

CRF & ISSR Scholars Info-session: 12/04/20

TL,DW!

Presentation Highlights: ([Zoom video link here](#))

1. **When is the right time in my career for applying for a Scholars Program? When you can say yes to most of these questions!**
 - a. Do you have adequate pilot data and publications?
 - b. Do you have facilities, resources and expertise to carry out the project?
 - c. Have you identified a good funder/match?
 - d. Have you taken advantage of internal seed grants and mentoring on-ramps
2. **How do I know which program is right for me?**
 - a. Family for [CRF Scholars \(Center for Research on Families\)](#)
 - b. Social science theory for [ISSR Scholars \(Institute for Social Science Research\)](#)
 - c. Talk to us ([Krista Harper](#) for ISSR, and [Lisa Harvey](#) or [Gisele Litalien](#) for CRF)
 - d. Review the materials
3. **Is there a required size or scale for “major” research proposal?**
 - a. No set dollar range – but look at senior scholar grants at NSF, NIH for a sense of scale
4. **Are there preferred methodologies/approaches?**
 - a. No, just be specific and accessible to a multidisciplinary panel of reviewers
 - b. Get as granular as you can about site/sample, data collection methods, data analysis procedures
 - c. Persuade the panel of the feasibility and importance of the project
5. **What’s the most valuable thing I can do to raise my odds of success?**
 - a. Start soon (Deadline January 29!)
 - b. Get feedback

Participant Questions:

About the Programs:

Does your definition of “interdisciplinary” extend beyond social sciences?

Yes! Applications can very successfully draw across the natural sciences, humanities and the arts, social sciences and engineering.

Does it matter if the proposed research in a setting outside of the United States?

Not in the least! Both programs encourage applications for domestic and international work, and will help Scholars to develop research designs and budgets that work for your setting.

Will junior faculty be disadvantaged?

NO! This is a program for you, and we take into account the stage you are at as we review applications. ISSR likes to have a mix, to facilitate mutual mentoring. Similarly, funding agencies take career stage into account when reviewing proposals.

Do the programs facilitate opportunities to meet with Program Officers from foundations/funders?

Such meetings can be arranged per the interest of the Scholar cohort. ISSR does strategically bring Program Officers to UMass as part of its regular programming, and both programs support Scholars in

strategizing how to meet POs – including identifying, preparing, and maintaining effective communication.

Application Tips

Can you apply for both programs in different years?

Yes, you can apply for both programs, either in the same year, or sequentially. You can be a scholar more than once in CRF.

What if you're not sure yet of the funder?

Most Scholars target their main grant proposal for a federal science agency, and many could do either NIH v NSF. It's natural to be unsure which is best, but best to commit to one at the outset, because the requirements are significantly different for each. Your application can also identify alternative funders if there is a good fit with your primary pitch.

What kind of track record (pilot data/publications/grants) do you need to be a competitive candidate?

The Scholars Programs themselves are open to candidates at a range of career stages, and the strongest applications are those that demonstrate a strong capacity to create and carry out a significant research project. The need for pilot data varies greatly on where you are seeking funding – for example, NIH R21 and K01 grants need some level of pilot data, and all proposals are greatly strengthened by inclusion of pilot data. Reach out to people in your field who know what you'd need in order to apply. If you don't have pilot data now, a plan for how you would get it as part of your Scholar year.

What dollar range constitutes a “major grant” for these Programs?

It will vary somewhat, but consider this as an opportunity to scale up your research, in ways that exceed what is available internally at UMass. Look at what senior scholar grant opportunities are in your discipline's main federal funding agencies, or in interdisciplinary programs that are a good fit for your research agenda. The NSF Career Grant grants are important for the earlier stage of your careers. [Marco Manoc in the Foundations Relations office](#) sends weekly opportunity announcement, and you can find his recommendations on ISSR's Funding Fridays page.

Proposal Nuts and Bolts:

Are images allowed, and if so, are they part of the 2-3 page limit for application length?

Yes, conceptual models, diagrams, graphs and tables can be great ways to communication tools, but they should be integrated in your 2-3 page proposal. This is an opportunity to practice getting your arguments honed into a set page limit!

Do you have sample applications we can review?

We do not share these materials ourselves, but we encourage you to reach out to former scholars ([CRF](#) and [ISSR](#)), who have been generous in sharing their application materials in the past. Don't be shy – this community-building is a key strength of the Scholars programs!

If you are applying to both programs, should you declare a preference?

If you know you have a preference, go ahead and apply to that program. If you are open to either, we do try to create the best mix of scholars in each cohort, and so will look for those opportunities among applicants to both programs.