

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

UTEP Interdisciplinary Research and Education Program (IDRE) Part I. Space Allocations in the New Interdisciplinary Research Building (IDRB) Part II. Seed Grants for IDRE Teams

Introduction

UTEP's Interdisciplinary Research Building (IDRB) is nearing completion. The building will provide 150,000 ft² of collaborative research space, including core facilities, interdisciplinary research suites designed to accommodate interactive research teams, large shared space laboratories (both wet and dry), and specialized spaces, such as a state of the art visualization lab, and human subjects research spaces. This new research building, planned around flexible, shared spaces, is intended to support collaborative research and other scholarly activity that integrates multiple disciplines.

We face several opportunities to leverage the building to help us meet our full potential:

- In the next ten years, we aim to double our research expenditures to over \$200 million/yr. One way to fuel this kind of significant growth is through large interdisciplinary research grants. The IDRB has the potential to be an important asset in meeting this goal.
- The IDRB will serve as a “hub” for convergence, a common place for scholars from all disciplines across our campus to converge, figuratively and literally, for problem solving or engaging in creative endeavors.
- Using the building to cluster expertise on important topics is expected to enhance not only the ability to garner grant funds but also the perceived public value of the building and its impact.

With these goals in mind, this document presents a process for space allocation in the new building and a call for proposals as a first step in that process, plus a request for proposals for seed grants to support interdisciplinary team activities (not necessarily in the new building). The criteria and instructions for applying for space allocations and grants are provided herein. This initial RFP should be considered a “first step” in a process, a learning process for how to support teams through space allocations and small scale funding. This process will not be static but dynamic over the next several months/years, and intended for participation from a wide array of disciplines. **The deadline for receipt of applications is 5:00 pm MST, Friday, February 28, 2020.** Detailed instructions and other relevant information follow. For questions or assistance, contact one of the Interim Staff:

Bill Hargrove, Director, whargrove@utep.edu

Nate Robinson, Asst. VP for Research, nvrobinson@utep.edu

Andrea Tirres, Associate Director, altirres2@utep.edu

We are hosting two town hall meetings on Friday, January 24, to answer questions about the building, the spaces, and the proposal process: Session 1. 9:00 -11:00 am, Acacia Room, UTEP Union; and Session 2. 3:00 – 5:00 pm, Acacia Room, UTEP Union. Each town hall will have the same agenda, beginning with presentations by staff, then Q&A.

Part I. Space Allocations in the New Interdisciplinary Research Building (IDRB)

A. The “Two-Step” Process

Space allocations in the IDRB will use a two-step process: 1) peer review of the IDR merits of proposed space allocations; and 2) a negotiated process for selected research teams with IDRB staff, VP for Research, the Provost, and the relevant Deans and Department Heads, to develop a support agreement that includes space utilization in both the IDRB and the participants’ home units, equipment sharing/usage, and other relevant technical and financial support to ensure team success. This will allow Deans and Department Heads to plan space management in their units. In the final decisions about space allocations, IDRB staff will strive to ensure equity in IDRB space allocations consistent with the mission of engaging a wide array of participation and leveraging the building to raise UTEP to a new level in research excellence and productivity.

We are now initiating this process by calling for applications for space from faculty teams. These applications will be evaluated and ranked based on technical merit and feasibility by a peer review committee of UTEP faculty. Before being allocated space, highly ranked applications will engage in the process of agreement of support described above.

Application instructions and review criteria for this first step of peer review are presented in this document.

A. Eligibility

1. Interdisciplinary Research Defined

In general, we use the definition of interdisciplinary research from the National Academies (Committee on Facilitating Interdisciplinary Research, Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy, 2004. *Facilitating interdisciplinary research*. National Academy Press, Washington, D.C. p. 2.):

“a mode of research by teams or individuals that integrates information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge to advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice.”

Any research or graduate training activities meeting this definition are eligible for space utilization in the IDRB. We emphasize the term “integrates” in the definition above. We are most interested in building and supporting integrated teams, not “multidisciplinary” teams. (See <http://teams.science.nih.gov/>). **Applications that do not meet this basic definition of interdisciplinary research will not be considered.**

2. Principal Investigator

The Principal Investigator/Team Leader must be in a faculty level position (tenured, tenure track, or non-tenure track, including research professors, clinical professors, and professors of practice), or a Center Director at UTEP. The PI/Team Leader can be from any department/college/school or center at UTEP. Staff or graduate students cannot serve as PI or Team Leader. However, staff and/or graduate students can be members of teams; in fact, their active participation is encouraged.

3. Team Composition

The proposed team can be comprised of any combination of faculty, staff, and students that meets the definition above in Subsection A.1. Priority will be given to research efforts that integrate multiple departments/divisions from at least two colleges/schools. Appropriate individuals outside of UTEP may be included on the team. Teams can be newly formed or more established, but will be evaluated based on the same criteria described below in Subsection C.

