



Request for Applications
Office of Research and Economic Development
Pathway to Interdisciplinary Research Centers
Phase III: Interdisciplinary Research Team Center Grants
December 2011

Application Receipt & Routing Deadline:	March 1, 2012
Funding Decisions Available:	June 1, 2012
Award Start Date:	July 1, 2012
Award Termination Date:	June 30, 2013
Award Amount:	Up to \$100,000 per year for one year (potential for a one-year renewal)
Total Number of Awards:	Up to three awards are expected

I. PURPOSE:

The Pathway to Interdisciplinary Research Centers program is designed to foster or support interdisciplinary research teams at UNL and enhance their competitiveness for large-scale or center grants. In addition to providing critical answers to complex questions that impact society, some interdisciplinary research teams may also be in a position to attract partners from industry to translate academic research into new products and services that may be licensed and commercialized to benefit Nebraskans and the general public.

Interdisciplinary research teams that build collaborations across departments, colleges, campuses, and with other institutions of strategic importance are critical to enhance competitiveness of UNL faculty. These interdisciplinary research teams should emerge naturally from shared research interests or needs and take into account external funding opportunities, institutional priorities, and UNL's unique strengths. Interdisciplinary research teams include expertise across two or more disciplines and leverage an integrated or holistic approach to solve complex societal problems. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review and include reference to recent reports from the National Academy of Sciences or federal agencies to become familiar with national priorities and critical societal issues.

For the purpose of the Pathway to Interdisciplinary Research Centers program, interdisciplinary research teams must be broader than collaborations between molecular biologists and computational biologists, agronomists and plant pathologists, physiologists and molecular biologists, basic and applied engineers, theoretical and physical chemists, organic and analytical chemists, social and cognitive psychologists, theoretical and comparative political scientists, economists and risk analysts, survey scientists and statisticians, or anthropologists and linguists. The rationale for the nature of the interdisciplinary research team should not be based solely on the use of various research techniques.



Funds must be used to support interdisciplinary research teams where there is a *known opportunity* for obtaining competitive funding from a federal agency or a foundation. A large-scale or center grant is defined as a competitive, full Facilities and Administrative (F&A) cost-bearing funding opportunity of at least \$1 million per year (total costs) for a minimum of three years.

The Phase III Interdisciplinary Research Team Center Grants will provide support for:

- Regular face-to-face team meetings or webinars to plan and prepare for submission of large-scale or center grants;
- Face-to-face meetings with an external advisory board;
- Site visits at collaborating institutions, including minority-serving institutions;
- Building partnerships with minority-serving institutions and/or industry;
- Developing effective education and/or outreach programs;
- Collecting stakeholder input;
- Up to 0.5 FTE for administrative assistance to coordinate these activities; or
- Conducting activities that enhance interdisciplinary research teams as described in the Phase I RFA.

II. ELIGIBILITY:

The Principal Investigator (PI) must have a tenure-track or research-track appointment at UNL. The co-PI(s), collaborator(s), and/or team members can be affiliated with any University of Nebraska campus or be employed outside the University of Nebraska system.

NOTE: Visiting and adjunct faculty may not serve as PI on awards from this program. An individual may serve as PI on only one application but may serve as co-PI, collaborator, or team member on other projects.

III. APPLICATION SUBMISSION, FORMAT, AND CONTENT:

The following information is required as part of the electronic application via NUgrant:

1) Abstract

The abstract should be written in lay language without the use of technical terminology or acronyms and must not exceed 250 words.

2) Project Description

The Project Description must be a draft of the pre-proposal (if required by the funding opportunity) or a draft of the full proposal to be submitted to the federal funding agency or foundation. This section must be formatted (font size and type, margins, and line spacing) and adhere to the page limits as required by the funding opportunity. Applicants are *strongly encouraged* to contact Dr. Deb Hamernik (dhamernik2@unl.edu) in the Office of Research prior to preparing this section of the application.

If relevant to the specific funding opportunity, plans for engaging minority serving institutions and/or industry partners; developing educational or outreach programs; mentoring plans for postdoctoral fellows; managing the data and/or the interdisciplinary research team; and



strategies for effective communication among team members must be included. Clearly indicate the role and responsibilities of the PI, co-PI(s), and/or collaborators.

