

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



APPLICATION DEADLINES

Large Grants: 5 pm, Monday, February 12, 2018

Small Grants: Available after June 30, 2018: proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Applicants should contact Dr. Silvia da Costa at the Office of Research at 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 (a) plan to apply for an externally-funded grant specific to the proposed topic, (b) provide a realistic plan for sustained funding or support beyond the end of the award, and (c) demonstrate that a Zumberge award will make a difference in attracting further research support.

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. Additionally, the Zumberge award will not fund the same work that is being funded under other provost programs or external sponsors.

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 purchases and sub-contracts **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 or to other researchers or institutions;
- Awards include fringe benefits but **are not** assessed facilities & administration costs (i.e., indirect costs);
- Recipients have **12 months** (for the Large) and **3 months** (for the Small) from the date funds are received to complete projects. Funds not expended by that time are returned to support other Zumberge grants;
- PIs and Co-PIs who received a Zumberge Interdisciplinary Award in **FY15-16** 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.
- Awards **do not** fund faculty salary for the PI or collaborating PIs;
- Awards **do not** pay for consultants;
- Awards **do not** fund student tuition and other student fees (such as health insurance);
- All USC rules, with respect to conflict of interest, human subject research, animal research, etc., apply to projects funded under this program. Funding will not be provided until all pertinent reviews are complete.

Please contact the Office of Research at vprsch@usc.edu should you have additional questions regarding allowable expenses.

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, 2018**; funds will not be available until before the fiscal year beginning **July 1, 2018**. 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 14, 2019** (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 must 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 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. 7).

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 “α”).

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) for more information.

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

- a) Principal Investigator (PI) contact information;
- b) Have you received a Zumberge Interdisciplinary Award in **FY15-16** or later?
- c) Proposal title;
- d) Keywords: *Provide up to 5 key words that best describe your research interest;*
- e) Budget: total requested for Zumberge award;
- f) Is USC Committee approval required? (Please indicate all that apply);
- g) Link to the **specific solicitation or program** targeted (if the RFP has not yet been released, provide the link to the most recent RFP available);
- h) Expected date of proposal submission to external sponsor;
- i) Amount requested to the external sponsor;
- j) Co-PI contact information.

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 **5 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 solicitation or program** 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 external funder/target program and to 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). This statement will be an obligation for the investigators and participating schools

c) **Budget Justification:** (no 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.

- d) **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.
- e) **References: (not to exceed one page)**
- f) **Curriculum vitae: (not to exceed 5 pages)** Summary vita, 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 or 213-821-8163.