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## Catalyst Grants Program: Investing in Research and Competitive Funding

### Catalyst Grants Program: Phase I

To be eligible for consideration, all proposals must be received by the ORSSP, approved by the academic unit (chair or equivalent), by **5:00 p.m. Friday, April 3, 2009**.

#### DETAILED PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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## **I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The Phase I Catalyst Grants Program is a competitive internal funding opportunity designed to stimulate research and scholarship activities and enhance the ability of faculty members without externally-funded support to compete for external research funding. Eligible investigators will lack a proven track record of proposal submission and external funding and need support to acquire the preliminary data necessary to produce competitive proposals for submission to external sponsors. Preference will be given to proposals which demonstrate a high probability for continuation through external funding after an initial support period.

Phase I Catalyst Grant Program funds are primarily awarded to: (1) establish research and scholarly programs that will be competitive for significant external grants; (2) further multidisciplinary and collaborative partnerships to leverage capabilities and knowledge; and (3) provide “seed” support for productive faculty members in their efforts to garner external funding during the first few years of their tenure-track appointments.

## **II. AWARD INFORMATION**

### **Type of Award:**

Cost-reimbursable grant

### **Estimated Number of Awards:**

2 to 4 awards (pending availability of funds)

### **Period of Performance:**

The anticipated Period of Performance for Phase I awards is **July 1, 2009 through May 31, 2010**.

### **Anticipated Funding Amount:**

Phase I Catalyst Grant Program awards will range from \$10,000 to \$20,000, pending the availability of funds. If additional funds remain, a second solicitation may be established for funding during the same fiscal year. All expenses must be encumbered by May 1 and all expenses processed by May 31 of the following year to be considered allowable expenses under the program. Any funds that remain unspent at the end of the Period of Performance will be forfeited.

## **III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **Organization Limit:**

In general no more than two proposals will be funded from the same department.

### **Limit on Number of Proposals per Investigator:**

Submissions are limited to one proposal per Investigator. However, a faculty member may also be involved in the submission of one additional, multi-departmental or multi-disciplinary proposal and serve as Co-Principal Investigator.

### **Investigator Eligibility:**

Phase I of the Catalyst Grants Program is restricted to faculty members without a history of external funding or extensive proposal submission. Principal Investigators should not have current external funding and lack past

performance of current funding. Catalyst awardees receiving money in a previous year's competition are ineligible for awards in the current year. While the participation of undergraduate and graduate students on research projects is always encouraged, student-led projects will not be funded.

## **IV. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

### **A. Proposal Preparation Instructions**

#### **A.1. Full Proposal Instructions**

Principal Investigators should work closely with their Grant Coordinator in devising a project budget and preparing the materials for submission. Detailed information is available on the [Proposal Development section](#) of the ORSSP website.

The ORSSP must receive the completed proposal materials, including a proposal routing form signed by the unit chair, by the posted submission deadline.

#### **A.2. Human Subjects and Animal Use**

If human subjects approval, via the Institutional Review Board (IRB), or animal use approval, via the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), is required and is not received at the time of submission, there must be a plan for such approval described within the proposal. If awarded, approval must be secured before a sponsored program account will be established to incur project-related costs.

#### **A.3. Marking Proprietary Information**

To the extent permitted by law, the University will not release properly identified and marked technical or proprietary data. If the proposal contains proprietary information, clearly mark this information within the proposal with an asterisk at the beginning and end of the proprietary paragraph, underlining the proprietary sections, or choosing a different font type. Utilize a legend if necessary. An entire proposal should not be marked proprietary.

#### **A.4. Required Format**

A complete, peer review-quality proposal written in the format of the funding agency or sponsor expected to fund the research described, and for which an external proposal will be subsequently submitted, should be provided. The anticipated sponsor's guidelines must be followed closely and clearly denoted on the Phase I Catalyst Grant Program Coversheet. A [listing of government sponsors](#) is available on the ORSSP website. Contact your Grant Coordinator for assistance or for examples of proposals from select funding agencies.

