

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
JAMES H. ZUMBERGE FACULTY RESEARCH & INNOVATION FUND  
MULTI-SCHOOL INTERDISCIPLINARY  
RESEARCH AWARD**



**APPLICATION DEADLINES**

**Large Grants: 12 pm, Monday, February 13, 2017**

**Small Grants:** Open: proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Applicants should contact Dr. Silvia da Costa at the Office of Research at [Vprsch@usc.edu](mailto:Vprsch@usc.edu) or via telephone (213) 740-6709, *prior to submitting a proposal*, to receive confirmation that the proposed research is consistent with the aims of the Zumberge Interdisciplinary program.

**PURPOSE**

Zumberge Multi-School Interdisciplinary Research Awards provide seed funding for broad, collaborative research activities that are interdisciplinary and involve groups of faculty from multiple schools across USC. Successful proposals are typically led by faculty with strong records of previous research accomplishments. The priority for interdisciplinary awards is for teams of such faculty who are preparing a proposal for an externally-funded multi-investigator grant on the scale of an *interdisciplinary center, training grant or program project award*.

To be considered for this award, applications must provide a realistic plan for sustained funding or support beyond the end of the award, and must also demonstrate that a Zumberge award will make a difference in attracting further research support. Targets for funding must be specific to the proposed topic and must be external to the university.

Each application must designate a team that includes one Principal Investigator (PI) and at least one co-Principal Investigator, who may be faculty of any rank or type (excluding visiting faculty).

At least *two separate schools within USC* must be represented between the primary appointments of the PI and Co-PI. Applications should also specifically describe the involvement of other faculty (beyond the PI and Co-PI) who have agreed to participate in the project.

**ELIGIBILITY**

There are two types of Zumberge Interdisciplinary Research awards:

**Large Research Grants** provide up to **\$85,000** in funding and are intended to support activities that take place over a one-year period.

**Small Research Grants** provide awards up to **\$10,000** and are intended to support projects that typically last no more than three months.

Neither type of grant provides financial support from the Office of the Provost beyond the duration of the award, and neither carries the opportunity for funding renewal. Rather, applicants should use these grants as a step toward securing external funding or other forms of support for a sustained collaborative research program.

## OTHER ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Faculty Rank. Applicants must be permanent, full-time faculty at USC at the start of the award period. Applicants who are not currently permanent faculty, but expect to have a permanent appointment at the start of the award period, should include a brief letter from their department chair or dean indicating the pending appointment. Research faculty are eligible. Tenure track and non-tenure track faculty, with a research profile, are eligible. Individuals who are visiting faculty are *not eligible* to apply.

## TYPES OF ASSISTANCE

- Organization of workshops or conferences.
- Creation of a website or other electronic resource.
- Travel to meet with potential research sponsors, or to attract collaborators or visitors to USC (but not for the conduct of research).
- Salary support for post-docs and students providing research assistance.
- Staff salaries associated with organizing events or preparing major proposals.
- Costs of pilot research projects, designed to produce data that can lead to future external funding, may be considered in areas where exploratory research grants are unavailable from external sources.
- Costs of grant writers to support proposal development.

## GRANT CONDITIONS

- Equipment and computer purchases, Ph.D. student tuition, sub-contracts, and indirect costs **are not** permitted under this program.
- Awardees have discretion in the budgeting and re-budgeting of funds to meet their research needs within the guidelines of the fund and the terms of the proposal. However, funds may not be transferred to another project.
- Awards will include fringe benefits but awards **are not** assessed facilities & administration costs (i.e., indirect costs).
- Awards are **not** transferable to other institutions or to other researchers.
- PIs and Co-PIs who received a Zumberge Interdisciplinary Award in **FY 2014-15** or later are **not** eligible to apply for another award in the same category (small or large research grant). However, faculty may apply for a large research grant to support an activity that was previously supported by a small research grant.
- Recipients have 12 months from the date funds are received to complete projects. Funds not expended by that time are returned to support other Zumberge grants.
- Awards **do not** fund faculty salary.
- Awards **do not** fund student tuition and other student fees.
- Please contact the Office of Research at [yporsch@usc.edu](mailto:yporsch@usc.edu) should you have additional questions regarding allowable expenses.
- If review committee approval is required for the applicant's project, approval must be received prior to funding.

