Interdisciplinary Research Initiative
In
Nature and Culture

Call for Seed-Grant Research Proposals
Spring 2009

Informational meeting: Date to be announced
The Commons
Spooner Hall

Submission deadline: April 15, 2009

Awards announced: May 15, 2009
PURPOSE
The Commons at the University of Kansas explores nature and culture and their reciprocal impacts across the sciences, arts and humanities. In so doing, the Commons intends to be a catalyst for bold innovation, unconventional thinking and unexpected discoveries (www.thecommons.ku.edu).

The Commons Interdisciplinary Research Initiative in Nature and Culture is a KU-wide, competitive seed-grant program to nurture and develop interdisciplinary, collaborative research ideas and extramural grant proposals. The Commons seed grant program targets concepts and their interdisciplinary synthesis, not the generation of preliminary data. Seed grant activities may include exploratory research workshops, colloquia, symposia, scholarly travel and visits, and other activities that advance interdisciplinary research ideas, collaborations and extramural proposals. Proposals that create and integrate ideas across the arts, sciences and humanities will be most competitive. Research partnerships across KU units and between KU and other universities and institutions are strongly encouraged.

The outcome of a seed grant should be the development and submission of a substantive research grant proposal to a federal agency, foundation or other funding entity.

ADMINISTRATION
All KU faculty and academic equivalents are eligible and encouraged to apply to The Commons Interdisciplinary Research Initiative in Nature and Culture.

Proposals for the Spring 2009 round are due April 15, 2009 with funding decisions announced May 15, 2009. An informational/mentoring meeting for potential applicants to discuss The Commons seed grant proposals will be held in The Commons in Spooner Hall in March 2009, exact date to be announced.

All seed grant proposals should be submitted in electronic format (Word doc or pdf file) to Jordan Yochim, Director of The Commons (jeyochim@ku.edu). A panel chosen by The Commons team will review the proposals and make funding recommendations.

Awards. Up to $20,000 is available for one or more individual awards. Allowable costs include workshops, travel, scholarly visits and other activities that advance interdisciplinary research ideas, partnerships and extramural research proposals. Expenditures for salaries, equipment, data collection, etc. are not allowed. Matching funds will increase a proposal’s competitiveness.

Project activities. The Commons will make its spaces and services available for all funded KU-based activities, e.g., workshops, which are expected to occur in The Commons whenever possible. The Commons will will work with awardees to observe, document, and publicize funded activities, if appropriate. Awardees will inform The Commons of project activities and extramural proposals submitted, funded or declined.

PROPOSAL CONTENT AND FORMAT
Please follow these guidelines in preparing your proposals in electronic format (Word or pdf) and include the components described below. Applicants may also provide supporting “work samples” in another medium, including video (not to exceed 4 minutes) and stills (maximum of 20 images).

Project Cover Page
Provide the
• title of the project;
• name(s) and affiliations of investigator(s);
• project dates;
• the amount requested and matching funds and source(s), if any;
• the agency, foundation or other entity to which the full extramural proposal will be submitted.

Project Abstract (maximum: 200 words, 12 point type)
Summarize the research project and its intellectual rationale, scope and impact.

Project Description (maximum: 4 pages, double-spaced 12 point type)
Describe the research project, addressing the following issues:
• Challenge/Purpose — the need for the project, the question(s) being addressed, their conceptual bases, and why they require an interdisciplinary approach.
• Solution/Significance — how the seed grant activity will foster
  o interdisciplinary partnerships and research across the sciences, arts and/or humanities
  o an extramural grant proposal, and
  o potential answers to the question(s) being addressed.
  Also include, if applicable, the urgency or special opportunity of the proposed research.
• Scope — the scope of the project activity and how it fits the conceptual basis and interdisciplinary nature of the inquiry.
• Plan — the tasks, methods, schedule and milestones for the seed grant activities, the collaborating units or institutions, and the roles of project personnel.
• Logistics — the logistical needs of the seed grant activities

Budget & Budget Justification (1 page, 12 point type)
Itemize and explain the costs of the proposed seed project activities and matching funds, if any. Salary support, data collection or the purchase of equipment are not allowed.

Literature Cited

Appendices
Include a bio sketch or abbreviated curriculum vitae of project participants.
PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Intellectual Merit and Broader Impact

• *Strength of the research problem or exploration*. Is the research/exploration significant?

• *Appropriateness of proposed activity*. Will the proposed seed-grant activity help develop the ideas and partnerships to address the research problem?

• *Interdisciplinary strength*.
  o *Degree of interdisciplinarity*. Does the research/exploration encompass significant interdisciplinarity, i.e., does it integrate disciplines from the science, arts and/or the humanities? Projects that integrate disciplines from all three will be more competitive.
  o *Appropriateness of interdisciplinary concepts*. How well do the interdisciplinary concepts and areas fit the research problem
  o *Integration of interdisciplinary concepts*. How cohesive is the proposed integration of the ideas and concepts across these disciplines?

• *Strength and capability of personnel*. Do the personnel fit the project?

• *Proposal potential of proposed activity*. Will the proposed activity result in the development of a strong extramural research proposal to a federal agency, foundation or other funding entity?