#### **A.5. Proposal Materials and Format**

##### **A.5.1 Default Proposal Format**

All proposals should be written in the format of the funding agency or sponsor expected to fund the research and for which an external proposal will be subsequently submitted. In addition, the following materials are needed to assist the Catalyst Committee in assessing proposals for funding:

1. ORSSP Internal Approval Form
2. Completed Phase I Catalyst Grant Program Coversheet
3. Formal budget composed by the ORSSP Grants Coordinator

4. Catalyst proposal written in the format of the funding agency expected to fund the research

### **A.5.2. Alternate Format**

In cases where the sponsor's proposal formatting guidelines are ambiguous or do not provide the necessary guidance for preparing a proposal, the following materials are needed to assist the Catalyst Committee in assessing proposals for funding:

1. ORSSP Internal Approval Form
2. Completed Phase I Catalyst Grant Program Coversheet
3. Formal budget composed by the ORSSP Grant Coordinator
4. Catalyst proposal to contain the following proposal sections by default:
  - a. Project Summary (Also provided within the Phase I Catalyst Grant Program Coversheet)
  - b. Project Description
  - c. References Cited
  - d. Biographical Sketches
  - e. Budget Justification
  - f. Current and Pending Support (if any)
  - g. Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources

#### **A.5.2.a. Project Summary**

An edited version of the Project Summary will be available to the public if a proposal is awarded. No proprietary information should be included in the summary. The Project Summary should be included within the Phase I Catalyst Grant Program Coversheet, written in the third person and limited to 250 words. The Project Summary must have the following components, summarized from the Merit Review Criteria described in Section V.A.:

1. Address the intellectual merits of the proposed activity. Include a brief identification of the problem or opportunity, the research objectives, a description of the research, and the anticipated results.
2. Address the broader impacts of the proposed activity. Include information on the potential commercial value, societal impact, and/or enhanced scientific and technological understanding.

#### **A.5.2.b. Project Description**

The project description/proposal narrative should follow the format of the funding agency or sponsor expected to fund the research. In cases where this information is ambiguous or not provided, the Principal Investigator should take into consideration the following standard narrative contents, as well as the Merit Review Criteria described in Section V.A.

##### **a. Purpose/Objectives**

This section should answer the question, "What do you intend to do?" It is suggested that you begin with a concise statement of the general purpose or major objectives and goals of the proposed project. This statement, often in combination with the limited objectives or specific aims, should describe the research/scholarly/artistic issue or problem to be addressed, product to be developed, work to be created, external funding opportunity, etc. (If a hypothesis is appropriate for your proposed project, it should be presented as part of this discussion.) The Catalyst Committee will review your

proposal to determine the extent to which you have chosen your purpose and goals carefully and logically, and stated them clearly and concisely. Be specific about the results, products, or consequences of your project's purpose or objectives.

**b. Relevance/Significance**

This section should address the broad importance of the project in the field and its potential to generate external funding. For example, will the project address a gap in your field or discipline, make a contribution to an important or noteworthy scholarly or aesthetic issue, advance the understanding of your area of work, have immediate or eventual practical value (e.g., enhance opportunities for students, provide a stepping stone for your interest area, or lead to proposal for outside funding or public exhibit), produce new data and concepts, or test existing hypotheses and assumptions? Will the projects develop a pool of pilot data relevant to an identified funding source or contact base? Document the significance and originality of your project's approach. Specify likely outlets for dissemination of your results (e.g., journals or other publications, conferences, associations, exhibits, museums, societies, or potential user groups). This section should convince the Catalyst Committee of the overall merit of your project.

**c. Procedures/Process/Work Plan/Methodology**

This section should describe project activities in detail; describe the sequence, flow, and interrelationship of activities; and present a reasonable scope of activities. The case should be made in this section that the methods and procedures are familiar to the applicant and are appropriate for the purpose or objectives already described. If established methods or procedures cannot serve the project, describe how modifications will enable you to overcome shortcomings in existing approaches. For the entire project, demonstrate an understanding of the linkages between your process or methodology, the activities to be undertaken, your aims, the limitations on what can be produced or concluded, and the plan for evaluating whether the project has been accomplished.

**d. Schedule/Timetable**

This section should answer the question, "Are you being realistic about what you propose to accomplish in the time frame you outline?" Have you described how you propose to use the research semester(s)? Approximately how long should each task or activity take? At what point in the process do you expect to test which hypotheses, accomplish which objectives, produce which results, etc. (If appropriate, a timetable or task/activity chart may be included as a separate attachment).

Keep the award limitations in mind when constructing your timetable. Awards will not be established until November 1 and must be expensed by May 31 of the following year. The timeline end point should include a reference to action toward external funding.

**A.5.2.c. References Cited**

Provide a comprehensive listing of relevant references, including relevant intellectual property citations, if applicable.

