

USC ACADEMIC SENATE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Answering the Call: Senate/Provost Strategic Plan Implementation Grants

Application Deadline: noon, Friday, February 14, 2020

Purpose:

The 2018 USC Strategic Plan, *Answering the Call*, proposes to allocate up to \$10 million over the next five years to advance goals in Four Pillars: 1) *Leading Through Values*, 2) *Leading Through People*, 3) *Leading Through Impact*, and 4) *Leading Through Transformation*.

For Year 1, AY 2020-21, the Academic Senate is issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for each of the four Pillars, providing support up to \$500,000 (\$2,000,000 across all Four Pillars).

A general RFP structure (detailed below) and a common timeline have been established by the four Pillars Committees —Values, People, Impact, and Transformation. While we have tried to insure some uniform standards and requirements across the pillars, there may be variations in budget and other rules across pillars; and proposals should be tailored to the specific pillar to which they are applying. Applicants should read and follow pillar descriptions carefully.

All programmatic questions must be directed to the names in the Further Information and Program Contact section of this document.

Eligibility

Faculty Rank. Applicants must be full- or part-time faculty at USC at the start of the award period. Both Tenured/Tenure Track and Research, Teaching, Practitioner and Clinical (RTPC) faculty are eligible. 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. Individuals who are adjunct or visiting faculty are not eligible.

To insure greater and more widespread participation in project-leadership roles, applicants may apply as a PI (or co-PI) on only one proposal per award cycle. In addition, each proposal should be directed to only one Pillar. However, applicants can be team members on any number of proposals to various Pillars within the same award cycle (subject to the conflict of interest policies stated below for committee members).

Conflict of Interest Policy

No member of a Pillar Review Committee can apply for funding from the same Committee (for example, no member of the People Pillar can apply for funding through that Pillar as a PI or a team member). However, Committee members can be Principal Investigators (PIs or co-PIs) or team members on a proposal submitted to another Pillar Committee.

The restrictions for Pillar Committee Chairs are stricter: no Chair of a Pillar Committee can be a PI or co-PI on a proposal to any Pillar Committee, but can serve as a team member on a proposal submitted outside their own Pillar.

Award Information

Award Amount: Each Pillar Committee will consider requests ranging from **\$50,000 to \$200,000 in total awarded funds**. Projects can be one, two, or three years in duration and funds must be completely spent by the end of three years from the funding date. A one-page annual report and a final report upon completion of the grant are required, to include performance based on the proposed metrics-of-success and realized impact of the work.

Grants do not provide financial support beyond the duration of the award and do not carry the opportunity for funding renewal. Indirect costs (IDC) are waived in this funding opportunity; however, fringe benefits costs are still required where applicable. Additionally, *Answering the Call* awards will not fund work that is already being funded under other USC programs or externally sponsored programs.

Future Award Cycles: Funding for future award cycles (and for new proposals) under the *Strategic Plan Answering the Call* program has not been determined, but may be contingent, in part, on the level of faculty interest and proposals received in response to this RFP. To be clear, this does not affect any award in this first cycle – if a project funded in this round is multi-year, the funding will be fully awarded and available over that period.

Multiple Awards: As noted above, faculty can serve as the PI or co-PI on only one proposal but can serve as team members on multiple proposals (subject to the conflict of interest policies). The same (or a very similar) proposal cannot be submitted to multiple Pillar Committees; if there is a question as to best fit, faculty should feel free to contact the Pillar co-chairs.

Interdisciplinary and cross-school collaboration: Collaboration among faculty members in different departments, disciplines, and schools is highly encouraged; some of the Pillars require this (see below for Pillar details).

Topics Eligible for Funding

Proposals may be submitted in the areas of research, teaching, mentoring, and/or service work. The *Four Pillars of the Strategic Plan* are described on the University website. This RFP seeks to support proposals advancing the topics highlighted below, specific to each Pillar.

Leading Through Values (Leading by transforming/developing values and practices at USC)

Reaffirming our commitment to our core academic principles, to our code of ethics, and to each other, while adding new voices and exploring new, equitable ways of acting in the world.

Leading Through People (Leading by transforming/developing people at USC)

Nurturing a cadre of faculty, students, and staff who embrace not just the entrepreneurial spirit, but the inclusive spirit and the convergent spirit as well.

