

# How to Sell your Research Program to Different Sponsors



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## Expert Panel

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Consortium, Director of Research, Projects, and  
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**Frank Bailey, Ph.D.**

Professor and Director, Forensic Science Program

# Gregory Rushton, Ph.D.

co-Director, ORSP

# Problem Statement

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- I work in this specific area, only this specific program funds that kind of work
  - Over reliance/dependence on a single agency or solicitation
  - Solicitation cycle, competitiveness, frequent customer
  - Programmatic restrictions (time, budget, spending categories)

# Broadening perspectives

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- Think about broader impacts...what is the ultimate purpose/contribution of your scholarship to society? Human flourishing?
- Work backwards from sponsor mission to your broader impacts to your specific aims/goals
- Look at where peers in your field have been funded
- Look at who outside your field has been funded by programs you are interested in

# Cynthia Chafin, M.Ed.

Associate Director for Community Programs  
MTSU Center for Health and Human  
Services Sleep Research Consortium,  
Director of Research, Projects, and  
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# MTSU Center For Health And Human Services

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I AM *true* **BLUE**

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

# Mission, Vision, and Funding

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## **Vision:**

The Center for Health and Human Services will improve the health and well-being of Tennesseans and through multi-state partnerships, will impact health nationally.

## **Mission:**

The Center for Health and Human Services, through collaborative affiliations and partnerships, facilitates projects, programs, and research activities in public health issues of importance to Tennessee and to that of the nation, consistent with the mission and purpose of MTSU. Through collaboration with the Adams Chair of Excellence in Health Care Services, CHHS supports efforts to initiate and strengthen academic programs in health and human services to support workforce development and promote healthy communities.

## **Funding:**

- From 2000 – 2016, average annual operating budget of approximately \$402,000; 2021 annual operating budget of approx. \$1.1 million.
- Cumulatively since 1992, received over \$9 million for external research, projects, and programs that have reached all 95 TN counties as well as other states through multi-state partnerships.



# Current and Recent Research and Projects

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## **Current:**

Rural Communities Opioid Response Program – Planning and Implementation grants

STEMsational Ag: Virtual Farm (workforce development, STEM, agriculture, health)

Blue Raiders Drink Up: Healthy Choices for Healthy Students

(diabetes and obesity prevention)

Death Scene Investigation and Sudden and Unexplained Infant Death for First Responders  
and Health Professionals

Sleep Research

**Recent:** MTSU Mental Health First Aid, All Children Excelling (ACES) through a Network of  
Trained Providers, SPARK 2 Read (Sports, Play, Active Recreation for Kids), SMILE Smart for  
Dental Professionals (tobacco prevention)

# Funding Approaches and Strategies

- **Reflect** on greatest needs/gaps in research or of target population **and** availability of external dollars for those areas;
- **Reframe** the topic or issue and consider atypical funding sources;
- **Reframe** or expand the target audience of current or recent work;
- **Reimagine** partnerships and collaborators;
- **Recognize** and maximize campus resources in funding applications and work plan.



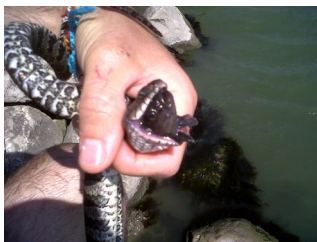
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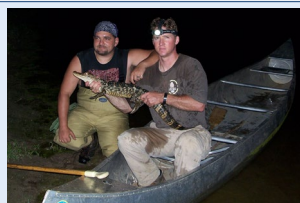


# Environmental Toxicology Dr. Frank C. Bailey's Laboratory Research Interests



## Effects of Mercury and Stress

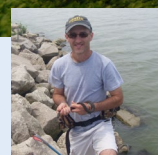
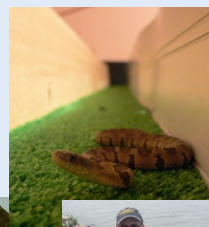
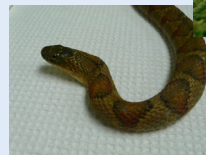
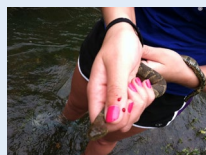
- Uptake and effects of mercury in reptiles
- Effects of acute stress on Cottonmouths and Northern Water Snakes



## A FEW OF THE THINGS WE DO IN OUR LABORATORY

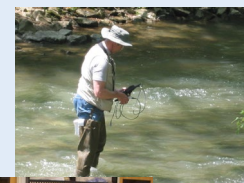
### Endocrine Disruption Studies

- Looking for "feminization" of Northern Water Snakes (*Nerodia sipedon*) in streams



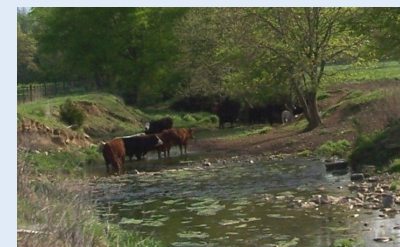
### Physical, Chemical, and Invertebrate Sampling

- For MS4 permit sampling
- For other 303d-listed streams



### Fecal Bacterial Source Tracking

- We use a genetic technique called polymerase chain reaction (PCR) to determine the source of fecal bacteria in streams



# Thinking About Opportunities for Funding

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- “Traditional” and non-traditional funding sources are both viable.
  - I have made a living mostly in the non-traditional area.
- To start down this path, I realized that I was “an expert” in some “things” (topics, areas of research, skills, etc).
- There are organizations (public and private) that need advice and the skills my lab has to offer.
- You are often “cheap” to hire compared to consulting firms, etc.
- You represent academia, so, believe it or not, your opinion is trusted and respected.
- Through discussions with my contacts, I will often find out what is most important to an agency before writing any proposals for funding.

# Action Items

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- What skills/knowledge do you have?
  - Don't sell yourself short....you have a terminal degree and know how to solve problems.
- What organizations, agencies, etc have need of your skills and abilities?
- Armed with this information (you are the expert), make contacts at local, regional, national levels.
  - These contacts can be made at meetings or through directly contacting individuals.
- Use your contacts!
  - It is not cheating to talk to and use your contacts to gain information!
- Even if you land a contract that is for a specific non-research problem, you can piggyback scientific questions onto the project if you choose to.

# Q & A

## **Do you have any questions?**

How many different agencies or programs are you looking to sell your ideas to?

How many different solicitations do you look at per year?

How many people outside your area do you know that you can connect your work to?