Funding Incentive Seed Grant Program at the University of Utah

ASEE ERC Meeting – March 7, 2017
Program Overview

• Campus-wide program administered through Vice President for Research Office

• Intent is to support only new areas of research for a principal investigator.
  – Applicant must demonstrate proposed project represents a new research direction in an area likely to generate extramural funding.

• Funds cannot be used for
  – Research that overlaps with existing research or is already supported by other grants.
  – Gap funding to bridge support between grants.

http://research.utah.edu/grants/seed.php
Program Overview

• Two rounds of Seed Grant awards per year (applications due Feb. 15 and Aug. 20)
  – Awards are up to $35,000 for one year only
  – 50-100 applications are received each round
  – Open to all disciplines across campus
  – Typically 18-20 awards are made per round
  – Often budget requests are reduced slightly to accommodate more awards

http://research.utah.edu/grants/seed.php
Eligibility

- Tenure track faculty with an appointment that is at least 0.75 FTE.
- Auxiliary faculty
  - Research faculty of at least 0.75 FTE with a minimum of a two-year residency at the University of Utah.
  - Clinical faculty with a combined appointment at the University of Utah and/or the VA Hospital of at least 0.75 FTE.
- Upon receipt of an award, PI is not eligible to apply again for three years.

http://research.utah.edu/grants/seed.php
Application Review

- Seed Grant Award Committee
  - 16 senior faculty - representation from across campus
    - Also (ex-officio) VP for Research and one Assoc. VP for Research
  - Committee Co-chairs – one from School of Medicine, one from Engineering/Science (Assoc. Dean for Research)
  - Evaluates all proposal scores (from reviewers) and determines award recipients
    - Provides some of the proposal reviews

http://research.utah.edu/grants/seed.php
Review Process

• Reviewers
  – Each proposal is reviewed by 4 faculty
    • Applicant submits 4 names as possible reviewers
    • No more than 2 from PI home department
    • 2 selected from other departments on campus
  – Reviewers provide scores based on published criteria

• Seed Grant Committee co-chairs vet/select reviewers

• *Primary challenge is identifying sufficient qualified (willing) reviewers*
  • Use Seed Grant Award Committee members to fill in gaps

http://research.utah.edu/grants/seed.php
### Some Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Yr 1 - Spring</th>
<th>Yr 1 - Fall</th>
<th>Yr 2 - Spring</th>
<th>Yr 2 - Fall</th>
<th>Yr 3 - Spring</th>
<th>Yr 3 - Fall</th>
<th>Yr 4 - Spring</th>
<th>Yr 4 - Fall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Award</td>
<td>Submit</td>
<td>Award</td>
<td>Submit</td>
<td>Award</td>
<td>Submit</td>
<td>Award</td>
<td>Submit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mines Earth Sci</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soc Behavior Sci</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soc Work</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts / Law</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Funding %           | 31%   | 38%   | 35%   | 35%   | 31%   | 26%   | 20%   | 24%   |
| Avg Funding Amt     | $23K  | $28K  | $32K  | $31K  | $28K  | $28K  | $31K  | $29K  |

### Faculty Rank of Awardees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Track</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assist. Prof.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assoc. Prof.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary Comments

- **Intramural Seed Grant Program**
  - Helps young faculty to launch new research areas
  - Helps mid-career & more senior faculty to re-start their research in new direction
- **Focus on concepts that can lead to new extramural funding**
  - Provides impetus for investment of university funds
- **Major challenges**
  - Review process – relying on the good will of a large number of university faculty
  - (Potentially) Identifying a source for seed grant funds
Additional Material
Specific Evaluation Criteria

- Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:
  - If the proposed research is completed, does the proposal have a high chance at leveraging extramural support?
  - Are the significance and merit of the research clearly documented?
  - Does the PI provide information necessary to determine if this is a new direction and that the research does not overlap with existing funded projects?
  - Have potential barriers or technical difficulties been identified?
  - Does the PI (and collaborators) have the experience necessary to carry out the project?
  - Are the goals, objectives and expected results stated clearly and are they reasonable, given the funds and time provided?
  - Are the methods outlined and do they reflect the goals and objectives stated in the proposal?
  - Have extramural opportunities been identified and are they reasonable?