UW ROYALTY RESEARCH FUND (RRF) INFO SESSION

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ROADMAP

- RRF objectives and eligibility
- Review process and review criteria
- Preparing the proposal
- Submitting the proposal
- Decisions
- Insider tips for a successful proposal
THE BASICS

Mission

“...to advance new directions in research, particularly:

(1) ...in disciplines for which external funding opportunities are minimal

and/or (2) for faculty who are junior in rank

and/or (3) for in cases where funding may increase applicants’ competitiveness for subsequent funding

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THE BASICS

Not intended to...

• Support grad student/postdoc independent research

• Support ongoing funded research

• As matching funds for another grant

• Supplement start-up funds

• Bridge funding for lapses between external funds (Bridge Funding program services this purpose)
THE BASICS

Budget

• ~$1 million per cycle (UW royalty and licensing fees)
• Up to $40,000
• 1-year (no-cost extension of up to 1-year may be granted)

Scholar vs. Standard RRF

• **Standard**: Up to 2 months summer salary total
• **Scholar**: One quarter teaching release

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THE BASICS

Eligibility

• Only **tenure-track/tenured UW faculty** can be PI/co-PI
  • Acting, affiliate, visiting NOT eligible
  • Tenure-track faculty funded in the proposal MUST BE PI/co-PI

• May be PI/co-PI on (1) **proposal per round**;
  Can only be **funded on (1) project** in the same period

• **Up to (2) resubmissions** of same proposal (3 submissions total)

• **Past recipients** eligible 2 years after formal termination of previous award and receipt of final report
THE BASICS

Deadlines

• Solicited twice a year

• Due by 5pm on:
  • The first Monday in March (March 1, 2021)
  • The last Monday in September (Sept 27, 2021)

• Awards announced by January/June

• **Begin the process early** – optimally 1-2 months in advance
  • Work with Office of Research!
  • Discuss with Dean/Director well in advance, particularly if requesting teaching release
  • Aim for completed proposal (3-5) business days in advance

THE BASICS

Proposal components

• Cover page

• Resubmissions: **Summary of responses to previous reviews** (1 page)

• **Description of proposed research** (6 pages)

• **Budget** – completed template and justification (3 pages)

• **CV(s)**, for each PI(s) (2 pages each)

• **Other research support** (even you have none)

• **Suggested Reviewer Memo** (submitted as separate document)

*All Required, All Important!*
THE BASICS

Broad Funding Patterns
- Average tri-campus award rate = **25%**  [range = 23-28%]
- Tacoma average (last seven rounds): **33%**

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REVIEW PROCESS

**Step 1:** Proposal assigned to one of 3 review committees

- Physical Sciences & Engineering
- Basic Biological & Biomedical Sciences
- Arts, Humanities & Social Science

**RRF Program Committee Chair**
Professor Kate Stovel, UW Sociology
REVIEW PROCESS

Each staffed with 10-16 UW faculty from relevant disciplines (as of Sept 2020):

**Physical Sciences & Engineering**
- Astronomy
- Engineering
- Environmental Sciences
- Human Centered Design
- Information Sciences
- Mathematics
- Oceanography
- Physics
- Statistics

**Basic Biological & Biomedical Sciences**
- Aquatic & Fishery Sciences
- Biological Sciences**
- Environmental Sciences
- Genome Sciences
- Global Health
- Medicine
- Pharmacy & Pharmacology
- Physiology
- Population Health
- Psychiatry & Behavioral Health

**Arts, Humanities & Social Science**
- Anthropology
- Communication
- English & Comp. Literature
- History & Ethnic Studies
- International Studies
- Information Sciences
- Linguistics
- Near Eastern Language
- Nursing*
- Philosophy
- Political Science
- Social Work*

*UW Tacoma Member
**UW Bothell Member

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**REVIEW PROCESS**

**Step 2:** Committee identifies one member as “lead reviewer” for each proposal

- Assigned based on self-selection, expertise/discipline
- Conflicts of interest avoided
- **Important figure** – can champion, mediate outlier reviewers
- Likely to come from different field, lens – **plan accordingly**
PREPARING THE PROPOSAL

