Guidelines for SIU School of Medicine Internal Research Funding Mechanisms:
Seed Grants (RSG)
and
Near-Miss Funding

Mechanisms and Purpose of Funding

RSG FUNDING

The goal of the Research Seed Grant program is to assist faculty in generating preliminary data that can be used to support applications for extramural funding. Research Seed Grants (RSG) are evaluated for scientific merit by the Grant Review Committee (GRC).

RSG funding is intended to develop grant-writing skills, and hence the competitiveness of faculty who are not highly experienced at writing grant proposals. New and clinical investigators may submit their applications by the early submission due date to receive a critique that can be used to refine and improve the final application.

Faculty who receive RSG funding are required to submit a post-award report to the Associate Dean of Research (ADR) within 2 months after the end of the period of funding in order to maintain eligibility for future RSG funding. Expectations are that PIs of RSG funding submit external grant applications based on their RSG project.

NEAR-MISS FUNDING

The goal of the Near-Miss funding program is to support the improvement of grant applications that were submitted for external funding generating full indirects, but were not funded. These applications are reviewed by an *ad hoc* review committee appointed by the ADR.

Faculty who receive funding through the Near-Miss mechanism are required to submit 1) a post-award report to the ADR within 2 months after the end of the period of funding and 2) a revised application to the parent agency within one year after the start of the period of funding in order to maintain eligibility for future Near-Miss funding.

I. Research Seed Grants (RSG)

A. Eligibility

General Guidelines:

1. A faculty member must be at the Assistant Professor level (including Research Assistant Professor, Lecturer, and Instructor) or above. Principal Investigators must have at least a 51 percent appointment in the School of Medicine to be eligible for RSG funding. Others associated with the School of Medicine, including but not limited to volunteer faculty, graduate students, research associates, post-doctoral fellows, visiting faculty, medical students, residents, medical fellows and technicians, are ineligible.

2. During any one grant cycle, a faculty member may be Principal Investigator on only one RSG application. A faculty member may be a Co-Investigator on any number of grants.

3. An investigator may apply for funding for a new project or for continuation or extension of a previously-funded RSG project. RSG funds are not awarded to supplement ongoing, externally funded research projects.

4. Both established and unestablished investigators are eligible to submit RSG applications. An unestablished investigator is one who has not been Principal Investigator on an external grant (pharmaceutical-sponsored research is not considered an external grant for the purposes of this definition); and/or who has received less than three years of RSG support; and/or who has had less than five years of research experience after completion of formal or postdoctoral training.

Established Investigator Guidelines:

5. Established investigators with total current external funding of $75,000 or more (direct costs only) will be considered ineligible to apply for an RSG award unless they can demonstrate that the external funding available during the fiscal year of requested RSG support is unrelated to the RSG application.

6. Established investigators are eligible to receive RSG support for a total of two years out of any four-year period.

Unestablished Investigator Guidelines:

7. The "two years out of any four years" rule in Section A6 will not apply to unestablished investigators.

8. If an investigator receives an RSG grant as an unestablished investigator and, subsequently receives an external award for a project unrelated to the RSG -supported project, the investigator will be considered an established investigator for the purposes of future RSG support.

B. Guidelines for Financial Support

1. The GRC will consider applications requesting up to $15,000. Indirect costs are not included on RSG grant budgets.

2. Depending on the project, salaries for personnel may be considered an appropriate use of RSG funds, butmust be well justified. A request to partially support an existing researcher position must explain why the research project cannot be accomplished without the requested personnel time. RSG funds can be used to pay for graduate student stipends. Support for faculty salary is not allowed under any circumstances.

3. Purchase of commodities is an appropriate use of RSG funds.

4. Equipment, defined as durable items costing over $5,000, is not eligible for funding. Durable items that cost less than $5,000 (e.g., computers) require strong justification (see #6 below).

5. Payment for contractual services is an appropriate use of RSG funds. However, documentation must be provided to show that requested outside service is more appropriate and less expensive than performing that work using SIUSM resources. If funds are awarded, an appropriate prior contract or purchase order must be established with the vendor through Purchasing before committing for or incurring charges for services.

