GRANT FEVER

Or How I Learned To Live With Title VI And Love It

JAMES D. EK
Western Michigan University

The symptoms are easily detected. A quick pulse accompanied by an erratic heartbeat is common at the onset. Sweating hands and a moist brow indicate an advancing case; while a distinct loss of humor, a feeling of panic and complete disorganization are definite indications of total physical and mental submission to this recurring disorder. Other symptoms may occur, but these are the most prevelant.

If you haven't gathered from the title, I'm not talking about inuenza, a cold or something worse. Be assured, Grant Fever is indeed a disease. It is something that most of us must face, sooner or later; and many of us have repeated attacks.

It is common to those of us in business and education who are responsible for established areas (like language/learning labs) or instructional development (everybody else!). The problem with a grant like Title VI is that everybody thinks it is a great idea, but no one wants the headache. In the end, it is the innovator who gets "stuck" with the job because he has done the most noisemaking, or the director of ——— (or the assistant director of ———, if the director is so lucky) because there is no one else interested enough or capable enough down the line. I don't mean to sound pessimistic, but when is the last time you volunteered to have a nervous breakdown?

Grant Fever cannot be totally avoided by those of us who truly care about our programs but the detrimental effect of its presence can be drastically reduced, at least in the case of Title VI.

First of all, for the uninitated an explanation of Title VI is in order. Title VI is offered through the Office of Education, Department of HEW, and the correct title is "Application for Grant for Equipment and Materials to Improve Undergraduate Instruction." The grant is provided under Title VI-A of the Higher Education Act of 1965, P.L. 89-329. In Michigan the grant awarded through our Department of Education and all applications are submitted to them. The grant provides matching funds for approved applications, thereby halving the expenditure of the institution involved. Considering the situation in education, there is seldom an abundance of funds no matter what the size or status of the institution, and the promoters of this act hoped to double the buying power of those institutions with promising proposals.

There are two categories in this grant, aptly named Category I and Category II. Category I provides for laboratory equipment, related materials and some minor remodeling. Category II provides for closed circuit direct instruction, related materials and directly associated minor remodeling. Category I and Category II are separate in all respects and each requires a separate application even though the plan for improvement is for a combined audio and video lab.

Now, who may apply for these "double dollars?" (This is when the disease begins its invasion of your system.) According to HEW, "All accredited, non-profit institutions of higher education, including post-secondary trade and vocational schools are eligible who comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; are not 'school or departments of divinity'; and meet the basic maintenance of fiscal effort set forth in the act." This description lets out many of you who are in high schools, but, as you can see, post-secondary trade and vocational schools are still in the running for a good deal.

What can you ask for? So, you're eligible and you want to know what you can get? Well wait a minute. There are three levels of eligibility, and your program is only one of the three levels. To borrow again from HEW instructions—"*Institutional* eligibility is a prerequisite for *project* eligibility, which in turn is a prerequisite for item eligibility." You must have a project in mind, and in order for it to be eligible it must be a plan for the improvement of undergraduate education at your institution. For items to become eligible, then, they must relate *clearly* to the proposed plan for improvement. This eliminates such things as institutional administration, physical plant operations, general library functions and research. But, that's not what we're after, is it?

Let's get down to work!! Like most requests for money, the "giver" requires a narrative from the " givee." The narrative has four subject areas to which you should address yourself specifically:

1) Deficiencies to be Remedied;
2) Plan for Improvement;
3) Adequacy of Resources; and
4) Detailed Lists of Equipment, Materials and Minor Remodeling.

The first area is a bit touchy for some. The government thinks that in order to qualify for improvement, a deficiency must exist. Most of us look upon our existing programs not as having deficiencies, but rather as allowing "room for improvement." Both mean the same, but with slight variations in language—shall we say "dialects?" That "room for improvement" or "deficiency" can be the need to update

your program to include items you haven't been able to afford or haven't had the need for until now. In any case, *don't downgrade your present program in hopes of scoring points for the new one.* Simply state what you can't do or don't have, without derogatory comments. Your State Board is looking ahead to what might be, not back on what should have been.

