McCormick Catalyst Fund Awards

Through the generosity of a McCormick donor, $1 Million in funds are available for innovative, high-risk research. Key aspects of the proposed funding mechanism are as follows:

Eligibility and Allowable Costs

- Funding is available only to full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty with at least a 25% appointment in McCormick. Collaborative proposals are welcome, but at least one investigator must meet the 25% McCormick appointment criterion.
- Funding is available only in specific areas of research:
  - Cellular therapeutics and reprogramming including immunoengineering, cellular engineering, regenerative engineering, and physical genomics
  - Finite earth and sustainability including enhanced transportation systems, sensors, robotics, controls, improved manufacturing techniques, advanced electronics, and specialized software and/or data analysis
  - Optimization as applied to a broad range of fields including healthcare, transportation, energy, and other societal needs
- Proposals should be focused on high-risk research, including, but not limited to:
  - Projects that are too risky for federal funding
  - Projects that fit less comfortably into established funding mechanisms (and consequently are viewed skeptically by reviewers)
  - Projects for which preliminary data is necessary before applying for federal funding
  - Projects for which innovative collaborations are necessary and thus are unlikely to be eligible for federal funding mechanisms
- Award amounts for this program will typically be in the $75,000 - $100,000 range, though smaller amounts are acceptable.
  - Funds will typically be used for graduate student or post-doc support, materials, supplies, user fees, and lab services.
    - Graduate student and/or post-doc support may not exceed a total of 12 months.
    - Capital equipment up to $15,000 may be included in the budget.
    - Funds above $95,000 must be used to support undergraduate research.
  - Funds must be completely expended within 18 months of funding notification. No-cost extensions will not be allowed.
  - Research Catalyst Award funds may not be used for faculty salary, travel, conferences, publication fees, entertainment of visitors, alcohol, teaching activities, or outreach activities (symposia, academic visitors, etc.).
  - Indirect costs are not applicable.

Submission Instructions

- The proposal should include the following items only:
  - Cover sheet including the name(s) of the investigator(s), the department(s), the proposal title, the total funding requested, and the level of additional cash funding via cost-sharing
  - 2-page research plan
A one-paragraph, non-technical executive summary of the planned research and expected results suitable for sharing with the donor

- Budget on the standard McCormick budget template
- Budget justification
- Department research administrators can help prepare the budget

- Proposals should be submitted as a single pdf file (including the cover sheet, research plan, budget and justification, and department chair support letter or email) to Elizabeth Rentfro (Elizabeth.rentfro@northwestern.edu).

- Questions should be directed to the department research administrator, Associate Dean Eric Perreault, or Senior Associate Dean Rich Lueptow.

Review and Post-Award Requirements

- The McCormick Office of Dean will manage the proposal submission and review process. Proposals will be reviewed by a committee comprising the associate deans and other senior faculty designated by the Dean. The McCormick Dean has final decision on funding approval. Additional calls for proposals will occur periodically. Resubmissions will be considered.

- Deliverables should be specified in the proposal and are expected to include:
  - 1-2 journal papers
  - 1-2 proposals to funding agencies
  - A one-paragraph, non-technical executive summary of the research accomplishments including a list of resulting submitted/accepted papers and proposals suitable for reporting to the donor will be required annually and at the completion of the project.
  - A short (2-3 page) final report is required at the end of the grant indicating research results including a list of resulting submitted/accepted papers and proposals.