

Request for Proposals

University of Rochester Multidisciplinary Fund

Statement of Purpose

The Multidisciplinary Fund was established to support interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary activities at the University of Rochester (UR) by providing seed money on a competitive basis for innovative scholarly research activity that clearly crosses the boundaries of disciplines, departments and/or schools and colleges at the UR. Grant applicants should propose projects that establish connections across disciplines and call upon multiple intellectual traditions. The review committee will view most favorably those proposals that include at least two disciplines or schools and have the potential for lasting benefit to the community. Proposals that include faculty from separate schools at the University are strongly encouraged, although initiatives proposed by faculty within the same school or even the same department also will be eligible. Applications from all academic areas of the University are encouraged.

Proposals will be solicited once a year, approximately in October (reminder in January), for projects starting no earlier than July 1. Awards will be administered by the Office of the Provost, with assistance from the Office of Research and Project Administration (ORPA).

Scope

Areas of Interest: The Fund supports the development of multidisciplinary research in a broad range of areas.

Review Criteria: The goal of the review process will be to fund meritorious projects across schools and departments. Proposals will be rated by the following criteria:

- Overall significance of the project; intellectual and/or scientific importance, significance to the University in terms of potential for future funding or profile enhancement.
- Innovation as a multidisciplinary venture, and potential to shed new light on larger questions or issues of significance to the disciplines involved.
- Qualifications, background, and level of commitment of applicants and support staff in relation to the proposed project. Preference will be given to applicants who include top undergraduate students in their projects.
- Appropriateness of collaboration plans (e.g., whether they are realistic) and division of responsibility.
- Use of, and fit with, supporting resources and expertise in the UR setting.
- Effective justification based on background information or literature to date.
- Rigor of research methods or appropriateness of planned steps and materials to achieve project aims.
- Appropriateness of budget to achieve project aims.
- Feasibility of project within available time and budget.
- Soundness of research plan for dissemination and access to project results or products.
- Product of collaboration need not be co-authored.

Term: Funding requests should normally specify a 12-month budget period. Unexpended funds must be returned to the Fund unless a no-cost extension is approved by the Provost. Future year solicitations for the Fund may allow for the possibility of funding renewal or continuation applications.

Award Amounts: Applications may request up to approximately \$100,000 in direct costs. F&A (indirect) costs are not allowed. Size of the grant in relation to the amount requested will be within the agreed upon limits (see application) but will be at the discretion of the review committee and Provost. While the objective of the Fund is to award as many meritorious projects as feasible in any one year, higher-cost and high-impact proposals are also encouraged.

Eligibility: Grant proposals must originate from at least two faculty members. Faculty eligibility is specified in the UR's Principal Investigator Eligibility Policy found at <http://www.rochester.edu/ORPA/policies/pieligib.pdf>. While undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral students may be part of a project, faculty members must serve as the Lead Investigators (LI's). Proposals may either name one investigator as the programmatic lead, or multiple LIs. Multiple LI applications will require one person to be named as the contact LI.

Post Award Follow-Up: The awardees will be invited to share the results of the work with the University community in the form of a public presentation. Within three (3) months of the end of the funding period, they will be required to submit a written final report or other durable product.

Application Process

The full application is self-explanatory and can be found at www.rochester.edu/provost/multidisciplinary.html. The Application must include:

- 1) A completed coversheet;
- 2) An abstract, no more than 350 words, **written for the educated non-specialist**;
- 3) A description of the proposal, which should be no more than three (3) single-spaced pages. Proposals should provide background, purpose and significance of the project, methods to be used, work to be undertaken, and outlook for development and future funding;
- 4) A **two-page** biographical sketch for each investigator working on the project; a suggested format is included in the application packet, please **adhere to formatting and content requirements**;
- 5) A budget with justification for each item requested. Items that can be requested include relevant travel, lodging, and meals for invited speakers, supplies, and minor equipment specifically designed for the proposed research. Funds may also be requested for hiring replacements for committed professional services (for example, course replacements, in which case prior approvals by the Chair and Dean are required), for summer salary (for faculty on 9-month salaries), for graduate student stipends, and for salary costs for assistants, postdoctoral scholars, and/or technical staff. **Please note:** These grants are intended to be seed money but applications

- should specify well-articulated plans describing how projects will be sustained for the long term;
- 6) Other support information, including current funding with a list of titles, amounts, sources, and grant periods, plus pending applications;
 - 7) Regulatory issues. If research involves human subjects, animals, biohazards, or otherwise raises regulatory issues, the application should identify those concerns and provide documentation that they will be addressed. If IRB, UCAR, or EH&S review and approval is required, it may be obtained after the proposal has been approved but must be in place before funds are expended or research is initiated;
 - 8) Letters of support: Letters of support are not required, but may strengthen the application. Department chairs and/or deans/directors of the respective applicants may provide short notes outlining their support for the proposed research and explaining why the proposed interdisciplinary project would enhance the mission of their unit, department, or center.

Submission: The deadline for the proposal will be the **1st Monday of February**. The complete proposal should be sent electronically as a single PDF document to Provost Ralph Kuncl at ralph.kuncl@rochester.edu. Proposals recommended for funding will require completion of the University of Rochester Proposal Sign-off Form after the review committee makes its initial decisions but before any projects receive final approval.

Review Process

Submitted proposals will be evaluated by a Multidisciplinary Fund review committee. This committee will consist of a representative group of faculty who cross schools and major subject areas. The review committee is advisory to the Provost who will make final award decisions.

Questions

Should you have any questions with respect to this RFP, please contact either Vini Falciano, Assistant Provost for Institutional Research (vfalciano@admin.rochester.edu), or Gunta Liders, Associate VP for Research Administration (gunta.liders@rochester.edu).