Fall 2011 Seed Grant Competition

Fall 2011 for Projects during Calendar Year 2012

The Seed Grant Program at the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) is intended to cultivate promising individual or collaborative research and creative scholarship by providing start-up funds for projects of the highest merit and potential. The program encourages innovation and advances the University’s educational and research mission by seeding new and cross-disciplinary small projects and strategic initiatives. A major goal is to engage increasing numbers of faculty and students in scholarly work that advances the University’s vision and strategic goals and has the potential to attract funding from external sources.

THE APPLICATION DEADLINE IS 4:00 PM EDT MONDAY October 3, 2011.

Submissions must be made electronically on a flash drive or by email to seedgrants@udc.edu. The subject line MUST READ “SEED GRANT PROPOSAL,” and the file name must include the PI’s last name: “PIlastname.seed2012”. Files with other names and emails with no subject or a different subject are likely to be lost!

Proposals are invited in two separate categories:
(1) Small projects with a budget of $4,000 or up to $8,000 (if at least two faculty members from at least two schools/colleges are involved)

(2) Strategic initiative projects with a budget of up to $25,000

The UDC Seed Grant Program will provide early funding for projects in any discipline or interdisciplinary area of interest. Strategic initiatives must take early steps toward implementing strategies to make progress on the Strategic Academic Program Plan (see Figure 1), and especially to become competitive for external funding.

Both strategic and small projects could open new scholarly directions, expand on existing paradigms, and/or collect preliminary data in preparation for a submission to external sponsors for funding, for publication, or for presentation. For example, funds could be used to perform preliminary data collection via a pilot survey or experiment; for travel to do field research or interviews (not to present at conferences or to attend a course); for software or equipment needed to initiate a new research direction; or to start a new creative artistic endeavor. No funding may be used to purchase furniture or in a manner that encumbers the University and would require additional expenditures beyond the seed grant. Pedagogical research is eligible, but not the development of new courses or curricula. We particularly seek to encourage interdisciplinary projects involving more than one department or school/college; to engage increasing numbers of faculty in all schools and colleges in scholarly pursuits; to seed collaborations and partnerships external to the University; to advance the University’s strategic goals; to involve students in research and scholarly pursuits; and to initiate efforts with the potential for broad impact and growth beyond the initial project.
Small projects: Projects will start on January 15, 2012 and must be completed by November 30, 2012. *No budget may be used for salaries, wages, or stipends.* Budget expenditures for equipment, materials, supplies, and contracted services are expected to be spent during spring 2012. Applicants may request funding of up to $4,000 for a project with a single investigator (up to $8,000 for a collaborative project with two or more faculty investigators from two or more schools/colleges). Applicants may also request one student research assistant to participate in the project and release from teaching up to one course during one semester (for a single-investigator project) or up to one course during one semester for each of no more than three faculty members from different departments on a collaborative project. Up to $40,000 is expected to be awarded to seed high-quality projects spanning the full intellectual and scholarly range at the University. *Funding is contingent upon the availability of funds.*

Strategic initiatives: The purpose of the Strategic Initiatives category is to jump start research or other major projects that are aligned with the growth areas identified in the University’s Strategic Academic Program Plan (See Figure 1). The maximum budget is $25,000 (if two or more schools/colleges are involved; $10,000 otherwise). Projects should start by January 15, 2011. Up to $15,000 of the budget may be used to pay summer stipends not to exceed $5,000 per faculty member (on a 9-month contract) or $4,000 per summer student assistant. In no case may this stipend cause summer compensation to any faculty member to exceed 33% of the academic salary.

![Figure 1. UDC’s Strategic Academic Impact Areas](image)

Eligibility
Full-time regular faculty members at UDC, including the Community College, are eligible to serve as principal or co-principal investigators. No faculty member may be the principal investigator on more than one proposal. A person may be a co-investigator or collaborator on more than one proposal, however. Faculty members with great ideas, but without significant external funding that supports research or other scholarship are especially encouraged to apply for small project grants. Faculty members, who already have significant external funding, are encouraged to mentor these colleagues, or to lead or participate in
strategic initiatives. Proposals building directly on or closely related to externally funded, ongoing or
previous work are not likely to be competitive.

**Peer Review**
Small-grant proposals will be reviewed and ranked by a peer review committee (PRC), and written
reviewer feedback will be provided to both successful and unsuccessful proposers. The Office of
Sponsored Programs will administer the Seed Grant Program and provide staff support to the PRC. The
ranking and recommendations will be provided to the Associate Provost for Research, who will make the
final funding decisions and ensure a distribution of awards across the full disciplinary range and
schools/colleges represented among the applicants. Strategic initiative proposals will be reviewed and
ranked by the strategic leadership group.