The "Plan for Improvement" is your brainstorm on paper. You already know why you want what you want, so now tell everyone else. In fact, it might be helpful to write your plan first and then use it as a guide to help describe what "deficiencies" the old program has compared to the proposed program. This is the most important section, but it is imperative that you make it concise, i.e. SHORT! A good idea can be carried to extremes; and when the instructions say keep it short, a windy proposal can blow you out of contention.

"Adequacy of Resources" pertains to one thing only: can you implement the proposed program? Your benefactors want to know that this program has every chance for success. Will you be purchasing equipment that no one at your school will understand or be able to operate successfully? If so, don't plan on getting any help with the funding. Your idea is no good if you do not have personnel who can operate the proposed equipment or who can train those who will be using the equipment and materials. So, a single paragraph stating that you have qualified personnel on your campus who will provide continuing resource, and/or capable faculty who will operate the equipment is sufficient.

Believe it or not, you've done the easy part! (At least in terms of time consumption, this seems to be the case.) The instructions ask for a detailed list of equipment, materials and related minor remodeling, including an exemplary make and model. What the review board wants is something between a general term and a list of exact specifications; the former being too indefinite and the latter being too excessive. An example for equipment might be an audio tape recorder. Stating simply "tape recorder—carrel mounted" is not enough. However, adding such information as "1/4 inch, open reel, four-track two-channel providing a non-erase teacher track and a record/compare student track" adds enough information to separate this item from other similar equipment. To get this information, go to various dealers and ask for their brochures and price guides. Such information usually gives the specifications for each piece of equipment. For grant purposes you may then eliminate such information as "'wow and flutter, frequency response, etc." These things are used only when you send out specifications to dealers asking them to bid for the contract.

Materials listed under this fourth section are greatly limited. Generally textbooks and consumable items that can be used only once

are not eligible. This means that our descriptions must include more information in order to "justify" the purchase of items in the dubious areas such as audio recording tape. Our description might be: "1/4 inch, 1 ½ mm., heavy-duty, audio tape on seven-inch reels to be used for the production of instructional materials for extended use." In other words you must show the board that these materials will be used over and over to provide an ongoing program.

Minor remodeling includes any alteration in a previously completed building which is directly related to the installation or effective utilization of the equipment in the proposal. This includes all installation costs of the equipment (which should be provided as a separate item by the equipment supplier). How minor is minor? An example might be a video classroom/observation room that we installed. The plans called for a wired classroom and an attached observation room with one-way glass. To do this, we constructed a partition wall, complete with doors and window frame for the glass, in an existing large room. The grant paid for all the rewiring (audio/video cable and lighting), the doors, the one-way glass and installation, a raised floor for the observation room (which was later dropped in favor of other desired articles) and complete redecoration of the facility. The wall was considered to be ineligible even though half of it was door and glass which they paid for. In my estimation, "minor remodeling" means altering an existing feature to the point of replacement without actually replacing (i.e. a wall cannot be removed, but it can be reduced from 24 feet to 2 feet, 4 inches in length!). It was in this manner that we were allowed to raise the floor in the observation room. We simply stated that we wished to build a raised platform covering the entire floor. Again, we dropped that part of the project ourselves, but it shows that wording is everything.

Up to this point nothing has been mentioned about your half of the matching funds. Remember, the government will pay for half of everything that you buy. That means that you must find someone within your institution willing to supply the rest of the money needed. If you have the why and the what, it's easier to get the wherewithal. If your needs are small and there is some flexibility within your budget (or your department's budget), you are indeed lucky; if you must go to a dean or a vice president, have no fear. You have laid the groundwork and believe me, this is impressive to those who must dole out what little there is. Administrators are not dumb. Programs that are thoughtfully planned tend to succeed, and this looks good on everyone's record. Please note that if an installation is planned that physically changes, removes, or replaces a room or its contents, there is undoubtedly a physical facilities committee that must okay the installation. These committees are usually forgotten until the last

minute (if remembered at all) and their members can cause a great deal of apprehension for those who forget. Now is the time to submit a copy of the proposal to them. Your prompt and timely report will be appreciated, and unless you plan to take a classroom completely out of use, you will meet with no resistance.

