The College of Social Science Faculty Initiatives Fund
Request for Proposals

The College of Social Science invites applications for competitive awards under the Faculty Initiatives Fund (FIF). The FIF was established by Dr. Gwen Andrew, Professor Emeritus and Dean Emeritus of the College of Social Science with the support of the College's faculty, staff, friends and alumni. The FIF is limited to faculty members who hold primary appointments (51% or more) in the College of Social Science and who have not received FIF funding during the past three years. The endowment recognizes and encourages the innovative and creative work of College faculty members.

The FIF promotes the production and dissemination of knowledge by supporting faculty research initiatives, development of new outreach and engagement efforts, and the publication of "pioneering" works that otherwise would not find outlets among commercial publishers. Applications that represent pilot activities leading to proposals for external funding are particularly encouraged. During recent award cycles, the College has funded 5-6 applicants. A minimum match of $1,000 from the applicant's unit is required. The average award in recent years has been $6,000.

Applications for the FY 2021-22 awards are due in the Dean's Office no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, March 1, 2021. Proposals are limited to two pages (single-spaced, 11-point Times Roman font, one-inch margins. References, CV, detailed budget, and budget justification should be included as appendixes), and must clearly articulate methods, offer a concise statement of expected outcomes, and justify the use of this particular funding mechanism. A brief letter from the unit chair/director with a commitment for the required matching funds must accompany each application. Applications must be submitted via email as a single PDF file by 5:00 p.m., March 1st to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies at SSC.researchdean@msu.edu. All proposals will be evaluated using processes and criteria shown on p. 2 of this RFP.

Proposals will be reviewed by members of the College Research Committee and awardees will be notified by Friday, April 30, 2021. All award decisions are final.

Instructions for accessing funds will be provided at the time of award notification. Funds may be used for expenses related to the project as submitted, consistent with University Policy and Procedures, but may not be used for faculty salaries or conference travel and expenses. All equipment requests must be justified and directly related to the proposed research activities. Any equipment valued at $500 or more purchased from these funds becomes the property of the University. A brief report is required within 12 months of the award date describing outcomes and plans for follow-up.
**Review Questions**

**I. QUALITY AND TECHNICAL MERIT**
   a. Does the proposal demonstrate an awareness of the state of current research?
   b. Does the proposal describe a sound methodology, analytic or technical approach?
   c. How feasible is the proposed project?
   d. Does the proposal suggest an innovation and creative approach to address a problem?

**II. IMPACT OF THE PROJECT**
   a. Does the proposed work hold potential for the advancement of science?
   b. Is the proposed work relevant to policy and practice?
   c. Is this project likely to attract additional sponsored activities?

**III. CAPABILITIES, DEMONSTRATED PRODUCTIVITY, AND EXPERIENCE OF APPLICANTS**
   a. Does the PI demonstrate the ability to complete the proposed effort?
   b. Does the applicant demonstrate a record of successful past performance?

**IV. BUDGET CONSIDERATION**
   a. Is the FIF an appropriate mechanism to advance this work?
   b. Are the budgeted project costs appropriate for the level of effort?

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**Scoring Table for FIF Research Grants (adopted from NIH guidelines)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Impact/Priority Score</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Additional Guidance on Strengths/Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
<td>Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Very strong with only some minor weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Strong but with numerous minor weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong but with at least one moderate weakness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Some strengths but with at least one major weakness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>A few strengths and a few major weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Definitions**

- Minor: easily addressable weakness that does not substantially lessen the impact of the project
- Moderate: weakness that lessens the impact of the project
- Major: weakness that severely limits the impact of the project