### **Awardees commit to:**

- \* submit a proposal application to the identified multi-PI center or program grant;
- \* submit a near-final draft of their proposal to the Office of Research **three weeks prior to the external submission date**; the draft will be reviewed internally and reviewer comments provided to the awardee.

**Cost Share for Large Grants:** For Large Grants, participating schools or organized research units are encouraged to provide cost-share support through relief of normal academic duties (e.g., course-load reduction) or financial contributions in support of the effort. Cost-share is encouraged from the home schools of each PI and Co-PI, and will be a factor in the selection process, but cost-share is not a requirement.

### **RESEARCH PROPOSAL EVALUATIONS**

Research proposals submitted to the James H. Zumberge Research & Innovation Fund are evaluated by interdisciplinary faculty panels. Typically, the reviewers will be USC faculty members; however, when the necessary expertise does not reside on campus, external reviewers may be used.

**Large Grant Proposals** will be evaluated in two steps: first by referees with expertise in the area of research, and second by the Office of Research. In reviewing research grant requests, the referees will consider:

- a) Likelihood that the research will receive significant external funding;
- b) Intrinsic significance and originality of the proposed research;
- c) Interdisciplinary nature of the research;
- d) Extent of sustained collaborative activity that is fostered by the award;
- e) Prior record of principal investigators in leading externally funded collaborative interdisciplinary research projects. PIs and co-PIs should have a record of sustained funding from outside the university.

The second evaluation step will consist of an oral presentation to the Office of Research, combined with a question and answer period. The purpose of this step will be to assess whether the applicants will work as an integrated team and determine whether the applicants have a realistic plan for sustaining the proposed activity.

**Small Grant Proposals** will be evaluated only by the Office of Research. The criteria are the same as those for the large grant proposal, but the expectation is that the activity will be in a formative stage.

### **NOTIFICATION AND TERM OF AWARD**

In the event of a favorable panel recommendation, and approval by the Vice President of Research, applicants will be notified of the amount and conditions of the award. For **Large Grant** awards, applicants will be notified by the end of **May, 2017**; funds will not be available until before the fiscal year beginning **July 1, 2017**. Funds that are not expended at the end of a fiscal year will be returned to the Office of the Provost. Copies of the notification of the award will be sent to school deans. For **Small Grant** awards, applicants will be notified of award decisions within several weeks of submission, and funds will be available to awardees soon thereafter.

### **REPORTING AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SUPPORT**

Zumberge Large awardees are asked to submit a brief report by **September 15, 2018** (including an accounting of expenditures and any external support received). A formal request for the final report will be sent to awardees at the close of the grant period, indicating required information. These reports will be

reviewed and portions of the report may be reprinted to build support for the fund among the university community and to make decisions about how best to use the fund to promote productivity in the future.

Any publication or creative endeavor arising from work supported by the fund should acknowledge the **James H. Zumberge Faculty Research and Innovation Fund at the University of Southern California**. Copies of publications should be submitted to the Office of Research. The Office of Research should also be informed of any grant submissions/awards for which Zumberge funds were used.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION AND PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION**

Questions about award or the application submission process can be directed to Melody Tang at [Vprsch@usc.edu](mailto:Vprsch@usc.edu) or 213-821-8163.

**For submission instructions, see Proposal Guidelines.**

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**GUIDELINES**

**PROPOSAL GUIDELINES**

*Before preparing a proposal, applicants should read closely the program description, including the sections on eligibility and evaluation criteria.*

**Proposals must be submitted using the Office of Research online application system (see p. 6).**

**Format:** Proposal documents should be written using a standard font (e.g., Arial or Times New Roman), 12 point, single-spaced, with one inch margins. Documents should be uploaded as PDFs. Apart from use in formulas, preferably do not use “symbols” text format (use “alpha” instead of “ $\alpha$ ”).

**PROPOSAL COMPONENTS**

Proposals for the Zumberge Small award may be submitted only *after* receiving confirmation from the Office of Research that the proposed project fits the aims of the Zumberge Interdisciplinary program. Contact Dr. Silvia da Costa ([Vprsch@usc.edu](mailto:Vprsch@usc.edu)) for more information.