**A.5.2.d. Biographical Sketches**

Provide relevant biographical information for the Principal Investigator (PI) and key personnel.

**A.5.2.e. Budgets and Budget Justification**

Your Grant Coordinator will assist in creating a formal, itemized budget for the program. The total budget shall not exceed \$20,000. All itemized budgets must be accompanied by a Budget Justification, which supports the need for each budget item (or group of items if related) in order to attain the project's objective and reflect current reasonable costs.

The budget should reflect the cost for work to be done only during the Period of Performance as provided in this solicitation. Note that an Investigator may not expend funds for any costs associated with the project before or after the Period of Performance of the award.

List the principal investigator and senior personnel by name with their time commitments budgeted percent-effort for the fiscal year (e.g. 10% effort over 1 year).

Additional budget information is included in Section B below.

**A.5.2.f. Current and Pending Support of Principal Investigator and Senior Personnel**

This section should provide information about all research to which the principal investigator and other senior personnel either have committed time or have planned to commit time on other sponsored programs. If none, state NONE.

For all proposed projects or proposals that are pending or will be submitted in the near future that involve the Principal Investigator or senior personnel, provide the following information:

- Name of sponsoring organization,
- Title and performance period of the proposal, and
- Annual person-months (calendar months) devoted to the project by the principal investigator and each of the senior personnel.

**A.5.2.g. Equipment, Instrumentation, Computers, and Facilities**

Provide a description that specifies the availability and location of significant equipment, instrumentation, computers, and physical facilities necessary to complete the research. If computer hardware is requested, explicit justification for the hardware must include why current University computer facilities are inadequate. Basic computer equipment or software will not be considered for funding.

Only research equipment that is unique to the project or the applicants department will be considered for funding. Requests must justify the need for equipment in reaching the objective/goals of this project and how it is essential in meeting the long-term research agenda. If research equipment is requested, please provide a best estimate of cost, as well as estimates for the continuing costs to operate and maintain the equipment and how these costs are to be covered. New faculty members should include information on the use of their start-up funds and why the request could not be accommodated under those funds.

Equipment purchased under the Catalyst program remains the property of the University following completion of the project. Applicants may wish to consider leasing equipment as an alternative to purchasing.

## **B. Budgetary Information**

### **Limitation on Funding:**

Limited funds are available and early submission is strongly encouraged. Budgetary constraints preclude capital projects or long-term support of an individual research agenda. Budgets must be contained within a single fiscal year and expenditures must be made in a timely manner so that all billing is concluded during the appropriate fiscal year. All funding is restricted to Georgia Southern University and cannot be used to fund collaborators at other institutions. All budgets and transactions must comply with Georgia Southern University policies.

### **Cost Sharing:**

Cost sharing is not required by this program.

### **Allowable Costs:**

Allowable costs should be consistent with costs normally charged for externally supported sponsored programs as defined by [OMB Circular A-21, Cost Principles for Educational Institutions](#). For additional guidance, contact your Grant Coordinator.

### **F&A Costs:**

Facilities and Administrative (F&A) Costs are not required as part of this program.

### **Allowable and Unallowable Costs:**

Allowable direct costs toward the program should be incurred solely to advance the work under the grant and be consistent with such costs towards externally funded programs. The following lists provide some guidance for allowable and unallowable costs for the Catalyst Program. Additional allowable and unallowable costs towards sponsored programs are detailed on the [Allowable and Unallowable Costs on Sponsored Programs](#) section of the website.

#### **Allowable Costs:**

- Summer support for Principal Investigator and Co-Principal Investigator(s), not to exceed a total of \$6000 for all investigators, inclusive of fringe benefits. Because of limited funding, Investigators are encouraged to budget for other programmatic costs in lieu of summer support.
- Salary support for non-faculty support personnel
- Undergraduate and Graduate Assistant support
- Essential, project specific travel with supporting documentation
- Research equipment unique to the project or the applicants department
- Materials, supplies, equipment, and other direct costs of performing the program

#### **Unallowable Costs:**

- Academic year support for faculty
- Support for University personnel already paid from other means of institutional support

- Tuition costs
- Supplemental compensation
- Basic computer equipment or software
- Travel, registration, subsistence, and any/all conference-related travel costs
- Food or entertainment costs
- Items typically attributed as covered by the University's Facilities and Administrative (F&A) cost rate

### C. Due Dates

#### **Full Proposal Deadline:**

To be eligible for consideration, all proposals must be received by the ORSSP, approved by the academic unit (chair or equivalent), by **5:00 p.m. Friday, April 3, 2009**. All Principal Investigators should contact their Grant Coordinator early in the proposal preparation process to register the proposal with the office and to provide necessary programmatic and budgetary information to the Grant Coordinator.