Leading Through Impact (Leading by transforming/developing the Southern California and global communities we serve)

Seizing opportunities and solving the intractable problems of our city and the world, supporting the underserved who wish to improve their lives and the lives of others, and reinventing medicine and caregiving to improve health and wellness for all.

Leading Through Transformation (*Leading by transforming/developing USC as an institution*)

Asking how we might reimagine higher education, elevate the value of a university degree, expand access and opportunity for those of immense talent who will make us the most prosperous society in the world, and reimagine the college experience to prepare graduates to face world challenges with optimism and purpose.

At the end of this document, we provide more detail on the nature of questions and proposals that might best fit under each Pillar.

Budget

Budgets should be detailed but need not follow any particular format; more information on this is offered below. Support for external partners, such as community-based organizations or other institutions, is permitted but must be justified and specified. There are no general limits on types of spending (for example, on the share that can go to support faculty salaries and benefits) but this may differ by Pillar so applicants should carefully read the Pillar instructions.

Because we expect that these will generally be new projects, we do not anticipate complementary external or internal funding; but if such funding is part of the project, this should be clearly specified in the budget narrative.

Proposal Evaluations

This funding opportunity is seeking proposals that can have lasting impact on the institution. Proposals should both outline the actual activities of the grant and, to the extent possible, indicate likely long-term impact. There is no requirement or expectation that lasting impact should include future external funding support; improvements are sought to our university practices.

The evaluation committees will specifically consider: (1) Feasibility: how likely a proposal is to achieve the desired result, including articulating connections to past research, funding sources, and USC organizations and other work; (2) Impact: how likely the proposed work is to have transformative effects on the institution, and what specific effects it might have on diverse groups within our community; and (3) Future outcomes: how the project's outcomes might scale up and positively influence across other units/schools/programs across the University.

With these broad criteria in mind, proposals to each Pillar will be evaluated by the relevant Pillar Review Committee. Please note that, with input from the Committees at the time of proposal submission, the Committee Chairs reserve the right to act on recommendations to re-assign review of a particular proposal to the Committee that is deemed to be best positioned to provide an expert and fair review. After Committee review, the co-chairs will work to generate the final awards after ensuring that the conditions specified above about single submissions, conflicts of interest, and other factors have been addressed.

Notification and Term of Award

All proposals are due at **noon PST, Friday, February 14, 2020** and should be submitted to through the [Wizehive Proposal Portal](#). Announcements of awards are tentatively scheduled for **May 1, 2020**. The Pillar Committees will provide a report to the faculty on the number of applications received and the number of awards, and provide a description of awarded projects. The members of the Pillar Committees will also be publicly announced at that time.

Reporting and Acknowledgement of Support

Answering the Call awardees are asked to submit a brief report at the end of the award period (including an accounting of expenditures and any external support received). Final reports must include results, outcomes, and impact of the activity. 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 *USC Academic Senate/Provost Answering the Call Awards*. The specific committee of the *Answering the Call Awards* program should also be informed of any publications and grant submissions/awards for which award funds were used.

Further Information and Program Contact Information

For all programmatic questions, please contact:

Leading Through Values: Dr. Sunita Puri (sunita.puri@med.usc.edu)

Leading Through People: Manuel Pastor (mpastor@usc.edu)

Leading Through Impact: Dr. J. Perren Cobb (jpcobb@usc.edu)

Leading Through Transformation: Maja J Matarić (mataric@usc.edu)

For submission instructions, see Proposal Guidelines.

USC ACADEMIC SENATE PROPOSAL GUIDELINES ANSWERING THE CALL

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 Wizehive 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**. Apart from use in formulas, preferably do not use symbol text format (use “alpha” instead of “α”).

Proposal Components

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

- a) Principal Investigator (PI) contact information;
- b) Proposal title;
- c) Which *Pillar* are you applying to?
- d) Budget: total requested
- e) Co-PI(s) contact information (*if applicable*).
- f) Other Research or Proposal Team members.

Sections to be uploaded: 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.* Please upload each of the sections below individually.

