

Writing Compelling Proposals: Finding Your Formula

Jeremy Guinn

United Tribes Technical College

Director, Intertribal Research & Resource Center Director

TCUP Hub Co-PI

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UNITED TRIBES
TECHNICAL COLLEGE



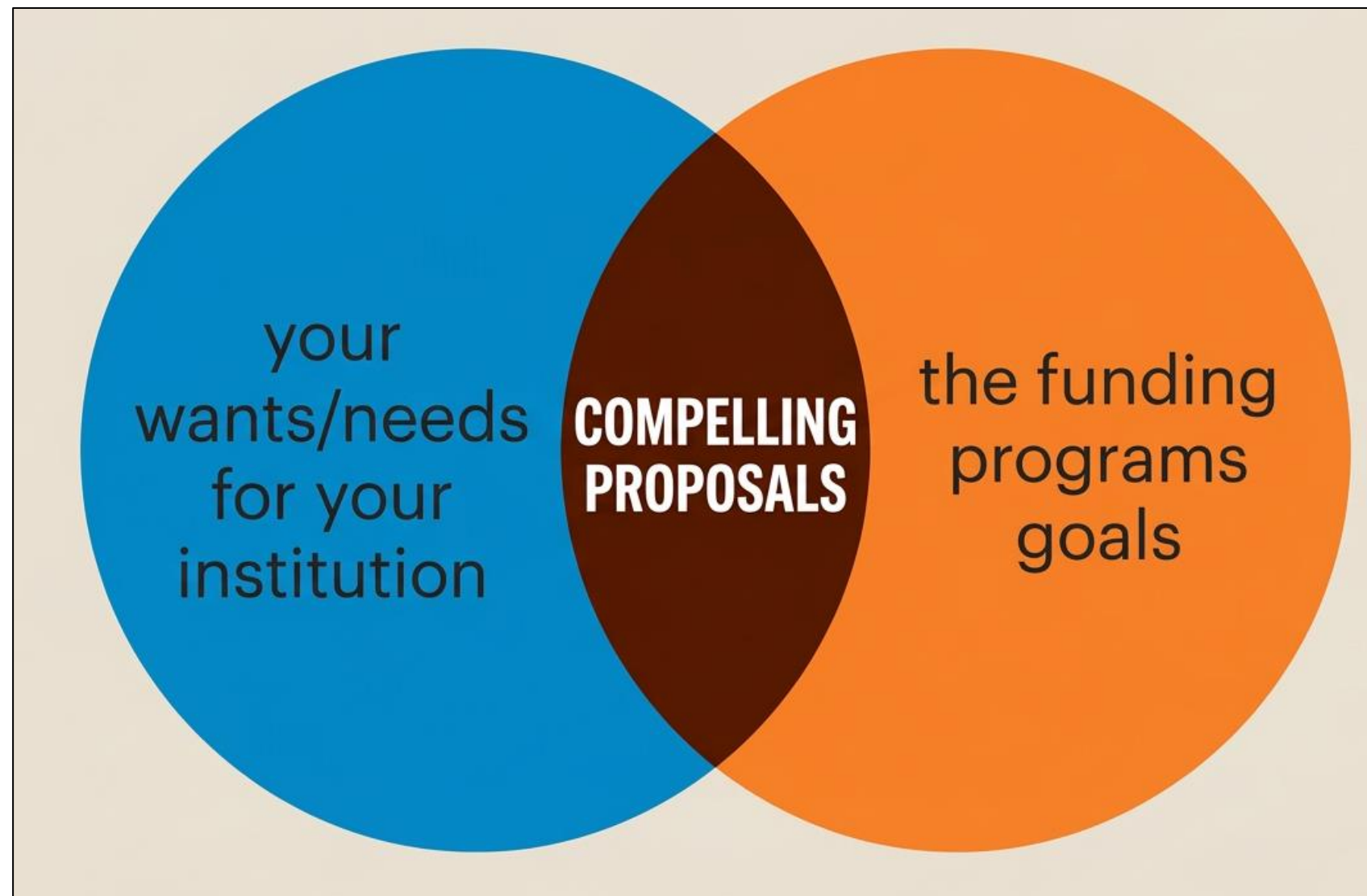
~~COMPETITION~~



COMPELLING

Best Fit

Make Your Proposal Compelling to the Program Officers



Their goals are your goals

They have objectives to meet.