6. RSG funds are to be used exclusively for direct support of the funded research project. Funds cannot be used for ancillary items such as travel expenses, meeting registration fees, publication costs, biomedical illustration costs, computer costs, purchase of journals or memberships, etc. Under some circumstances, funds may be requested for computer equipment and software. Such requests will be considered only if the computer is integral to conducting the study (e.g., data collection in which the computer is attached to a piece of equipment). Documentation of such special requests must be provided.

7. The funding period associated with the RSG mechanism is for up to one year. Appropriateness of the budget impacts funding decisions. It is critical to make sure the budget requested is appropriate for the scope and time required for the project, if funded. If additional internal funds (department based) are available to supplement the RSG project, these must

be detailed in the budget justification. If needed, the Allocation Committee may request "just in-time" material to verify PI eligibility and/or potential funding overlaps.

8. "No cost extensions" for RSG funding should not be anticipated to be granted.

C. Review and Allocation Criteria

1. NIH Criteria for the Evaluation of RSG Applications will apply, as follows:

    a. **Overall impact.** The overall impact score reflects the reviewers' assessment of the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the research field(s) involved, in consideration of the following review criteria.

    b. **Significance**. Does this study address an important problem? If the aims of the application are achieved, how will scientific knowledge or clinical practice be advanced? What will be the effect of these studies on the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field?

    c. **Investigators**. Are the investigators appropriately trained and well suited to carry out this work? Is the work proposed appropriate to the experience level of the principal investigator and other researchers? Does the investigative team bring complementary and integrated expertise to the project (if applicable)?

    d. **Innovation**. Is the project original and innovative? For example: Does the project challenge existing paradigms or clinical practice; address an innovative hypothesis or critical barrier to progress in the field? Does the project develop or employ novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools, or technologies for this area?

    e. **Approach**. Are the conceptual or clinical framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, well-reasoned, and appropriate to the aims of the project? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics?

    f. **Environment**. Does the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Do the proposed studies benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, or subject populations, or employ useful collaborative arrangements?

    g. **Budget considerations**. Is the budget requested reasonable for the magnitude and scope of the project? If funded, will the budget be expected to cover costs for completing the proposed project? Is

the time budget (1 year) sufficient to complete the project?

2. The GRC recommends proposal for funding to the Allocation Committee based on scientific merit.

3. The Allocation Committee selects proposals to be funding taking into account the recommendation of the GRC, the scientific merit, and the availability of research funds. The Allocation Committee consists of ADR, and Chairs of the Research Policy Committee and the GRC. If any of the standing members have a conflict of interest, then the ADR may appoint an alternate member. The Allocation Committee will be chaired by the ADR, assuming a conflict does not exist.

D. Submission of Applications

1. Submission for Preliminary Review

An advanced RSG deadline is available to unestablished investigators and clinical investigators that plan to submit a RSG proposal. The comments of a preliminary review will be sent to the Principle Investigator for their use in revising the application prior to resubmission for the regular (final) deadline. Contact the ADR Office for future details.

2. Submission for Funding

Applications from unestablished, established, and clinical investigators will be accepted and reviewed together under the same process by the GRC.

E. Reporting

Faculty who receive RSG funding <u>are required</u> to submit a post-award report to the ADR within 2 months after the end of the period of funding in order to maintain eligibility for future RSG.

II. NEAR-MISS FUNDING

A. Eligibility

1. A faculty member must be at the Assistant Professor level (including Research Assistant Professor, Lecturer, and Instructor) or above.

2. Both established and unestablished investigators are eligible to submit an application.

3. Eligible parent applications must meet four criteria: 1) generate full federally negotiated F&A (indirect cost) return, 2) have an associated critique (dated within one-year of the Near-Miss deadline), 3) be eligible for resubmission to the parent agency and 4) not be currently resubmitted as a revised or new application.

4. Application for Near-Miss funding must be submitted within one year of the receipt of critiques from the parent granting agency.

5. Each application can receive Near-Miss funding only once. Therefore, applications with the same parent agency grant number will be considered for Near-Miss funding based on the critique for the original application.