**Cover page information** (*to be filled out on-line*)

- a) Proposal title;
- b) Keywords: *Fill in up to 5 key words that best describe your research interest;*
- c) Principal Investigator (PI) and Co-PI contact information;
- d) Budget summary: *Fill in appropriate fields on the online budget form as completely as possible.*

**Sections to be uploaded:** Materials for each item below should be uploaded as a single PDF. It is requested that applicants follow instructions carefully and **do not submit** additional materials not requested by this RFP. Information that is uploaded beyond what is requested **will not** be included in the proposal package provided to reviewers.

- a) **Abstract:** (*not to exceed 30 lines of text*) The project abstract is meant to serve as a succinct and accurate description of the proposed work when separated from the application.
- b) **Project Narrative:** No other ancillary text, appendices, etc., will be accepted; page limits are inclusive of figures and tables. The Zumberge Small must not exceed **1 page**. The Zumberge Large must not to exceed **7 pages** and must include the following components (use headers below):
  - i. **Research Description**  
Describe the area of research to be supported from the following perspectives: What is the goal of the research in terms of benefits to society, and what is the goal in terms of advancing fundamental knowledge? In general, what is the importance of the project to USC, the research community, and society? What is the state of the research activity at USC

and elsewhere, and what are the important research questions for the topic? Who at USC is engaged in the area of research and how would their research be integrated through the proposed project?

ii. *Project Design*

Describe what activities will be undertaken during the project to accomplish the project goals, and the research methodologies involved. Activities may include pilot data collection and analysis, workshops or seminar series that involve groups of researchers, or other relevant activities. Identify key collaborators and describe their roles and participation in the project. Describe preliminary planning or research activities that the team of investigators has already carried out for this project.

iii. *Sustainment*

Targets for funding must be specific to the proposed topic and must be external to the university. Describe the plan for sustaining the research beyond the award period. Name (a) the specific RFP (or FOA) of the externally-funded multi-investigator grant that is being targeted to support the project, as well as the proposed submission date and amount requested and the link to the RFP or award site or (b) the specific funder and targeted program, with expected proposal submission date and amount requested. It is important for the proposal to present a clear plan of action for the team of investigators to be competitive for a specific funding opportunity. Provide a realistic plan for sustained funding or support beyond the end of the award, and indicate how the Zumberge award will make a difference in attracting further research support.

iv. *Expected Results and Impact on Long-Term Research Program*

Describe the expected outcomes and deliverables from your research.

v. *Timeline*

A clear timeline for the completion of the work should be included in the application, identifying specific milestones associated with project goals.

vi. *Commitment Statement*

The proposal must include a statement in which applicants commit to submit a proposal to the intended funder/target program. This statement will be an obligation for the investigators and participating schools

c) **References:** (not to exceed one page)

d) **Budget Justification:** (Online form, plus explanatory page, not longer than one page for Zumberge Large; half page for Zumberge Small). Clarify the role of individuals for whom salary support is requested. Justify any request for salary support in terms of the objectives of the project. Explain how travel funds will be used to conduct the research. No specific format is required so long as the budget and explanation contain the relevant information.

e) **Letter(s) of Support:** (Zumberge Large grants only)

A letter of support, signed by the deans of the participating schools, must be provided for Large Grant proposals. The letter should describe any financial support provided by their schools and should state why the proposed activity is important for their schools. The letter should also describe any commitments to sustain the activity upon project completion.

f) **Curriculum vita:** (not to exceed 4 pages)

Summary vitas, per PI, should be provided. Applicants may use any standardized CV format, or institutional ones (such as those for submissions to NIH, NEA, etc.).

## **PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**

Submit your proposal application utilizing the new Office of Research application submission and reporting portal.

Go to: <https://app.wizehive.com/webform/USCgrants> to log in (or create an account for yourself), using your USC email address.

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**Signatures:** By submitting the online application, applicants indicate their agreement to comply with the terms and conditions of the Zumberge program as well as all other applicable USC policies.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION AND PROGRAM CONTACT**

For additional information or inquiries about the Zumberge Multi-School Interdisciplinary Research Award program application submission process, please contact: Melody Tang at [Vprsch@usc.edu](mailto:Vprsch@usc.edu) or 213-821-8163.