The timeline should include a description of the activities and should allow at least six weeks to conduct an external review of the draft application.

3) Biographical Sketches/Vitae

A two-page biographical sketch/vita must be included for all faculty on the interdisciplinary research team. Applicants must use the standard format required by the potential funding agency.

4) List of all funded and pending internal and external grants of all UNL faculty involved in the project.

This form is available in NUgrant and requires the NU grant ID, title, name of the lead PI, agency, current award amount, and project total amount. This information is automatically provided for applications that have been submitted to NUgrant. Team members that are not employed by UNL are not required to provide this information.

5) Budget and Budget Justification

The budget form is available in NUgrant. The budget justification is limited to one page and must include a rationale for the purpose of expenditures. Allowable expenses include, and are not limited to: travel and per diem expenses for UNL faculty; travel and honoraria for outside experts; faculty retreats; and up to 0.5 FTE for administrative assistance to coordinate these activities. Tenure-track faculty may request up to one month of summer salary or release time from teaching one course per academic year. A letter of approval for release time from teaching from the Department Head/Chair and the Dean must be included. Facilities and administrative (F&A) costs are NOT allowed. In general, these funds must not be used for construction, renovation, or international travel; however, special requests for these purposes will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Approval for construction, renovation, or international travel must be obtained from the Office of Research (UNLresearch@unl.edu) prior to expenditure.

IV. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

Applications will only be accepted via NUgrant (<http://nugrant.unl.edu>). If you are a first-time user of NUgrant, you can login to NUgrant using your Blackboard username and password. If you need assistance with your Blackboard credentials, contact the University Help Desk at: (402) 472-3970 or toll-free at: (866) 472-3970. ***Electronic submission of applications is required. Paper applications will NOT be accepted.***

Applications MUST be submitted and administrative routes must be completed in NUgrant by March 1, 2012. Applications received after this deadline will not be reviewed.

V. REVIEW PROCESS:

Applications will be reviewed by senior research administrators within the applicants' College(s) or Institute and the Office of Research. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the Pathway to Interdisciplinary Research Centers program, it is unlikely that any one reviewer will be an expert in



the areas of any application. Thus, it is the responsibility of the PI to write the proposal in language that reviewers can understand even if the research is outside the reviewers' immediate area of expertise.

VI. EVALUATION CRITERIA (100 point scale):

Applications will be evaluated on:

- Scholarly merit and relevance to solving critical societal challenges (35 points);
- Potential for external funding of a large-scale or center grant of at least \$1 million per year (total costs plus full F&A cost recovery) for a minimum of three years and potential of the interdisciplinary research team to compete successfully for this funding opportunity (30 points);
- Qualifications of project personnel (25 points); and
- Budget and justification (10 points).

Priority will be given to interdisciplinary research teams that have developed a Concept Paper and have received internal funding to generate and analyze preliminary data.

VII. OUTCOMES AND EXPECTATIONS:

Awardees will be expected to submit an extramural (e.g., federal, foundation, or private) application for a large-scale or center grant. All expenditures will be monitored closely and must be as described in the proposed budget. *Failure to submit the required extramural application will disqualify the PI and co-PI(s) from receiving internal grants through the UNL Office of Research for a period of three years.*

The PI must agree to serve as a reviewer on at least two review panels administered by the Office of Research during a four-year period. Failure to do so will disqualify the applicant from future internal grant competitions sponsored by the Office of Research.

VIII. POST AWARD MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Prior to the end of the first 12-month period of funding, the PI must submit: a) an annual report of progress and accomplishments and b) an annual report of project expenditures to the Office of Research (UNLresearch@unl.edu). In addition, the PI and Co-PIs must participate in a face-to-face meeting with senior research administrators from the applicants' College(s) or Institute and senior research administrators from the Office of Research. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss progress, unexpected obstacles, and plans for the interdisciplinary research team to obtain extramural funding. Following the face-to-face meeting, the Office of Research will determine whether to release funding for the next 12-month period or terminate the project.

A final cumulative termination report is due 30 days following the project's termination. A report format/template will be provided to the PI by the Office of Research.

Departments/Units of the PI will be held responsible for expenditures beyond the approved budget. All funds must be spent by June 30, 2013. Funds remaining following the project's termination will be transferred back to the Office of Research.