RRF Website: Past RRF Committee Members

https://www.washington.edu/research/or/royalty-research-fund-rrf

Active Members for Fall 2020

- Christopher Adolph
  Political Science
- Jessica L. Burnstein
  English
- Erin Casey
  Social Work and Criminal Justice – Tacoma
- Hussein M. Ellahmari
  Near Eastern Languages and Civilization
- Robin A. Evans-Agnew
  Nursing – Tacoma
- Stephen F. Greening
  Comparative Literature, Cinema, and Media
- Moon-Ho Jung
  History / American Ethnic Studies

REVIEW PROCESS

Step 3: Lead committee member/reviewer recruits (2) additional UW reviewers

- PI identifies 2-4 possible UW faculty reviewers
  - At least 1 of these probably used – think strategically!
- Lead reviewer/committee works to identify other reviewers – may (not) come from your field
- Resubmissions may (not) go to original reviewers
- A second committee member reviews, but does not score (serves as a ‘tie breaker’)
- Reviewers remain anonymous (PI does not)
REVIEW PROCESS

Step 4: Proposals ranked quantitatively by average score

Step 5: Top scored proposals (and possibly a few others) discussed in committee

Step 6: Committee selects proposals and allocates awards

REVIEW CRITERIA

Primary Criterion: Merit

• Scored on (4) criteria – scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)
  
  • #1: “Research performance competence”
  
  • #2: “Intrinsic merit of the research”
  
  • #3: “Utility or relevance of the research”
  
  • #4: “Effect of the research on the university infrastructure”

• Budget not considered as part of the review
REVIEW CRITERIA

#1: Research performance competence

- "Capability" of investigator(s)
- "Technical soundness" of the approach
- Adequacy of institutional resources available

REVIEW CRITERIA

#2: Intrinsic merit of the research

- Likelihood that the research will lead to new discoveries or fundamental advances in the field(s)
- Potential for substantial impact on progress in that field
- Weighted more heavily for basic research
REVIEW CRITERIA

#3: Utility or relevance of the research

- Likelihood that the research will contribute to achieving a goal that is extrinsic or in addition to that of the field
  - e.g. supporting new technology or solutions to societal problems, enhance teaching

- Weighted more heavily for applied research
  - But – Criterion #2 (Intrinsic Merit) still front-and-center
REVIEW CRITERIA

#4: Effect of the research on university infrastructure

- Potential to improve the quality, distribution, or effectiveness of university’s research and education activities
- Somewhat secondary: Not intended to ‘make or break’ a proposal

REVIEW CRITERIA

Secondary Criteria:

Rank

- Among comparable proposals, preference for junior faculty
- Senior faculty funded only when the proposal...
  a) “…supports a genuinely new direction
  b) “…provides a unique opportunity to compete for subsequent onetime/infrequent funding
  c) “…originates in disciplines with minimal funding opportunities”

Availability/timeliness for obtaining future funding
THE BASICS

Proposal components

• Cover page

• Resubmissions: Summary of responses to previous reviews (1 page)

• Description of proposed research (6 pages)

• Budget – completed template and justification (3 pages)

• CV(s), for each PI(s) (2 pages each)

• Other research support (even you have none)

• Suggested Reviewer Memo (submitted as separate document)

All Required, All Important!

PREPARING THE PROPOSAL

Description of proposed research (6 pages)

Introduction and Rationale

Objectives

Procedure

Time Schedule

Need for RRF

Section headings MUST appear exactly as above, in order;

Do not include any other heading
PREPARING THE PROPOSAL

Conceptualizing your project

• Scope: 1-year

• Discrete project...
  • ...but clearly connected to long-term research agenda

• Focused on increasing competitiveness for future funding
  • ...and/or your development as a scholar
PREPARING THE PROPOSAL

Think of the proposal’s narrative arc...