### V. PROPOSAL PROCESSING AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

Proposals are forwarded to the Catalyst Committee for review if they meet proposal preparation requirements as described in this solicitation and are carefully reviewed and scored. Additional reviewers, external reviewers, and/or experts in the field represented by the proposal may be used at the discretion of the Committee and the Associate Vice President for Research.

#### A. Merit Review Criteria

All proposals will be reviewed by the Catalyst Committee utilizing universal criteria to evaluate proposals and to establish funding priorities. The following criteria have been developed to be applicable across disciplines and include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Intrinsic merit of the project to lead to discoveries or advances in the field of study;
- Relevance of the project and the ability to impact disciplines, research, populations outside the field of study; and
- Ability of Investigator(s) to perform the aims of the project, capability of the Investigator(s) in terms of his/her past training, publication activity, and other scholarly or creative accomplishments.

The Catalyst Committee may employ additional criteria as required to highlight specific objectives of the program's purpose and activities.

#### **Merit Review Criteria**

The term "project" as used in this and the following contexts refers to the central concern of the proposed activity - for example, this may be a current or emerging issue in a discipline such as chemistry or economics, a question of interpretation of an artistic creation or historical event, the technical or procedural choices in the production of an artistic or other creative work, or an assessment of current or alternative social policies or programs.

##### **Intrinsic Merit of the Project**

This criterion considers the likelihood that the project will lead to discoveries or advances within its field or discipline, or have substantial impact on progress in that field or discipline or lead to significant sources of

external funding. The concern is that the project is soundly conceived in terms of current work in the field, existing literature on the subject, and appropriateness of procedures for the task.

### **Relevance of the Project**

This criterion relates to the likelihood that the project can contribute to the achievement of a goal that is external to that of the project's field or discipline itself: for example, by serving as the basis for new or improved techniques, by assisting in the amelioration of community or societal issues, by helping to enhance aesthetic or cultural development, or by enhancing public knowledge, understanding, or appreciation of the project's area of concern.

### **Applicant's ability to carry out the project**

This criterion considers the capability of the applicant in terms of his/her past training, publication activity, and other scholarly or creative accomplishments. The adequacy of the resources available including ability to complete the work within the Period of Performance (November 1 through May 31) is also considered. As appropriate, the applicant should include details on recent research/scholarly/creative projects. Beginning researchers may include student work.

### **Evaluation Summaries**

Catalyst Committee members will provide an initial evaluation summary for each proposal, using the following categories:

- **EXCELLENT:** Important project undertaken by a qualified investigator who can be expected to make substantial progress. This rating should be reserved for truly excellent proposals, but should be used without hesitation when warranted. Top priority for funding.
  - Point value: 4
- **VERY GOOD:** Proposal considered superior, both for the intrinsic merit of the project and the ability of the investigator. Should be supported.
  - Point value: 3
- **GOOD:** Worthwhile project by a competent investigator, but routine in nature. May be supported if funds are available.
  - Point value: 2
- **FAIR:** Proposal has serious deficiencies that decrease the probability of successful completion. Might merit consideration if resubmitted with major changes in future competition.
  - Point value: 1
- **POOR:** Clearly not deserving of support.
  - Point value: 0

### **Additional Review Criteria:**

The Catalyst Grant Program emphasizes the pursuit of external funding. Successful proposals will clearly demonstrate and describe how funds will be used to leverage additional external proposals and awards. Proposals should describe plans and timelines for submission of external proposals following an award. You are strongly encouraged to address the merit review criteria as you prepare your proposal, as well as careful editing and proofing. As appropriate, you are expected to incorporate references to pertinent literature throughout your narrative.

Evaluation Summaries will be provided for Investigators following a determination of award.

## **B. Review and Selection Process**

The Catalyst Committee may recommend full funding, partial funding, or no funding. In the event of a partial award, the awardee may wish to alter the scope of the proposed research or may even choose to decline the award and reapply at another time.

Following scientific, technical and programmatic review and consideration of appropriate factors recommended by the Committee, the Associate Vice President for Research will determine whether the proposal should be declined or recommended for full or partial award. In all cases, reviews are treated as confidential.

