

# Sarah Messbauer

M: +1 (484) 225-8893

sarah.messbauer@gmail.com  
linkedin.com/in/sarahmessbauer

## Profile

Grant administrator, program manager, strategist and communicator whose principles, methods, and outcomes are grounded in understandings of shared common humanity and a love of bad music. Motivated to apply stakeholder engagement, executive consulting, and team development abilities to harness and enhance strategic initiatives for a service-driven organization.

## Skills & Experience

*15+ years managing grant administration and business development operations at the intersection of public and private interest for agencies including, but not limited to, DOD, DOE, DED, DOT, EDA, HHS, NASA, NEA, NEH, NILMS, NIH, NTIA, and USDA.*

### DEPUTY DIRECTOR

West Virginia Office of Energy – 08/2023-Present

*Overseeing daily operations and public engagement for state energy operations in West Virginia, a top 5 energy producing state.*

Business Operations – Oversees daily management of all state- and federally-funded programs.

- **Process Auditing & Improvement:** Executed full audit of all processes and programs under WVOE purview, between August 2023 and March 2024. Executing continuous improvement model for integrating new policies, procedures, and best practices.
- **Fiscal Oversight:** Engages with Chief Financial Officer on daily/weekly basis to ensure the continued financial health of the unit; supervises financial audits of WVOE programs, approves financial reports, facilitates training opportunities for staff (i.e., procurement basics)
- **Strategic Planning:** Works with WVOE Director to develop and execute Strategic Plans for critical areas within the unit, including overall WVOE strategy; funding opportunity development; workforce development; and community engagement

Grant Administration – Supervises preparation, submission, and execution of all state- and federally-funded proposals with WVOE involvement.

- **Preparation:** Expanded funding base beyond the historic focus on formula funds to incorporate competitive opportunities; established process for securing required administrative approvals; developed library of resources and templates for common proposal components.
- **Submission:** Built and employed in-house tracking system for application components, including letters, resumes, and other supporting documentation; supervised training of new staff across agencies in adoption of new policies designed to increase lead-times.
- **Administration:** Developed new processes for enhanced workflow in bidding/procurement; Increased on-time report submission rate to 100% from 60%. Completed successful close-out of three concluded programs.

Staff Supervision and Development – Oversaw a portfolio of services for single-investigator and small-team grants.

- **Hiring and Onboarding:** Supervising the hiring and onboarding of all WVOE staff, including the creation of personalized Professional Development Plans for each staff member (incl. grant-funded positions).
- **Performance Management:** Supporting staff in performance of daily functions; providing training and troubleshooting; reviewing performance against professional development plans during regular progress meetings.
- **Cross-Functional Teaming:** Developing cross-functional relationships between WVOE staff and other state units; encouraging collaboration on project execution and co-leads on new project development.

## **SENIOR RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT ANALYST**

University of California, Davis, Office of Research – 4/2022-3/2023

*Supervised proposal development, grantsmanship development, and diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives for the Office of Research Interdisciplinary Research Support team.*

Proposal Development– Oversaw a portfolio of services for single-investigator and small-team grants.

- **Program Management:** Oversaw grant-writing and research development support for proposals from 100+ academic and applied disciplines, managing between 5-35 simultaneous projects as seasonal deadlines required.
- **Performance Management:** Supported team members tasked with reviewing proposal drafts, meeting strict deadlines with quality service despite high volumes.
- **Cross-Functional Teaming:** Collaborated with 12+ University offices to offer support from subject matter experts on topics ranging from budget development to intellectual property agreements, contractor and vendor sourcing, and art exhibit design.
- **Highlights:**
  - UC Davis secured \$1B in extramural research funding in FY22, a 10% increase from FY21. The Interdisciplinary Research Support team contributed to \$750M of these awards, through direct support or through preparatory resources & activities.

Grantsmanship Development– Supervised a professional development program offering faculty and administrative stakeholders the activities, services, and resources needed to improve their grant writing knowledge and skills.

