UND Research Seed Programs 2017-2018

In order to increase research and scholarship at the university, the Office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development (VPRED) is launching the second round of seed research funding in two programs – the Post-Doctoral Research Program and the Early Career Award Program. These programs are funded primarily through the support of the UND Alumni Association and Foundation.

The Post Doctoral Program is aimed at dramatically increasing extramural funding support for our research programs by increasing the capacity of faculty and research staff to win and manage more external grants. In 2016-2017, the Post Doctoral Program awarded funding for ten 2-year post-doctoral positions, representing a $1.25M commitment. The program was co-funded by the VPRED office (year 1 of the program) and colleges of the awardees (year 2 of the program). These awards went to faculty in several colleges. In March 2017, the awardees and the post-doctorals that were recruited met as a group to report out on research progress as well as publications, presentations, grant proposals submitted and grants received. Excellent progress was reported. In 2017-2018, we anticipate making up to ten new 2-year awards representing a similar level of commitment. All researchers with permanent (either faculty or staff) appointments at UND will be eligible to apply for the Post-Doctoral awards. Please note that one criterion for review of proposals will be the fit with the Grand Challenges articulated in the new One UND Strategic Plan.

The Early Career Award Program is designed to help pre-tenure, tenure track faculty develop their research programs leading to a positive tenure decision. In 2016-2017, five Early Career 1-year awards were made to faculty in three colleges (Arts & Sciences, Education & Human Development, and Engineering & Mines) representing a $100K commitment. In April, the awardees met with the Provost and VPRED to report on the progress of their work and offer suggestions for future iterations of the program. In 2017-2018, we anticipate making up to five new 1-year awards.

These two programs are the first in a series planned for this academic year that are geared to support Goal 4 of the One UND Strategic Plan, specifically building research activity in areas related to the plan’s Grand Challenges.
Post-Doctoral Funding Program Call for Proposals

The Post-Doctoral Funding Program represents a collaboration between the VPRED office and colleges/research units and is designed to enhance our research efforts across the university, particularly in areas related to the Grand Challenges articulated in the One UND Strategic Plan. The program will provide full salary (up to $42,000) plus benefits for up to 10 post-doctoral associates for a period of two years. Awards will be made on a competitive basis.

This program is designed to achieve three goals that together will help the university increase research activity and external funding and enhance the impact of our research on North Dakota. First, we expect that supporting post doctoral personnel will increase the capacity of investigators to compete more effectively for additional grant funding and to convert more quickly and successfully this additional funding into impactful results. Second, we expect that a portion of the post-doctoral funding will be directed toward research related to the Grand Challenges set out by the One UND Strategic Plan and, thus, further our success in developing a profile in those key areas. Third, we will create a more vibrant post-doctoral culture, which we view as a natural extension to our graduate research programs and an important step in raising our reputation as a research university. In the first round of the program in 2016-2017, 10 post-doctorals were recruited.

Funding for the first year of the two-year post-doctoral appointments will be provided by the Vice President for Research and Economic development. Funding for the second year of the appointments will be provided by the college(s)/research unit(s) of the PI(s), subject to availability of funding, and/or by the PI(s) through other sources. At the time of proposal submission, it is not necessary to identify the source of the second year of support.

Program Information

1) Principal Investigators must be University of North Dakota faculty or full-time staff researchers.
2) Teams of PI's who are working in interdisciplinary areas are particularly encouraged to submit proposals.
3) Teams of PI's are encouraged to submit proposals related to the Strategic Plan Grand Challenges.
4) Previous awardees are eligible for this competition
5) PIs may submit or participate in more than one proposal.
6) Proposals may request post-doctoral support for a period of up to two years each.
7) Support is designated for new post-doctoral associates, i.e., those persons who do not currently have an appointment at UND and have not had an appointment at UND in the previous 3 years.
8) Support will include 12 months’ salary up to $42,000. Additional support will be provided to cover benefits.
9) No ancillary costs will be supported (e.g., materials and supplies, travel, recruiting costs, PI compensation, etc.)
10) Post-doctoral associates will submit multiple external research proposals during the lifetime of the award both for their own support as well as for the support of their research group.
11) PI's will submit at least one major research proposal for each year of the award.
Proposal Preparation and Submission

All proposals must include the following information in the order indicated and conform to the page limits and other noted restrictions. If this information is not provided and clearly indicated, proposals will be returned without further review.

