



2009

**UAHUNTSVILLE RESEARCH MINI-GRANT PROGRAM
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

SPONSORED BY

OFFICE OF VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Office of Vice President Research (OVPR) strives to be a key asset to the academic mission of the university in numerous ways, including by assisting in attracting, developing, and retaining leading scholars; supporting the development of an enabling environment for innovative, externally-sponsored research; and enhancing the reputation of UAHuntsville as a research university.

2.0 OVERVIEW

The UAHuntsville Office of Vice President for Research announces the availability of \$100,000 in grant support for the Research Mini-Grant Program. This internal grant program is designed to encourage the growth and development of UAHuntsville faculty scholarship in all academic areas. The program is intended to enhance individual faculty member's talents, scholarship, and their ability to pursue externally-sponsored research activities in her/his respective field of study. The program requires the submission of competitive proposals in basic and applied research, which are motivated by an effort to probe toward and discover new ideas, information, or applications. It is intended that the development of proposals to this program will strengthen those faculty member skills that enable the development of sponsored research from other sources. The Research Mini-Grant Program is not intended for support of work which is a part of a scheduled course, development of course curriculum, on-going sponsored research project, purchase of equipment for non-research purposes, student tuition, or to satisfy requirements for a student's degree.

3.0 ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for participation in the Research Mini-Grant Program is limited to new tenure-earning faculty members who are within the first four years of their academic career at UAHuntsville at the time of the submission of their proposal. A faculty member is limited to the submission of one proposal in any given year, and is only eligible for a maximum of four Mini-Grant awards during their career at the University.

Topics previously awarded a Research Mini-Grant will not normally be considered eligible for continued sponsorship. Furthermore, with all other evaluation criteria being equal, those faculty members with no prior Mini-Grant awards will be given priority consideration.

If two or more faculty members collaborate on the submission of a proposal, one must be designated as the Principal Investigator with responsibility for budget expenditures and coordination of the effort, and the others as Co-Investigators. There is no limit to the number of proposals on which a faculty member may serve as a Co-Investigator.

4.0 AWARDS

The Research Mini-Grant Review Committee will meet within one month of the closing date to review proposals. A total of \$100,000 is available for award, and there are no limits on the number of awards that can be made. Proposals of all funding levels are encouraged, up to a maximum funding request of \$10,500. Based on the recommendation of the Review Committee, the selected proposers will be notified as soon as possible thereafter by the Office of Vice President for Research.

The 2009 Mini-Grant awards must be expended by November 1, 2009 (extensions must be requested from the Office of Sponsored Programs). The grant funds must be utilized on research-related expenditures. Eligible expenditures include up to one month of faculty salary (above the research time allotted by their College); research-related equipment; student wages necessary for the completion of the proposed research project (tuition is not an eligible expense); travel required for the completion of the research; research-related materials and supplies; publication costs related to the proposed project; and facility user fees necessary for the completion of the proposed project.

Please give careful consideration to the amount of funds requested in order that we may support the maximum number of proposals.

4.1 NSF CAREER AWARDS

The NSF CAREER program shares many objectives with the UAHuntsville Research Mini-Grant program, in terms of career development for our young faculty. Therefore, the Office of Vice President for Research will commit to offering a UAHuntsville Research Mini-Grant award of \$10,500 (the maximum Mini-Grant award size) each year for the first three years to any UAHuntsville faculty member who wins an NSF CAREER grant.

This commitment of funding from the OVPR may be used as a source of university cost-share in the faculty member's NSF proposal (though NSF does not require cost-share for CAREER proposals). The statement of work and the budget contained in the faculty member's CAREER proposal serves as a commitment on behalf of the faculty member to the Mini-Grant Review Committee, and a separate Research Mini-Grant proposal should not be submitted. **However, the faculty member agrees that by accepting this award offer, any and all restrictions in terms of eligible expenses that apply to the use of Mini-Grant funding will also apply to the use of the three Mini-Grant awards. Furthermore, by accepting this award offer, the faculty member agrees that all of the reporting requirements (Section 5.0) of the Research Mini-Grant program apply as well.**

Note that the *total* amount budgeted for UAHuntsville Research Mini-Grant awards is not being increased or decreased by this policy, but remains at \$100,000. However, any NSF CAREER grant awards to UAHuntsville faculty members will correspondingly decrease the amount of *discretionary* funding available to the Mini-Grant Review Committee for new Research Mini-Grant awards over the period of three years.