- **Strategic Communications:** Expanded client base in coordination with communications teams based in 10 Schools and Colleges. Developed new materials for deployment across 6 pre-identified platforms following research on user habits and preferences.
- **Competitive Intelligence:** Built and employed in-house competitive intelligence tools to analyze national funding trends, using results to develop strategic plans for University-, College- and Department-level grant-seeking activities.
- **Subject Matter Expertise:** Synthesized and communicated the impact of funding-related policy announcements on the University to campus leadership; advised on planning and policy solutions accordingly.
- **Highlights:**
  - Completed a 5-year Strategic Plan for expanding the internal-facing Grantsmanship Development Program into the external-facing (and revenue-generating) *Research Development Institute* within the next 5 years.

- Premiered the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the *UC Davis Grant Writer's Workbook*, a 300+ technical publication providing step-by-step instructions on developing a multi-year research funding plan and writing a proposal. This workbook has an audience of more than 15,000 faculty, staff, and student grant writers at UC Davis.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Developed and implemented strategies to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in Research Development at the university, in alignment with the UC Davis Principles of Community and campus/Office of Research strategic plans.

- **Intercultural Communication:** Coordinated DEI-related activities with related units and teams, such as Strategic Initiatives, to share information about diversity-related funding opportunities and proposal preparation resources with the campus community.
- **Highlights:**
  - Received the 2022 Team Innovation Award from the National Organization of Research Development Professionals for development of a standardized training & onboarding program for the profession, targeted at recruiting underrepresented communities.

## RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT ANALYST

University of California, Davis, Office of Research – 4/2018-4/2022

*Offering strategic proposal development and grantsmanship development services on behalf of the Office of Research Interdisciplinary Research Support team.*

Proposal Development– Created a portfolio of services for single-investigator and small-team grants.

- **Information Synthesis:** Distilled highly technical information on federal research sponsor requirements, created clear, condensed & simplified proposal development checklists and templates;
- **Grant Writing & Research Development:** Provided grant development support for writers from diverse disciplines. This included supporting investigators and teams of investigators regarding proposal preparation:
  - Helping investigators to develop/clarify a vision and objectives for their research
  - Interpreting funding opportunity announcements and identifying unique requirements
  - Developing proposal preparation calendars, checklists, and timelines
  - Determining the appropriateness of a proposed projects' fit with funder objectives
  - Liaising with funding agency program officers on behalf of the institution
- **Data Analysis:** Retrieving, coordinating, analyzing, interpreting and disseminating reliable and accurate report data for campus executives, administrators and researchers.
- **Highlights:**
  - Combined process improvement & marketing to increase consultations by 35%
  - Conducted 100+ door-to-door visits with new faculty to establish equitable outreach & communications practices; 87% positive responses from faculty, 15% increase in consultations from researchers with historically excluded and marginalized backgrounds

Grantsmanship Development– Supervising a professional development program offering faculty and administrative stakeholders the activities, services, and resources needed to improve their grant writing success.

- **Needs Assessment:** Surveyed stakeholders bi-annually to determine training needs via historical analysis, focus groups, interviews, and qualitative and quantitative surveys.

- **Strategic & Creative Content Development:** Developed activities, tools, and resources to meet needs identified by stakeholders; collaborated with university service units for delivery; directed rollout, proactive problem solving/troubleshooting, and program assessment.
- **Database Management:** Developed a 1,000+ file Toolbox of grant application templates, samples, and resources. Implemented best practices in file system management.
- **Highlights:**
  - Developed a proposal preparation program for the National Science Foundation “CAREER” grant: from 2018-2022, funding success increased from 15% to 60%, compared with 20% success nation-wide. UC Davis was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the nation in 2021 for most CAREER grants awarded to an institution.
  - Received the 2021 UC Davis STAR Award for “exemplary contributions in the achievement of an important project” related to the CAREER Prep Program.

Professional Service – Liased between my University and the National Organization of Research Development Professionals (NORDP). Served national roles including Member Services co-Chair and Travel Award Scholarship Chair.

- **Coaching & Mentoring:** Energized efforts to build national coaching & mentoring networks by stewarding growth of the organization’s membership from 600 to 1,000+ and developing member resources such as a new member orientation and handbook.
- **Highlights:**
  - Awarded the 2020 Rising Star Award from the National Organization of Research Development Professionals for service to the profession, particularly in advancing accessibility and disability awareness for colleagues, peers, and researchers

## **GRADUATE STUDENT ASSISTANT TO THE DEAN AND CHANCELLOR**

University of California, Davis, Office of Graduate Studies – 6/2016-10/2017

*Full-time administrative consultant to senior campus leadership, representative of and peer mentor for 8,000+ graduate and professional students at UC Davis.*

Executive Leadership Consulting – Proactive and responsive consulting to the Chancellor and Graduate Dean on emergent issues, policies, and practices related to graduate education.