They have constraints on what they are allowed to support.

Don't make it a stretch for them to fund you!

If your project does not help them reach their goals, then it is not fundable.

Goals of the TCUP Program?

Goals of Each Funding Strand?

How does your project help the PO reach their goals?

How will your project attain *institutional transformation*?

Finding your proposal writing formula

1. The Right Fit

2. Provide Context

Intro Section { 3. Define the Problem – Establish Need

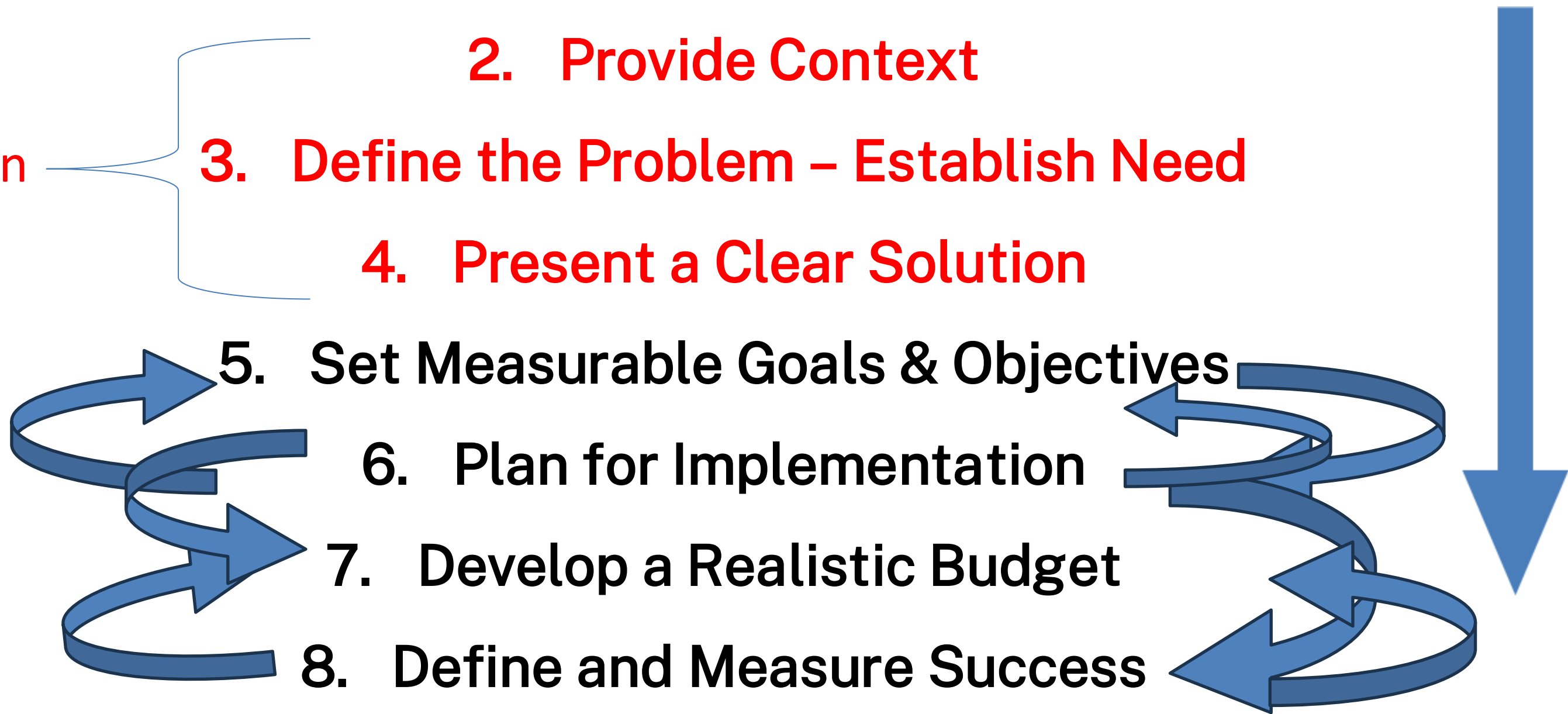
4. Present a Clear Solution

5. Set Measurable Goals & Objectives

6. Plan for Implementation

7. Develop a Realistic Budget

8. Define and Measure Success



Narrative Storytelling Issues

Provide Context

- First sentence: UTTC proposes to develop a summer math camp [*no context*]