- 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: (not to exceed 6 pages).*** Proposals to any of the Four Pillar Committees can be related to research, teaching, mentoring, or service work. No other ancillary text, appendices, etc., will be accepted; page limits are inclusive of figures and tables.
 - i. ***Description:*** Proposals should make the significance of the work clear, indicating the potential impact for USC, California, the nation, and the world. What is the goal in terms of advancing the aims of the chosen Pillar? What are the benefits to USC, the community and society as a whole? In general, what is the importance of the project to USC, its research community and society?
 - ii. ***Project Design:*** Describe what activities will be undertaken to accomplish the project goals, as well as the research methodologies (if applicable) involved. Identify key collaborators, community organizations, or other partners, and describe their roles and participation in the project. Describe any synergy with education programs and the degree to which the proposed project involves students and provides or expands

educational opportunities. Describe preliminary planning or research activities that have already been carried out for this project.

- iii. **Expected Results and Long-term Impacts:** Describe the expected outcomes and deliverables from your proposal. Be sure to discuss potential lasting impacts on institutional practices.
 - i. **Timeline & Milestones:** Project proposals should indicate a prospective time frame for project implementation and evaluation (not to exceed three years from the funding date) and provide a list of metrics by which project success can be evaluated. A clear timeline for the completion of the work should be included in the application, identifying specific milestones associated with project goals.
- c. **References: (not to exceed one page).**
- d. **Budget Justification: (not to exceed two pages).** Clarify specific budget categories and the role of individuals for whom salary support is requested. Justify any request for salary support in terms of the objectives of the project. Spending can be on staff/faculty time, post-doctoral or graduate student support, material and/or supplies, and other reasonable costs (such as visiting scholars, artists, or others, or travel to learn from best practices at another university, etc.). Support for external partners is permitted but must be specified and justified. Explain how travel funds (if applicable) will be used to conduct the project. No specific format is required as long as the budget and explanation contain the relevant information. Budgets should include fringe benefits on any salary items, but there is no indirect charge assessed.
- e. **Letter(s) of Collaboration:** Letters of collaboration from partnering organizations are not required but may be submitted.
- f. **Team Description (not to exceed 1 page) & Curriculum vitae of key personnel: (not to exceed 2 pages each).** Briefly describe the qualifications of the PI and team members and how they are well-situated and prepared to carry out the proposal activities. Include the CVs of the PI or co-PI(s), and select key personnel on the proposal. Do not exceed the 2-page limit for each CV. Applicants may use any standardized CV format, or institutional ones (such as those for submissions to NSF, NIH, NEA, etc.).

Proposal Submission

Submit your proposal application utilizing the Wizehive application submission portal.

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

Application Deadline: noon, Friday, February 14, 2020

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

Further Information and Program Contact

For additional information or programmatic questions about the USC Academic Senate *Answer the Call* award program, contact:

Leading Through People: Manuel Pastor (mpastor@usc.edu)

Leading Through Values: Dr. Sunita Puri (sunita.puri@med.usc.edu)

Leading Through Impact: Dr. J. Perren Cobb (jpcobb@usc.edu)

Leading Through Transformation: Maja J Matarić (mataric@usc.edu)

PILLAR DESCRIPTIONS

[Leading Through Values](#)

The USC Strategic Plan emphasizes "the values of informed risk-taking, entrepreneurial spirit, thirst for impact, and the unfettered search for truth." But in recent years there has been a disjunction between the values the university espouses and those it has enacted. Our Committee seeks project proposals that reaffirm our commitment to our core academic principles, to our code of ethics, and to each other, while including new voices and perspectives, and exploring new, equitable ways of acting in the world. We encourage our campus community to reflect critically on our past in order to reshape our university's future.

We are particularly interested in projects with practical applicability that cultivate virtuous practices within our campus community. The term "values" is one way to understand ethical behavior, but another useful term is "virtues." For ancient philosophers, virtue (areté) names dimensions of human excellence activated in practice. If values are abstract and theoretical, virtues are specific practices that lead to human flourishing. Rather than pursuing additional values, our Pillar seeks proposals that will engender virtuous practices - practices that will allow us, in the words of Mahatma Gandhi, to be the change we wish to see in the world.

The Values Pillar Committee encourages submissions from all corners of the University. While we seek proposals that focus on our USC campus community, we hope to fund work that can lead to sustained change and social transformation in a local and global context. We encourage, but do not require, cross-disciplinary proposals. Faculty must serve as PIs on all projects, but we look favorably upon projects that include a diverse cross-section of our university community. We do require a detailed budget outlining direct expenditures on the proposed project and the cost alignment with the goals of the pillar. We expect proposals to define the specific outcomes and/or measures of impact they seek to achieve.

