

Strategic Faculty Research Mentoring Grant Proposal Award Competition—Focus on (1) Social Justice, Diversity, and Inclusion and (2) Strategic Research Partnerships

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Introduction

The College of Education and Human Development (COEHD) is pleased to sponsor the Strategic Faculty Research Mentoring (SFRM) grant proposal award competition. The goal is to encourage cross-rank and cross-college collaborations that lead to long-term research partnerships and that support the grant-writing skills of junior faculty through their collaborative development and submission of a large-scale research grant proposal. Faculty mentoring is key to successful professional development, and strategic partnership are increasingly viewed as necessary to foster impactful scholarship. The SFRM grant proposal award competition incentive encourages the formation of these faculty-to-faculty mentoring collaborative efforts by awarding least four grant development teams, each consisting of two to four UTSA faculty, including one or two (1-2) senior faculty member(s), preferably with a track record of extramural funding, and either one or two (1-2) COEHD tenure-track junior faculty member(s), to collaborate in developing and submitting a proposal for funded research addressing either of two strategic areas. At least two of the grants will be awarded to teams with *letters of intent* to submit proposals for external funding for research addressing Social Justice, Diversity, and Inclusion. At least two awards will be made to teams submitting letters of intent to submit research proposals with a focus on establishing Strategic Research-Practice Partnerships. Awarded letters of intent that are selected for eligibility will receive a \$3,000 stipend once they have submitted their proposal to the funder as planned. The actual proposals must be submitted during one of the two proposal development periods: one for proposals submitted from 2/15/21 to 6/15/21 (the 1st call) and a second for proposals submitted between 4/15/21 and 8/15/21 (the 2nd call).

The Office of the Dean will provide each of the cross-rank pairs or teams of faculty with a total stipend (\$3,000) to be divided among the two to four participating faculty on each proposal. The awarded funds are not to be used for the proposed study, but rather their own independent research-related activities. Letters of intent will be reviewed by the COEHD Research & Development Committee. There will be two submission deadlines, so that funding opportunities in Spring and Summer can be pursued. Faculty may only propose one time in FY21, so must select either the first or second submission period.

Funding Priorities

Competition Area One Social Justice, Diversity, and Inclusion	Competition Area Two Strategic Partnerships
Proposal should propose conducting research, scholarship, or creative activities in the areas of social justice, diversity, and inclusion. Examples of related activities/domains include, but are not limited to: ▪ Engagement in community-based participatory research in topics related to social justice ▪ Efforts to achieve community or organizational equity and inclusivity of historically disenfranchised, disempowered, underprivileged, or oppressed groups	Proposal should pursue research funding that establishes research-practice partnerships, collective impact initiatives, school-university collaborations, and university-industry collaborations. Examples of research-practice partnerships (RPPs), as defined at source listed in the below footnote,¹ include: 1. Research Alliances a. Cross-sector research alliances b. District-focused research alliances 2. Design Research

¹ Coburn, C.E., Penuel, W.R., & Geil, K.E. (January 2013). *Research-Practice Partnerships: A Strategy for Leveraging Research for Educational Improvement in School Districts*. William T. Grant Foundation, New York, NY. See <https://wtgrantfoundation.org/library/uploads/2015/10/Research-Practice-Partnerships-at-the-District-Level.pdf>

▪ Efforts to create an inclusive university campus climate (including efforts related to student retention, training, and direct efforts to impact public/educational/school policy), and ▪ Efforts to improve community empowerment and network building, civil rights, and justice. Examples of Funding Prospects ★ WK Kellogg Foundation Advancing Racial Equity and Racial Healing or Lever for Change/ W.K. Kellogg Foundation Racial Equity 2030 ★ Ford Foundation Gender, Racial, and Ethnic Justice ★ NSF INCLUDES (Inclusion across the Nation of Communities of Learners of Underrepresented Discoverers in Engineering and Science) ★ W.T. Grant Found. Grants on Reducing Inequality	3. Networked Improvement Communities (NICs) Additional configurations will be considered. Strategic partnerships may be based on content area, curriculum, instruction, assessment, or achievement of an important overarching goal. Examples of Funding Prospects ★ USAID Strategic Alliances for Mexico ★ NSF INCLUDES (Inclusion across the Nation of Communities of Learners of Underrepresented Discoverers in Engineering and Science) ★ RPP funders: Spencer Foundation, NIH ★ W.T. Grant Institutional Challenge Grant
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Funding priority will be given to letters of intent for proposals that (a) have the potential to yield lasting partnerships and collaborations among faculty, (b) are submitted to external funding agencies or foundations requesting \$100,000 or more for specific research project costs, and (c) promise research findings and outcomes that will lead to scholarly presentations, policy reports, public awareness campaigns, publications, performances, or exhibitions.