It is at this point that problems beyond your control may arise. Each state is provided with a limited amount of money for use in awarding Title VI grants. The State Board of Education, in turn, makes these funds available to its institutions on a priority basis. The concentration may be on vocational schools one year and community colleges the next, with the remaining funds allocated right on down the line. In any case each institution has a different total amount that they may request each year. Your Budget Office, or if you have one, the Research Services Office should be able to tell you this figure. As an example, Western Michigan University's total institutional request this year (that is, the total sum of monies requested by each department applying) was over three times that which was allowed by the state. This problem is resolved by either a percentage cutback (which may not be possible or acceptable) or a roundtable "discussion" of all key persons involved with the Vice President for Finance and/or the Vice President for Academic Affairs as mediator and judge. These meetings are not pleasant, but usually only occur when several large proposals are submitted.

If you do not have an Office of Research Services at your institution, a grant coordinator or your Budget Office should be able to help you fill out the rest of the grant application. This consists of facts and figures which may or may not make sense to you, but must be present in order to show maintenance of effort at your institution (that is to say, you're keeping up with what you have and are likely to maintain whatever you get).

Now you must submit the proposal—and wait. And wait. And wait. A three to four month waiting period is not uncommon. You can, however, put this period to good use by sending the proposal to various dealers asking them to make a final bid. Since bids usually take a month or so to get back to you for custom installations and they are good for 90 days, you should be in good shape when notice of the grant's acceptance gets to your desk. (Notice I'm thinking positive!) Also, if you have the funds available and are planning to make a purchase regardless of the grant's outcome, please do so at any time after your submission deadline. If the grant is approved, half of the money that you spend for proposed equipment *after the deadline* will be returned to your budget. This sometimes makes equipment available to you when you need it most.

Did you have trouble along the way? If you couldn't find someone to provide the institution's half of the proposed expenditure, perhaps you had better look at your proposal again; or did you try to "test" for possible backing of an idea? Ideas lacking concrete information tend to be tabled for further consideration. A successful proposal has a quality of research and investigation that answers questions and demands attention. If someone says they will "think about it," you haven't done enough.

If you ran into problems at the institutional or state level, there is little to be done. When your institution goes over its limit, as in the example above, you can only compromise. At the state level, however, you can find out the reason behind the non-acceptance. Was your institution at the bottom of the list of priorities? If so, it was probably because a Title VI grant was awarded in the past year or two. This drives your institution lower if not to the bottom of the list. This being the case, re-submit the proposal next year if possible; you will have a better chance.

If your section of the grant application was rejected, ask why. Someone will tell you why it could not be accepted. At best, this will show you what not to ask for the next time around; at worst, it will give you heartburn. (At this point you might even consider writing an article!) Please do ask, however, and pass the information on to someone who might make the same mistake.

Is it all worth the effort? You Betcha!! The monetary reward can be only part of the value of a grant experience. If you judge your success by the success or failure of the application, you only have a 50-50 chance of making it worthwhile. Writing a grant proposal requires that you become acquainted with all the latest developments in your field including those which are educational, technical and monetary. If you're an average person you probably let one or more of these lapse. Once you are up-to-date, it's easy to stay there. And what about organization? My first grant experience provided me with so many catalogues that I finally started a file, which has since doubled even though I discard the outdated ones. I also keep a running tally of needed equipment along with price information and a reason for each item being on the list in hopes that money will become available so that I can include everything in a proposal. I also keep an idea file which I have yet to use. Most of these are my prototypes for the future that for various reasons may never get off the ground. The point of this is ORGANIZATION. If you become a storehouse of information, it's amazing how much your track record will improve when it comes to grants. If you are prepared, a grant proposal dumped in your lap will become no more than a major inconvenience to you.

