

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS – PRESIDENT’S OFFICE
Program Announcement
2008 Science & Technology Initiatives Fund

Introduction

The University of Massachusetts (UMass) President’s Office is pleased to announce the 2008 Science and Technology (S&T) Initiatives Fund. This is the fifth annual competition, and funding for this year is expected to be \$1.175 million.

The fund represents the Office’s continued commitment to advancing UMass’s interests as the Commonwealth’s public research university and to ensuring that the University contributes significantly to social and economic development in Massachusetts. It also directly responds to the Trustees’ strategic priority on strengthening the University’s research enterprise and growing its portfolio substantially.

Purposes and Allowable Uses of Funds

The S&T Initiatives Fund is a tool to catalyze research collaborations among UMass campuses with other partners to create impact at many levels. It will provide resources to outstanding faculty working in areas of demonstrated campus commitment and priority. It will also enable growth of networks for the purpose of enhancing UMass’s contribution to the Commonwealth’s economy.

The intent of the program is to provide seed funding to researchers to help position them for larger and longer-term investment, such as major grants from federal, state and private sponsors. It is also a goal of the program to help create partnerships with industry that leverage UMass faculty effort and expertise to make Massachusetts companies, industries and clusters more competitive and robust.

It is expected that over time, the portfolio of projects supported by the fund will attract significant new investment to the University. This includes not only sponsored research awards, but also for funds for infrastructure development, revenues from industry-related services and philanthropy.

Resources from the fund may specifically be used to support faculty release time, sabbaticals, travel, hiring of project staff or consultants, and other such expenses associated with developing major new S&T initiatives. These funds are not of the scale nor intended to be used as direct cash match for grant programs (although they may contribute to cost-sharing). They are also not intended to support technology development (e.g., prototyping, proof-of-concept activities). Both the Office of Commercial Ventures and Intellectual Property (CVIP) and the Mass Technology Transfer Center (MTTC) operate modest but growing “gap” funds to which UMass faculty can apply for this type of assistance.

It is anticipated that S&T awards will be made in the \$50,000 - \$250,000 range, but the President's Office reserves the right to be flexible in this regard. The project period is typically twelve months, starting at the beginning of the University's fiscal year (July 1). Funds are disbursed in two equal shares at the beginning (July 1) and end (June 30) of the project period. An interim project report is requested in mid-January and a final report in mid-June.

Criteria for Awards

The criteria for awarding funds from the S&T fund include:

- **Intellectual Merit**: Only high-quality science and technology projects will be considered for funding;
- **Growth Opportunity**: Potential for leveraging substantial outside funding from federal, state, industry and other sources is expected;
- **Institutional Partnerships**: Collaboration with other Massachusetts academic and research institutions is highly valued, especially partnerships among UMass campuses;
- **Economic Impact**: Projects should demonstrate their ability to support economic growth in Massachusetts, through partnerships with individual companies or regional/statewide industry associations, or through other mechanisms;
- **Project Leadership**: The presence of strong project leadership by both faculty and administrative staff (as appropriate, including the use of external consultants) is considered crucial for success; and
- **Campus Commitment**: The endorsement of the Chancellor(s) and evidence of campus commitment to the proposed initiative (such as financial support) is essential.

Application and Review Process

The goal of the President's Office is to keep the process simple and non-bureaucratic. The timeline is as follows:

- Wed., March 12: Concept Papers due to President's Office (submitted via campus research offices)
- Wed., April 1: Deadline for feedback to investigators and campus officials
- Fri., April 30: Proposals due to President's Office (submitted via campus research offices)
- Fri., June 27: Deadline for announcement of decisions

Guidance for Concept Papers

Concept papers should:

- Be no more than two (2) pages in length;
- Outline the thrust of the project and how it will achieve the goals of the fund;
- Identify project leadership and estimated cost;
- Describe the external funding opportunities to be pursued and the expected nature of collaborations (on a preliminary basis if necessary); and

- Demonstrate the endorsement of the Chancellor. Submission via campus research offices will be presumed to indicate approval of the Chancellor. For multi-campus proposals, evidence of approval of each campus research office is needed.

Concept papers will be reviewed by the Vice President for Economic Development and the Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and International Relations, and their staffs, in consultation with campus research offices. Applicants who submit the strongest concept papers will be asked to submit full proposals. In some cases, where opportunities for synergy exist, proposers from two or more campuses may be advised to combine their ideas into a single proposal.

Guidance for Full Proposals

Full proposals should:

- Be no more than five (5) pages in length;
- Elaborate on the intellectual focus presented in the concept paper and provide a more thorough project description, including anticipated performance milestones and success measures;
- Specifically address how the project will meet the selection criteria for the fund;
- Identify and address key administrative and managerial challenges to the project;
- Provide a budget for the proposed use of funds; and
- Demonstrate the endorsement of the Chancellor. Submission via campus research offices will be presumed to indicate approval of the Chancellor. For multi-campus proposals, evidence of approval of each campus research office is needed.

Proposals will again be reviewed by the two Vice Presidents and their staffs, with input from the campus research offices. The President's Office staff will also actively consult with relevant government (e.g., the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative and the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center) and industry (e.g., the various technology councils) stakeholders. Proposers will likely be invited to meet in person with staff as part of the review process. The monthly President's Council meetings will be used to provide updates to and solicit input from the Chancellors. Staff will make funding recommendations to the President, who has final decision-making authority.

Proposal Submission and For Further Information

All materials should be sent via campus research offices to Jeff Brancato, Associate Vice President for Economic Development, UMass President's Office. For additional information, he can be contacted at (617) 287-7223 or jbrancato@umassp.edu.