Cross-Cutting Initiative

Cross-disciplinary Research Grants
Call for Proposals

2009-2010

To: Columbia University Faculty

        Columbia University Research Scientists

        Columbia University Research Scholars

        Columbia University Postdoctoral Fellows

Award Amounts
        $10,000 - $30,000   Typical Award Amount
        $50,000   Maximum Award Amount
        <$10,000   Awards for Colloquia-type Projects

Proposal Deadline
        Thursday, April 30, 2009   10:00 pm

Award Notification
        Wednesday, July 1, 2009

The Earth Institute
AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Call for Proposals – Cross-disciplinary Research Grants

Proposals are solicited from the Columbia University faculty and research staff to advance the goals and objectives of the Earth Institute's Cross-Cutting Initiative (CCI). Under the CCI, scholars from a wide range of fields (e.g. earth, biological, engineering, health, social, and political sciences) join forces to address complex global challenges and possible solutions to the most pressing problems in the field of Sustainable Development. The CCI aims to establish new methods for bridging disciplines and enabling scientists from different fields to address intrinsically cross-disciplinary problems and work towards practical solutions. A website is available which provides information on the CCI and on current and past CCI awards and recipients: http://www.earth.columbia.edu/articles/view/61.

For additional information, contact Robin DeJong at robin@ei.columbia.edu or 212-854-7905.

Eligibility

These funds are available only to members of the Columbia University community.
- The lead Principal Investigator (PI) must be a full-time research scientist, research scholar or faculty member at Columbia University. There can be up to four co-PIs. There is no limit to the number of project team members.
- An EI Fellow or Columbia postdoctoral research fellow may be the PI of a project as long as a co-PI who is a full-time research scientist, research scholar or faculty member at Columbia University signs an agreement to assume responsibility of the project in case the Fellow leaves Columbia University. If a postdoctoral research fellow wishes to be PI, he/she must indicate in the proposal when the fellowship ends. A fellow may also be a co-PI.
- The project team ideally will be comprised of a mix of senior and junior scientists including Earth Institute Fellows, and may include graduate students. The project team may include collaborators outside the Columbia University community.
- A project that receives funding from the CCI is an Earth Institute project and will remain so regardless of changes in project leadership.

Award Amounts

A maximum amount of $50,000 will be granted to a single project, except under rare circumstances with approval by the CCI Steering Committee. The typical range of award amounts is between $10,000 and $30,000. A minimum of $10,000 will be awarded to a research projects; proposals for community building and definition of new lines of inquiry through seminar/colloquia-type activities can request for an award under $10,000. Support can be provided for preparation of specific proposals emerging from CCI planning activities.

Project Requirements

1. The project should be critical to the mission of the Earth Institute and the proposal should describe how it fits into the larger picture of the Earth Institute.

2. The project should be interdisciplinary by seeking new and innovative ways of drawing together faculty and research staff from across academic disciplines, bringing their knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on the task of finding practicable solutions to complex global challenges in line with the CCI goals and objectives (see above). Priority will be given to proposals that address 3 or more of the following nine cross-cutting themes:

    o Climate and Society Interactions
    o Managing Water Scarcity
    o Clean Energy
    o Poverty Alleviation
    o Ecosystems Health and Monitoring
    o Global Environmental Public Health and Global Health Delivery Systems
    o Food, Ecology and Nutrition
    o Hazards and Risk Reduction
    o Urbanization

3. Intellectual inquiry should be outcome-driven. Examples include creating technologies that improve the quality of life, or using new kinds of science and public policy to have direct impact on individuals.
4. The proposed work should feed back to the research within the five clusters of the Earth Institute: Earth Sciences, Biological Sciences, Engineering Sciences, Social Sciences, and Health Sciences.
5. Projects may be place-specific, but the overarching theme should address problems that are relevant on a global scale or, in other words, are scalable.
6. The project should aim to leave behind a legacy – institution building, external funds to further the research, published papers in peer-reviewed journals, etc., and how the experience gained from this project might be leveraged for external funding in future years.

The following criteria will also be taken into consideration by the CCI Steering Committee:
- Creativity of the research
- Information on how the relevance of the research will be conveyed to the public
- Composition of the project team

Proposal Format

The proposal should include the New Project Proposal Coversheet (attached) and up to five (5) pages (minimum of size 12 font, 1" margins) covering the remainder of the information about the project. Only the first five pages will be considered if more than five pages are submitted. All proposals must be submitted in Microsoft Word or equivalent (please no PDF files) and the budget must also be in Word format. Appendices are not permitted except one (1) page of references (can be in size 10 font and at the end of the proposal). The proposal should contain the following sections:

Title and Scope of Project. This section should include the project title and a description of the goals and objectives of the project. An explanation is required of how the project relates to the 6 project requirements (listed above).

Methodology. This section should layout the basic research plan – what actions are going to be taken in order to reach your goals and objectives, how data will be collected or generated and how the data will be analyzed. This section should include information on design, population and sampling, instrumentation, procedures and timeframe, and analysis plan. Knowledge of alternative methods should be demonstrated and the case made that the proposed approach is the most appropriate and most valid way to address the research question.

Required Equipment and Approvals. This section should describe any equipment that is to be used and whether new equipment is required for the project. The grant money cannot be used to purchase new computers. Software, if it is vital to the project, can be purchased. This section should also list the approvals necessary for project initiation (e.g. Institutional Review Board, etc.).

Names and Titles of Contributors and their Role in the Project. This section should present a breakdown of the Project Team, Collaborators, etc. and provide a brief description of what specific activities they will be conducting.

Budget. This section should contain an itemized budget projected for the seed funding. If this request is part of a larger project, please indicate how the remainder of the funds will be obtained or what portion can be accomplished with the requested amount. The project funding can stretch over more than one year and if that is the case, the budget should include a breakdown by fiscal year (July 1-June 30). Indirect costs should not be included although the charge for fringe/benefits on salaries should be 31.1% for faculty, staff and fellows (does not apply to students). The grant money cannot be used to cover student tuition but can be used for interns, research assistants and work stipends. The grant money can be used to cover faculty time or can provide additional funds to complement existing salaries; this is left to the discretion of the project leader.

Deadlines

Proposal Submission

Proposals must be received electronically by 10:00 pm on April 30, 2009, to Robin DeJong, robin@ei.columbia.edu. *Late submissions will not be considered.*

Award notification will be made by July 1, 2008.

Progress Reports and Final Report

Once the project commences, a progress report must be submitted to the CCI Steering Committee by April 1 and October 1 for the length of the project. A reminder and progress report form will be provided one month in advance of these deadlines. A final report is due at the end of the project. The progress report form and final report form will be provided at the time of award but can also be requested from Robin DeJong, robin@ei.columbia.edu.