This policy simply recognizes the highly-competitive nature of the CAREER program, the thorough peer review that all CAREER proposals undergo, and the OVPR's commitment to the mutual objectives that the Mini-Grant and CAREER programs share. Similar early career development programs for other federal agencies are being assessed for future inclusion in this policy.

5.0 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

All Mini-Grant awardees are required to submit a mid-year progress report in May to both their Dean and the Office of the Vice President for Research. Failure to do so may result in a review of the grant for advisability of continuation.

In addition, all Mini-Grant awardees are required to prepare a final paper summarizing their research results that will be included in the “**2009 Faculty Research Mini-Grant Proceedings.**” The proceedings will be published by the Office of the Vice President for Research.

This final paper will be considered as the deliverable and final report on each Mini-Grant. The final paper is due to the Office of Vice President for Research by **November 27, 2009**. The Office of the Vice President will provide the guidelines for the paper to all awardees.

The Deans of the Colleges will arrange for their Mini-Grant awardees to present the results of their research. The appropriate college Dean will determine the date and format of these presentations.

6.0 REVIEW OF PROPOSALS

Awards are made by the Office of Vice President for Research, based on recommendations by the Research Mini-Grant Review Committee. The proposal evaluation criteria (Section 8.0) are used to establish the recommendations. The Review Committee consists of the Vice President for Research, one senior faculty member appointed by the Dean of each of the Colleges/Schools, i.e., Business, Engineering, Graduate Studies, Liberal Arts, Nursing, and Science, and two Research Center Directors appointed by the Vice President for Research. The Vice President for Research (or his designee) serves as the Chairman of the Review Committee. By majority vote, the Review Committee will recommend which proposals will be supported and the level of support that will be provided.

Please note that the Review Committee will consist of faculty members and research staff from various fields of study. Therefore, the PI should endeavor to write her/his proposal such that it is comprehensible by a colleague who is not a specialist in a directly-relevant discipline. Technical terminology should be explained, and variables should be defined.

7.0 PROPOSAL FORMAT

The proposal should provide a clear and complete narrative account of the proposed research project. It should include what is to be done, why, and how. It must be focused toward enhancing the respective faculty member's talents. Since the Awards Committee consists of faculty members from various fields of study, the language used in the proposals should be understandable by a lay person not versed in the field of study proposed. Technical terminology (define your variables) and jargon should be explained.

The proposal length should not exceed eight double-spaced pages, excluding the cover sheet, the budget pages, the Vita, the list of prior publications and sponsored research, and the list of previous Mini-Grant awards. The proposal should maintain one-inch margins, and use Times New Roman in 12-point font. In the interest of fairness to all faculty, any proposal exceeding the page limit, or not conforming to the margin and font requirements, will not be reviewed.

All proposals must follow the format given below (format details are given in Appendix A):

- I. Cover Page
- II. Proposal Title
- III. Summary
- IV. Background
- V. Technical Objectives and Approach
- VI. Benefits to Faculty Member
- VII. Budget
- VIII. Publications/Sponsored Research
- IX. Previous Mini-Grant Awards
- X. Vita of PI

Please note that this program is intended to enhance the scholarship of our faculty, and to assist them in preparing for the peer-review process of external funding sponsors. Therefore, reflecting the practices of most external funding sponsors, those proposals which do not follow the format given in this RFP may be returned without review.

