

**UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA**  
**OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH**  
**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**PLANNING GRANTS FOR COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROJECTS**

**OBJECTIVES**

The Office of the Vice President for Research is soliciting proposals for Collaborative Research Projects. The funds set aside for this program are to be used as Planning Grants to position interdisciplinary groups of researchers to prepare proposals for submission to federal agencies for 'Center'-type programs. Examples of such center-type programs include (but are not limited to) Engineering Research Centers (ERCs), Materials Research Science and Engineering Centers (MRSECs), NIH-U54s, P30s, USDA Coordinated Agricultural Projects (CAP), etc. It is expected that each group receiving planning grants will submit a competitive center proposal within 18 months to 2 years of receiving the award.

**ELIGIBILITY**

To qualify for review, proposed projects must include at least one Principal Investigator (PI), and at least two co-investigators, preferably from a minimum of two different academic units. Preference will be given to proposals that are interdisciplinary in nature.

Proposals must identify the federally funded center/interdisciplinary program that is the primary focus of the proposed planning project. It is recommended that projects leverage existing resources including those of the relevant centers/institutes on campus.

Deans at all levels, and faculty with administrative appointments are not eligible to apply.

Proposals must be forwarded to the Office of Research by the Associate Dean for Research of the College of the lead PI.

**NUMBER OF PROPOSALS**

Each College may submit no more than two proposals as the lead unit per funding cycle.

## **BUDGET**

The Office of Research expects to support 3-5 meritorious projects per year. Each project will be supported by a total budget of up to \$250,000 for a total funding period of up to 2 years. The Office of Research will provide 40-50% of the funds, with the remainder coming from the participating units and Colleges.

Allowable costs include but are not limited to: support for one or more doctoral students and/or post-doctoral researchers, tuition and research supplies. Funds may be used to buy out teaching time, pay for administrative support during the planning process, and support organizational activities required for the submission of a center-type proposal. Travel to technical meetings may be included in the budget. Faculty salaries, and conference support cannot be included in the budget.

## **PROJECT PLAN**

Proposals must identify the federally funded Center program that is the primary focus of the proposed planning project. Pls must identify the time frames for the issue of the RFP by the federal agency as well as the planned submission dates.

The project plan should include in the following order:

- Abstract. (1 pg)
- Background: What is the current status of the research area under consideration? What are the obvious gaps in making UF competitive for a center in this discipline? (1.5 pgs)
- Scientific aims and goals of the proposed center. Proposed research plan.  
Describe how the existing resources at UF (C/Is, intellectual) will be leveraged towards making a successful center. Describe how and why the research proposed and the existing resources, intellectual and physical, would convince federal sponsors of UF as a logical choice for the proposed Center. (3 pgs)
- Goals for the planning phase: What does the team/discipline require to become competitive for the proposed center? How will the Planning Grant propel the team into becoming competitive? (1.5 pgs)
- Management plan/Leadership structure: Describe how the faculty team will be chosen, assembled and managed. (1 pg)
- External partners: Describe the anticipated external partners and interactions as the proposal for a federally-funded center moves forward. (1 pg)
- Long term sustainability: Describe the long term plans for sustaining the center, once it is funded. Describe the expected contribution of the center towards the growth of the research enterprise at the College and UF. (1.5 pgs)
- Milestones/timelines: Describe the milestones that must be achieved towards submitting the named center proposal – and timelines to achieve them. (2 pgs)
- Detailed Budget and budget justification (3 pgs)
- Biosketches of collaborating faculty (4 pgs each)

## **SUBMISSION DETAILS**

Formatting requirements: Proposals must be single spaced; font size no smaller than 11 point; minimum 0.7 inch margins throughout; tables and figure legends can be in 10 point font.

Proposals must be emailed (with the approval of the respective Dean's office) to Dr. Sobha Jaishankar, Assistant Vice President, Office of Research at [sjaishan@ufl.edu](mailto:sjaishan@ufl.edu), with a copy to Jennifer Hubbs ([hubbsj@ufl.edu](mailto:hubbsj@ufl.edu)) on or before **5:00 pm Jun 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012**. Proposals must be emailed in Word or PDF format only; combine all files into ONE file. Paper copies will not be accepted.

The signed DSR-1 form may be scanned and submitted as a separate file (or it may be faxed, delivered or mailed to the Office of Research). Please ensure that all faculty contributing time to the project, as well as their chairs and deans sign the DSR-1 form. Department chairs and Deans must be made aware of the time, effort and financial commitment.

## **REVIEW CRITERIA**

Proposals will be evaluated and scored by a peer-review panel consisting of at least three faculty members with appropriate expertise - including Distinguished Professors/Eminent Scholars, UFRF Professors and/or others with appropriate expertise. The panel members will score the proposals in the following categories:

1. Theme/Research Area: Are the proposed theme(s)/scientific foci aligned with the strategic goals/initiatives of the participating departments and colleges? Are they aligned with UF's strategic goals? Does this area represent an emerging strength at UF – a field in which UF could become a leader?
2. Degree of interdisciplinarity: What is the breadth of academic departments represented by the proposal? What is the potential to produce and sustain long term interdisciplinary collaboration among the participants? Will the proposed collaborations result in a major Center-type research effort?
3. Scientific quality of research proposal: Does the proposal build on current strengths and visualize growth in a competitive/fundable area? Are the contributions of each participant distinct and complimentary? Are the existing strengths of the departments/colleges/core resources leveraged sufficiently? Does the scientific plan address the gaps currently existing at UF? Are the reasons for UF to be the lead institution sufficiently compelling?
4. Goals of planning phase: Are the activities proposed for the planning period sufficient to propel the science to be competitive for a Center?
5. Relevance of faculty background experience and interest: Does the team represent the best available expertise in the required fields? Does the PI have sufficient leadership experience? Is there is good mix of senior and junior faculty among the participants and leadership team to ensure both continuity and new growth.

6. Leadership and team cohesiveness: Does the team possess the leadership required to carry the project to a competitive center proposal at the federal level? Is there cohesiveness among the participants? Do the faculty members involved have a sufficient level of commitment to the project?  
What are the resources committed by the departments and colleges (other than contribution to the Planning Grant) towards the success of the program?
7. Milestones and Timelines: Are the proposed milestones and timelines realistic towards meeting the goal of submitting a center proposal within 18 -24 months?

Awards will be made based on a ranking of the proposals using scores assigned during the review process.

The earliest anticipated start date for the award is **July 1, 2012**.

## **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

The Principal Investigator and the leadership team will meet quarterly with Associate Deans for Research of the participating Colleges, as well as members of the Office of the Vice President for Research. Continued support for the teams will be contingent upon making adequate progress and meeting the milestones towards submission of a center proposal, as determined by review of the annual reports.