Deadline and Funding Period

There are two internal (COEHD) submission deadlines for the letters of intent:

Fall SFRM: February 1, 2021 at 5:00 (with notification by March 1) for proposals due to sponsoring funder between 2/15/21 to 6/15/21.

Spring SFRM: April 1, 2021 at 5:00 (with notification by May 1), for proposals due to sponsoring funder between 4/15/21 and 8/15/21.

The proposal to be submitted as planned to the identified external sponsor between February 15 and August 15, 2021 as stated in the letter of intent. The SFRM is not eligible for proposals due before 2/15/21 or after 8/15/21.

Stipends are awarded following submission of the actual grant research proposals, which must be of sufficient quality, rigor, and intellectual merit to secure COEHD and university approval for submission, and must be submitted to the funder and on the submission due date listed in the SFRM letter of intent.

Eligibility

A junior faculty member must be identified as the Principal Investigator on the internal SFRM letter of intent and the actual research proposal submitted subsequently to an outside funding agency. The lead junior faculty member must be a tenure-track assistant professor in the COEHD with fewer than 4 years at this rank and must be at least two years away from a tenure decision. The junior faculty lead is responsible for identifying and securing agreement with the senior faculty member(s) who agree to serve as Co-PI or Co-Investigator on the final proposal submitted for funding, and agree to mentor the junior faculty member in the processes and practices of grant proposal development and submission. Partnerships involving senior faculty from other UTSA colleges also will be considered. Preference will be given to senior faculty

mentors who have a track record of extramural funding as a Principal Investigator (PI)(e.g., served as PI on two or more competitive awards similar to that for which the project proposal will apply); but priority in making SFRM award decisions will rest largely on the perceived likelihood of the proposed project being funded, which will depend on fit between project and the funder's goals, the intellectual rigor/merits of the study, and what each investigator will contribute to the project. Therefore, while the pair/team may share some scholarly and/or research overlap, they should complement each other to provide clearly independent roles on and contributions to the project. The letter of intent should convey the value of their collaboration on the proposed project, but also make clear both what the junior faculty (mentee) can learn from the mentor and how the proposed project could lead to future collaborations as well. Faculty members who are engaged in existing mentoring relationships with other faculty are eligible to apply, but a senior faculty (mentor) may only serve on one proposal through this funding initiative, and the development of new collaborations through this award are strongly preferred over the strengthening of existing working relationships. Preference also will be given to cross-department and cross-college collaborations. The mentee(s) must serve as the Principal Investigator (PI) of the project, and the mentor as Co-PI or Co-I.

Mentee Responsibilities

- The mentee must commit to working with the mentor during the academic year to collaborate in proposal development and should specify the nature of planned collaboration over the period leading up to the award submission in the SFRM.
- The mentee must submit the competitive extramural grant application(s) for a minimum of \$100,000 (in direct costs over the life of the award) by the next program deadline (between 2/15/20-8/15/21).
- If the proposal is declined, the mentee is encouraged to revise and resubmit during the next funding cycle but will not be eligible for the SFRM competition as a resubmission.
- Following the submission of the external proposal, and before the SFRM stipend is awarded, the awardee is also responsible for reporting on the outcomes of the mentoring relationship, noting successes and struggles, and identifying which elements of the plans for collaboration (e.g., number and nature of meetings) were accomplished. The 2-3-page report should provide a clear picture of progress made during the Spring and/or Summer FY21 semester and could include the number of meetings, general areas of discussion, funding opportunities reviewed, and lessons learned about grant writing, proposal review and critique, etc. Submit the report as double-spaced Word document to the COEHD Associate Dean of Research.

Mentor Responsibilities

- The mentor must commit to meeting with the mentee once per week or as stated in the letter of intent during the period leading up to the submission.
- The mentor is responsible for ensuring that the mentor and mentee(s) work steadily towards submission of a competitive grant application by the due date, flex and accommodate as necessary to collaborate with and support the activities of the mentee, and should take the necessary steps to assist with the submission, which include:
 - Discussing the mentee's research interests and how they fit with short and long-term career goals.
 - Discussing possible funding sources for this and potential future collaborations.
 - Provide an explanation of the funding process to help the mentee set proposal development targets, encourage contact with program officials, and anticipate necessary resources, forms, and approvals.
 - In selecting the funding opportunity and nature of the proposed project, the mentor should ensure the mentee's planned research and career goals are well-matched to the program.
 - Review the request for proposal (RFP) with the mentee, inform him/her of available resources at UTSA to help the mentee, promote interaction with COEHD Research Centers, and the relevant Research Service Center (RSC), and serve as both a partner and guide in establishing steps to writing the grant proposal.
 - The mentor must schedule time to contribute to and review drafts of grant proposal and provide constructive feedback and additional guidance.

- The mentor must commit time and attention to ensure that the end product is a grant application of a substantially higher quality than the mentee would have achieved without the mentoring relationship.