Define the Problem – Establish Need

- UH West O'ahu has this and this and this and now wants to do this amazing thing [*no need established*]

Present a Clear Solution

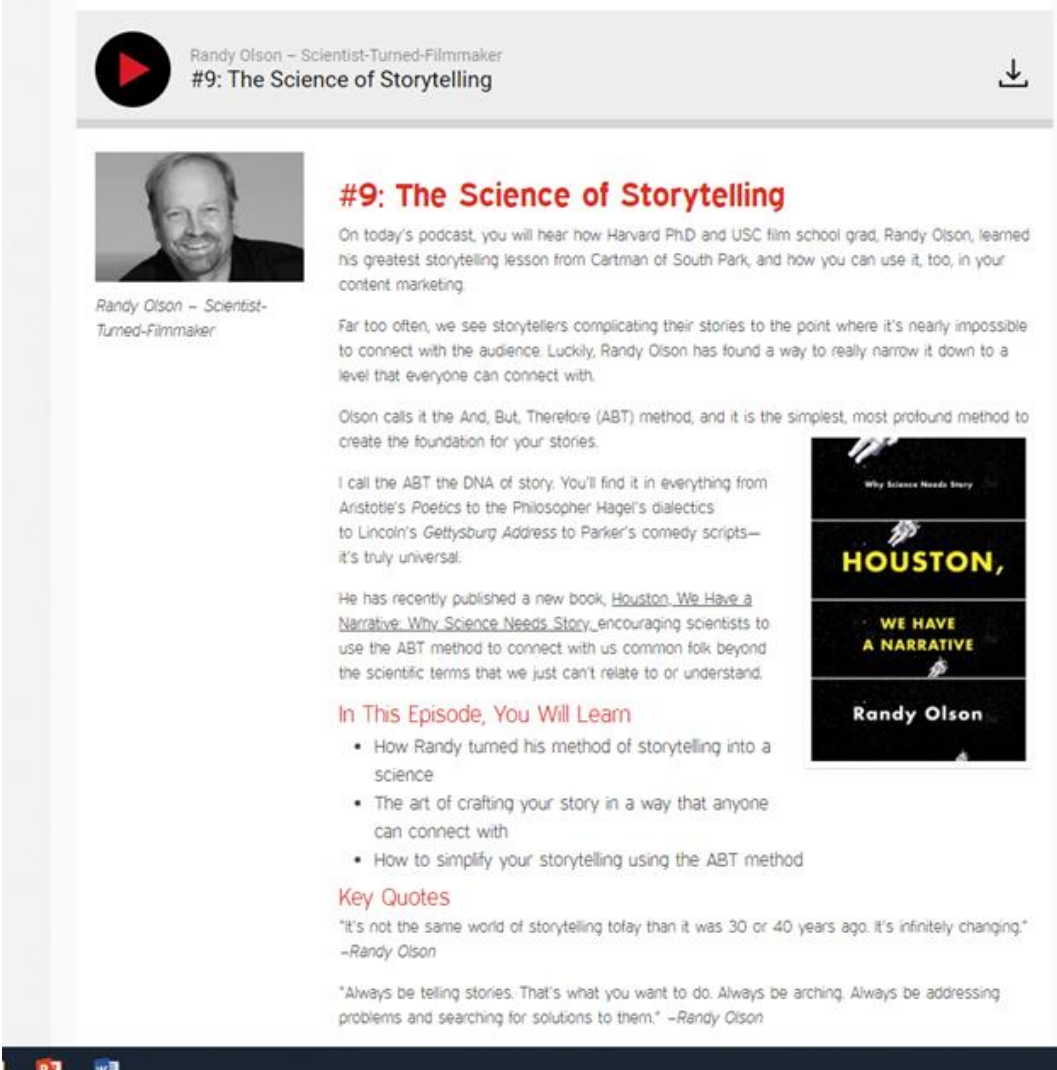
- We have amazing science students, but many don't return after summer, so we are going to start a winter break research project to improve their interest [*solution is not aligned with context or problem*]

Narrative Storytelling Framework

- Communicating science to the general public.
- Media training using narrative storytelling
- What does filmmaking have to do with writing a proposal?
- We are adapting this method for proposal writing!

