

NOVA PRESIDENT OFFERS ADVICE ON OBTAINING ATE GRANTS

To presidents of community colleges that have not had Advanced Technological Education (ATE) grants, Dr. Anne M. Kress suggests they focus grant proposals on existing strong programs that meet regional workforce needs.

“Figure out what you’re really great at already and then remember that’s your superpower and go out and find some funding for that,” Kress said. She is president of [Northern Virginia Community College \(NOVA\)](#) and is chair of CCPI-STEM’s Northeast Regional Network. Kress was interviewed recently for CCPI-STEM’s forthcoming *Models that Work* publication.

As of December 2023, NOVA has been awarded 21 [National Science Foundation \(NSF\)](#) grants with a combined value of \$7.5 million. Kress attributes the many awards the college has received in recent years and the nine proposals submitted in 2023 to the synergy from the college starting NOVA SyTEMic, a STEM-focused center on its Manassas campus prior to her being hired, and key faculty and staff strategically pursuing grants that benefit students.



After a president develops a “heat map” of the college strengths, Kress said, “you need to build a structure that continually and consistently supports these individuals and sort of reaches down and says to other faculty members, ‘There’s a skill set here that you could develop.’”

To build a “coalition of the willing,” Kress suggested starting with small internal grants that faculty can obtain to enhance their programs; encouraging faculty to serve as reviewers for ATE and other NSF programs; and having faculty and staff talk to ATE principal investigators at nearby colleges about their projects.

Grants office personnel should notify faculty of grant opportunities well in advance of deadlines—ATE proposals are due in early October—and be able to explain the rules of particular grants and help shape grant proposals, which are written differently than academic papers.

“Writing these grants and administering these grants, it’s not easy,” Kress said, adding that the efforts of faculty and staff should be recognized by inviting those who obtain grant awards to present their work to the board of trustees and the president’s cabinet, and to feature them in college publications.

“A lot of this goes a long way to helping folks think, ‘I did this grant. Now I want to do another one because somebody understands exactly what it takes to make this work,’” she said.

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