January 10, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: College Deans in the Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences, and Related Fields (HASS) –
   Dr. José Luis Bermúdez, Dean, College of Liberal Arts
   Mr. Ryan C. Crocker, Dean, The Bush School of Government and Public Service
   Dr. Mark A. Hussey, Vice Chancellor and Dean for Agriculture and Life Sciences
   Dr. Douglas J. Palmer, Dean, College of Education and Human Development
   Dr. Jerry R. Strawser, Dean, Mays Business School
   Dr. Jorge A. Vanegas, Dean, College of Architecture

FROM: Dr. Jeffrey R. Seemann
       Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies

RE: HASS Enhanced Research Capacity (HASS ERC) Internal Grants Program

The Division of Research and Graduate Studies is pleased to announce the creation of the HASS Enhanced Research Capacity (ERC) Internal Grants Program at Texas A&M University. This program is designed to build on successes in the humanities, arts, social sciences, and related fields (HASS). The aim is to assist departments as they build faculty interest in and a capacity for seeking external funding for high-impact HASS projects. This program has been thoroughly discussed with your research deans for the past several months. A copy of the formal announcement is attached.

The HASS ERC Internal Grants Program will provide up to $50K annually for two years with a required match of up to $25K from the receiving unit. Third and/or fourth year funding might be possible with demonstrated preliminary success.

We encourage you to discuss this program with your research dean and with department and program heads in your college. Please contact Dr. Charles A. Johnson, Senior Associate Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies, at 845-8585 or cjjohnson@tamu.edu if you have any questions or would like additional information about the program. We will be happy to assist you.

Attachments

cc: Dr. R. Bowen Loftin
    Dr. Karan L. Watson
    HASS Research Deans
    RGS Executive Team
Enhanced Research Capacity (ERC) Internal Grants Program
In The Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences, and Related Fields (HASS)

Supporting high-impact research, scholarship, and creative work by faculty at Texas A&M University is a major strategic objective of the Division of Research and Graduate Studies. This high-impact work requires the provision of world-class organizational and physical infrastructure by the university, as well as external funding to support the development of new understandings about the world and human endeavors.

Faculty at Texas A&M in the humanities, arts, social sciences, and related fields (HASS) have contributed much to the developing national stature of the university as a Tier One comprehensive research institution, and they have advanced knowledge in their respective fields. With the creation of the HASS Enhanced Research Capacity (ERC) Internal Grants Program, the division wishes to build on successes in HASS areas at Texas A&M and enhance the capacity of faculty to pursue externally funded high-impact research, scholarship, and creative work. The HASS ERC Internal Grants Program is also responsive to the recommendation from the Research Roadmap Committee that activities in HASS areas receive greater support and encouragement by the University.

The remainder of this announcement outlines the HASS ERC Internal Grants Program. The program will be administered by Dr. Charles A. Johnson, Senior Associate Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies. He will be assisted by a working group of HASS research deans from the Colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Architecture, Education and Human Development, Liberal Arts, the Mays School of Business, and the Bush School of Government and Public Service.

Objective for the HASS ERC Internal Grants Program:

Increase the number of major, externally funded projects at Texas A&M University that yield high-impact work in the humanities, arts, social sciences, and related fields while enhancing the unit’s capacity for sustained extramural success and national recognition. As appropriate for specific fields, external support may come from such federal agencies as the National Science Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as selected programs in the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Departments of Defense, Education, Energy, or other agencies. Support may also come through prestigious awards from such groups as the Guggenheim Foundation, Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, the National Humanities Center in North Carolina, and the American Council of Learned Societies.

The HASS ERC Initiative:

The HASS Enhanced Research Capacity (ERC) Internal Grants Program assists departments and interdisciplinary programs to enhance their faculty’s capacity to seek external support for high-impact HASS projects that require external funding or awards. HASS ERC internal grants will provide up to $50K annually for two years with a required annual match of up to $25K from the
receiving unit. Third and/or fourth year funding might be possible with demonstrated preliminary success.

**Process:**

1. Prior to the development of a HASS ERC proposal, the research dean overseeing the prospective proposing unit should discuss the development of the internal grant application with the senior associate vice president for research and graduate studies.

2. If the research dean decides to move forward with an initiative, a draft proposal should be developed for informal review by the HASS research deans and the senior associate vice president for research and graduate studies. Comments from this review should guide development of the formal proposal.

3. The HASS research deans and the senior associate vice president for research and graduate studies will review the final proposal and make a recommendation to the vice president for research and graduate studies.

4. Normally, the Division of Research and Graduate Studies will make two awards annually.

**Expectations for a Successful Proposal:**

The proposal should:

1. outline the linkage between the proposed program for the HASS ERC internal grant and strategic plans by the university, college(s), department(s), and allied units;

2. identify strengths in the university and opportunities within external funding agencies that are sufficiently well aligned to increase probabilities for yielding high-impact research, scholarship, or creative work;

3. outline current achievements in a department, program, or unit suggesting that a HASS ERC grant would elevate the research capacity of the organization and its faculty;

4. identify major participants to be involved in implementing the proposal, discuss how they would be involved, and specifies support provided to the major participants;

5. describe major elements of the proposed plan, including the budget, engagement activities, and assessment of progress; and

6. specify a two-year budget highlighting major budgetary categories, proposed expenditures, and sources of funds, including unit matches.
Elements of ERC Grant Proposal

Strategic Opportunities and Current Program Achievements:

1. Outline the strategic opportunities presented by the status of the receiving unit's development, college, and university plans, and external funding opportunities. Describe how the proposed ERC grant would build capacity and sustainability for high-impact research, scholarship, and creative work.

