A Space Grant Manual of Operations

Vermont Space Grant Consortium
May P3 Session
Overview

• Part 1: Why did we make a Manual of Operations? What are the benefits and uses for a Manual?
• Part 2: Making the Manual; What should be included, and how much detail is useful?
• Part 3: Examples from the VTSGC Manual of Operations
A Combined 5 Years of Experience

VTSGC Director, 2019

VTSGC Program Administrator, 2022

Part 2: Making the Manual
Part 3: VT Examples
Benefits of a Manual

- In case of emergency… What if the Director falls off the horse?
- Apollo 13—having a manual on board saved the astronauts lives!
- Provides single-source information for all consortium-specific programs
- Articulates best practices—how the programs operate
- May be shared with other consortia
- Illustrates the complexity of the programs
Potential Downsides of a Manual

• Might limit flexibility
• Public release
• Needs regular updating
• “Anything you write may be used against you!”
Making the Manual: What to Include

• The primary goal of a Manual of Operations is to detail how our organization works to streamline program delivery, administrative tasks, future application development, and reporting.
Making the Manual: What to Include

- Research programs
- University programs
- K-12 programs
- Outreach programs
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- Research programs
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- K-12 programs
- Outreach programs
- Program assessment
- Re-budgeting and revision processes
- Consortium-specific strategic plans
- Consortium management practices
- Affiliation processes

Part 2: Making the Manual
Part 3: VT Examples
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- Past applications
- Mission, goals, and objectives
- Budget templates and examples

Part 2: Making the Manual
Part 3: VT Examples
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- Past applications
- Mission, goals, and objectives
- Budget templates and examples
- Reporting templates and examples
Making the Manual: How Much Detail

• As much as you, the author, want (or are willing) to provide!

• The manual isn’t a replacement for on-boarding; it’s a tool to help ease the process.
  • Doesn’t need every tiny step laid out, but should have enough detail that:

    someone familiar with a process can independently follow the manual

    or

    someone new to the process can get a useful overview that helps them ask informed questions as they become familiar
Making the Manual: How Much Detail

Research programs

- Program name & purpose (e.g., pilot research grant program)
- Award amount
- Award eligibility
- Solicitation process
- Review and selection process
- Program timeline
- Program management and reporting
Making the Manual: How Much Detail

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- Appendix: research program sample announcement
- Appendix: grant review template and instructions
- Appendix: sample decision letters
- Appendix: progress report template
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* each suggested strategy is paired with suggested metrics for success to help shape future S.M.A.R.T. goals
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Additional Appendices we’ve found useful to include

Appendix W: VTSGC Strategic Plan ................................................................. 93
  • Allows us to review the original strategic plan for the current award when making programmatic decisions

Appendix X: Staff Position Descriptions ....................................................... 96
  • Serves as a guide for preparing future hires

Appendix Y: Student Longitudinal Tracking Survey ....................................... 101
  • Allows us to review the data we receive and whether it is sufficient as we grow and refine programs
Thank you!!

That's all Folks!