1) Title.
2) PI, co-PI names and departmental affiliations.
3) 100 word abstract.
4) Technical Description. Describe the research idea/concept and the specific tasks that the post-doctoral associate will carry out. (maximum 3 pages, including figures, minimum 10-point font. References should take up no more than 1 additional page.)
5) Describe the impact that post-doctoral support will have on the capacity of the PI/PIs to increase external funding. (1/2 page maximum)
6) List and describe the specific additional funding opportunities that will be enabled by post-doctoral support, including funding agencies and specific programs. Provide this information in table format. (1 page maximum) If relevant, describe how this support will help improve a previously unsuccessful external proposal. (1 additional page maximum)
7) Describe how the proposed research is synergistic with current university research, particularly the Grand Challenges in the One UND Strategic Plan, if applicable. (1 page maximum)
8) Summarize PIs' and co-PIs' external funding track record, current funding, and proposals submitted and awaiting a funding decision. (No page limit)
9) Describe the source and amount of current resources that can be used to support the post-doctoral research (e.g., materials and supplies, travel, etc.) (1/2 page maximum)
10) Describe previous institutional support and the purpose and the research outcomes of this support. (If proposals for extramural funding were submitted/awarded, include this information.) (1 page maximum)
11) Provide an NIH-style, NSF-Style or equivalent Biographical Sketch of the PI(s)/co-PI(s)

Proposals should be submitted electronically as a PDF file, directly to the Vice President for Research and Economic Development, c/o Brenda Halle at vpr@research.UND.edu. Proposals will be due on or before November 1, 2017, and funding decisions will be made no later than December 1, 2017. Awards may begin immediately upon notification. Please direct questions to Grant McGimpsey, VP for Research and Economic Development, grant.mcgimpsey@und.edu or John Mihelich, Faculty Fellow, john.mihelich@und.edu.
Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Review will consider the following criteria:

1) Intellectual merit of the proposed research.
2) The potential to quickly generate substantial external funding.
3) Current funding and funding track record of the PI(s) and co-PI(s).
4) The results of previous institutional support for the (co)-PI's research, including support from this program.
5) Synergy of proposed research with the research strengths and emphases in the PI(s)' department(s), college(s), and/or university.
6) Potential contribution to Grand Challenges

Proposal Review

Proposals will first receive an administrative review for adherence to the proposal requirements. Following this review, an ad hoc group of internal and/or external reviewers will be assembled to evaluate the proposals based on the criteria described above. All reasonable attempts will be made to ensure wide domain expertise among the reviewers. Reviewers will be recused in cases of conflicts of interest. Reviewers will rank order all proposals received. Reviews and rankings will be forwarded to the Vice President for Research and Economic Development and evaluated by the deans of the colleges and/or directors of research units. Highly ranked proposals will also be reviewed by Grand Challenge Champions for relevance to these challenges. Awards will be made dependent on funding available in the Division of Research and Economic Development and the colleges/research units.

Reporting

If funded, PI's will report regularly on their progress. This includes reporting on recruitment efforts, appointment of the post-doctoral associate, and semi-annual reports of research and funding progress (including proposals prepared and submitted). Progress toward proposed goals will be reviewed after nine months and funding for the second year of the award will be contingent on adequate progress. In addition, awardees and their post-doctoral associates will attend periodic meetings designed to enhance the post-doctoral culture at UND and to facilitate collaborative research. As there is a requirement that PIs and post-doctoral associates will submit external proposals (at least one major proposal per year of support from PIs), copies of the proposals should be sent to the Vice President for Research and Economic Development, c/o Brenda Halle.