Creativity Hubs Award
2023

9/28/2022
Q&A Webinar
Up to $500,000 over 2 years to support research project

Assemble interdisciplinary teams to develop pilot proposals

Generate foundational data leading to large scale external funding opportunities

OUTCOME
Convergent Research: Collaboration and innovation to solve emerging problems and shape the future

$5,000 to support teams invited to prepare full proposals
Key Dates

- RFP Posted: Sep. 15, 2022
- Expression of Interest due: Oct. 28, 2022
- Full Proposal Invitations: ~Dec. 2022 or Jan. 2023
- Full Proposal due date: Apr. 3, 2023
- Earliest Start date: Jul. 1, 2023
Program Goals and Award Overview

• The intent of the Creativity Hubs Pilot Award Program is to promote the development of innovative ideas that emerge from cross-disciplinary interactions to address key challenges and/or develop new knowledge.

• Proposers should describe:
  • projects exploring new collaborative directions;
  • advancement of a risky idea that works to solve a major challenge in a field, or;
  • other big concepts that would have difficulty attracting extramural funding without a seed investment of this scale.

• Scale of competitive proposal normally include more than two units on campus
Profile of Competitive Projects

- A two-year deliverable, as a part of a 10-year vision
- Clear reasoning on sustainability:
  - Creativity Hubs projects should enable teams to be more competitive for large-scale extramural funding from public or private entities - federal grant-making agencies, private foundations, corporation partnership and/or venture capital within 2 years from the end of the project.
- Team composition should strive to include project personnel from across faculty ranks and with diverse representation.
Key Review Criteria

• "Applicants should articulate the problem/challenge, how the proposed research will provide solutions to the challenge, how the diverse expertise of the team forms a greater whole that promotes new ways of thinking, and how the proposed research program would make the team highly competitive in pursuing future extramural funding or commercialization opportunities."

• Proposals that seek to develop **platforms** with multiple applications must also incorporate at least one specific, **compelling use case** that demonstrates the application of the platform.
Partnership with SDSS

New for 2023’s competition!
One of the hub awards will be made in a special data science category--jointly funded by the OVCR and UNC’s new School of Data Science and Society (SDSS)

• Teams that decide to target the special data science category indicate this on the Expression of Interest.
• Teams must propose projects that have an interdisciplinary emphasis as well as grounding in theory and methods applied to the entire data life cycle.
• The OVCR/SDSS Creativity Hub opportunity aims to demonstrate and enhance the utility of existing or newly developed data collections to create hypotheses and catalyze interdisciplinary discoveries across disciplines.
Areas of focus

While the OVCR is encouraging on-campus teams to design projects touching on one or more of these foci and will support one Creativity Hub in the field of data science this year, any projects proposing revolutionary ideas through convergent research are welcome and encouraged to apply.
EOI details – team composition and project roles

- Teams are expected to include researchers from multiple schools/colleges and/or Centers and Institutes.
- Multiple PIs are OK but a single contact PI must be identified.
- Proposing teams are encouraged to organize project personnel from across faculty ranks and with diverse representation, with mentorship/development plans described in the Sustainability section, below.
- PI and co-PIs may come from any faculty rank – we especially encourage faculty development models such as a mid-level faculty PI with a senior-level co-PI.
- Allowable project roles are intentionally broad and include PI, Co-PI, Investigator(s), and other significant contributor e.g. community stakeholders, or research scientists.
- Teams should focus on UNC strengths but can include outside investigators or other roles.
EOI details – SDSS-specific instructions

• Applicants indicate if they want to be considered for the SDSS Creativity Hub. This does not exclude the application from the regular pool.

• In addition to all other content described in the standard instructions, an SDSS Creativity Hub Expression of Interest should include statements that describe:
  • the source of the data
  • the method(s) and algorithm(s) used to analyze data, and any challenges that might be addressed by this attempt to use the proposed algorithms
  • how trainees will be included in the project
  • the hoped-for impact of this work
EOI details – section-by-section

Problem/Challenge: Describe the problem/challenge to be addressed by your proposed Creativity Hub. The challenge should be described in such a way that any reviewer could easily understand the field-wide challenge, and why current approaches are falling short.

*Approach: Describe your team’s research approach to the problem/challenge. If the approach centers on organizing key datastreams into a ‘platform’, the team should clearly articulate use case(s) that will make measurable progress toward answering the Problem/Challenge.
EOI details – section-by-section

**Innovation and Impact:** Describe how the proposed approach will provide innovative and impactful solutions to the problem. Detail how this innovation and impact would be more difficult without Creativity Hubs support.

**Convergence and Team Science Plan:** Describe how the diverse expertise of the team will increase the likelihood of success and promote new ways of thinking that push disciplinary boundaries, and how the team will work as a unit. Describe how team members will be mentored in and employ team and convergence science best practices.
EOI details – section-by-section

**Sustainability Plan:** Identify specific suitable sources of extramural funding. In addition, teams should briefly describe project sustainability, cross-rank faculty mentorship and other sources of organic renewal.

**Proposal Development Budget Description:** EOIIs advanced to the next stage are awarded $5000 to support development of the full proposal. In this section, describe what you would spend these funds on and how those expenditures would advance your idea development or teaming efforts. Examples of appropriate expenditures of funds during this stage include but are not limited to team-building meetings and workshops, travel to meet with colleagues or program officers, and sample analysis for pilot data.
Review Process

EOIs will be reviewed by a panel consisting of university research and administrative leaders. Panel recommendations will be considered by the leadership of the Office of Vice Chancellor for Research and other UNC Executive Officers including representatives of the School for Data Science and Society. It is anticipated that up to 8 EOIs will advance to the semi-finalist round.

Criteria:

- **Innovation and Impact** – Ability to provide solutions to important challenges and/or generate new fundamental knowledge to create impact to benefit society, culture, community, the environment, or the economy. Originality of the proposed research program as a solution to the stated challenge. Impact it would have on the problem/challenge to benefit society, culture, community, environment or economy.

- **Convergence** – Demonstration that the project takes advantage of expertise from multiple and diverse disciplines and promotes new ways of thinking.

- **Feasibility** – The proposed approach could be reasonably implemented within the time and budget allowed.

- **Sustainability** – Potential for the proposed project and team to compete successfully for identified large-scale funding from public or private entities, such as government agencies, corporations, private foundations, and/or venture capital OR initiate numerous high-yield research projects. Evidence of commitment to team mentorship and faculty development goals.
Full proposals

Full proposals will consist of the following components, detailed below: Cover Page, Project Description (6-page limit), References, Budget and Budget Justification, Biosketches, and Optional Letters of Support

Review processes and criteria are similar to EOIs with two additional categories:

- **Budget** – Reasonableness of the budget.
- **Strategic Impact** - The importance of the challenge and the impact that the proposed convergent solution could provide to benefit society, culture, community, the environment, or the economy, including the State of North Carolina
## Key Dates

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Questions?