**College of Agricultural Sciences**

**Strategic Networks and Initiatives Program**

**Collaboration Grants**

The Office of Research and Graduate Education is offering the **Strategic Networks and Initiatives Program (SNIP):** **Collaboration Grants** for 2017/2018. The goal of this program is to capitalize on the collective expertise within our college and to invest in faculty-driven initiatives that will strengthen existing programs and promote new interdisciplinary research programs. Proposals should address one of the six cross-cutting thematic areas with a focus on building research capacity and interdisciplinary research partnerships across the college. Please, contact Dr. Siela Maximova (snm104@psu.edu), Strategic Research Initiatives Coordinator, or Dr. Gary Thompson (gat10@psu.edu) for assistance with development of ideas and background information related to the program.

**Cross-cutting Thematic Areas:**

**Advanced Agricultural and Food Systems –** transforming thinking and practice in agricultural and food systems through research focused on productivity, sustainability, and adaptability.

**Biologically-Based Materials and Products –** discovering novel approaches using genetic systems and biological materials to create value-added commercial and consumer products in a sustainable, profitable manner.

**Community Resilience and Capacity** – helping communities improve their economic resilience, create sustainable infrastructures, and promote their local economy through value-added opportunities and new business development**.**

**Environmental Resilience –** providing innovative research to enhance and protect managed and natural ecosystems, ecosystem services, and human well-being.

**Global Engagement –** advancing global solutions to challenges in agriculture, health, and sustainability that impact the future of an interconnected world.

**Integrated Health Solutions** – improving the health of humans, animals, and communities through research into preventative, corrective, diagnostic, and predictive solutions to the challenges presented by lifestyle, diseases, pests, and toxins.

Grants of $5,000 to $25,000 are available to fund proposals that provide a compelling plan to kick-start a new or boost existing interdisciplinary collaborative program. To spark innovation, proposals should employ a variety of approaches to promote collaborations. Examples of appropriate use of funds include:

* Developing interdisciplinary research teams or networks
* Hosting a workshop or conference on an emerging interdisciplinary research area
* Supporting a high-level seminar series to promote networking that will lead to the formation of an innovative program
* Creating enabling technologies to facilitate large-scale interdisciplinary research programs

Please, submit short concept notes for proposals (max 200 words) by email to agresearch@psu.edu by **September 15, 2017**.Full proposals must be submitted in PDF form by 5:00 pm on **October 2, 2017** to the Office of Research and Graduate Education (agresearch@psu.edu).

**Proposal Contents**

1. Title, Thematic Area, Primary Investigator (PI)
	1. PI must be a faculty member in the College of Agricultural Sciences.
	2. Designate only one PI who will serve as the primary contact for the project.
	3. List co-PIs and participants in section D (Project team).
2. Summary (200 words maximum)
	1. Summarize the proposed activities to accomplish the goals of the network or initiative.
3. Proposal Narrative (5 page maximum, excluding references and budget):
	1. Proposed activities:
		1. What is the strategic network or initiative opportunity?
		2. What are the goals of the network or initiative?
		3. What are the proposed activities and timeline (maximum duration of 2 years)?
		4. Provide benchmarks of progress toward success for the funding period.
	2. College readiness:
		1. What key strengths in the college will contribute to success?
		2. What gaps in the college create a need for the network or initiative?
		3. How will the proposed activities address the gaps and capitalize on the strengths?
	3. Benefits to the College and University:
		1. What impact will the project have on the stature and visibility of the college and university?
		2. How will the project advance one of the college’s cross-cutting thematic areas?
		3. What will be the lasting effects of the network or initiative?
	4. Sustainability plan:
		1. Provide a plan for continued collaboration with benchmarks beyond the funding period.
		2. Identify specific sources to support continuing costs of the activity, including applicable external funding opportunities (agency, request for proposals, submission deadline).
4. Project team (2 page maximum, individuals can participate in multiple proposals):
	1. The team must include two or more co-PIs from different CAS departments and can include faculty from any college at Penn State as participants.
	2. List all team members and their departmental affiliations.
	3. Describe the role and responsibilities of each project team member.
	4. Describe a plan to include additional faculty in the network or initiative.
5. Budget and Justification
	1. Fringe benefits are not required in personnel costs.
	2. Funds cannot be used for:
		1. Faculty salaries (including supplemental) or standing appointment salaries
		2. Travel to professional meetings
		3. Support of personnel not in the College of Agricultural Sciences
	3. Budgets can be constructed for a maximum of 2 years
	4. Funds from this program must be expended by September 30, 2019

**Proposal Review**

* Proposals will be evaluated by a peer review committee, which will make funding recommendations to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education.
* Evaluation Criteria: Proposals must emphasize and promote interdisciplinary research across multiple departments with the goal of developing research initiatives with high potential for significant external funding from government, corporate, and foundation partners.
	+ Intellectual Merit
		- Relevance to the thematic area
		- Evidence that the proposal addresses a critical research need and opportunity
		- Innovation and significance of goals and expected results
		- Soundness of the proposed plan and activities
	+ Impact on Growth in Thematic Area
		- Strategy to leverage this initial support for longer-term funding
		- Plan for building/organizing a core of strength in the thematic area
		- Additional or continuing activities to stimulate long-lasting impact
	+ Collaboration Plan
		- Commitment of the team members
		- Potential for developing new and productive collaborations among participants or strengthening existing ones in the thematic area

**Reporting**

* Interim reports on SNIP funded projects will be due at six month intervals depending upon the duration of the proposed project (i.e. June 1, 2018; November 1, 2018; June 1, 2019)
* A final report on SNIP funded projects will be due November 1, 2019. Submit reports in PDF form to the Office of Research and Graduate Education (agresearch@psu.edu).