2. Outline recent successes in major awards or grants (e.g., listing of grants, awards, or similar successes by faculty or groups related to the ERC grant proposal area) and the prospects for success by faculty without a history of grant success.

3. Identify major funding sources or programs to be targeted for new proposals (e.g., NSF, NIH, NEH, specific foundations, or funding programs; references to specific programs are expected).

4. Discuss preliminary steps taken to assure probable success with an ERC grant (e.g., seed funding, prior external grant successes, discussions with program officers, etc.)

5. Discuss any significant opportunities or processes, such as recommendations through external validation, program reviews or external advisory board reports, which suggest that this initiative is timely and likely to succeed.

Major Initiatives of Proposed ERC:

1. Identify the core group of faculty who will lead the effort to acquire major external funding or awards (e.g., those faculty with prior funding success and who are prepared to devote time to mentoring faculty who are not currently funded).

2. Describe the specific actions proposed by the department, program, or unit to encourage the development of successful external funding or award proposals (e.g., inclusion of grants/awards as a part of departmental standards for personnel evaluations; seed funding support for proposed projects; commitments of graduate assistant time to projects; commitments of staff time to proposal development).

3. Describe the proposed support that would be provided by the college (or group of colleges for interdisciplinary programs) to encourage successful external funding of award proposals (e.g., inclusion of major proposals, grants, and awards in personnel evaluations and departmental head evaluations; seed funding; staff support).
Description of Plan:

1. Discuss implications for the unit’s growth and development with receipt of the ERC award.

2. Outline how the funds will be used to enhance the research capacity of the department, program, or academic unit (e.g., seed funding program; consultants; workshops; etc.)

3. Describe the processes to be used to advance discussion and engagement of faculty with the ERC grant in the department, program, or academic unit (e.g., mentoring processes; professional development plans; etc.).

4. Discuss implications for the unit’s undergraduate and graduate programs.

5. Discuss how the proposed plans will be monitored and assessed to assure success.

Description of the Budget:

1. Specify budget categories, proposed expenditures and funding sources, including internal matches.

2. Provide a budget narrative discussing the linkage between budget expenditures and program elements.
HASS ERC GRANT PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

Before submitting your HASS ERC Internal Grant Program proposal, please review the following checklist to ensure that all elements of a successful proposal are included.

Strategic Opportunities and Current Program Achievements

___ Outline the strategic opportunities presented by the status of the receiving unit’s development, college, and university plans, and external funding opportunities and describe how the proposed ERC grant would build capacity and sustainability for high-impact research, scholarship, and creative work?

___ Outline recent successes in major awards or grants (e.g., listing of grants, awards, or similar successes by faculty or groups related to the ERC grant proposal area) and the prospects for success by faculty without a history of grant success?

___ Identify major funding sources or programs to be targeted for new proposals (e.g., NSF, NIH, NEH, specific foundations, or funding programs; references to specific programs are expected)?

___ Discuss preliminary steps taken to assure probable success with an ERC grant (e.g., seed funding, prior external grant successes, discussions with program officers, etc.)?

___ Discuss any significant opportunities or processes, such as recommendations through external validation, program reviews or external advisory board reports, which suggest that this initiative is timely and likely to succeed?

Major Initiatives in the Proposed ERC

___ Identify the core group of faculty who will lead the effort to acquire major external funding or awards (e.g., those faculty with prior funding success and who are prepared to devote time to mentoring faculty who are not currently funded)?

___ Describe the specific actions proposed by the department, program, or unit to encourage the development of successful external funding or award proposals (e.g., inclusion of grants/awards as a part of departmental standards for personnel evaluations; seed funding support for proposed projects; commitments of graduate assistant time to projects; commitments of staff time to proposal development)?

___ Describe the proposed support that would be provided by the college (or group of colleges for interdisciplinary programs) to encourage successful external funding of award proposals (e.g., inclusion of major proposals, grants, and awards in personnel evaluations and departmental head evaluations; seed funding; staff support)?

Description of Plan

___ Discuss implications for the unit’s growth and development with receipt of the ERC award?

___ Outline how the funds will be used to enhance the research capacity of the department, program, or academic unit (e.g., seed funding program; consultants; workshops; etc.)?

___ Describe the processes to be used to advance discussion and engagement of faculty with the ERC grant in the department, program, or academic unit (e.g., mentoring processes; professional development plans; etc.)?

___ Discuss implications for the unit’s undergraduate and graduate programs?

___ Discuss how the proposed plans will be monitored and assessed to assure success?

Description of the Budget

___ Specify budget categories, proposed expenditures and funding sources, including internal matches?

___ Provide a budget narrative discussing the linkage between budget expenditures and program elements?