We encourage applications that address the following suggested areas of focus, which we hope will promote sustainable cultural and social change within our university community, thereby reaffirming our commitment to the core values espoused in the Strategic Plan.

- Empowering through Education
- Creating Space for Dialogue About Our University's Past and Future
- Giving Voice to all Communities Within USC
- Promoting Transparency and Accountability
- Fostering Introspection and Collaboration
- Pursuing Excellence through Rigorous Inquiry
- Manifesting Respect and Caring for Self and Others
- Reinforcing USC's Commitment to Service
- Affirming Ethical Conduct
- Emphasizing Creativity, Innovation, and Experimentation
- Advancing Diversity and Inclusion

Leading Through People

The USC Strategic Plan emphasizes that "great research universities have been great because of the richness of their intellectual capital – the quality of their faculty, students, postdoctoral scholars, and staff who uncover truths, question, produce new knowledge, invent, create, relentlessly push against the boundaries of the impossible, and endeavor to change the world." The Plan calls for a renewal of that commitment to recruiting, developing, and retaining talent with a focus on three areas: Cultivating the Entrepreneurial Spirit; Embracing the Inclusive Spirit; and Forging the Convergent Spirit.

By the "entrepreneurial spirit," the plan means to stress efforts to support solicitous risk-taking and innovation, including in technology, social ventures, and business. By the "inclusive spirit," the plan lifts up our ambition to be a world-class leader in diversity and equity, particularly given the multicultural milieu of Los Angeles. And by the "convergent spirit," the plan aims to encourage research, teaching, and learning that crosses the traditional disciplinary lines and facilitates interaction between diverse scholars and different schools.

Given the Plan's broad charge, the People Pillar Committee encourages submissions from all corners of the University. While we seek proposals that focus on our USC campus community, we are open to proposals that include external actors as partners. We strongly encourage cross-disciplinary proposals. Faculty must serve as PIs on all projects, but we look favorably upon projects that include a diverse cross-section of our university community. PIs should outline the training and experiences they have that qualify them to lead the project. We also expect proposals to define the specific outcomes and/or measures of impact they seek to achieve, and we are particularly interested in lasting impacts.

Some potential types of proposals are listed below. However, these are for illustration only; we mean to provoke your imagination, not limit it. For example, faculty could propose:

- A post-doc program focused on the study of race and gender that would bring new scholars into the orbit of USC for potential long-run recruitment
- Training programs for faculty that are substantial in content and commitment aimed at reducing bias in hiring, in the classroom, and in our research labs and centers
- Efforts to empower more women for leadership positions through coaching, professional development, and peer mentoring, done in conjunction with anti-bias training for colleagues
- Course and/or clinical load relief for associate professors who have experienced delays in being promoted to full to better prepare their cases, with a special eye to how this could assist diversity, inclusion, and campus morale
- Programs to encourage community college transfer students to quickly move into research opportunities and professional development
- Support of supervised undergraduate student projects that work across disciplines to solve some community challenge, with opportunities for mentorship by faculty and graduate students
- Programs that create and support pathways to academic careers for undergraduates from underrepresented racial-ethnic groups
- Efforts to create a non-profit or technological venture that would meet a community need with participation by faculty and students
- Start-up funds for an interdisciplinary research group with an eye toward establishing a permanent center
- Efforts to empower faculty, staff, and students with disabilities, coupled with programs to better educate faculty, staff, and students on ableism and how best to include all Trojans in our success

Leading Through Impact

The USC Strategic Plan notes that USC grew up with Los Angeles and that we continue to have a symbiotic relationship with LA and the Southern California Region. USC can only be the most impactful 21st century university by being both a great global institution and a great local friend and neighbor. Importantly, Southern California is one of the most diverse regions in the world, acting as a laboratory that produces solutions that can work globally.

