

Fund for Innovation in Engineering Research (FIER)

Request for Proposals - Round V (2011)

The College of Engineering, through its unveiling of a new Strategic Plan, is charting a new course towards research prominence. The development of an innovation ecosystem within the College will allow faculty to engage at all levels of discovery and creation, with an eye on establishing an environment where fundamental science is increasingly moved to and through the commercialization stage. Vital to a successful innovation ecosystem are seed funds that enable a faculty member with an excellent idea to generate preliminary data that can be leveraged to procure future federal funds that can lead to entrepreneurial outcomes.

The **Longwell Family Foundation** made a philanthropic commitment of \$1,000,000 to the **Innovation in Engineering Research Fund (FIER)**. This fund will provide seed money for research conducted by faculty members of the College. It is anticipated these funds will enable faculty to attract additional federal, state, and/or industrial funds to continue the research beyond the timeframe of the FIER funds and move it along the innovation ecosystem continuum towards commercialization. Proposals will be reviewed by a representative committee and will provide their recommendations to the Associate Dean for Research and Diversity Programs, College of Engineering.

Proposals prepared in this current solicitation should address research issues/opportunities aligned with Strategy 2: Conducting Research to Improve Quality of Life (two signature research areas - Energy and Sustainable Environment and Engineered and Natural Infrastructure) in the College's new Strategic Plan. These areas of research must also lead to a tangible outcome in the near future and research for which the infrastructure already exists to facilitate leveraging. While preference will be given to proposals focused on the two signature research areas of the College, any proposals focused on technological innovation will also be considered.

The eligibility of faculty and format of proposals are described in the following sections.

Eligibility

College of Engineering tenured, tenure-track, and research faculty members are eligible to submit research proposals to the Associate Dean for Research and Diversity Programs for consideration of this award. Proposals must be routed through their respective Department Chairs. Each proposal must be accompanied by a letter from the Chair certifying that the resources (facilities and equipment) are available for the proposed work to be implemented. These proposals will be reviewed by the Selection Committee for funding. New faculty hires may submit proposals prior to officially assuming their positions at LSU. However, funds may only be disbursed after they start their employment at LSU. Faculty members who have funding through this program in Rounds 1-4 are not eligible to submit to this RFP.

Amount and Duration of the Award(s)

The College of Engineering will spend the available funds annually to the fullest extent possible, taking into consideration the number and quality of proposals submitted for funding evaluation. We anticipate funding two to three proposals as a result of this solicitation.

The requested funding limit may range from \$25,000-\$50,000. The funding requested must be commensurate with the stated deliverables. The final amount awarded will be recommended by the Selection Committee. Awards will be made for a maximum period of one year. With the target being seed funding for new and innovative work, the proposal must describe significant tangible deliverables that can be accomplished in one year.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria (in order of importance)

1. Innovation – document and justify (technical/scientific and marketing) at beginning of the proposal what is truly innovative and novel. On the marketing side - if you were trying to get a venture capitalist to provide funds for this idea, what would you tell him/her (20 pts.).
2. Relevance and Benefit – deliverables should be of benefit, and relevant to the subject, industry and/or region and address the Strategic Plan of the College (15 pts.).
3. Deliverables – clearly list and describe the tangible deliverables that will result from the funding and probability of implementation in the near term. This category seeks deliverables that show the research will move along the development line towards something that can be commercially implemented. Archival journal articles/conference papers, while nice, cannot be the only deliverable (15 pts.).
4. Collaboration building – clearly indicate industrial sectors that may be interested in the results of this research, along with a plan to work with the College’s Director of Corporate Relations and Economic Development to identify corporate/industrial entities for future collaboration (10 pts.).
5. Follow-on Funding – additional/future funding should be clearly identified – agency, program, etc. Be more specific than just indicating an agency – define the source program, RFP, etc (5 pts.).
6. Multiple PI’s should be justified.
7. Items #1-5 above being equal – award selection will give preference to junior faculty.

Proposal Format

The proposal is limited to 4 pages (11 pt or larger font, 1” margins) plus a one page bio (up to one page per PI) and a one page budget and budget justification. The proposal should be formatted as follows:

- Title, PI and contact info
- Problem statement and rationale for work. Make sure items 1 and 2 from the Proposal Evaluation Criteria are clearly and succinctly described and discussed.
- Approach – Methodology and Tasks to perform (including milestones for each task).
- Deliverables and future work - Make sure items 3-5 are clearly delineated and discussed.
- Expertise and Facilities– Describe PI expertise/facilities available to conduct proposed work. No facilities/equipment can be requested.

- Budget – Estimate for effort, provide justification of items. Cost sharing is not required.

The funds requested may include supplies, travel related to research activities (not conferences), graduate student stipends, and summer salaries. This fund is not intended to support administrative functions or build research infrastructure (equipment should be already available). The nature of the funding carries an exemption from indirect (F&A) costs. The budget should include, however, fringe benefits calculated at the prevailing LSU rate. To optimize the use of the fund, PIs are encouraged to limit budget items subjected to fringe benefits.

Please submit your proposals to your Department Chair by November 30, 2011. Proposals from more than one department should be submitted through the chair of the lead PI's department. Proposals must be forwarded to the College by the Department Chairs by 4:30 PM, December 5, 2011. Proposals submitted after this deadline will not be considered. Department chairs should submit each proposal package electronically in PDF. Each file should contain the following file name format: last name_first name_FIER_2001.PDF. Send the proposals to:

Kelly A. Rusch, Associate Dean
College of Engineering
krusch@lsu.edu

Also, please direct any questions regarding proposal preparation to Kelly A. Rusch. The timeline of the process is in Appendix I.

Final Reporting Requirements

The PI will submit, to the Associate Dean for Research and Diversity Programs, a final report no longer than 5 pages within 60 days of the end of the funding period. The report will include:

- An itemized summary of expenditures.
- Major research findings
- Planned dissemination of research results
- Plans for continuation of work including references to proposals submitted to external granting agencies
- Patent applications submitted, technology transfer agreements implemented, and/or commercial collaborations established
- Plan for collaboration building

For three years following the end of the funding cycle, the PI will submit to the College information pertaining to the last three bullets to allow tracking the return on investment of the seed funds. The College is currently developing an online database for which you will be given access to electronically update the activities of this award.

Appendix I

Timeline Leading to Award Round V

November 30, 2011	Deadline for proposal submission to Department Chair
December 5, 2011	Deadline for proposal submission to CoE
Week of January 20, 2012	Selection Committee meets to recommend recipients
Week of January 27, 2012	Notify award recipients and initiate funding for February 2012
January 31, 2013	Project Report due to Associate Dean's Office (through the online database)