B. Guidelines for Financial Support

1. A maximum of $25,000 of direct costs can be requested for up to 12 months of Near-Miss funding.

2. Depending on the project, salaries for personnel can be considered an appropriate use of Near-Miss funds and must be well justified. Near-Miss funds can be used to pay for graduate student stipends. Support for faculty salary is <u>not</u> allowed under any circumstances.

3. Equipment, defined as durable items costing over $5,000, is <u>not</u> eligible for funding. Durable items that cost less than $5,000 (e.g., computers) require strong justification (see #5 below).

4. Payment for contractual services is an appropriate use of Near-Miss funds. However, documentation must be provided to show that requested outside service is more appropriate and less expensive than performing that work using SIUSM resources. If funds are awarded, an

appropriate prior contract or purchase order must be established with the vendor through Purchasing before committing for, or incurring charges for, services.

5. Near-Miss funds are to be used exclusively for direct support of the research project. Funds <u>cannot</u> be used for ancillary such as like travel expenses, meeting registration fees, publication costs, biomedical illustration costs, computer costs, purchase of journals or memberships, etc. Under some circumstances, funds may be requested for computer equipment and software. Such requests will be considered only if the computer is integral to conducting the study (e.g., data collection in which the computer is attached to a piece of equipment). Documentation of such special requests must be provided.

6. Near-Miss awards cannot be extended. There will be two award periods. The award period will be for 12 months maximum.

7. PI's who receive funding through this mechanism are required to resubmit the application to the external agency within 12 months after receiving the Near-Miss award.

C. Review and Allocation Criteria

1. The applications will be evaluated and prioritized by members of an *ad hoc* Near-Miss Review Committee. This Committee will be appointed by the ADR and will consist of at least three faculty members who have external funding or have received external funding in the recent past and have reviewer experience on external review committees.

2. All members of the review committee will review and rank all applications based on the likelihood that Near-Miss funding will address critical deficiencies in the parent application that will result in significant and critical preliminary data for successful resubmission of the application. Scores from the reviewers will be compiled by the ADR Office and used to determine the award recipients.

3. Priority will be given to those proposals for which the funds are most likely to allow the PI to successfully address concerns raised in the critique. It is incumbent on the PI to make sure the proposed work is feasible and of appropriate scope to address the most critical concerns and commensurate with a one year, $25,000 maximum budget.

   a. In addition to the scientific merit scores, the Allocation Committee may consider the following:

1) Whether an application meets the overall program goal of the funding mechanism,

2) The appropriateness of requested money for each budget line,

3) Prioritized areas of research as determined by SIUSOM's strategic plan,

4) Distribution of funding between established and unestablished investigators,

5) Past and current internal funding records of the PI, and current external funding of the PI.

6) Distribution of funding between meritorious clinical and basic science applications.

b. If the number of meritorious applications exceeds the available total funding, the ADR may reduce the requested budget of some or all of the applications, and distribute the funds accordingly.

c. If the ADR is in conflict with any of the submitted applications, or if significant disagreement exists among the reviewers, the ADR will seek the advisement of the Allocation Committee regarding the allocation of funds based on the scientific merit. The Allocation Committee consists of ADR, and Chairs of the Research Policy Committee and the GRC. If any of the standing members have a conflict of interest, then the ADR may appoint an alternate member. The Allocation Committee will be chaired by the ADR, assuming a conflict does not exist.

4. If the study receives external funding during the year of Near-Miss support, remaining money will revert back to the ADR. Any publications arising from work supported by Near-Miss funds must acknowledge that support.

D. Submission of Applications

1. Near-Miss applications will be solicited and deadlines will be announced by the ADR Office.

2. The following documents in one single PDF format file should be submitted by email to the Office of the ADR:

a. Near-Miss Cover Page,

b. The full external critique and the original application associated with the critique,

c. Two-page explanation with specific aims detailing how the requested funding will be used to address the reviewers' concern(s)/critiques (11 point, Ariel font, 0.5" margins), and

d. A one-year budget and one page budget justification.

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