Serendipity Grant Request for Proposals (RFP)

As a means of implementing the OVPR’s Five Years Forward Research Strategic Plan, the Serendipity Grant Program advances exceptional research, enhanced by serendipitous interactions and collaboration. The grants represent an investment of resources to bring together researchers across departments, colleges and disciplines – including colleagues and communities outside the university – to think creatively and cultivate new ideas. Innovative ideas and approaches are widely recognized as critical to meeting societal challenges and producing knowledge for the public good.

Contact facgrant@umn.edu with any questions.

Purpose of Funding

Grants of between $5,000 and $30,000 are available to teams that emerge from each of the 2015 Convergence Colloquium events. Up to $60,000 will be available for grants related to each Colloquium event. The funding is available to support the formation of and capacity-building for new collaborative research teams that engage diverse disciplinary perspectives and integrate UMN experts with those from the public, private, and nonprofit organizations in Minnesota. Funds are available to support activities such as:

- Facilitating exploration of critical intersections and collaboration across disciplines needed to address critical societal challenges and emerging areas of scholarly inquiry
- Developing reports, articles, and/or other media to communicate and position UMN and Minnesota expertise
- Cultivating collaboration with and support from national and/or international entities to advance future research
- Preparing proposals for future research funding opportunities
- Gathering relevant pilot data essential new collaborations and future research funding opportunities
- Advancing other creative activities that offer a pathway to research innovation by promoting serendipitous interactions, fostering new research ideas, applying knowledge from academic and non-academic experts, and drawing on multiple disciplinary insights

Proposers are encouraged to think creatively about indirect outcomes and tangible outputs that can be generated based on activities such as those described above.

Timeline

Due date for Letter of Intent: 10 days following the Convergence Colloquium event
Due date for Proposal: 30 days following the Convergence Colloquium event
Award notification: 30 days following proposal due date
Funded activities must be completed within one calendar year of receipt of funds.
Eligibility

This grant program is focused on supporting collaborative research teams that emerge from the 2015 Convergence Colloquia series. Key considerations for eligibility include:

- One Principal Investigator (PI) and up to six Co-Principal Investigators (co-PIs) can be identified in the proposal. The PI must be employed at the University of Minnesota. At least one of the co-PIs must be from a non U of MN public, private, or nonprofit organization. Non-UMN co-PIs must provide a letter of support for the proposal.
- Additional Participants can be identified in the proposal. Participants should have confirmed interest in contributing to the proposed work.
- The PI must have attended the Convergence Colloquium event. It is preferred, though not required, that other co-PIs and Participants attended the event as well.
- Pls, co-Pls, and Participants should not have substantial prior experience in working together as a team. Specifically, the group should not have worked together before or at most have worked together for no more than a year.
- Pls, co-Pls, and Participants should represent multiple disciplinary perspectives. Teams with at least three distinct disciplines are preferred.

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Clarity in articulating need for transdisciplinary and collaborative research in addressing a societal challenge and/or emerging area of scholarly inquiry
- Quality, creativity, and feasibility of proposed activities in advancing capacity of team to pursue transdisciplinary and collaborative research
- Clarity and feasibility of stated outcomes and outputs of proposed activities
- Potential for sustained collaboration, future funding, and scholarly impact
- Breadth of disciplines and partners involved
- Newness of the team

Required Letter of Intent

Letters of intent (required LOI template provided) should be submitted as a one-page PDF document, via email to facgrant@umn.edu with Serendipity grant in the subject line. The letter should specify the issue/topic to be addressed in the proposal, likely participants, potential activities, and prospective outcomes and outputs. Everyone who submits a letter of intent is invited to submit a full proposal.

Required Proposal Content

Proposals should be submitted as a single PDF document, via email to facgrant@umn.edu with Serendipity grant in the subject line. Proposals must be prepared in point size 10 or higher with one-inch margins and must comply with the page limits outlined on the next page. Key questions to be considered in proposals are specified on the next page.
1. **Title page** *(required Title Page template provided)*
2. **Description of issue/topic** *(up to one page)*
   a. What is the critical societal challenge and/or emerging area of scientific inquiry to be addressed in this proposal?
   b. Why is engagement across disciplines and among UMN and external collaborators critical in this effort?
3. **Description of team** *(up to one page)*
   a. What are the disciplines and organizations represented by the team?
   b. What are the qualifications of the team relative to the issue/topic being addressed?
   c. To what extent is the team a new collaboration?
4. **Description and timeline for proposed activities** *(up to two pages)*
   a. How do the proposed activities engage diverse disciplinary perspectives and support collaboration with non-UMN experts?
   b. How will activities support and build team capacity for transdisciplinary research collaboration, as well as partnerships between the UMN and external collaborators?
5. **Description of outcomes and outputs of proposed activities** *(up to one page)*
   a. How do the proposed activities advance research on the issue/topic?
   b. What tangible outputs, as well as indirect outcomes will be produced?
   c. How will collaboration be sustained after the grants funds have been exhausted?
   d. What funding sources are available to support future research?
6. **References from the literature** *(up to one page)*
7. **Budget and Justification** *(required budget template provided)*
   Allowable expenses include personnel (e.g. students, research associates), travel, materials and supplies, space rental, consultants, computer services beyond those typically provided. Faculty summer salary is allowed only if effort is directly related to the proposed activities. Indirect costs are not allowed.
   a. In addition to a basic description of each budget item, the justification should discuss on how the budget supports the specific activities proposed and contributes to the intended outcomes and outputs.
   b. Are there other existing or potential funding sources that will be leveraged to further support the proposed work? Additional funding is not required, but should be noted if it is available.
8. **Bio-sketches for PIs and co-PIs** *(no more than 2 pages each)*
9. **Letter(s) of support from non-UMN co-PIs**
   Letter(s) should address importance of proposed activities in advancing collaborative research, their significance to the co-PI's organization, the role of the co-PI, and resources (e.g. in-kind resources, matching funds, direct support)