Preparing your Research for an Extramural Proposal

The Institute for Society, Culture, and Environment (ISCE), a Virginia Tech investment institute, is offering an opportunity for a cohort of faculty members in the social sciences who are new to preparing proposals for extramural funding or who have had limited success in the role of PI. The primary goal of this program is to support faculty whose research is likely to lead to external funding. Faculty selected for the program will receive funding to support their preliminary research activities and mentoring to prepare a proposal to be submitted no later than August 2023.

Program: This two-semester, structured program consists of didactic and interactive sessions where cohort members learn (a) the grantsmanship process, how to write a compelling narrative, and how to develop a budget; and (b) develop a competitive grant proposal to be submitted to a federal or state agency or private foundation. Anticipated fall activities include 1-2 sessions per month to review funders’ requirements and develop a compelling 1–2-page concept paper to communicate ideas to a program officer. In the spring semester, monthly sessions of approximately 2-3 hours each will consist of writing, reviewing, critiquing, and discussing cohort member proposals. Cohort members are expected to spend time outside of sessions on tailored assignments (fall) and their proposals and brief reviews of their peers’ proposals (spring). The ISCE leadership team will provide individually tailored mentorship throughout.

Eligibility: Faculty from any department/program across Virginia Tech's campuses whose research addresses significant societal concerns that impact people and places through a social sciences lens are eligible to apply. This program gives priority to faculty in a tenure/tenure-track position at the assistant or associate level and to research faculty (research scientist and assistant/associate professor level) embedded within departments/centers seeking significant external funding. Proposals for the development of student education/training programs, or individual fellowships are not support by this program.

Requirements: Award recipients must commit to attending scheduled meetings, contacting program officers as appropriate, providing feedback on proposal ideas and drafts of cohort members, and submitting a grant proposal by August 2023 for which they will serve as PI. In addition, award recipients will provide ISCE with an annual report detailing activities leading up to the submission of the proposal as well as publications, presentations, and any other grant submissions for three years after completion of the program.

Timeline: The deadline for applications is September 12, 2022. A single pdf file of the application [last name_ISCE_PREP.pdf] should be emailed to Yancey Crawford (yanceyc3@vt.edu). Notification of awards will be made by the beginning of October 2022. The funds must be spent by June 2023 in accordance with university guidelines.

Review Criteria: A committee consisting of the ISCE leadership team and affiliated faculty with diverse expertise in different focus areas will review the proposals. The review criteria will include the scientific merit, impact and feasibility of the proposed idea, relevance to ISCE’s mission and thematic areas, and documentation of a well-thought plan for submission of an extramural grant. Applicants who are past recipients of ISCE funding will also be evaluated on outcomes of previous funding.
Awards: ISCE anticipates making up to 8 awards of approximately $7,500 per award. Awardees will
- Receive tailored mentoring from ISCE leadership;
- Participate in grant writing seminars that will include comprehensive instruction on the
details of successful proposal development and resources of the University that support
proposal submission;
- Participate in working sessions with other cohort members to share progress and obtain
feedback for continuous improvement; and
- Have access to individual and group consultation as needed.

Questions: Contact Yancey Crawford (yanceyc3@vt.edu) or Isabel Bradburn (isbrad@vt.edu)

Application Guidelines

[Format: single spaced; 12-point font; 1-inch margins]

Cover Page (1 page): Include name, rank, department, and college, brief statement of why you
are interested in being a part of the PREP program, project title and a brief project summary (~150
words): The summary will be used to announce the awards and will be published on the ISCE
website.

Project description (2 pages): Describe the significance of your proposed research, rationale
and research question or hypothesis to be tested, sample and data collection methods,
anticipated outcomes, and any other relevant information. If not within a traditional social science
discipline or department, be sure to explain how your work would be considered within a social
science paradigm.

Plan for submission of an extramural proposal by August 2023 (1 page max): Briefly
describe your planned timeline leading to the submission of an extramural research proposal.
Identify the potential funding agency or RFA (if available) for your planned proposal submission,
who will comprise your research team, and the level of funding you anticipate requesting.

Budget and Justification (PREP Budget Form required): Applicants may request funds for the
following expenses related to their proposed research and application to an external funding
agency:
- Student wages
- Support for pilot/feasibility study (e.g., travel for data collection, printing, measures)
- Course buy-out (Spring 2023 only; requires department pre-approval) OR first summer
  session stipend (up to $5,000; eligible only if proposal submission is due in June-Aug
  2023)
- Other (must specify)

Funds may not be used for activities typically supported by departments and colleges (e.g.,
conference travel, standard equipment and software) or graduate student research.

BioSketch (2 pages max): include brief experience (funded or not) in preparing grant
proposals and list of key publications relevant to proposal idea.