**Review Criteria**
Small Grant Proposals will be evaluated on:
1. **Intellectual merit (50%)**: how important is the project; to what extent could it advance knowledge or
the state of the art; how novel or innovative is the project; how appropriate, developed, and sound is the
approach?
2. **Alignment with UDC mission, vision, and strategic goals (20%)**: why is the project appropriate for
UDC; how would it help the University accomplish its mission and make progress toward its strategic
goals?
3. **Investment return (10%)**: What is the project’s potential to lead to successful proposals for external
funding and/or peer-reviewed publication (or the equivalent in the discipline); how does the project
increase the number of faculty engaged in research and scholarly activity?
4. **Interdisciplinarity (10%)**: To what extent does the project integrate across disciplines or involve
faculty and students from more than one department or school/college
5. **Feasibility (10%)**: does the team have the necessary experience, expertise, and resources; can the
project be accomplished within the time and budget proposed?

Strategic Initiative Proposals will be evaluated on:
1. **Intellectual merit (30%)**: how important is the project; to what extent could it advance knowledge or
the state of the art; how novel or innovative is the project; how appropriate, developed, and sound is the
approach?
2. **Alignment with UDC mission, vision, and strategic goals (30%)**: why is the project appropriate for
UDC; how would it help the University accomplish its mission and make progress toward its strategic
goals?
3. **Investment return (20%)**: What is the project’s potential to lead to successful proposals for external
funding and/or peer-reviewed publication (or the equivalent in the discipline); how does the project
increase the number of faculty engaged in research and scholarly activity?
4. **Interdisciplinarity (10%)**: To what extent does the project integrate across disciplines or involve
faculty and students from more than one department or school/college
5. **Feasibility (10%)**: does the team have the necessary experience, expertise, and resources; can the
project be accomplished within the time and budget proposed?

**How to Apply**
The seed-grant application must include:
- A cover page (see attached)
A project narrative (3 pages maximum, including any figures or tables; use font size of 11 point or larger and have margins of at least 1 inch on all sides) including

- Specific Goals or Aims: What is the purpose of the project? If the work is hypothesis based, state the hypothesis.
- Background and significance: What is the state of the art or knowledge base, and what knowledge or techniques will be advanced? How is the project worthwhile, significant, innovative, or impactful? How does it align with the University’s strategic goals and interests? If the proposal is a strategic initiative, describe how it will jump start and advance a strategic area.
- Research or project design, approach, and/or methods: How will you do the project? Show it is feasible and achievable.
- Interdisciplinarity, collaborations, students: mention if applicable
- Summary: briefly address the selection criteria, helping the reviewers to evaluate the proposal.

The one-page budget summary and justification (please use attached form).

One page of references/bibliography and to describe facilities you have access to (especially if you are using facilities that are not on the UDC campus).

- A job description for the student worker (on the budget page).
- A timeline or table of project dates and milestones for strategic initiatives.
- A 2-page biographical sketch for the PI and each co-PI, containing education, employment history, qualifications for this project, and no more 5 publications and 5 presentations. (See attached sample).

THE PROPOSAL MUST BE SUBMITTED AS AN ELECTRONIC FILE TO MELISSA SELDIN (seedgrants@udc.edu). It may be submitted by email or on a flash drive) and must be received not later than 4 pm Monday October 3, 2011.

Post-Award Expectations

1) The principal investigators of all proposals—both funded and not funded—will receive written review feedback on their proposals, prior to December 15, 2011.

2) The principal investigators of projects selected for funding will be notified by the Office of Sponsored Programs of the process for making purchases. The plan is to procure all the required and budgeted materials, equipment, and supplies as soon as possible, so that they are on campus prior to February 15, 2012. Principal Investigators of funded projects must provide a phone number or email address through which they can be reached reliably and promptly during December and early January. Work should start by February 1, 2012. All funds must be fully expensed by August 31, 2012.

3) The principal investigator is expected to use the project results in at least one peer-reviewed publication (or equivalent) and/or a proposal for external funding.

4) The principal investigator is responsible for preparing a written report of progress, accomplishments, publications, and external proposals (two to three-page maximum) due by May 7, 2012; and a final report by December 15, 2012. Both reports should be submitted to Melissa Seldin in the Office of Sponsored Programs at seedgrants@udc.edu.

The principal investigator will present a talk or exhibit on campus during Spring 2012 or Fall 2012 about the project as part of a Research Showcase, to be organized by the Office of Sponsored Programs.
5) Principal investigators and co-investigators of small projects and strategic initiatives, who are making excellent progress as of May 2012 may be eligible to apply for a summer supplement stipend of up to $3,000 (for a faculty member) and $3,000 (for a student) for a maximum of $9,000 for the project. The application for summer supplement should be part of the progress report, and it must include a work plan, with milestones, for the summer.