Guest Column: Office for Research & Discovery Offering New Funding Opportunities

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When President Ann Weaver Hart unveiled the Never Settle [1] strategic plan in 2013, it was designed to be a blueprint for the future of UA and how we can expand our research activity and impact.

Last summer, hundreds of faculty from across campus came together for a series of workshops to further define that plan and identify specific areas of opportunity under the UA’s research strengths that held particular promise for securing increased external funding.

The goal of each workshop, simply put, was to grow research in each strength. How can we do that? Hire more talented researchers to join our existing stars. Provide everyone the needed resources and support to seed the work. Demonstrate to federal agencies and industry partners that the UA is the right place to award their funding.

With that in mind, I am happy to announce we are moving forward with achieving our goal by introducing many new internal funding mechanisms that advance the competitiveness of our campus researchers and will help us win federally funded projects and/or partnerships with industry. Some of the internal grants also were developed with any eye to enhance the preparation of our graduate and undergraduate students to conduct research in interdisciplinary teams, which is so important for today’s work environment.

These new funding mechanisms, explained below, are opportunities open to all campus researchers and all disciplines ? from humanities to sciences to professional; from very basic to translational in the field.

Different sources of internal funding will be used for awarded projects in different areas. Proposals aligned with the missions of UA’s TRIF-funded initiatives ? improving health, water, environment and energy solutions, space exploration and optical solutions, and defense and security systems ? will be supported with TRIF funds. TRIF ? the Technology Research Initiative Fund ? was established by the Arizona Board of Regents to manage funds allocated to the state’s three universities out of a 0.6 percent sales tax approved by Arizona voters in 2000 to support K-12, community college and university education. Office for Research & Discovery [2] development funds will used for other projects in the broader range of research, discovery and creative activities on campus.

The new opportunities are:

Accelerate for Success Grants [3]
These grants are available to transdisciplinary teams of faculty ? for example, teams with faculty from more than one college ? who wish to establish or extend successful research programs into an emerging or upcoming federal priority area. Funds are available to position
the team to be successful for specific, large-scale?often multi-institutional?external program proposals. Where appropriate, funds may be utilized to provide initial funding for a University-level initiative that is designed to evolve into a University-wide center or institute, or similarly large-scale effort. Up to $250,000 for the total program cost may be requested, inclusive of a required match. The fiscal year 2017 proposal deadline is April 18, 2016.

**Pilot Interdisciplinary Project Grants** [4]
These grants are available to interdisciplinary teams of two or more faculty?for example, from at least two colleges?who wish to obtain pilot data for a specific external proposal mechanism, generally at the level of $1 million or greater total costs. Total funding up to $100,000 inclusive of match is available. The fiscal year 2017 proposal deadline is April 18, 2016.

**Core Facility Enhancement Grants** [5]
These grants are available to augment scientific capacity through the acquisition of equipment for use by multiple investigators in University core facilities?shared research facilities that provide access to high-quality scientific services. Equipment with a total cost between $100,000 and $300,000 can be requested. An additional $30,000 in core facility use credits can be added to stimulate use; core facility use credits may only be used to cover approved user fees in the core facility. The fiscal year 2017 proposal deadline is Sept. 1, 2016.

**Shared Equipment Enhancement Grants** [7]
These grants are available to augment scientific capacity through the acquisition of equipment for use by multiple investigators. Proposed equipment total cost cannot exceed $150,000. Equipment must be located in a core facility or in a shared, accessible space, and must have multiple committed users from at least two departments and preferably from at least two different colleges. Equipment must not simply replace existing stock; it must add new capacity to enable competitiveness for an identified funding opportunity. The fiscal year 2017 proposal deadline is Sept. 1, 2016.

**Graduate/Undergraduate Team Interdisciplinary Research "Link" Awards** [8]
These awards are available to an interdisciplinary co-principal investigator team and cover half the cost, including salary and tuition, of a 0.50 full-time equivalent Graduate Research Assistantship and two undergraduate student researchers to support interdisciplinary efforts that will lead to new funding opportunities. In addition, the Link award can include up to $5,000 in Office for Research & Discovery core facility usage credits to cover approved user fees and support for an undergraduate student for two semesters. The fiscal year 2017 proposal deadline is April 18, 2016.
Graduate/Undergraduate Team Industry Engagement Awards [9]
These awards are available to match a new UA industry-sponsored agreement with support for graduate research. The industry partner will fund the first academic semester of the graduate assistantship and the Office for Research & Discovery will fund the second, as well as support the undergraduate assistants for the two-semester duration. The purpose of this assistantship is threefold: to catalyze new, funded research between University researchers and industry or to enhance competitiveness for University-industry efforts in the pursuit of external funding opportunities of mutual interest; to enhance the preparation of graduate and undergraduate students to work in an industry environment, as well as to gain experience supervising and mentoring an interdisciplinary team of undergraduates; and to provide undergraduates an intensive research experience in an interdisciplinary team environment oriented toward industry. The fiscal year 2017 proposal deadline is April 18, 2016.

These new funding opportunities are in addition to the ones that ORD has been running and advertising for the past year. All of our internal funding mechanisms can be found on the Research Gateway [10] under Funding Opportunities [11]. Make sure to also sign up for our weekly Funding Opportunities Announcements [12] newsletter.

Finally, please note that the office’s Research Development Services staff [13] is available to support faculty efforts to secure extramural funding. From strategic advising to proposal support to providing workshops and trainings, research development professionals have the goal of enabling competitive individual and team research.

This series of awards provides a variety of opportunities ? from resources for brainstorming sessions to money for large interdisciplinary projects to industry-focused grants. They target everyone from undergrads to seasoned researchers. Please check them out to find one that will enable you to expand your research activities in interesting new ways.

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Links:
[8] http://rgw.arizona.edu/development/funding-opportunities/ORD-Programs/graduate-undergraduate-team-interdisciplinary-research-link-awards
[9] http://rgw.arizona.edu/development/funding-opportunities/ORD-Programs/graduate-undergraduate-team-industry-engagement-awards