AHC SEED GRANTS PROGRAM

The Academic Health Center (AHC) is soliciting applications for AHC Seed Grants to fund faculty research. These funds will be distributed through a competitive peer review process. The maximum award per project is $30,000.

Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria

• The goal of the AHC Seed Grants program is to fund creative, innovative proposals across the continuum of programmatic research areas in the six AHC colleges. Grants are available to Assistant, Associate or Full Professors in the AHC with an N, P, I, J, K or W appointment and employment through the University (or A or W at the Minneapolis VAMC). Individuals who hold P&A appointments (e.g., Research Associates), but hold a courtesy appointment as an Assistant Professor from their department chair are not eligible. Questions regarding faculty eligibility should be discussed with and are determined by the Associate Dean for Research in the applicant’s college.

• AHC Seed Grants are intended to support faculty who wish to initiate a substantially new direction in their research or to help develop innovative projects that will allow them to expand into new areas. Generic examples of what do and don’t meet the definition of a Seed Grant are shown at the end of these guidelines. The primary award criteria will be creativity, quality of the proposal, the degree to which the proposal represents a new direction, and the potential for future funding.

• The rationale for submission of a Seed Grant must be described in a one-page cover letter (see below, Application Process—point #2). AHC Seed Grants will not be awarded to support identical research currently funded by another UMN internal funding mechanism (e.g., Graduate School, UMF, American Cancer Society, Cancer Center, ITN, LHI, etc.). Faculty who received AHC Seed Grants from the 2015 RFA are not eligible to submit a new application in 2016. Faculty who received AHC Seed Grants in 2014 must contact Jessica Van Gilder, vangi007@umn.edu, for additional instructions prior to submitting a proposal.

• Each application must have a single PI, and a faculty member may submit only one application as a PI. There is no limit to the number of applications on which a faculty member could participate as a co-investigator.

• The maximum award is $30,000. Funding is for a single year. No-cost extensions will not be considered. The funds must be designated for the direct support of the research. No funds will be available to support faculty salaries. Given the size of the awards, only small equipment purchases that are directly required for the
Research are appropriate. In general, funds should be primarily used for supplies and reagents, animal costs, use of shared resources (e.g., UMGC, Flow Cytometry, Biostatistics/Bioinformatics, Imaging, etc.), data and data collection costs, as well as support for research personnel (postdocs, graduate students or technicians). Funds for travel can be requested but must be in direct support of the research; not to simply attend meetings in one's discipline.

**Application Process**

- The first page (cover page) must include the application title, name, highest degree, academic rank, college of PI and co-investigator(s); and total amount of support requested. **Do not include a lengthy list of co-investigators, many of whom may play only a peripheral role on the project. Only include the names of major collaborators as co-investigators.** In order to facilitate the review of applications, we are requesting that the PI self-identify the category that best describes their research. Please choose from one of the following research categories and indicate your choice on the cover page:

  Basic research  
  Translational/Clinical research  
  Population/Outcomes research

- The second page should be a cover letter from the PI providing the background and rationale for the request. **It is imperative the PI explain how the work proposed in the application fulfills the criterion of a substantially new direction.**

- The body of the proposal is limited to three pages and should include: background to the problem, hypothesis/specific aims, and research plan. The three-page limit includes any preliminary data. References can be included on a separate page. **Do not write the proposal using extensive language and/or terminology unique to your discipline.** The application should be written for an audience that extends beyond the applicant’s own discipline.

- Include a NIH biographical sketch for the PI and each co-investigator. **The format including the section on “contributions to science” must be used.** List all current and pending internal and external applications.

- A budget page with justification must be included.

- Application may be single-spaced, must be Arial or Helvetica typeface of font size 11 or larger, and must have adequate margins (use NIH standards).

- A Proposal Routing Form (PRF) should be completed and signed by the department head and dean. Include the PRF in your submission file at the very end. **(DO NOT SEND THE PROPOSAL TO SPONSORED PROJECTS**
ADMINISTRATION.

- Submit the application (single .pdf file) electronically using the online form available at the following link: Seed Grant Submission Form. The deadline for receipt of applications is 4:30 p.m. on Friday, January 20, 2016.

Review Process

The AHC Council of Research Deans will identify reviewers and make final decisions on funding.

Reporting Requirements

Principal investigators of funded projects will be required to provide a final report and an accounting of all funds expended at the completion of the project. Forms for the final report will be sent to the PI, and reports will be submitted to Jessica Van Gilder (vangi007@umn.edu).

What is a new initiative?

This can encompass both a substantial change in the research tools a PI is using to study a specific problem, or addressing an entirely new problem using similar tools. Some generic examples include:

- PI makes heavy use of genomics and informatics to evaluate genes in tumor cells from cancer patients, but now proposes to use similar genomics and informatics tools to evaluate the microbiome in patients with chronic GI diseases.
- PI has been using mouse models to study thymocyte development, but now proposes to employ a new imaging technique to study thymic function in neonates.
- PI has been studying the risk factors in a large cohort of Minnesotans that predispose them to complications from type II diabetes, but now proposes to use the same cohort to study the role of diet in development of skin infections.

What isn’t a new initiative?

- PI is studying the role of a particular enzyme in lung cancer metastasis in a mouse model, and now proposes to study the same enzyme in pancreatic cancer metastasis in a mouse model, but using the same methodologies and techniques.
- PI has been studying the role of smoking in breast cancer risk in a large cohort of Minnesota women, but now proposes to study the role of diet in breast cancer risk in the same cohort.
- PI has been studying the therapeutic effects of an inhibitor of acetylcholinesterase in
Alzheimer’s patients and now proposes to study the effects of another drug from the same pharmacological family in the same disease.