B. Assignable Spaces in the IDRB

Below is a brief description of the assignable spaces. Timeframes identified below for each are flexible and negotiable. For a more detailed description of the assignable spaces, see the IDRB website: <http://idrb.utep.edu>

Long-Term Assignments

- Laboratories, wet and/or dry, assignable space measured in linear bench space, for 1-5 years
- IDR Suites, configurable collaborative work space; some open, some with movable walls, that could include offices, student work stations, meeting space, and collaborative work space, assignable space is one or more complete suites, for 1-5 years
- Vivarium, assignable space measured in “cubicles”, for 1-3 years; procedure rooms assignable by the day

Medium-Term Assignments

- Vivarium, assignable space measured in “cubicles”, for 1-12 months; procedure rooms assignable by the day
- Specialized spaces for human subjects research, includes exam rooms, interview rooms, focus group rooms, assignable spaces are individual rooms, for 1 week to 16 weeks
- Maker space, large work space or performance space, assignable for 1 week to 16 weeks

Note: There are other spaces that are available for short-term assignment that can be requested through staff (no need to submit a proposal at this time) such as:

- Tiger Team Rooms, large meeting rooms for team work on proposals or reports or related group work, for 1-10 days
- Conference space, meeting rooms, and visualization lab, assignable by the hour up to one day
- Core facilities, shared equipment assignable by appointment

C. Priorities/Review Criteria

The review criteria and their relative weight reflect the IDRE priorities described above and criteria identified from the literature on successful interdisciplinary teams.

1. Grant funding, current and/or potential, 20%
2. Significance of the problem, expected outcomes, and potential impact, 20%
3. Contribution to training/team research for students, both graduate and undergrad, 20%
4. Degree of interdisciplinarity (above the minimum required to meet the definition in subsection A.1.), 20%
5. Level of stakeholder engagement (Note: stakeholder engagement is not synonymous with community engagement; “stakeholders” are the users of research; they could be policymakers, industry, other professionals/scientists, the general public, etc.), 10%

6. Research is multi-institutional; includes partners from outside UTEP (We include this as a criterion because larger grant-funded projects are often multi-institutional; we consider this an indicator of potential for larger grant funding); 5%
7. Experience and/or willingness to work in shared spaces, 5%

D. What to Submit and How to Apply

Proposals should include the following elements and adhere to the following format/instructions. Suggested length of each section is given as a general guideline.

1. **Title** – short title of less than ten words
2. **Principle Investigator/Team Leader or Co-Leaders** - name; rank/position; affiliation; contact information (email and telephone)
3. **Team Members** – for each team member: name: rank/position; affiliation
4. **Problem Statement and Significance** - Brief description of the problem and its importance/significance (half page)
5. **Objectives and Approach** - Statement of long-term goal and short-term objectives; brief description of the general scholarly approach; what research questions will be addressed; (1-2 pages)
6. **Space Request** - Identification of the spaces requested and what is the timeline, including the start date and end date, and rationale for the space allocation; if a multi-phase project with varying space needs, outline the time and sequential space needs (half page) [Note: the building will come with some furnishings and lab supplies but no research equipment.]
7. **Advancing Interdisciplinary Training of Students** - How will students be engaged; how will the research contribute to the interdisciplinary training of students (half page)
8. **Stakeholders and Their Engagement** - Identify the key stakeholders or potential users of the research. Briefly describe how they are or will be engaged (half page)
9. **Multi-Institutional Partners** - If multi-institutional, identify what institutions are involved and how (half page)
10. **Outputs/Outcomes/Impacts** - Identify planned outputs, intended outcomes and impacts from the research; include outcomes and impacts for the team itself in terms of its functionality/effectiveness (half page)
11. **Current and Potential Funding** - Description of current grant funding and/or potential for grant funding in the future (half to one page)
12. **Teaming Statement** - Description of the team's experience and/or willingness to work in shared spaces, including the name and contact information of at least two peers who are not on your team, but who can serve as references regarding the team or team leader's experiences in collaboration and sharing spaces (half page)

Attachments: Two-page biosketch, following the attached template, for each team member (required); plus list of literature cited (optional).

Proposal narrative should not exceed seven pages, excluding attachments, and should be prepared single-spaced in 12-point font. . **Submit as a single pdf document to wlhargrove@utep.edu by 5:00 pm, Friday, February 28, 2020.**

E. Process for Selecting Proposals and Implementation

Proposals will be reviewed and ranked by a peer review committee of UTEP faculty. Proposers will be notified of their review results by the end of March, 2020. We plan to initiate and facilitate a process of negotiation that will engage highly ranked teams with IDRB staff, the VP for Research, the Provost, and Deans and Department Heads, to develop individualized space utilization plans for each team to include space commitments in the IDRB, equipment sharing/utilization, space requirements in researchers' home departments, and other relevant details, to ensure the success of teams while allowing Deans and Department Heads to adequately plan space management in their units. In the final decisions about space allocations, IDRB staff will try to ensure equity in IDRB space allocations consistent with the mission of engaging a wide array of participation in the IDRB and of leveraging the building to raise UTEP to a new level in research excellence and productivity. In addition, we will attempt to "cluster" successful teams in the IDRB in order to enhance the potential for synergy and research impact. Planned move-in to the IDRB is late May or early June. Annual project reports of progress will be required from each successful team.

