

USC Research Collaboration Fund

Proposal Deadline: THURSDAY APRIL 15, 2010



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The Research Collaboration Fund is a new program that supports the creation and development of expansive research collaborations among faculty and students working on broad interdisciplinary research topics, such as water, neuroscience, digital humanities, or the environment.

The aim of the program is to help foster wide-ranging research communities and forums for sustained, ongoing interaction and collaboration among a large number of faculty and students who share an interest in a broad research theme. Competitive proposals are ones that address an unmet need or area of emerging strength at USC; that offer opportunities for participation to a diverse array of faculty and students from different units at USC; and that describe a concrete set of activities that will engage and sustain the research community over the long term.

Example uses of funding include organization of workshops, seminars, and retreats; and the application of collaborative technologies, tools and resources. The program is not designed to fund individual research projects; it aims to fund activities that build and maintain the research community.

Each collaboration should engage a large group of faculty (typically a dozen or more) representing at least two schools at USC. Funding can be for up to three years, with the possibility of competitive renewal thereafter. Teams of faculty may apply for grants of between \$10,000 and \$30,000 per year.

Awards under this program are made through a competitive process, based on proposals submitted by a lead faculty investigator along with at least one additional investigator holding a primary faculty appointment in a different school than the lead investigator.

Proposal Components

Cover Page: Give the title or subject of the research collaboration theme. List the two primary applicants or principal investigators (representing two different schools), and their respective contact information.

Narrative Section (No more than four pages):
Proposals must address the following components:

- (1) **Overview:** Very briefly describe the general theme of the research collaboration.

- (2) **Research Impact:** Describe the nature of research, and the type of work currently being conducted at USC, and the type of new research that might occur as a result of the collaboration.
- (3) **Activities:** Describe a set of concrete activities that will occur in the first year of the collaboration. Explain the purpose of the activities, and the outcomes you expect to result. Describe a plan for organizing and hosting these activities.
- (4) **Participation:** List the faculty who would participate, and identify some of their potential contributions to the collaboration. Describe steps already taken to promote collaboration among the group of faculty, and prior accomplishments in this area. Describe plans to identify other groups of researchers across USC who may be relevant and how you plan to provide opportunities for their participations. Describe how the collaboration will affect educational programs and opportunities for USC students.
- (5) **Budget:** Provide a budget explaining the use of funds for year one. Proposed budget requests can be between \$10,000 and \$30,000 for the first year. Funds may be used for the costs of holding events (e.g. meals, rental of space, advertising) and may include travel costs for outside speakers visiting USC to participate. A limited amount of funds, not to exceed \$10,000, may be used for staff or student salaries/benefits to assist in organizing events. Funds may also be used to apply technologies to enable collaboration, including websites. No funds may be used for faculty or researcher salaries/benefits, overhead or tuition.
- (6) **Leverage:** Describe any additional resources that will support the collaboration provided by departments, centers or schools.

Criteria for Support

- a) **Impact:** Degree to which collaboration makes a substantial different in USC's research activities, and the degree to which the collaboration fills an unmet need at USC.
- b) **Creativity:** Level of creativity displayed in the organization of collaboration activities.
- c) **Participation:** Number of faculty who will actively participate, and the degree to which the participants span multiple schools.
- d) **Action Plan:** The extent to which the proposal is based on a set of concrete, well-defined activities that further the aims of the collaboration.
- e) **Leverage:** Priority is given to requests that are leveraged against supporting commitments from other units at USC.
- f) **Synergy with Education Programs:** Degree to which program involves students, and provides or expands educational opportunities.

Review and Awards

Proposals will be reviewed by a faculty committee, which will provide a prioritized list to the Vice Provost for Research Advancement for final decision. Approximately three to four awards

will be made this year. If a topic area has received prior provost level support, prior accomplishments will be factored into the award decision.

Renewal

Awards will be made for a three year period, subject to an annual progress review and an annual activity plan, and continued availability of funding. Funds that are not expended at the end of a fiscal year will be returned to the Office of the Provost. At the end of three years, collaborations may reapply for funding on a competitive basis.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS:

Proposals must be submitted electronically as a single file in Word (.doc) or Acrobat (.pdf) format. Proposals are to be submitted via the Research Advancement application portal at:

www.usc.edu/research/upload/

Submissions are due by **April 15, 2010 at 5:00 PM**. Questions about application submissions can be directed to Alisa Gonzales at alisagon@usc.edu or 213-740-6709.

Further Information and Program Contact Information

For additional information or inquiries about the Research Collaboration Fund program, please contact:

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