Podcast

Randy Olson – Scientist-Turned-Filmmaker
#9: The Science of Storytelling



#9: The Science of Storytelling

On today's podcast, you will hear how Harvard PhD and USC film school grad, Randy Olson, learned his greatest storytelling lesson from Cartman of South Park, and how you can use it, too, in your content marketing.

Far too often, we see storytellers complicating their stories to the point where it's nearly impossible to connect with the audience. Luckily, Randy Olson has found a way to really narrow it down to a level that everyone can connect with.

Olson calls it the And, But, Therefore (ABT) method, and it is the simplest, most profound method to create the foundation for your stories.

I call the ABT the DNA of story. You'll find it in everything from Aristotle's *Poetics* to the Philosopher Hager's dialectics to Lincoln's Gettysburg Address to Parker's comedy scripts—it's truly universal.

He has recently published a new book, [Houston, We Have a Narrative: Why Science Needs Story](#), encouraging scientists to use the ABT method to connect with us common folk beyond the scientific terms that we just can't relate to or understand.

In This Episode, You Will Learn

- How Randy turned his method of storytelling into a science
- The art of crafting your story in a way that anyone can connect with
- How to simplify your storytelling using the ABT method

Key Quotes

"It's not the same world of storytelling today than it was 30 or 40 years ago. It's infinitely changing."
—Randy Olson

"Always be telling stories. That's what you want to do. Always be arching. Always be addressing problems and searching for solutions to them." —Randy Olson

Why Science Needs Story
HOUSTON, WE HAVE A NARRATIVE
Randy Olson

The **AND, BUT, THEREFORE (ABT)** Method of Storytelling, Filmmaking, and Proposal Writing

There was a girl, and she had a dog, and she rode a bike, and she lived on a farm with her auntie, and she had a pretty normal life.

A, A, A

There was a girl with a dog and she had a teacher and she had a pretty normal life, but one day a tornado came and whisked her away to a strange and magical land.

A, B

There was a girl and her dog and she had this mean teacher and she had a pretty normal life, but one day a tornado came and whisked her away to a strange and magical land; therefore, she had to find her way back home.

ABT

The **AND, But, THEREFORE** Method

- There was a boy who lived on a farm with his aunt **and** had to do chores **and** didn't get to play with his friends, **but** one day some droids arrive and the Empire kills his family; **therefore**, he has to fulfill his destiny and become a Jedi.
- We have an active science program **and** a student research program. **But**, faculty have high teaching loads, so research is limited to the summer. **Therefore**, we will hire full-time research faculty.
- Honda safety affects everyone commercial: <https://www.ispot.tv/ad/Zr4D/honda-safety-affects-everyone-t2>
- Randy Olson ABT Method: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkAM9noWjFk>

Finding your formula

1. The Right Fit

2. Provide Context

3. Define the Problem

4. Present a Clear Solution

5. Set Measurable Goals & Objectives

6. Show You Plan for Implementation

7. Develop a Realistic Budget

8. Define and Measure Success

- Supported by statistics, published literature, job reports, market analyses, etc.