Criteria for a Successful Mentor-Mentee Relationship

- Similar or complementary research interests to allow each to make unique contribution
- Alignment of the mentor's expertise with the mentee's level of experience and needs
- Accessibility of the mentor for regular meetings and contact through e-mail/phone calls
- Willingness of the mentee to ask for assistance when needed
- Willingness of the mentee and mentor to accept and give constructive feedback

Application and Submission of Letter of Intent

A complete Letter of Intent application includes the following components:

1. **A Project Narrative:** A five-eight page description addressing: (a) what the call for funding supports (including funder, due date, and anticipated total funding), and how the faculty members involved can bring unique skills and expertise to address the funder's priorities, including a summary of the research questions to be explored and research methodology (identifying research methods and activities to be undertaken, the role of each faculty in the project), and potential opportunities for disseminating findings, influencing practice, or addressing key problems in society/practice; (b) plan for a meaningful mentoring relationship, including time commitment from mentors; how each will contribute to the proposed research plan and research study; (c) a formal commitment to submit a competitive grant proposal and resubmit if declined; (d) any additional information you want to convey about the value of this mentoring collaboration and possibility for future partnerships. (Format: 11 pt. or 12 pt. Times New Roman or Arial font; margins of at least ½ inch)
2. Mentee abbreviated curriculum vitae (2 pages max)
3. Mentor abbreviated curriculum vitae (3 pages max). Include grants awarded (as PI) that demonstrate experience with the funding agency (or one similar) to which the mentee will apply.

Selection Criteria

The COEHD Research and Development Committee will review all SFRM competition Letter of Intent applications to identify those proposals deemed eligible for the SFRM award, with final approval of the outgoing proposal to the funder determined by approvals from Department Chairs, the Associate Dean of Research, and the Research Service Centers required for award funding.

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Research Focus:** Do both the mentee and mentor have complementary research expertise that can be translated into a successful grant submission to address the key research question they propose?
- **Benefits:** Does the application articulate the benefits and value of the mentor and mentee pairing together to work on this project, and how it helps each uniquely in their respective careers?
- **Experience & Compatibility:** Does the mentor have the appropriate research interests and background to make significant contributions beyond what the mentee alone would bring to the proposed study?
- **Commitment:** Does the application demonstrate the mentor has and is willing to dedicate time and effort to the relationship and ensure a competitive grant application is submitted at the end? Does the mentee convey that she/he/they are willing to commit the time and effort to get the most benefit from the relationship and submit a competitive grant application at the end?

Additional Criteria for Competitive Proposals

- Clearly stated purpose of the study/collaboration tied to funder objectives
- Clearly defined timeline for study activities

- Clearly defined theoretical framework, and both research questions and methodology linked to the theoretical framework
- Clear indication of potential contribution to the field of the proposed study
- Clearly defined plan for mentoring activities and roles leading up to proposal submission
- Articulated goals for future grant activity and collaboration beyond the end of the project

Further Guidelines and Tips for Letters of Intent Applications

- All tenure-track faculty are eligible to apply, except those who received a COEHD or UTSA faculty research award during the current or prior academic year and those who have been awarded a Faculty Development Leave for current or next year.
- Applicants wishing to build on previously funded research must distinguish how the proposed research builds on rather than duplicates previously funded activities.
- Letter of Intent must adhere to all essential content and formatting guidelines outlined below. Those that do not will be eliminated from further review.
- Funding source for award is yet to be determined, and may be in the form of F&A funds or in a type of funds that must be spent during the current fiscal year (and thus all funds must be exhausted by the end of the fiscal year [e.g., July 31]). Any unused funds after that date may be reclaimed by the Dean's Office. Second call awardees *may* have the option to receive their awards at the start of the following fiscal year (FY22) if F&A funding is not the funding source for the award, so that faculty have sufficient time to use their award funds.

Research Grant Proposal Letter of Intent Application Instructions

Your SFRM Letter of Intent application should consist of the following three sections: Cover Page, Project Narrative, and Vitae. Submit by email to COEHDFacultyResearch@utsa.edu, not through CAYUSE.

Cover Page: Includes Title of Project, PI Name, Phone Number, and Email Address

Project Narrative: Limited to 5-8 pages (references may be added in addition to the page limit), single-spaced with one-inch margins, Times New Roman or Arial, no smaller than 12-point font, and should include the following four elements:

Vitae:

Junior Faculty (mentee) abbreviated curriculum vitae (2 pages max)

Senior Faculty (mentor) abbreviated curriculum vitae (3 pages max). Include grants awarded (as PI) that demonstrate experience with the funding agency (or one similar) to which the mentee will apply.

Review Process: The final selection of COEHD awardees (for funding following proposal submission) will be made by the Research and Development Committee of the College of Education and Human Development.