Perhaps best of all the rewards of preparing and submitting a grant proposal is the recognition you receive. You draw attention from people that otherwise wouldn't have known you existed. The mere fact that you are asking for federal money to "help" your institution purchase something it "needs" puts you in the best possible light. This boosts your ego and shows others that your area is alive, capable and growing. So, go out and buy a bottle of "Alka Seltzer" and a carton of gum and dig in. That next deadline is just around the corner!

Materials Review

Sussex Tapes, distributed by Holt Information Systems, a division of Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 383 Madison Avenue, N.Y. 10017.

There are ten series of Sussex Tapes dealing with various historical and literary topics. In the French literature series there are tapes on approaches to criticism, romantic poetry, Balzac, Racine, Baudelaire, Verlaine and Beckett as well as the following topics which will be discussed here:

The Modern French Novel
Michel Butor is interviewed by Dr. Stephen Bann of the University of Kent.

The Twentieth-Century Novel in France
A discussion by John Cruickshank, Professor of French at the University of Sussex, and John Sturrock, Assistant Editor of the Times Literary Supplement of London.

The Nineteenth-Century Novel in France
A discussion by Professor Cruickshank and Benyon John, reader in French at the University of Sussex.

The Eighteenth-Century Novel in France
A discussion by Dr. V. Mylne of the University of Kent and Professor J. Weightman, Westfield College, University of London.

Le Misanthrope
Presented and discussed by W. D. Howarth, Professor of Classical French Literature at the University of Bristol, and Dr. W. G. Moore of St. John's College, Oxford.

Each cassette presents approximately two hours of discussion. A booklet is included which gives an outline of content study questions, and a bibliography, thus making the tapes a good self-teaching aid. The discussions are in English with the titles of works cited in French.

The manner of presentation of each topic varies as can be seen in the case of the two tapes on the twentieth-century French novel. On the first tape mentioned above, Michel Butor, a well known author and critic, tells how he came to write his first "new novel," discusses the concept of the "traditional novel", analyzes one of his own works, and comments on the connection between the "new novel" and "new criticism." His English is not perfect, but the listener has no trouble understanding him. This tape gives the student of literature the unique opportunity of hearing a famous writer talk about his own work without the usual intermediary—the literary critic. Butor remarks during his discussion that "an author's work should be considered as a whole—including his spoken words." Several replays of the Butor tape are essential in order to absorb his thought-provoking evaluation of creative activity and literary criticism. If the tape were used in a classroom situation, especially on the graduate level, it would provide a basis for an interesting class discussion.

On the tape entitled *The Twentieth-Century Novel in France,* Professor Cruickshank and Mr. Sturrock attempt to show in what way the role of the French novelist has changed from the latter part of the nineteenth century to the present. In contrast to the Butor presentation just discussed, this program is disappointing. Even if the listener keeps in mind that the discussants are trying to present an overview of the subject, their remarks still are too superficial to be of much help. A graduate student would be bored by the discussion and an undergraduate might find the number of works and writers cited confusing. The second voice is slightly difficult to hear and a rather stilted atmosphere is created when the discussants exchange such comments as "would you think so?—Oh, yes, I would agree."

A bit more disturbing though is a reference to one of St. Exupéry's characters which appears to be not only superficial but incorrect as well. Rivière, the main character in *Vol de nuit,* is referred to as a "mechanic always tinkering over engines, who doesn't have a life at all." Rivière is, in fact, the director of the first flight operations in South America, and his life is devoted to imposing discipline on his pilots, ordering them on dangerous night flights in the name of some super-human goal which he himself does not quite understand. Thus the listener is hard put to make a connection between this hero of the novel and the reference to a "tinkering mechanic." One wonderers if this tape, which is a form of verbal publication, was submitted to the judgement of editors as would be the case in printed material.

The discussion of the "new novel" at the end of this tape is less than satisfying, especially if the listener is expecting significant comments from John Sturrock, author of *The French New Novel.* The discussants agree that the *nouveaux romanciers* are preoccupied with form. The comment that "at the moment, the theory of the *nouveau roman* is more attractive than the performance" is quite unsubstantiated, since they do not even attempt to evaluate one work by Robbe-Grillet or Butor, who have written novels which stand on their own merits. Perhaps Professor Cruickshank and Mr. Sturrock tried to cover too much literary ground on this tape and ended up saying little of value to the student of modern French literature.

