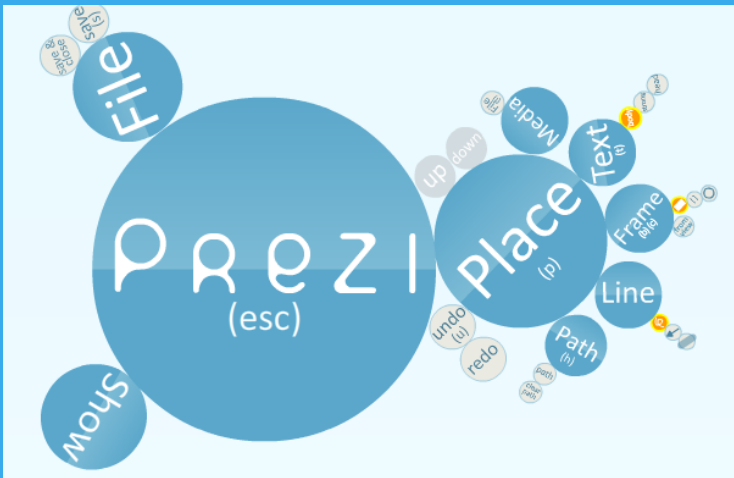- Co-authorship
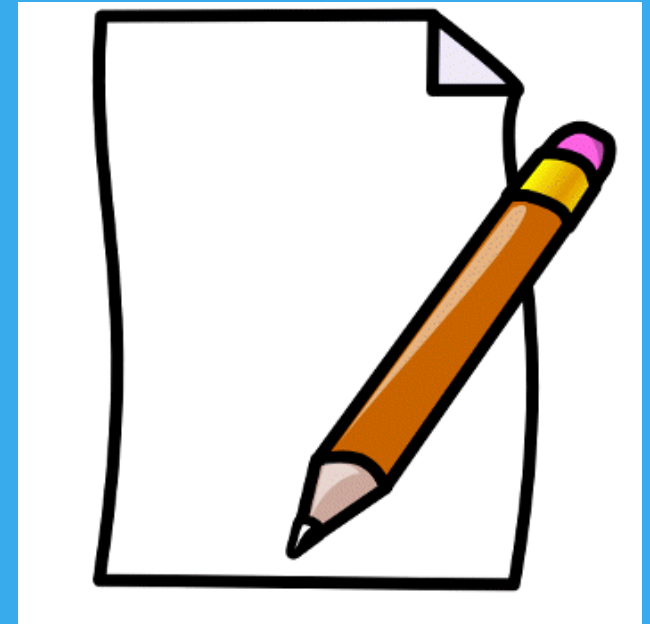
Grantsmanship

- Transparent conversations
- Early exposure
  - Internal
- Providing opportunities
  - External grants

National Science Foundation

GRANT
PROPOSAL
GUIDE

NSF 01-2 *(Addendum)*   June 2001

Technology

- **Team coordination**
  - Website with calendar
  - Bibliography linked to google docs
  - Dropbox as repository
  - "Hot copy" process
- **Technology training**
  - Prezi, SPSS, NVivo

Networking

- Conferences: Work the room motto!
- Visiting guest speakers
- Check-ins

Outcomes

- Personalized programs of study
- Preparation for graduate school & faculty positions
  - Skills, confidence, aspirations
- Explicit training in mentorship
  - Hollie Smith, UMaine Undergraduate Mentorship Award!
- Better problem solving, increased creativity
- Sense of empowerment
- Lots of papers, presentations, and grants!

Thank you!

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Special thanks to Scott Delcourt and Dan Sandweiss!