With the privilege of having a USC community of entrepreneurial-, inclusive-, and convergent-spirited scholars, teachers, practitioners, staff, trainees, and students comes the responsibility of using our community's talents to impact the world by contributing to solutions in our own backyard. Thus, we at USC strive to **solve** the intractable challenges of our age by **engaging** our local community to **support** further development and to **synthesize** different methodologies for joint solutions. This contrasts with classic top-down approaches because we advance new thinking about addressing regional problems in a more collective, intersectional way.

Our *Leading-Through-Impact* Committee aims to fund proposals that carry high risk but also a high potential for impact and that recognize that populations are expert in their own cultures (cultural humility). Proposals should include participants from at least two USC Schools and include collaborators who directly engage our community in-the-field. Investigators must also include a description of how their work addresses each *Impact* sub-pillar: to engage, to support, to synthesize, and to solve.

Numerous examples of the intractable problems we seek to solve are described in the Strategic Plan under the pillar *Leading Through Impact*. Our Committee seeks to fund proposals, for instance, that solve problems by fostering new partnerships between 1) governmental and non-governmental organizations, community partners, philanthropic and private foundations, 2) interdisciplinary and interschool research centers and institutes, or 3) creative industries in Los Angeles, such as in the media industries, Silicon Beach, and the Arts District.

A few examples are provided below, in no particular order. This list, however, is incomplete. The Committee expects to review applications that span the gamut of the important challenges we face in the 21st century, with proposals from faculty across the University.

- Multi-School collaborations with regional leaders that
 - Provide inter-professional solutions and training for the prevention of, treatment of, and recovery from opioid addiction
 - Address some of the most crucial issues of our time: homelessness, immigration, global pandemics, security, and sustainability
 - Broaden and deepen our support for children, especially through programs focused on early life health and wellness, education, and access to the arts
 - Provide novel solutions to the rising costs and access to quality health care, especially for the underprivileged
- Foundational programs that establish new USC-local partnerships that provide regional and intersectional intelligence for challenges around environment, race, access, or equity
- Interdisciplinary, multi-School projects that address disparities in health outcomes associated with socio-economic status or with geographic ancestry, such as the association between higher colon cancer mortality in our community and Hispanic ancestry
- Novel approaches to civic engagement through exercise, education, art, and athletics, including camps for children and adolescents (*e.g.*, Summer Olympics, Paralympics, and Special Olympics).
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Leading Through Transformation

The Transformation Pillar seeks proposals that will truly change USC in ways that are clearly linked to the goals of the Strategic Plan. Proposing teams should review the Plan and explain exactly how the proposed plans link to the ideas and mandates found in the Plan. Applicants should explicitly address:

- Why is this proposal transformational? How does it go well beyond established operations and represent entirely new solutions for USC?
- What is the problem or issue and how exactly will this project help?
- Who specifically will be impacted/helped by this project? Who is the population that will be served? What specific groups of students/faculty/staff/adjuncts will be involved or impacted?
- How will the work be evaluated and its transformative effect measured?

Proposals should be explicit in their intention to transform access to opportunity, academic or professional experiences, and equitable outcomes for underrepresented and/or marginalized communities. In particular, proposals must be clear with regard to how the proposed transformation addresses specific (sub-)populations of students, faculty (across rank and/or designation), and/or staff across differences in ability, mental health, class, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexuality, FirstGen, and other categories of social difference. Breaking down silos is strongly encouraged by bringing together research, education, and practice.

Requirements and Constraints:

Teaming: Proposing teams must represent diverse and inclusive representation across at least one category of social difference (ability, class, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and sexuality). All faculty ranks and types (including adjunct and remote faculty) are strongly encouraged. All proposals must have at least two full-time faculty co-PIs from different USC units (Dornsife's three divisions can be considered separate units). Teams involving members from existing cross-unit centers do not meet the requirement; additional teamings are required. Proposals that engage or work across all our campuses are encouraged.

Course development: Proposed new courses must span multiple units.

Final reports: Final report should have the outcomes, impact and results of the evaluation.

Budget: No international travel is permitted. However, staff, student and postdoc salary, M&S, equipment, and teaching buyout are allowed. No more than 35% of grant funds can go toward faculty salary.

Examples of relevant topics in addition to those found in the Strategic Plan:

- Scalably addressing pervasive student mental health challenges
- Program development for equity and access
- Addressing student food and housing insecurity issues.
- Reimagining the residential experience
- Operationalizing the reinvention of USC culture and values
- Achieving sustainability at USC