

ENHANCING OUR RESEARCH THROUGH PROGRAMMATIC INVESTMENT

To advance our mission with a particular focus on the guiding theme of “Achieving Global Excellence,” we seek to support the development of innovative research programs that contribute to knowledge creation and regional economic development while also supporting our academic programs and enhancing our institutional identity and reputation. The first initiative to achieve this goal, *Investing in Sustainability*, was launched in 2008 and continues with the support of the Miller Gift. This document provides the framework for establishing an ongoing, annual process of identifying and supporting the development of additional programmatic areas and announces institutional funding for the next round of investment in a new, or emerging, research program at Portland State University.

Similar to our investment in Sustainability, we seek to support the growth of other “program areas” - defined as multi-disciplinary faculty efforts to address a particular thematic issue or area that speaks to the objectives below. Programs supported by this activity will likely span academic units and be administratively supported through the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects. While the focus of this effort is focused on developing sponsored research projects, the programs are also expected to enhance the quality of instructional programs and engagement efforts.

Objectives

- Programs are expected to address “big questions” (i.e., problems or issues of considerable importance to society that are locally relevant, nationally or internationally significant, and of a level of complexity that mandates multi- or trans-disciplinary solutions.)
- Programs should build on and enhance existing strengths within the institution
- Programs should contribute to the University’s goal of growing PSU’s external funding base by attracting additional resources through support from individual donors, foundations, government and/or industry.
- Programs should demonstrate the potential to advance the reputation of Portland State University.

Characteristics and Review Criteria

It is anticipated that a “Program” will incorporate many of the following characteristics in order to attain the above objectives:

- Represents by an active and articulate champion/spokesperson
- Creates a distinctive or unique set of activities that are particularly appropriate to PSU consistent with the guiding themes, and exemplifies PSU’s commitment to engagement.
- Focuses on a coherent “big question” which goes beyond a single research project or proposal to identify an area for a long-term research agenda
- Demonstrates a clear vision of the significance of the work and a strategy to advance understanding and make substantial contributions and impact
- Connects to doctoral programs in a way that will help expand the number and quality of Ph.D. students and graduates
- Provides for faculty development opportunities, including mentoring of faculty who do not have a history of attracting external funding, and is consistent with priorities and commitments by participating departments/units in terms of future faculty hires.

- Incorporates a highly credible plan for increasing external funding (federal, state/local, private) including: possible funding opportunities, a track record of past funding to build upon, synergies of faculty from multiple units to help achieve funding growth, and plans for future faculty who will contribute to funding growth

Budget and Uses of Funds

- Requests should not exceed \$100,000 in the first year and may request up to three years of decreasing funding. Funding in subsequent years will be based on demonstrated progress.
- Funds are NOT to be used solely or primarily to support specific research projects.
- Funds ARE to be used for the general purpose of getting organized and creating capacity to establish capability and reputation in a programmatic area and apply for external funds. Such uses might include: hiring consultants or facilitators, limited amounts of faculty release time (typically no more than one course per year) or summer support for the purposes of program development, hiring Graduate Research Assistants, travel to other sites, organizing and holding small conferences, grant development support, core pieces of shared equipment or other resources which are central to the research question, enhanced library collections, and initial staff support to provide logistics and cohesion for a group.

Submission and Review Process. In Academic Year 2006-07, OAA supported several working groups to articulate institutional priorities and the means by which those priorities could be operationalized (see <http://www.pdx.edu/oaa/priorities.html>). The report, entitled “Advance Selected Programs that Establish Our Leadership” provides a starting point for this new process:

- A brief (6 page maximum) pre-proposal should be submitted by 3/16/2009 to the Associate Vice Provost for Research and Sponsored Projects (Nancy Koroloff). (This date will be the first Friday in January in subsequent years.)
- The pre-proposal should:
 - Describe the topical area being proposed (2 pages).
 - Demonstrate how the proposal relates to the objectives and characteristics of this initiative (1-2 pages).
 - Discuss the capacity available within PSU to address this topical area, describe the initial membership of the intended group, and identify a spokesperson for the group (1 page).
 - Provide a preliminary one-year budget and describe the use of funds (1 page).
- Proposals will be reviewed by a selection committee (as specified in the working group report). Groups will receive feedback by 4/17/2009, and may be invited to submit a full proposal based on that feedback.
- Full Proposals will be developed in conjunction with members of the selection committee, OAA and OGSR. Invited full proposals will be due to OGSR by 5/18/2009.
- The selection committee will review full proposals, obtain external review and comment and may invite presentations and/or discussion by proposing groups.
- The selection committee will make recommendations to the Provost by 7/15/2009. Proposals may be recommended for funding, recommended for partial (developmental) support, or not recommended for support.
- The Provost will make selections by 8/1/2009 and inform the proposing groups.
- Funds will become available in fiscal year 2009-10.

Process for Selection:

