The Commons
Interdisciplinary Research Initiative
in
Nature and Culture

Call for Seed-Grant Research Proposals 2012

Full Proposal Submission deadline: **March 30, 2012**

Awards announced: **April 16, 2012**
Purpose:
The Commons at the University of Kansas supports research endeavors that bring together the sciences, arts, and humanities to explore the reciprocal relationship between natural and cultural systems. In so doing, the Commons intends to be a catalyst for bold innovation, unconventional thinking and unexpected discoveries (www.thecommons.ku.edu).

The Commons Interdisciplinary Research Initiative in Nature and Culture is a KU-wide, competitive seed-grant program to nurture and develop interdisciplinary, collaborative research ideas at the conceptual stage. The Commons seed grant program targets *concepts and their interdisciplinary synthesis, not the generation of preliminary data*. Seed grant activities may include exploratory research workshops, studios, colloquia, symposia, scholarly travel and visits, and other activities that advance interdisciplinary research ideas, collaborations and extramural proposals. Awards do not pay for individuals to attend conferences. Proposals must equally integrate methods and ideas from the three areas represented by The Commons: sciences, arts, and humanities. Research partnerships across KU units and between KU and other universities and institutions are strongly encouraged. Awards are co-sponsored by Research and Graduate Studies and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

*The outcome of a seed grant should be the development and submission of a substantive research grant proposal to a federal agency, foundation or other funding entity.*

Awards:

*Up to $40,000 is available for one or more awards.* Allowable costs include workshops, travel, scholarly visits and other activities that advance interdisciplinary research ideas, partnerships and extramural research proposals. Expenditures for salaries, equipment, data collection, and faculty salaries are not allowed. Matching funds will increase a proposal’s competitiveness. *All funds must be spent by April 1, 2013, at which time a final report of activities and list of applications submitted or intended for submission is required.*

Project activities:
The Commons will make its spaces and services available for all funded KU-based activities, e.g., workshops, which are expected to occur in The Commons whenever possible. The Commons will work with awardees to publicize funded activities, if appropriate. Awardees will inform The Commons of project activities and extramural proposals submitted, funded or declined.

Proposals:
Please follow these guidelines in preparing your full proposals in electronic format (Word or pdf) and include the components described below. Applicants may also provide
supporting “work samples” in another medium, including video (not to exceed 4 minutes) and stills (maximum of 20 images).

**Project Cover Page**
- title of the project;
- name(s) and affiliations of investigator(s);
- project dates;
- the amount requested and matching funds and source(s), if any;
- the agency, foundation or other entities to which the full extramural proposal will be submitted.

**Project Abstract (maximum: 200 words, 12 point type)**
Summarize the research project and its intellectual rationale, interdisciplinary nature, scope and impact.

**Project Description (maximum: 4 pages, double-spaced 12 point type)**
Describe the research project, addressing the following issues:
1. **Challenge/Purpose:** the need for the project, the question(s) being addressed, their conceptual bases, and why they require an interdisciplinary approach.
2. **Significance:** how the seed grant activity will foster
   - interdisciplinary partnerships and synthesis of concepts and methods from the sciences, arts, and humanities, and
   - the development of an extramural grant proposal
3. **Urgency:** if applicable, the urgency or special opportunity of the proposed research.
4. **Scope:** the scope of the project activity and how it fits the conceptual basis and interdisciplinary nature of the inquiry.
5. **Plan:** the tasks, methods, schedule and milestones for the seed grant activities, the collaborating units or institutions, and the roles and special contributions of project personnel.
6. **Logistics:** the logistical needs of the seed grant activities.

**Budget & Budget Justification (1 page, 12 point type)]**
Itemize and explain the costs of the proposed seed project activities and matching funds, if any. Salary support for faculty, data collection, or the purchase of equipment are not allowed.

**Sources Cited** (e.g., literature, exhibitions, performances)

**Appendices**
Include a bio sketch or abbreviated curriculum vitae (no more than 2 pages in length per person) of project participants.
Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Intellectual Merit and Broader Impact

• **Strength of the research problem or exploration.** Does the research/exploration have the potential for significant discoveries and advances in knowledge?

• **Appropriateness of proposed activity.** Will the proposed seed-grant activity help develop the ideas and partnerships to address the research problem?

• **Interdisciplinary strength.**
  - **Degree of interdisciplinarity.** Does the research/exploration encompass significant interdisciplinarity, i.e., does it integrate disciplines from the sciences, arts and humanities? Projects should integrate disciplines from all three areas.
  - **Appropriateness of interdisciplinary concepts.** How well do the interdisciplinary concepts and areas fit the research problem?
  - **Integration of interdisciplinary concepts.** Will the activities lead to the development of conceptual advances that serve to further integrate the sciences, arts, and humanities?

• **Strength and capability of personnel.** Do the personnel fit the project?

• **Potential for extramural research proposal.** Will the proposed activity result in the development of a strong extramural research proposal to a federal agency, foundation or other funding entity?

Administration:

All KU tenure-track faculty and academic equivalents are eligible and encouraged to apply to The Commons Interdisciplinary Research Initiative in Nature and Culture.

Proposals for the 2012 round are due **March 30, 2012** with funding decisions announced **April 16, 2012**.

All seed grant proposals should be submitted in electronic format (Word doc or pdf file) to The Commons Coordinator (thecommons@ku.edu). An external panel review the proposals and make funding recommendations.
Past Grant Recipients

2010-11

Paul Atchley, Chris Depcik, and Gregory Thomas, SmartGrid/SmartHome/SmartCar: The New American Dream
Ford Ballantyne, The Texture of Desert Landscapes: Visualizing Interactions Between Humans and Their Environments
Mary Dusenbury, The Power of Color in Early and Medieval East Asia

2009-10

Glenn Adams, The Socio-Ecological Foundations of Intimacy
Chris Brown, Putting Global Commodity Chains in their Place: a KU Mongolia Initiative to Mitigate the Socio-Cultural and Environmental Effects of Mining
Michael Crawford, Why do we migrate? Interdisciplinary Exploration of Human Migration

Inquiries / Further Information

The Commons Steering Committee

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