

Critical Initiatives in Research and Scholarship

Dear Colleagues,

We are extremely pleased to release the Call for Pre-Proposals for the Critical Initiatives in Research and Scholarship (CIRS) Program, which was established to stimulate continued innovation and outstanding scholarship at UIUC. The preceding Critical Research Initiatives (CRI) program has been expanded this year to help catalyze and engage all areas of the campus in pursuing large-scale problems of broad scope. To that end, we are pleased to announce a special call for pre-proposals that is described below. In addition, the program staff has expanded the CIRS program information on the CIRS website to facilitate proposal preparation and the application process.

During the last eleven years, the CRI program has been an outstanding catalyst for discovery and has resulted in several high-profile programs for the campus. The CIRS program seeks to support innovation in research and scholarship by supporting interaction between and among disciplines that are not traditionally affiliated. The program provides support for broad multidisciplinary research themes that will position the campus to become a national or international leader in emerging areas of inquiry or scholarship. A key review criterion is that projects have the potential for transformative impact on the University. In addition, projects should leverage existing campus strengths and distinguish UIUC from peer institutions.

Program Goals

- Stimulate creation of multidisciplinary programs or projects
- Expedite exploration of innovative ideas that will lead to new research paradigms
- Initiate bold new programs in the humanities, arts and social sciences
- Fund high risk projects that have the potential for significant rewards

CIRS is not intended to provide interim support to ongoing research or scholarly activities.

Special Call for Pre-proposals: *The Behavioral and Social Dimensions of Major Societal Issues.* As recognition that large scale societal issues, often global in their scope, have a profound impact not only upon individuals but also upon the larger societies, cultural milieus, and communities of which they are a part, a portion of this year's CIRS budget will be directed toward funding pre-proposals submitted under a special call addressing *Behavioral and Social Dimensions of Major Societal Issues*. Issues related to aging, poverty, family cohesion, personal relationships, ethnicity and inter-group relations, obesity, physical disabilities, substance abuse, mental health, the effects of new communications technologies and systems, and personal and community change associated with immigration or the impact of globalization on employment are but some of the complex, multi-dimensional challenges faced by modern societies that lend themselves well to goal-directed research carried out by teams involving social and behavioral scientists. Singly and together these and other major societal issues (e.g., escalating energy consumption, lack of access to technology by persons in rural or low income areas, environmental impact and change, increasing economic disparity, response to disasters) present

opportunities to explore the interplay of individual, social, and cultural dimensions as critical aspects of these concerns and the interventions addressing them.

This special call is intended to stimulate increased collaboration among UIUC social and behavioral scientists across distinct, complementary areas of expertise as well as increasing their presence as integral to research teams that include faculty from other areas of campus addressing aspects of critical societal issues. Full and planning pre-proposals may be submitted to *The Behavioral and Social Dimensions of Major Societal Issues*. In general, planning pre-proposals are well suited to fund projects where team building activities may occupy a significant portion of the project's first year or in situations where the team must conduct preliminary research or build connections with a population of interest before fully developing a proposed research program. Full pre-proposals are the appropriate mechanism for funding already established teams with one or two new members or projects where relationships with populations of interest already exist.

Pre-proposal Application Deadline: Tuesday, December 5, 2006

Please visit the CIRS website for information on how to apply:

<http://www.research.uiuc.edu/cirs>

The CRI program has been privileged to fund over 90 proposals, representing disciplines that span the campus. I am proud to support and be associated with such fine scholarship and am pleased that we are able to expand the program to encourage new initiatives. I look forward to receiving your submissions.

Charles Zukoski
Vice Chancellor for Research