8.0 EVALUATION CRITERIA

The principal criteria considered by the Mini-Grant Review Committee in evaluation of a proposal is its relevance to UAH's mission of scholarship and research. Specific proposal-related evaluation criteria are:

1. Overall scientific, technical, or scholarly quality of the proposal. (25 Points)
2. The Principal Investigator's (and Co-Investigator's) capability to perform the research. (10 Points)
3. Potential of developing a more detailed research proposal for submission to state and federal agencies or other organizations. (15 Points)
4. Significant scholarly contribution in the discipline. (20 Points)
5. Clarity of research plan and reasonableness of the proposed budget (20 Points)
6. Adherence to proposal instructions and program intent. (10 Points)

9.0 TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Since a Research Mini-Grant Award is made for the activities as proposed, and reviewed as proposed by the faculty's peers, any significant changes in scope or direction must be cleared through the Office of the Vice President for Research.

Upon award of the Mini-Grant, an account will be established within the awardee's department and funds will be transferred from the Office of Vice President for Research to this account. It is then the responsibility of the awardee and her/his Department/College to assure that the funds are spent in accordance with the proposal. The Office of Sponsored Programs is prepared to answer any questions regarding the expenditure of funds. **Submission of a proposal warrants that all over-runs on any Mini-Grant account awarded are the responsibility of the grantee and his/her Department/College.**

Since the award is a grant, any funds remaining at the end of the award period will stay in the account and can be used at the discretion of the faculty PI, upon approval by their Department Chair.

The reporting requirements are: 1) a mid-year progress report; 2) the preparation of a paper for inclusion in the "**2009 Young Faculty Research Proceedings**", and 3) the presentation of the results within her/his College.

10.0 SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

FY 2008 Mini-Grant proposals must be submitted through the Office of Sponsored Programs in accordance with established OSP proposal procedures. A Mini-Grant proposal cannot be accepted by the Office of Sponsored Programs until the Principal Investigator has attended a How-to-Submit-a-Proposal workshop in the Office of Sponsored Programs. For those who have not attended this workshop in the past, the workshop schedule is:

August 19, 2008, 2:00 – 3:00 PM, in Room E-8 Von Braun Research Hall
August 28, 2008, 10:00 – 11:00 AM, in Room E-8 Von Braun Research Hall
September 8, 2008, 10:00 – 11:00 AM, in Room E-8 Von Braun Research Hall
September 17, 2008, 2:00 – 3:00 PM, in Room E-8 Von Braun Research Hall
October 1, 2008, 10:00 – 11:00 AM, in Room E-8 Von Braun Research Hall
October 17, 2008, 2:00 – 3:00 PM, in Room E-8 Von Braun Research Hall

Please contact Felecia Troupe (824-2660 or troupef@uah.edu) to RSVP, or if you have questions about the workshop.

A single PDF file of your final proposal should be received at troupef@uah.edu via email in the Office of Sponsored Programs *by the close-of-business (5:00 P.M. CST) on Wednesday, November 5, 2008*. A single hardcopy of your final proposal, received in the Office of Sponsored Programs by the same deadline, would also be acceptable. Those proposals received by 5:00 P.M. will be considered on-time, and *those proposals received after 5:00 P.M. will be considered late* and, to ensure fairness to all faculty, will not be reviewed.

11.0 ADHERENCE TO GUIDELINES AND FORMAT

Proposals which do not adhere to the guidelines in this call for proposals, or the proposal format specified in Section 7.0 and Appendix A, may be rejected without review, in which case the

proposal will be returned to the Principal Investigator with an explanation for the rejection. Note that adherence to proposal instructions is one of the proposal evaluation criteria.

APPENDIX A: PROPOSAL FORMAT

In order to ensure a level playing field across the entire university, all proposals must follow the format given below:

I. Cover Page

The cover page is provided at the end of this Call for Proposals.

II. Proposal Title

III. Summary (maximum of one double-spaced page)

Please provide a summary, not to exceed one double-spaced page, which summarizes your proposed activity and its key objectives to a lay person.

IV. Background (maximum of two double-spaced pages)

Please provide an overview of the technical problem to be addressed.

V. Technical Objectives and Approach (maximum of four double-spaced pages)

Include a description of the overall objectives and the justification of the proposed work. Describe the plan of work, including a description of the proposed methods and procedures. Relate the proposed work to the present state of knowledge in the field. Note that this section should be prepared in a manner that addresses the Evaluation Criteria (Section 8.0).

