Summer 2020 Fast Track Research Grant Guidelines

**Program Description**

The intent of this Summer 2020 fast track research grant program is to enable members of the Lehigh faculty to pursue research that is immediately responsive to the COVID-19 pandemic and/or racial justice. As in our [Fast Track FRG program](https://research.cc.lehigh.edu/sites/research.cc.lehigh.edu/files/documents/VPRO/Fast%20Track%20FRG%20Guidelines.pdf), applicants must identify a *fleeting opportunity*, whereby in the absence of immediate funding, the opportunity to pursue the research will be lost. Applicants must, in addition, present a convincing case with regard to relevance of the research to the pandemic and/or racial justice. Proposals are welcomed from members of the faculty working in all fields of study.

Beyond the clear need for a rapid funding decision and direct relevance to these crises, selection criteria for this program are similar to those used in our regular research investment programs: proposals will be evaluated based on what becomes possible with this seed funding that would not otherwise be possible. Please see the section on Evaluation Criteria for details.

The program cannot be used to supplant funding from an existing source such as an external grant, gift or endowment. Cost sharing from other sources is welcomed.

**Award**

For single investigators, funding will be limited to $30,000. For teams where more than one member of the faculty is *clearly involved in and committed to the project*, funding up to $45,000 will be available. Funds are limited, and *all applicants are urged to request only what you need*.

Grant funds may be used for all necessary costs of research including student stipends, supplies, travel, etc. Funds may not be used for faculty salaries or tuition. Inclusion of general-purpose equipment in the budget must be very carefully justified. Grant funds cannot be used for reimbursement of costs incurred prior to acceptance of an award.

**Eligibility**

All tenure line faculty are eligible to apply. For an application to be considered, applicants must have completed all required reports for past awards under all Lehigh internal grant programs.

**To Apply**

A Fast Track proposal may be submitted at any time, **through our** [**InfoReady Review**](https://lehigh.infoready4.com/) **website.**

When submitting, the online system will prompt for the following:

* A descriptive project title, suitable for publication on our public website.
* Name, position, and department of each participating faculty member. One faculty member must serve as correspondent and will be responsible for all deliverables and management of the budget.
* IRB/IACUC status. Please refer to our Research Integrity web page at [http://research.cc.lehigh.edu/research-integrity](https://research.cc.lehigh.edu/research-integrity).
* A three to five sentence abstract, suitable for publication on our public website, giving a clear and concise description of the project’s objectives, proposed methodology and anticipated results in layperson’s terms. Include anticipated start and end dates for the project. Absent a reason for more time to be required, the end date should be no later than twelve months from the proposed start date.

The following must be provided in a single pdf and uploaded to the online system. Page margins must be at least one inch. Exclusive of any figures, text must be 11 point or larger.

* **Need for Fast Track funding.** With specific reference to the COVID-19 pandemic and/or issues of racial justice, explain the transient nature of the opportunity or imperative, whereby non-fast-track sources of funding cannot be pursued. Considering the nature of the ongoing crises, reasons may include outright inability to address the research questions in the manner proposed unless support is provided in the immediate term.
* **Narrative:** Provide five to six pages briefly describing the proposed work. The narrative should include the project’s goals, proposed activities and anticipated outcomes. As in our other research investment programs, *programmatic* goals and outcomes will be valued: Beyond the value of the work to be undertaken per se, we place high value on establishment of lines of research, growth in collaborative relationships, and development of faculty careers. The narrative should make clear why the investment is necessary.
* **Budget:** Provide an itemized budget including amounts in categories including personnel, materials and supplies, travel, etc. Provide sufficient detail for reviewers to understand how the budget items support the completion of the project. For personnel, you must provide pay rates such as hourly rate, per-page rate for editing or indexing, etc. The budget must be appropriate to the specific needs of the research project.
* **A listing of all internal Lehigh grants and external grants** completed within the past two years, currently active, and currently pending. In any case in which a non-specialist might reasonably be concerned that the grant might support work that is funded by another source, provide a brief explanation of how the work and goals are different.
* **Health and Safety plan**. If access to campus is needed please list by building and room, specifying personnel and frequency of access.

Please keep in mind that those reviewing your proposal will typically include colleagues who are not intimately familiar with your area of specialization. It is important that technical and field-specific terminology be kept to a minimum and that the project be described in a manner that can be readily appreciated by non-specialists. In addition to providing reviewers with appreciation of the potential of the project, it should enable them to understand the necessity of each budget item to the completion of the work.

**Review Process**

Members of Lehigh’s Internal Review Committee (IRC) will review proposals. IRC members are selected for their experience and ability to review across the scope of research endeavors at Lehigh. Awards will be made by the Vice President and Associate Provost for Research and Graduate Studies based on the recommendations of the review panel.

**Evaluation Criteria**

The principal criterion considered by the review committee of a proposal is its relevance to Lehigh University’s commitment to excellent scholarship, research, and creative work. Applications will also be evaluated according to the following criteria:

* **Eligibility for special fast track funding.** Do the applicants describe a *fleeting opportunity* directly related to the pandemic, its root causes, and/or its aftermath, and/or to racial justice especially in relation to current events? As in the Fast Track FRG program, a fleeting opportunity is one that will be entirely gone if not acted upon quickly. Getting a head start on readiness to apply to a recurring external grant program is specifically *not* within the definition of a fleeting opportunity. **Reviewers may stop at this point in the evaluation if this criterion is not met.**
* **Potential outcomes.** Could successful completion give rise to establishment of a line of inquiry that continues beyond the period of funding? Could it give rise to important opportunities for the investigator(s), individually or as a group? Might it give rise to opportunities for others?
* **Research plan.** Is the plan realistic? Does it take into account work being done nationally and internationally in their area of expertise? Do they identify distinguishing characteristics of their approach or their combination of talents, experience, capabilities and perspectives?
* **Likelihood of success.** Based upon the qualifications and past accomplishments of the applicants, are they ready to carry out this work successfully?
* **Budget and personnel.** Is the budget appropriate for the proposed work? If a team project, is the necessary expertise in place, and is every member making a substantive contribution?

**Expenditures and Grant Management**

If you receive an award, an individual research account will be established. It is the responsibility of the awardee to assure that the funds are spent in pursuit of the objectives described in the application and in accordance with the proposal budget. Funds remaining at the end of the 12-month award period will revert to our office to support future research projects.

**Reporting Requirements**

A brief report on outcomes of the project is due to the Office of the Vice President and Associate Provost for Research and Graduate Studies one month after the end of the grant period, using a form to be provided by our office.

**Contact Information**

Questions and requests for additional information should be directed to VPResearch@lehigh.edu