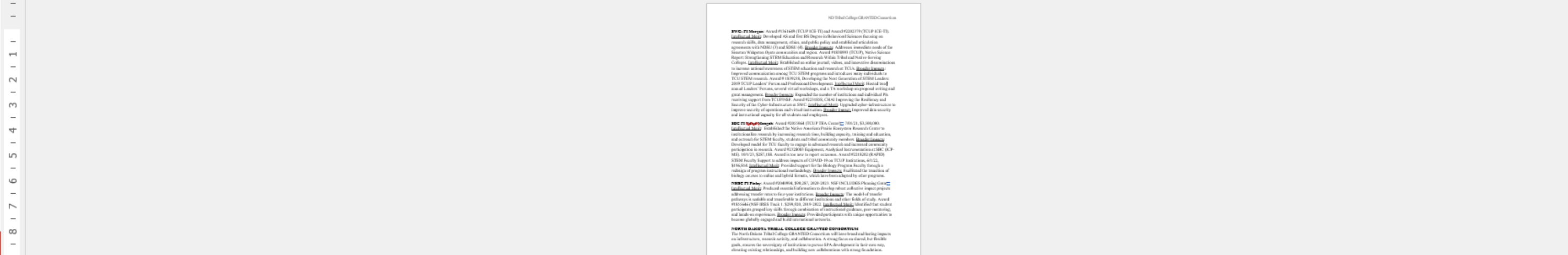
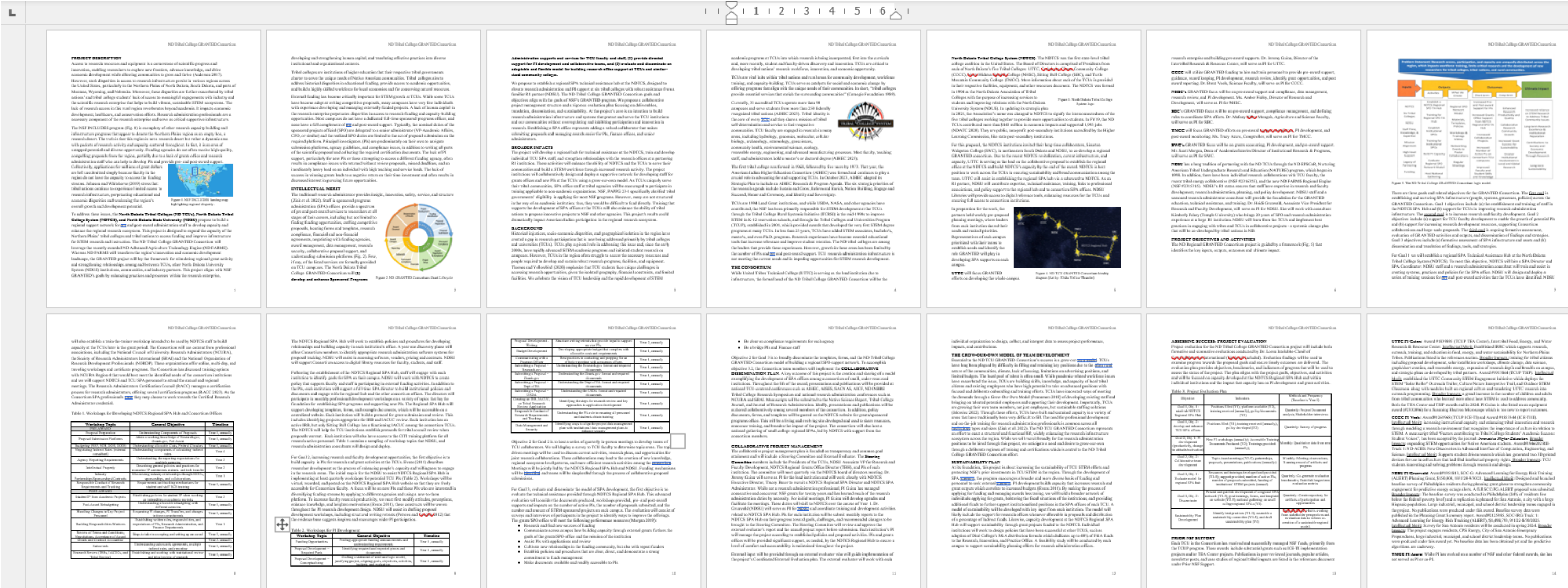
- Funnel information to your specific project

- Sell yourself/program/institution

- Show clear evidence of the issue you are facing and why it needs to be changed

- Describe how NSF funds will address the issue through aligned goals, objectives, evidence-based activities, and evaluation

Other hints for a more convincing proposal



Other, other hints for a more compelling proposal

- Page limits: up to 15 pages
- Intellectual merit – Advancing knowledge vs. evidence-based practices

“Is it novel?”

- Room for innovation?
 - Being the first to gain knowledge of particular topic or being the person that develops a new technique or framework
 - Can also mean the first to try it in your context – what is unique about what you are doing? If nothing, maybe try a new intervention...
 - Fishpond projects...?

Identifying ABT method

We have all the nuts & bolts, but sometimes our proposals are not compelling because we have not adequately established the need or solution; therefore, we will use a narrative storytelling technique to ensure the reviewers understand the predicament.

