Transdisciplinary Communities: Addressing Complex Problems that Impact the Human Condition

The Destination Areas (DAs) and VT's Investment Institutes are committed to advancing the Beyond Boundaries vision. In order to facilitate transdisciplinary research efforts that contribute to the solution of complex problems, **public involvement as well as transfer of knowledge to the public sector is a critical component.** To this end, this grant initiative provides seed funding for research proposals that are designed around the idea that societal impact as well as societal involvement are important considerations when addressing problems that impact the human condition. The DAs in conjunction with the Institutes, request applications to foster collaborative efforts that will enhance the competitiveness for external support by facilitating academic-community partnerships (e.g., industry, non-profits, K12) that have the potential for having an impact beyond academia, leading to broader impacts. *It is important that the requests provide sufficient rationale and evidence for the strong probability that the teams will be able to apply for external funding in the near future as a stand-alone project or embedded into a larger grant effort.* **Applicants are strongly encouraged to work with existing partners and can consult the Office of the Vice Provost for Learning Systems Innovation and Effectiveness to identify resources on campus to support this work (**LSIE@vt.edu**).** Teams must be made up of both *junior and senior faculty member partnerships, that are comprised of DA representation (e.g., DA hires, stakeholder committee members, engaged faculty).*

Requests are due by October 15, 2019. *Email submissions to LSIE@vt.edu*

Proposal Requirements: All requests for research funding will be evaluated based on the following:

1. Proposals **must address how this seed funding will facilitate public involvement** (e.g., community engagement, partnerships with external partners, citizen science initiatives, agencies, organizations, schools, businesses, philanthropic groups) **in the identification and solution of complex problems that fall into one of the five areas currently being addressed by DAs and Institutes**: https://www.provost.vt.edu/destination_areas/solutions_to_complex_problems.html
2. The proposal **should contribute to meaningful advancements in at least two of the nine DA areas as it relates addressing complex problems that impact the human condition**: https://www.provost.vt.edu/destination-areas.html
3. Transdisciplinary Collaboration: Proposals for funding should address the proposed team/network and the team's collaborative approach.
4. External Funding Potential: The potential ROI for the project in the form of subsequent external funding is critical. Applicants should identify clear plans to apply for external funding based on the proposal work and explain why this funding is crucial to this effort (e.g., why academic-community/industry partnerships are important, why this funding will help address an unmet need as it relates to addressing the human condition).
5. Level and Availability of Funding: The maximum amount of an award will be $20,000, and funds need to be spent by June 30, 2020. Feasibility, scope, and magnitude of the project relative to the request will all be taken into consideration by the review committee. The budget should be realistic, appropriate, and well justified.

Evaluation Process: Proposals will be evaluated by a peer review committee comprised of stakeholders from the DAs. Funding decisions will be communicated via email. The *anticipated* notification deadline is November 15, 2019.

Partnership Expectations: If a request for funding is approved, it is expected that:
• Grantees must provide a progress report at the end of the 7-month funding period. Progress reports must be concise, written for a general audience, and be suitable for publicizing the efforts of the DAs. Reports may be disseminated on university websites and used for communicating the work of transdisciplinary scholarship at Virginia Tech.
• Grantees agree to participate in a university-wide reception/small symposium at the end of the academic year to build transdisciplinary communities.
• Grantees must acknowledge support from the DAs and Institutes in resulting publications.

SUBMISSION AND APPLICATION: *Applications must include:*
A. Introduction
• **Title** of proposal
• **Collaborators:** Provide a list of all team members (PI, faculty, staff, and students); include their affiliation (college and department), their research project role and how their responsibilities will contribute to success. Unique expertise among investigators as it relates to Broader Impacts should be identified.
• **Impact:** How will this project align and advance current areas of focus (i.e., proposal requirements #1 &2) as it relates to addressing complex problems that impact the human condition (e.g., broader impacts)? (~500 words)
• **Abstract.** Provide a brief lay description of the proposed project and how it will lead to significant external funding that will contribute to addressing the identified problem. Clearly identify potential public/external partners/audiences/stakeholders that will be engaged to advance broader impacts. (up to 250 words)
• **Innovation:** What is novel and innovative about the proposed project? How will this work advance and contribute to solutions of complex problems that impact the human condition? (~300words)
B. Project Narrative (3-page limit, single spaced, 11 pt. font, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins)
• **Objectives:** Describe the scope of the project. Include a clear statement of the specific objectives/aims, including the how this project will address complex problems that impact the human condition.
• **Interdisciplinary Team/Network:** Discuss unique aspects of the team/network. Address how it might enhance our ability to solve complex problems and lead to broader impacts.
• **Rationale and Significance:** What is the significance of the project and/or overarching line of investigation? How will the requested support position the team to be more competitive for significant extramural funding?
• **Outcomes:** Provide a detailed description of the outcomes expected from the project (e.g., extramural funding proposals, publications, underserved populations reached, communities involved, external stakeholders engaged). How will this project advance broader impacts at VT and help reach DA goals to raise the profile of VT while solving complex problems through a transdisciplinary approach? How will the team evaluate and assess intended broader impacts of their project? What is the specific plan to translate results of the proposed work to applications for significant extramural funding, including agencies and funding mechanisms?
The following information and Sections C "Budget Summary" and D. "Budget Narrative" are <u>not</u> included in the three-page limit, but should be formatted using single space, 11 pt. font, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins.
• **References**
• **Timeline:** Include a table or Gantt chart of anticipated key milestones or outcomes and associated deadlines.
C. Budget Summary and Budget Justification (1page limit) **– Funds will need to be spent by June 30, 2020.**
Matching support, if applicable should be identified.