The discussion on the nineteenth-century novel in France is more successful partly because Professor Cruickshank and Mr. John limit their remarks to four novels, Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le noir,* Balzac's *Eugénie Grandet,* Flaubert's *Madame Bovary,* and Zola's *Germinal.* The discussants chose as a central theme the different ways in which the novelists attempt to present reality. After stating that genuine realism (whatever that might be) is impossible, Professor Cruickshank shows that realism was rather a stylization, a sort of illusion of real life. He sees in *Madame Bovary* a movement towards increasing stylization and away from documentation found in the earlier novels. Comparing *Germinal* to the other three novels Mr. John points out that the interest moves away from the individual to the collective sufferings of the group. Although the discussants touch upon many things that are obvious even in a most cursory reading of the novels, their attempt to define the meaning of realism in relation to each work saves the discussion from complete banality.

Professors Mylne and Weightman compare two eighteenth-century novels, Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and Laclos' *Les Liaisons dangereuses.* Rousseau's novel was very popular at the time it was published but is seldom read in its entirety today, whereas *Les Liasons dangereuses,* not a big success in the late eighteenth century, has gained popularity in more recent times. After making this comparison concerning the popularity of the two novels, the discussants then explore the possible reasons for the failure of Rousseau's work to establish itself permanently. They examine the weaknesses in the execution of the novel, the moralizing, the unconvincing psychology of certain characters, and Rousseau's inconsistency in handling the theme of Nature. Laclos' novel, on the other hand, has received the aesthetic, sexual and political approval of the modern reader according to Professor Weightman. The sophisticated urban setting, the intrigue, and the degeneration of the aristocratic tradition have more appeal today than the adventures of Rousseau's Saint-Preux, "Natures

gentleman." It is pointed out that *Les Liasons dangereuses* would probably have not been written if *La Nouvelle Héoïse* had not preceded it, since Laclos' novel seems to be a direct reaction to that of Rousseau. Although no original insights into the two novels are revealed, the discussion is well organized and the comparing of the letter-novels works well as a means of analyzing their strengths and weaknesses.

Molière's comedy *Le Misanthrope* is discussed by Dr. W. G. Moore whose work entitled *Molière: A New Criticism* is a classic. He and W. D. Howarth present an interesting study of the play starting with the very specific, a reading (in French) and analysis of twenty-five lines from Scene iii, Act IV and thirty-nine lines from Scene i, Act V. After pointing out the more subtle elements of Alceste's character revealed in the climax of the play, the discussants then treat the play as a whole and Moliere's comic theater in general. Dr. Moore suggests different ways to approach *Le Misanthrope* which he considers to be Molière's greatest play. One can appreciate it from the view of the scholar or the actor, in the context of Bergson's theory of laughter or Meredith's essay on the comic spirit, or through an understanding of the attitudes of Molière's contemporaries. Professor Howarth examines the complex subject of the relationship between comedy and satire. He takes a middle road between the nineteenth-century critics who dwelt too much on the satiric and didactic elements of Molière's plays and the critic René Bray *(Molière, Homme de Théâtre,* 1954) who, according to Howarth, denies the satiric element entirely. In conclusion the discussants ask themselves, "what, finally, is the nature of Molière's comedy?" Dr. Moore suggests that the laughter provoked by the play is secondary to Molière's view of the unreasonable. For him, Molière's comedy is closer to the absurd than to the funny, whereas Professor Howarth believes that the funny and the absurd are sub-sections of the comic. However, both critics agree that the satiric purpose of our laughter is minor—the major purpose is catharsis.

The programs offered in the French Language and Literature Series of the Sussex Tapes vary greatly in the manner of presentation and in the significant value of the commentaries. Judging from the tapes reviewed here, the more limited the subject matter treated, the more meaningful and interesting the discussion. Superficial comments on literary works can be found in many anthologies and can be read in much less time than it takes to listen to them.

Lois Vines, Ohio University