Introduction/Rationale:
- Theoretical background/justification
- Significance
- Potential Impact
Introduction/Rationale:
- Critical literature review
- Identify the fundamental "problem"
- Preliminary findings, if any
- Segue to research questions/objectives

Objectives:
- How do you propose to solve the "problem"?
- What objectives will the project accomplish towards that end?
- Specific, measurable aims
Procedure:
- What is your plan for achieving the objectives?
- What methods/tools will be used?
- What capacities do you have to successfully execute?

Time Schedule:
- How will proposed work be completed within 1-year?
- Consider including a table outlining key milestones

Need for RRF:
- How will the award advance your overall research agenda and career trajectory?
  - If junior: how will the award set you up for success?
  - If senior: how will the award support you in pursuing new directions?
- How will award increase competitiveness for subsequent funding?
- Briefly: Anticipated contribution to the field and practice/society
- Document teaching load (if requesting release, i.e. submitting as “RRF Scholar”)
PREPARING THE PROPOSAL

Your target audience:

• Scientifically-literate, but **likely NOT specialist** in your field
  → “major features should be accessible to non-specialists”
  → Ask non-specialist colleagues to review

• But, some reviewers **may have expertise**
  → Include enough technical detail to satisfy their expectations

• Busy academics just like you – **make it easy for them!**
  → Be explicit and clear – connect the dots for them

• Can help to keep in mind a **theoretical lead reviewer**
  → Past committee members listed on RRF website

• Request awarded proposals to understand “sweet spot”

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PREPARING THE PROPOSAL

**RRF Website: Past RRF Awardees**

[https://www.washington.edu/research/or/royalty-research-fund-rrf](https://www.washington.edu/research/or/royalty-research-fund-rrf)

Download a spreadsheet of [RRF Awards since 2011](https://www.washington.edu/research/or/royalty-research-fund-rrf) to the present.

**January 2021 Awardees**

- Berndt, Andrew (Aquatic and Fishery Sciences)
  A162020
  Revealing the genetic, social, and environmental drivers of behavioral phenology in spawning salmon
  $38,977

- Boyle, Patrick (Biomechanics)
  A162022
  A New Approach for Quantitatively Describing the Propensity for Triggered Activity Following Injection of Cardiomyocytes Derived from Stem Cells
  $40,000

- Chatsis, Mari (Urban Design and Planning)
  A58735
  Beyond Diversity: Decolonizing Historic Preservation
  $38,743

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**RRF FOR AWARDEES**

- List of Past RRF Awardees
- Guidelines for RRF Awards
- Scholar Replacement Salary Budget Instructions
- Sample Scholar Replacement Salary Budget and Workday Implementation Instructions

**RRF FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

- Committee Member Lists
- Application Review Process (Restricted)
BUDGET

Budget

• Up to $40,000

• Budget reductions sometimes occur
  • Request only what you really need

Allowable budget categories

• Faculty salary
  • 2 months summer ("standard") or release costs for 1 quarter ("scholar")
  • Summer salary and teaching release rare – justify, identify priority
  • Faculty salary may only be requested for PI/co-PI(s)

• Research assistants
  • Grad students / Undergrads – Discuss with Lisa

• Other staff
  • Technicians/Professional Staff: 2 months (if co-PI), by justification if not PI
  • Contractors/Consultants/Collaborators

• Travel (non-conference), supplies/materials, equipment

• Retirement and Benefits

• Student aid/tuition, if applicable – Discuss with Lisa
SUBMITTING THE PROPOSAL

Process

1) **eGC1** created in SAGE [*Systems to Administer Grants Electronically*]

2) **Proposal documents** attached to eGC1 as **single PDF**

3) **Suggested Reviewers Memo** attached separately (Word doc)

4) **Approvals via SAGE:** Dean/Director → Finance/Administration and UWT Office of Research → Seattle
   - Plan time for approvals!
   - Discuss teaching release with Dean/Director **well in advance**

