

## New Funding Opportunity

### RFP for Pilot Interdisciplinary Research Projects from The Institute for Integrative Genome Biology

The Institute for Integrative Genome Biology (IIGB) solicits proposals for pilot studies that will enhance its mission of promoting interdisciplinary research with worldwide applications.

- 1. Introduction.** A key aspect of IIGB's mission is to foster and support interdisciplinary collaborations among researchers involved in developing novel approaches to solving complex biological problems. We realize that there are few, if any, available sources of funding to perform crucial, early stage experiments that clearly demonstrate the viability and reward of such collaborative approaches to grant reviewers. In addition, early stage development funding for *new* innovations with commercial potential is scarce. Pilot funding is needed to develop promising technologies that can subsequently enable private sector development by licensing or by the establishment of start-up companies. To address these limitations, IIGB has established a new funding mechanism through which investigators can apply for limited project support. The desired outcome of the funded projects is for them to become competitive in applications for multidisciplinary, multi-investigator grants from NIH, NSF, USDA, DOE and other federal agencies and/or explore the translational development of potentially commercial projects (spin off companies).
- 2. Eligible areas of research.** Any group of at least two IIGB members (see <http://www.genomics.ucr.edu/> for information on joint membership in IIGB), with at least one having a proven track record of extramural support, who are interested in addressing a biologically important question are eligible to apply. At least one investigator shall have background and training in biology, and at least one investigator shall be from a different discipline. Of particular interest to IIGB are:

  - Collaborations between/among researchers with a background in biology and those from areas not directly related to biology, which may result in new approaches to complex biological problems. For example, individuals working in mathematics, physics, biophysics, bioengineering, engineering, system sciences, social sciences and informatics are especially

encouraged to find partners in the biological sciences with whom to develop new and novel methodological and experimental approaches. The disciplines listed are only examples, and individuals in other disciplines who may have new ideas that can be applied in biology are also encouraged to submit a proposal.

- Researchers with diverse scientific perspectives, such as basic researchers collaborating with more applied researchers. Examples include, but are not limited to, basic plant biologists teaming up with extension service scientists who work on problems in crop production with farmers or with scientists creatively addressing climate change; or basic researchers partnering with clinicians.

**3. Application mechanism.** Interested researchers who fulfill the above criteria are strongly encouraged to apply for funding. Potential applicants who have questions on whether they or their proposed experiments meet the criteria are welcome to contact Natasha Raikhel, Director of IIGB, at [nraikhel@ucr.edu](mailto:nraikhel@ucr.edu). Because a high number of competitive proposals are anticipated, no more than one proposal to a specific faculty member will be funded. Only new and innovative projects will be considered. These funds are not intended to support the continuation of any existing research project but to stimulate novel and interdisciplinary work. The proposal should contain the following:

- Project description (of no more than 3 pages, in 10-point font or larger), which should include specific aims, background, and experimental plan. A description of potential sources of future funding and possible commercial applications should be included.
- Bibliography of no more than 2 pages (not counted in 3-page project description limit)
- Project period, with beginning and end dates shown (one year maximum).
- Budget with justification for no more than \$50,000 (the budget and justification will not be counted in the 3-page project description. Use of funds is restricted to personnel expenses (salary and benefits) and supplies.
- Identification of the lead principal investigator and *curriculum vitae* for each proposed faculty member in the format used for NIH or NSF grants and not to exceed --2 pages for each faculty member.

- Proposals that do not strictly adhere to the above specifications will be returned and not considered in this round of the competition.

In addition to the proposal, please submit the names and contact information of five potential reviewers: two UCR faculty members and three external researchers. The criteria to be used for identifying reviewers include appropriate expertise without conflicts of interest with any of the applicants. The following are considered to be conflicts of interest: previous mentors or mentees, collaborators or co-authors on papers or grants within past 5 years, personal friends, and persons who would benefit financially from this proposal being funded.

**4. Evaluation criteria.** As the proposal is being prepared, keep the following in mind:

- Based on previous experience, most proposals are expected to contain projects with very high quality science, thus one criterion given a high weight by reviewers trying to distinguish proposals with equally sound science will be **the multi- and inter-disciplinary nature** of the proposed work, the combination of basic and translational science, and the possibility of translating the innovation to an application within a reasonable timeframe.
- The review panel will include an odd number of scientists with diverse backgrounds. It will therefore be important to write the proposal in a manner that the significance, experimental approach and expected outcomes will be understandable to a broad subset of scientists. **Proposals that are written only for the expert in the particular fields represented will likely not be successful.**
- A second equally important criterion will be **the potential for opening up new avenues of discovery and for being competitive for additional funding and /or commercialization (spin off company) within a reasonable timeframe.**

Please be sure to clearly address these criteria where applicable in the proposal. It will also be crucial to clearly indicate what the contributions will be for each of the faculty members submitting the proposal. One purpose here is seek true collaborations across disciplines at UCR.

5. **Proposal due date.** The proposal is due at 5:00 pm Monday, July 2, 2007, and should be submitted in electronic format to the e-mail address below.
6. **Funds available.** IIGB intends to fund 2-3 projects of up to \$50,000 dollars each. Funding can start as early as October 1, 2007.
7. **Review mechanism.** An odd numbered review committee, established by the Director, will be set up to assess the quality of all the proposals. The final decision on funding will be made by the Director. Reviews from experts internal and external to the University will also be sought.
8. A progress or final report will be submitted to the IIGB Director within two months of the end of the project. The report will detail the progress made towards the goals of the project and will list any publications arising from it and any external grants that have been submitted and/or awarded as a result of it. A full accounting of how funds were spent will also be required at the end of the project.

Proposals are due electronically no later than 5:00 pm Monday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007 to:

Guille Baca: [guilleb@ucr.edu](mailto:guilleb@ucr.edu).