OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, RESEARCH, INNOVATION, AND IMPACT

Facility Optimization Program

Overview: The Office of the Vice-President, Research, Innovation, and Impact (OVPRII) *Facility Optimization Program (FOP)* provides support for upgrading existing research infrastructure and acquiring new complementary equipment, components, software, etc. to an existing platform/lab. Projects under this program can be of the following types: (1) **Upgrade existing research infrastructure** (replacement of components, add-on systems, plug-in upgrades, etc), (2) **New research infrastructure**. In addition to the cost of equipment, the proposed budget can also include cost for installation and necessary modifications to the lab facility to ensure optimized installation and operations (for example, water and power supply or health and safety requirement). The acquisition of **Data Sets** is also eligible under this program.

The Facility Optimization Program is expected to complement funding programs offered by external sources for research infrastructure. Due to the limited number of available external funding opportunities for upgrading existing equipment, priority will be given to type 1 proposals over type 2 proposals.

Value: Up to $20,000. Requests must include matching funds, equal to the requested amount (1:1). Matching funds are required in the form of **cash** contributions (in-kind is not eligible as matching funds). Only one award will be granted per faculty member per academic year.

Duration: 1 year. Unspent funds at the end of the year will be returned to the University and accounts closed. No extensions will be provided.

Eligibility: Competition is open to all full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty members. Applications may be submitted by individuals, teams, or research units. **Applicants who currently hold an active FOP from a previous year, or hold an external grant for the same project, are not eligible to apply. Should applicants be awarded external funds as a result of pending applications, their FOP applications will be considered ineligible.**

Funding Requirements: Matching funds are required from either internal (other OVPRII competition awards are not eligible) or external sources and must be secured at the time of the application. Support letters **confirming the contributions** must be included in the application.

A grant may be awarded conditionally upon securing the matching funds. In some cases, if well justified in the application, expenditures may be reimbursed retroactively.

Eligible expenses include:	Ineligible expenses include:
- Tools for research (including data sets) - Shipping, warranties and taxes - Installation of the equipment, including modifications to the facility or lab and special furniture requirements - Training for principal users (researchers and technical staff)	- Salaries for research personnel or students for research projects - Consumables, office supplies, regular office furniture, office phone and monthly fees for phone or Internet service - Subscriptions to databases (or their maintenance) - Maintenance and/or repair of existing equipment

Evaluation Criteria:
As the Faculty Research Committee (FRC) may not include a member from the applicant's discipline, adjudication will be based on the information that is presented; therefore, highly-specialized technical language and/or disciplinary jargon should be avoided.

Applications are evaluated and adjudicated by the FRCs, based on the selection criteria below. The *weights* are only suggestions and may be modified by the FRC at its discretion, but must be justified in the recommendation to the OVPRII:

1. Demonstrated need and urgency for the proposed equipment (***40%***)
2. Suitability of the proposed equipment for the research program (***25%***)
3. Importance of the equipment for the training of highly qualified personnel (***25%***)
4. Future use of the facility/equipment beyond the scope of the current research program and how it may be used by others (***10%***)

The University Research Committee (URC) will make the final decision on funding allocations based on the: 1) Faculty rankings, 2) number of recommended projects, 3) amount requested, and 4) availability of funds. The University may declare preferences related to its developmental needs and strategic directions, and might choose to fund those projects that best fit with this description in any given year.

Competition Deadline: **Faculties will set and communicate their own internal deadline.** Competition results will normally be announced by April 01, 2025 for the spring competition.

IMPORTANT NOTE: ORCID registration is required for applications to any OVPRII funding program - *https://orcid.org/register*.

Application Submission Procedures: Ready to apply? Specific application requirements can be found in ConRAD by accessing **Forms,** selecting the *Apply New* button and choosing the **Facility Optimization Form** to complete.

Accessibility: For users that navigate and access information on the web regardless of disability, device or technical constraint we have set in place a process should a different submission method be needed. Please contact the Office of Research directly for more information.