Part 2. Seed Grants for IDRE Teams

A. Eligibility

The eligibility for seed grant proposals is the same as described above for Part 1, with the exception that teams eligible for seed grants could be planned, newly forming, or formed teams who are changing focus or addressing new topics. Recipients of seed grants will not automatically be allocated space in the new building but can apply for space in the new building.

B. Grant Size

We will be awarding seed grants of up to \$20,000 for team building for a period of one year, aimed at newly forming teams that will enable them to build a functional team and position themselves for grant funding. We plan to fund a minimum of three, perhaps more, seed grants for Team Building.

C. Priorities/Review Criteria

The purpose for seed grants is to build capacity at UTEP to be successful in grant-funded interdisciplinary research and creative scholarship. We want to see the IDRB serve as a "training ground" for team formation and cohesion, and the development of effective leadership and management for interdisciplinary teams and centers. We are also interested in interdisciplinary graduate training for our students.

Seed grant proposals for Team Building will be reviewed based on the following criteria that reflect the priorities described above.

1. Potential for grant funding, 20%
2. Significance of the problem or need and potential impact, 20%
3. Contribution to interdisciplinary research training for undergraduate and/or graduate students, 10%
4. Degree of interdisciplinarity, 20%
5. Level of stakeholder engagement, 10%
6. Qualifications of the team leader, 10%
7. Qualifications of the team and prospects for team success, 10%

D. What to Submit/How to Apply

Proposals should include the following elements and adhere to the following format/instructions. Approximate length of each section is given as general, but not strict, guidelines.

1. **Title** – short title of less than ten words
2. **Principle Investigator/Team Leader or Co-Leaders** - name; rank/position; affiliation; contact information (email and telephone)
3. **Team Composition** – for each team member: name: rank/position; affiliation
4. **Objectives** - Statement of long-term goal and short-term objectives; provide a brief description of the rationale for your proposal and its importance/significance (one page)
5. **Approach** - Brief description of the general approach; what activities do you propose that will lead to development of your team and its capacity for success; (1-2 pages)
6. **Space Request (if applicable)** - You may also request space in the IDRB for your seed grant activities. If you wish to request space, identify the spaces requested and what is the timeline, including the start date and end date, and rationale for the space allocation; (half page)
7. **Stakeholder Engagement** - If including stakeholder engagement, identify who and how stakeholders will be engaged (half page)
8. **Outputs/Outcomes/Impacts** - Identify planned outputs and intended outcomes and impacts (half page)
9. **Funding** - Identify potential funding sources and a plan for applying for grant funding (half to one page)
10. **Team Qualifications** - Describe the qualifications of the Team Leader and the Team and its prospects for success; (1 page)

Attachments: a) Detailed budget not to exceed \$20,000 (required); b) two-page biosketch following the attached template, for each team member (required); and c) list of literature cited (optional).

Proposal narrative should not exceed seven pages, excluding attachments, and should be prepared single-spaced in 12-point font. . **Submit as a single pdf document to wlhargrove@utep.edu by 5:00 pm, Friday, February 28, 2020.** Proposals will be reviewed and ranked by a peer review committee of UTEP faculty. Proposers will be notified of their review results by the end of March, 2020. Highly ranked proposers who also request space in the IDRB will have to enter the negotiation process for support agreements described in Part I, Section A, above.

E. Budgets, Authorized Use of Funds, and Reporting

A detailed budget should be submitted as an Attachment to the proposal narrative. Seed grant funds may be used to pay student researchers, to purchase supplies such as software, to fund travel for either team members or invited speakers, to host meetings excluding food and beverages, and to support meetings/collaborations with individuals or teams outside UTEP. Computers may not be purchased with seed grant funds. Seed grant funds may not be used for food, beverages, or any type of entertainment expenses. A mid-term progress report (after six months) and a one-year progress report will be required from each team.

Biosketch Template (Limited to two pages total)

Name, Job Title, Department, Email address

Professional Preparation (including all degrees and post-doctoral training)

Professional Positions Held (starting from most recent)

Honors

Research Support (total amount over career and list from the past five years, including current)

Publications, Patents, Programs, and/or Other Creative Products (total number over career by category such as books, book chapters, journal articles, and other, and list from the past five years)

Synergistic and/or Interdisciplinary Activities