## **VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

Similar to all externally-funded programs, Catalyst awards will be administered by the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs. Investigators are cautioned not to make financial or personnel commitments in the absence of an award.

### **A. Notification of the Award**

Notification of an award is made to the Principal Investigator by the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs. Investigators whose proposals are declined will be advised as promptly as possible, but not until successful Investigators have accepted the award terms and conditions.

### **B. Award Conditions**

An award consists of: (1) the award letter, which includes the terms and conditions and any special provisions applicable to the award, as well as any numbered amendments thereto; (2) the budget, which indicates the amounts, by categories of expense, on which The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs has based its support (or otherwise communicates any specific approvals or disapprovals of proposed expenditures); and (3) the proposal referenced in the award letter. The Principal Investigator and Co-Principal Investigator(s) must countersign the award in acceptance of the terms and conditions.

Responsibility for overall programmatic and financial management of sponsored programs is vested in the Principal Investigator. More comprehensive information on [process, procedures, and policies for sponsored programs and project management](#) can be found on the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs website.

Only budgeted and allowable costs may be incurred on the program. Requests to alter the scope of work or to re-budget costs are strongly discouraged and must be presented in writing to your Grant Coordinator.

#### **Special Award Conditions:**

1. All awards are subject to availability of funds and there is no obligation to make any specific number of awards under this solicitation.
2. Phase I Catalyst Grant Program awards are cost reimbursable grants, no award shall exceed \$20,000 and any funds that remain unspent at the end of the Period of Performance will be forfeited.
3. Budgetary constraints preclude capital projects or long-term support of an individual research agenda. The Period of Performance does not extend beyond the end of the University Fiscal year.

4. Expenditures must be made in a timely manner so that all billing is concluded during the appropriate fiscal year. All expenses must be encumbered by May 1 and all expenses processed by May 31. The Principal Investigator's academic unit will be responsible for any costs that exceed the award, expenditures processed beyond the May 31 budget period, and any/all unallowable costs.
5. All proposals must comply with Georgia Southern University policies and procedures, as well as standard federal, state and University guidelines for sponsored programs.
6. Awardees are expected to (1) submit an external research proposal for more than the amount of the Catalyst Program award within 1 year of the end of the Period of Performance, and (2) submit a comprehensive final report within 90 days of the end of the Period of Performance, before becoming eligible for subsequent funding under the program. The external proposal must be processed through the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs.
7. Investigators will not receive funding in concurrent years. Thus, awardees receiving money in a previous year's competition are ineligible for awards in the current year.
8. Any published work that was supported in whole or in part by funds from the Catalyst Programs should be acknowledged in the publication. An example of such an acknowledgment is: "This study was supported in part by funds from the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at Georgia Southern University." Copies of such publications should be forwarded to the Associate Vice President for Research.

### **C. Reporting Requirements**

The Principal Investigator must submit a final programmatic report to the Associate Vice President for Research within 90 days after the expiration date of the grant (i.e. before August 31). Principal Investigators should examine and utilize the reporting format of the corresponding funding agency or sponsor for which the original proposal was written. At minimum, the final report should provide information on activities and findings, project participants (individual and organizational), publications, and other specific products and contributions, *including plans and timeline for submission of the external proposal*.

Failure to provide the required final project report will make the Principal Investigator ineligible for future internal funding opportunities offered by the ORSSP.

### **VII. CONTACT INFORMATION**

General inquiries regarding this program should be made to:

- Charles E. Patterson, Associate Vice President for Research, telephone: (912) 478-5465  
Email: [cpatterson@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:cpatterson@georgiasouthern.edu)

Coordination of proposal submission and award management should be directed to the cognizant Grant Coordinator. Contact information and academic assignments for each Grant Coordinator can be found on the [ORSSP website](#).

### **VIII. OTHER INFORMATION**

The ORSSP website provides comprehensive information on funding opportunities and policies and procedures for sponsored programs. Use of this website by potential applicants is strongly encouraged.

The ORSSP supports faculty and staff in the acquisition, performance and administration of projects and programs funded from sources outside the University. The ORSSP is the central point of coordination for grants, and contractual obligations from individuals; government and public agencies; and industrial financial and private organizations to support sponsored research and service activities at Georgia Southern University.

In addition, the ORSSP serves as the administrative home for research compliance management, providing support and guidance to the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB), the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC), and the Intellectual Property Committee. The ORSSP also administers the University processes for reviewing financial conflicts of interest and scientific or scholarly misconduct in science allegations.

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