**Office of the Provost Tufts Collaborates Seed Grant Program**

**Round IX Guidelines**

**2019 - 2020**

The Tufts Collaborates Seed Grant Program seeks to spark scholarship, research, and creative work resulting from cross-disciplinary faculty collaboration. Cutting-edge work often begins when faculty members desire to collaborate across institutional boundaries. As such, collaboration may be forestalled by the lack of resources for the early phases of idea generation, data collection, project planning, or interdisciplinary engagement, Tufts University is committed to helping our faculty realize the extraordinary potential of interdisciplinary collaboration. Tufts Collaborates is funded by the Office of the Provost and overseen by the Office of the Vice Provost for Research.

**Two important changes** will be trialed this cycle to streamline the proposal submission and review process and facilitate systematic tracking of awards: online proposal development and submission through our Research Administration System (RAS) and distributed peer-review in which each submitting PI must also review several submissions by their peers (see below for more detail).

**Eligibility**

Any Tufts faculty or research staff active in scholarship, research, and/or creative works with a primary appointment at a University school or unit is eligible to apply to the Tufts Collaborates Seed Grant Program. While Tufts faculty members with a primary appointment at Tufts Medical Center and a secondary appointment at a University school or unit are encouraged to serve as collaborators, the lead principal investigator on a grant application must be a Tufts University faculty or staff member.

Non-Tufts collaborators are allowed, but their participation must be clearly justified, including the absence of the collaborator’s specific expertise at Tufts. Eligible projects can include both new collaborations and existing collaborations involving new areas of research.

Faculty members who have received a Tufts Collaborates award as principal investigator (PI) within the last two years (i.e. those starting in June/July of 2018 or 2017) are not eligible to submit a proposal as PI for a new Tufts Collaborates award. Those who were the PI of a Tufts Collaborates award that started prior to 2016 are eligible to submit a new proposal.

Additionally, faculty/staff members who have previously received two (2) Tufts Collaborates awards as PIs are not eligible to submit an award within 5 years from the end of the last award (since June/July 2013).

The status of awards given prior to this exclusion period will also be considered in the evaluation of a new submission – including submission of final reports, productivity and resulting extramural funding.

Lastly, by submitting a Tufts Collaborates proposal, the PI agrees to review 5-8 applications from their peers (see below).

**Amount and Duration**

Awards may range from $500 to $50,000. The grant period for Tufts Collaborates is one year. Most projects are expected to begin July 1, 2019. If necessary, a project may start earlier, but in any event, not earlier than June 1, 2019. Funded proposals should be completed and all expenditures incurred by no later than June 30, 2020 unless formal approval of project period extension is received.

**Requirements**

Only one (1) proposal is allowed per PI; however, there is no limit to the number of applications on which an individual can participate as a co-investigator.

For all proposals, collaboration between at least two Tufts faculty/staff members is required, as described below. For projects that could result in competitive grant proposals for extramural funding, the potential for funding and continued collaboration much be clearly described (e.g., how the work relates to a funding agency’s mission statement).

***Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences***

 • Proposals in arts, humanities, and social sciences must involve either (a) more than one school at Tufts, or (b) more than one department within a school at Tufts. Because federal funding is limited for collaborative work in these fields, it is not expected that these proposals will lead to external funding.

***Sciences and Engineering Proposals***

• Proposals in the sciences and engineering must involve, at a minimum, more than one department within a school at Tufts. Collaborations involving at least two schools are highly encouraged. Seed grants should be used to develop the proposed project to the point of enabling the collaborating faculty members to submit a competitive grant proposal to a federal or other external funding program. Proposals that could lead to program project or center grants are especially encouraged.

**Criteria for Review and Selection**

A distributed peer-review process will be utilized in which each submitting PI must review *N* number (5- 8) of their peer’s applications and will have their own submission reviewed by *N* reviewers. Importantly, instead of assigning a numerical score to each application, reviewers will be asked to rank their assigned applications from strongest to weakest. Based on the ranking an application is given by each of its *N* reviewers a numerical score will be calculated (using the Borda count) and used to rank all of the applications. Distributed peer review has been successfully used by the [NSF](https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2013/nsf13096/nsf13096.jsp) and the [USDA](https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/distributed-peer-review-pilot-foundational-program). Detailed instructions for review will be distributed at the time of review.

Review criteria include:

* significance of the project and potential for impact
* degree of innovation
* robustness and appropriateness of the study design, approach and methods
* extent of impact on Tufts constituencies, curriculum, and mission, measured in part by the degree to which the collaboration continues or leads to other outcomes
* potential to generate outside funding, where relevant
* appropriateness of budget requests and the feasibility of completing work within budget
* qualifications of the team to complete the work described
* feasibility of timeline
* feasibility of activities within departmental and/or school environment

As applicants develop their proposal, it is important to remember that reviewers are not likely to be experts in your specific field but rather to have a basic knowledge of the field. Thus, please write your application to be understood by this audience.

**Award Conditions**

Funds may be used to support reasonable and necessary direct costs to carry out the project. The PI will be responsible for financially managing the award. Funds will be disbursed to the school with which the lead PI is primarily affiliated for the project based on the approved budget. The budget should follow the policies of the applicable school(s) and Tufts University.