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Involved building and maintaining relationships with senior campus leadership, evaluating communications practices via committee, and improving information distribution via student stakeholder research to speed proactive problem solving.
- **Process Improvement:** Led a team of Graduate Studies staff through a strategic planning process to redesign Graduate Student Orientation. Reorganized programming to better respond to mandatory training requirements and student needs; cut the event from 5 days to 2, and increased marketing.

Student Education & Advocacy – Worked with graduate and professional students and student organizations to identify barriers to retention & graduation. Shared knowledge on navigating university administration & best practices in “mentoring up” for success.

- **Stakeholder Research:** Designed UC Davis’s first fully qualitative study of graduate and professional student experience, focused on ID’ing barriers to diversification & graduation.

### **Highlights:**

- Process improvements to Graduate Student Orientation increased attendance 3-fold from 400 in 2016 to 1,200 in 2017.

- 2017 report on graduate and professional student experiences led to re-organization of the University's Graduate Studies Strategic Plan, a new full-time Director of Mentoring, and 25+ University policy changes to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion.

## ADJUNCT LECTURER

University of California, Davis, Department of Music – 9/2014-6/2018

*Designed and taught courses on the ways music impacts/is impacted by social, cultural, political, and economic forces in cultures throughout the world.*

Course Instruction – Created 6 courses ranging in topic (World Musics; Classical Music; Global Hip Hop; African American Music) and difficulty (Intro, Advanced).

- **Curriculum Development and Design:** Developed learning outcomes aligned with University, Department, and disciplinary requirements; assessments and learning modules designed to reinforce course goals.
- **Interdisciplinary Communication:** Taught students from multidisciplinary backgrounds, requiring multiple methods of engagement to effectively communicate concepts and ground learning objectives.
- **Multi-Modal Communication:** Used live performance, public speaking lecture/discussion, theatrical re-enactments, recorded films, audio playback, and visual diagrams to clarify concepts.

Course Administration – Taught 1-3 courses per term while conducting full-time doctoral research (see below), with 40-160 students per course.

- **Project Management:** Tracked attendance, course engagement, assignment completion, and exam performance. Identified student performance problems proactively and collaborated with advisors, tutors, disability services, and student counseling to develop individualized student success plans.

### Highlights:

- Awarded the UC Davis Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching Award in 2015 for instruction on the soil hydrology course, *Earth, Water, Science, Song* co-taught with Dr. Wendy Silk of the 'Science and Society' program.

## DOCTORAL RESEARCHER

University of California, Davis, Department of Music – 9/2011-3/2018

*Directed a five-year research program examining the impacts of class-based immigration policies on federal arts funding programs. Case study: Haitian-Canadian music festivals.*

Archival Research & Fieldwork –

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Summarized grant program information for prospective Haitian-Canadian community applicants via group workshops and individual meetings; reviewed application drafts; facilitated applicant-funder communications.
- **Team Leadership:** Managed a team of Haitian-Canadian student researchers as they conducted archival work, developed leads and led interviews, translated texts and audiovisual materials, and developed research products for community distribution.

### Information Synthesis, Writing, & Dissemination –

- **Policy Analysis & Consulting:** Researched and analyzed Canadian federal funding policies; disseminated findings and consulted on policy changes with funding agency staff

#### **Highlights:**

- Awarded a 2017-2018 Dissertation Completion Award from the University of California Office of the President, in recognition of outstanding research and evidence of an intention to use the doctoral degree toward serving marginalized and underrepresented populations.

#### **Technical Writing**

*The UC Davis Grant Writer's Workbook, Third Edition. 2023.*

UC Davis-commissioned technical manual for writing externally-funded grant proposals. Includes 300+ pages of examples, exercises, and explanations designed for writers of all skill levels and academic disciplines. For internal use only.

#### **Education**

Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology, University of California, Davis

M.A. in Ethnomusicology, University of California, Davis

B.A. in Music and Anthropology, Muhlenberg College, *Cum Laude*