



**Request for Applications**  
**Office of Research and Economic Development**  
**Pathway to Interdisciplinary Research Centers**  
**Phase II: Interdisciplinary Research Team Seed Grants**  
**December 2011**

<b>Application Receipt &amp; Routing Deadline:</b>	March 1, 2012
<b>Funding Decisions Available:</b>	June 1, 2012
<b>Award Start Date:</b>	July 1, 2012
<b>Award Termination Date:</b>	June 30, 2014
<b>Award Amount:</b>	Up to \$75,000 per year for each of two years (two years is the maximum award duration)
<b>Total Number of Awards:</b>	Up to five awards are expected
<b>Prerequisite:</b>	Applicants must have submitted a Concept Paper to the Office of Research and discussed the goals of their interdisciplinary research project with the Office of Research prior to submitting a Phase II application.

**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 references 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 II Interdisciplinary Research Team Seed Grants will provide support to allow the research team to:

- Conduct and analyze experiments;
- Provide full or partial support for graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, technicians, or non-tenure-track faculty;
- Purchase shared equipment for use by members of the research team;
- Travel to meet with program officers at federal funding agencies or foundations; or
- Conduct activities that build 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 he or she 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 not exceed five pages. Type size must be Times New Roman or Arial 11 point font or larger. Margins must be at least one inch on all sides and line spacing must not exceed six lines of text within a vertical inch. Literature citations, budget, budget justification, and biographical sketches/vitae are not included in the five-page limit. The Project Description must include the three sections described below.

The *Introduction* should detail the project's background, justification, and significance. The current status of research at UNL, including research strengths, resources, relative



competitiveness for funding, and landmark outcomes should be discussed. The goals and objectives of the interdisciplinary research project and team-building activities should be described. Include the rationale and significance of the proposed project. Describe and justify how the research team is interdisciplinary. Applications from existing interdisciplinary research teams or programs of excellence must clearly indicate how the proposed activities differ significantly from current activities.

The proposed **Plan of Work** should include a description of the approach, methods, data analysis techniques, expected outputs/outcomes/impacts, dissemination plan, and facilities. Describe how the results generated from this funding will be applied to future studies. Include a description of a plan for managing the interdisciplinary research team and strategies for effective communication among team members. Clearly indicate the role and responsibilities of the PI, co-PI(s), and/or collaborators. Discuss how the proposed studies align with the Strategic Plan for UNL: Setting Our Compass (<http://www.unl.edu/ucomm/chancellor/compass/>). Provide information to justify how these activities will enhance competitiveness of the interdisciplinary research team for a large-scale or center grant. Provide a URL for a specific funding opportunity or communications from a Program Officer from a research funding agency that describes the external funding opportunity of at least \$1 million per year for a minimum of three years to which the team will eventually apply.

The **Timeline** should include a description of the activities and plans for the interdisciplinary research team to obtain additional internal or external funding to collect and analyze preliminary data. Longer-term plans for submitting an extramural application to fund the large-scale or center grant should also be included.

### 3) **Biographical Sketches/Vitae**

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

### 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, but are not limited to: travel and honoraria for outside experts; purchase of equipment; salaries and benefits for non-tenure-track faculty, technicians, or postdoctoral fellows; and stipends and tuition remission for graduate students. If you are requesting funds to support a postdoctoral fellow, you may include funds to cover the salary and fringe benefits as described at: <http://research.unl.edu/sp1/fringerates.shtml>. If you are requesting funds to support a graduate research assistant, you may include funds to cover the stipend and health insurance as



described at: <http://research.unl.edu/sp1/fringerates.shtml>. 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. Support for administrative assistance or 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](mailto: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 midnight on 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:

- Scientific 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 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 not previously received a Strategic Research Cluster grant from the Office of Research.*

#### VII. OUTCOMES AND EXPECTATIONS:

Awardees will be expected to generate preliminary data to enhance their competitiveness for extramural funding. The interdisciplinary research team will be expected to submit at least one high-quality, competitive application for extramural funding (e.g., federal, foundation, or private) funding prior to the end of the two-year funding period (e.g., by June 30, 2014). 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 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 over 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:**

Awardees will be required to meet with at least one representative from a federal research agency to discuss their ideas for specific research projects. A report of this meeting must be submitted to the Office of Research ([UNLresearch@unl.edu](mailto:UNLresearch@unl.edu)) within 30 days following the project's termination.

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](mailto:UNLresearch@unl.edu)). In addition, the PI and co-PIs must participate in a face-to-face meeting with senior research administrators from the College(s) or Institute of the PI and co-PIs 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, 2014. Funds remaining following the project's termination will be transferred back to the Office of Research.