Funds can only be used for the activities or experiments described in the proposal, although no cost extensions and/or re-budgeting with appropriate justification may be requested if experiments or activities have not been completed within the one year project period or if there are line item budget reallocations that are necessary to successfully complete the project. Requests for a no-cost extension must be submitted 90 days before the project end date, and both no-cost extension and re-budget requests should be submitted to collaborates@tufts.edu.

Expenditures for faculty salaries (either summer or academic year) are permitted according to school policies and appropriate approval for each collaborator. Fringe benefits charges for personnel must be included in preparing the project's budget. Student pay during the summer will be subject to the applicable rate for fringe benefits and the additional cost should be included in the budget. Student pay during the academic year (September-May) is not subject to a fringe benefits charge.

Generally, the budget may not be used to pay for:

* Indirect costs and overhead
* Tuition costs
* Refreshment costs or meals
* Laptop computers
* Student Health Insurance

Funds can be requested for equipment if the equipment will be primarily used by Tufts faculty, students, and staff for the proposed activities or experiments described in the proposal. Equipment purchased is property of the Office of the Provost; transfer of property ownership will be considered at the end of the grant period.

The proposal review committee retains the right to veto any budge item it deems unallowable. Seed grants may be conditioned on budget modifications.

All awards funds are subject to relevant university, state and federal guidelines. Please refer to the [**Tufts IP Policy**](http://techtransfer.tufts.edu/resources/tufts-policies/intellectual-property-policies/) for questions regarding intellectual property.

**Reporting requirements**

By Friday, August 30, 2020, award recipients must submit a final report of no longer than five single-spaced pages accompanied by other relevant products or evidence of the completion of the funded activity to collaborates@tufts.edu.

**The final report must:**

* describe the work that was accomplished;
* describe the outcomes/impact of the collaboration;
* describe any plans for ongoing collaboration beyond the funded project;
* provide a final accounting of budget expenses;
* identify specific proposal(s) submitted to external sponsor(s) as a result of the grant (if applicable); and
* describe any significant deviation from or extensions to the project described in the original proposal, if applicable.

If the final report is not submitted on time, the PI may not be eligible to receive future seed funding from the Provost Office.

**Procedure for Submitting Proposals**

Proposals must be developed and submitted electronically via RAS no later than 5 pm, 1 February 2019. Please work with your local research administrator to prepare and submit your proposal in RAS. You will be able to start development of your Tufts Collaborates submissions in RAS on Monday, 3 December.

In addition to completing the proposal demographic data (PI, collaborators, etc.) and budget document in RAS, applicants must prepare and upload a single PDF attachment to the proposal in RAS with the following components:

**1.** **Seed Grant Submission Form**. All sections must be completed.

**2.** **Project Description** **(no more than two single-spaced pages).** Describe the proposed collaborative project including goals, activities or experiments, expected outcomes, and a timeline for completion. The proposal must designate a lead principal investigator, who must be a Tufts faculty member with a primary appointment at a University school or unit

**3**. **Additional Proposal Information (no more than one single-spaced page).** This section is to be used to describe how the project will lead to the potential for the multidisciplinary team to develop new scholarship/research or further collaboration, including but not limited to an assessment of the potential for subsequent external funding, if applicable (e.g. how the work relates to a funding agency’s mission statement). The section can also be used to describe the collaborative team and each member’s contribution; and additional expected outcomes related to the project (e.g. intellectual property).

**4.** **Budget Justification (no more than two single-spaced pages).**

The budget justification, must address the following:

**a.** details explaining the necessity of each budget item;

**b.** description of each person's role in the project, percentage of effort, and estimated costs;

**c.** a list of any in-kind (no cost to the grant) contributions from Tufts central services and any other school or department (e.g. salaries and supplies); and

**d**. any previous funding provided by the Office of the Provost for this project or related projects.

**5.** **Abbreviated CV or NSF/NIH-style biosketch (no more than five single-spaced pages per collaborator).** Include an abbreviated CV or NSF/NIH-style biosketch for each collaborator.

**6. References/Bibliography.** A list of references relevant to the project may be included but is not required.

For your convenience, please use the [**Tufts Collaborates Proposal Template**](https://provost.tufts.edu/wp-content/uploads/Collaborates-TEMPLATE.docx)to prepare the above components. Use an Arial, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype, or Georgia typeface, a black font color, and a font size of 11 points or larger. Use standard paper size (8 ½" x 11) and at least one-half inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right) for all pages. No information should appear in the margins.

**Proposals that do not include the required components and are not prepared and submitted in RAS will not be accepted.**

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| The **deadline** for proposal submission is 5 PM Friday, February 1, 2019 **Notification** of awards will be made by May 1, 2019. For questions please email collaborates@tufts.edu. | **RAS Component:*** Proposal Demographic Data (Investigators)
* Budget Document

**Proposal Template sections (single PDF):*** Short Proposal Description (50 words max)
* Proposal Description (2 pages max)
* Additional Proposal Information (1 pagemax)
* Budget Justification (2 pages max)
* Abbreviated CV or biosketch (5 pages max per investigator)
* References/Bibliography
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