VI. Benefits to Faculty Member (maximum of one double-spaced page)

Discuss how this proposed activity will benefit the development of the individual research skills of the Principal Investigator. Address how this research will lead to follow-on externally-sponsored funding, including specific funding programs and sponsors when possible.

VII. Budget (maximum of two pages)

The appropriateness of the budget will be one of the proposal evaluation factors. To be helpful, some guidelines for constructing the budget are given below. Please provide an appropriate level of detail to allow for an informed evaluation of your proposed budget. This budget section should not exceed two pages.

1. Salaries, wages, and fringe benefits

A faculty member may budget up to one month of her/his time (above the research time allotted by their College) to the contract.

Funds may also be used to support wages for individuals other than the faculty member if their work is important to the completion of the research project by the faculty member. Typical examples are, graduate and undergraduate student wages required in the acquisition, development and preparation of research materials and data; machine

shop time; and computer/equipment operation assistance. Secretarial and tuition support is not covered. The faculty member's time required for accomplishment of the project must be negotiated with his/her respective Chair/Dean. The Principal Investigator is reminded that the Research Mini-Grant Program is intended to assist in the professional development of individual faculty members, and therefore the budget for salaries and wages should reflect this intent.

2. Research-related Equipment/Instrumentation

Any equipment/instrumentation acquired under the grant is owned by the University. Normally, at the end of the project, any equipment purchased will become property of the Department to which the grantee is assigned. All purchases for equipment must be supported in the proposal relative to need for accomplishment of the proposed research effort. Requests for purchase of equipment not justified and required for accomplishment of the specific research objective and proposed plan will not receive approval.

3. Research-related Operating Expenses

Please break out the total operating expenses necessary to complete the proposed activities into the three categories below.

- a. Supplies
- b. Duplication/Reproduction
- c. Software

4. Travel

Funds are not provided for routine attendance at professional meetings, but are available for travel required to complete the research. Justification of travel and explanation of its role in accomplishing the research project must be included in the proposal.

5. Books, Periodicals, Microfilm, etc.

Purchase of items critical for the project accomplishment should be made only when they cannot be procured through procedures for which library funds exist, or when they are not available through inter-library loan. Duplicate purchases of Library holdings are not normally allowed. All of these items shall be ordered through the Library. Then the items are received and catalogued. The Library will issue them to the grantee for a period of time not to exceed the authorized closing date of the project. All items will be returned to the Library at the completion of the project.

6. Publication Costs

Publication in well-respected scholarly journals is encouraged, and the associated publication costs may be included in the budget.

7. Cost Sharing

List all sources of cost-sharing. Cost-sharing is not required.

IV. Publications/Sponsored Research

List of recent (last three years) publications relevant to the proposed work, and the titles and amount of any current sponsored research of the Principal Investigator. Note that Research Mini-Grants are not intended to support the work of an on-going sponsored research project (see Section 2.0). Therefore, if there is a chance that the proposed activity may incorrectly be perceived as supporting the work of an ongoing sponsored project, please include in this section a brief statement (up to 250 words) distinguishing how the proposed activity differs from the ongoing work.

V. Previous Mini-Grant Awards

Note should be made of dates, titles and amounts of any previous Research Mini-Grant Awards received and associated publications. Note that topics previously awarded a Research Mini-Grant will not normally be considered eligible for continued sponsorship (see Section 3.0). Therefore, if there is a chance that the proposed activity may incorrectly be perceived as a continuation of a prior Mini-Grant award, please include in this section a brief statement (up to 250 words) distinguishing how the proposed activity differs from the prior award.

VI. Vita

A two-page maximum vita on the principal investigator and any co-investigator should also be included with the proposal.

**PROPOSAL
RESEARCH MINI-GRANT PROGRAM 2009**

Title: _____

Proposed Dates for Project: _____

Proposal Amount: _____

Principal Investigator (Name/Rank): _____

Principal Investigator's Signature/Date: _____

Co-Investigator (If any), (Name/Rank): _____

Department: _____ Bldg./Room #: _____

College: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Approval

Dept. Chair: _____ Signature/Date: _____

Dean: _____ Signature/Date: _____

OSP: _____ Signature/Date: _____