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**SUBMITTING THE PROPOSAL**

Identify appropriate “Research Area” in SAGE
SUBMITTING THE PROPOSAL

Identify appropriate “Research Area” in SAGE

Be strategic! Use past committee member list as guide

SUBMITTING THE PROPOSAL

Suggested Reviewer Memo

- Identify 2 to 4 UW faculty (any campus) who can provide a “thorough and objective review”
  - Cannot have written or taught with recommended reviewers
  - Must have a formal appointment (i.e. no adjunct/affiliate, but lecturers may be selected if appropriate research experience)
- Recommend UWT faculty and those who understand our context
- Consider carefully: At least 1 (maybe 2) will likely review
  - Particularly important if working in a ‘niche’ field
- Also identify UW faculty who should not review the proposal due to a conflict of interest (e.g. supervisors, previous collaborators)
DECISIONS

Decision letter

• Roughly equal chance of getting funded across committees

• Scores not released, but decisions letters offer clue:
  • “...competitive...”
    → In top 25-30% of unfunded proposals
  • “...would probably require significant revisions”
    → Not in top 25-30%

• Regardless, resubmit!
  • 60% of successful UWT proposals were resubmissions

INSIDER TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL

Kate Stovel, RRF Program Chair (Feb 2019)

1) How is what you are proposing to do different than what you have done before?
   • And what outcome will RRF be able to point to as a result of the funding?

2) Be realistic about your scope
   • Overly ambitious scope reads as though you don't know what you're doing

3) Be explicit about how you will achieve your objectives
   • RRF does not fund things that say “trust me”
   • Sees a lot of great ideas, with no idea of how they will do them – don't be in this group
INSIDER TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL

Robin Evans-Agnew, RRF Committee Member (Jan 2020)

• Use language carefully, **demonstrate awareness of positionality**
• Anticipate reviewers could have **unexpected contextual knowledge**
• **Write (not adapt) for RRF**, show how **RRF will launch (not maintain)**
• For **resubmissions: Demonstrate responsiveness**
  • Committee members get to know proposal and may advocate for it
  • And even if reviewers not the same, institutional memory persists
• **Strategically select reviewers!**
  • Can be difficult to recruit – Make your reviewer’s job as easy as possible
  • Recruit a **likely champion**, not a detractor

(MORE) TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL

• Emphasize **significance**
  • Particularly important in “niche” fields with limited reviewer expertise
• Well thought-out and clearly communicated **plan of action**
  • Demonstrating that you can do that you have thought through details signals to reviewers that you are able to execute
• Very clear **operationalization** of key concepts/variables
• Include **preliminary results** to greatest extent possible...
  ...but clearly **distinguish between past and proposed work**
  • What you have found → How proposed work will build on preliminary work
  • Aims should NOT incorporate completed work
(MORE) TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL

- When possible, specific detail about future funding opportunities
  - Not just “I will apply for NSF funding”...
  - ...but a specific program (“Geography”), solicitation (“CAREER grant”) and timeline (“in August 2022”).

- Use “Need for RRF” to describe the career trajectory
  - How administrative/teaching loads have impacted research (as applicable)
  - Good place to emphasize commitment to undergraduate research and/or community-engaged scholarship (as applicable)

- Explicit about how the project fits within long-term research agenda
  - The RRF is investing in YOU, and your long-term contributions to the UW's intellectual capital

(MORE) TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL

Community-engaged/”applied” work – Particularly important to:

- Clearly detail procedures and operationalization so that nothing about plan appears “fuzzy”

- Emphasize theoretical contributions beyond particular site(s)

- Describe how partnerships will set you up for future work/funding
(MORE) TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL

Framing UW Tacoma context:
• Remind reviewers/committee (likely in “Need for RRF”) of:
  • Predominantly undergraduates
  • Diverse student population
    • Over half transfer students
    • Less than 45% non-Hispanic and white
    • 20% enrolled through military benefits
    • Anchor for South Sound urban/rural communities
  • Heavy teaching load
  • For some, heavy administrative/institution-building loads
  • Interdisciplinary culture, associated challenges in finding funding
• Emphasize undergraduate involvement (if applicable)
  • ...but realize that RRF is not intended as undergrad support grant
  • Focus remains on the researcher and their long-term trajectory

WORKING WITH US

The Office of Research is here to help!
• Proposal development and editing
• Budget development
• Interested in serving on RRF committee? – Talk to the Office of Research!
  • History of external funding
  • Associate/Full preferred
Thank you! Questions?

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