

FRG Vote: 7 of 8

Proposal to Optimize Use of Research Funds in FRG Program

Problem:

There is room for optimizing the allocation of research funds through the FRG program in a manner that would improve the university's research output.

Currently, department chairs, endowed chairs, and distinguished professors may obtain stipends as part of their FRG.

This represents a problem: while a small amount of faculty at the highest rank in the university still receive stipends (in addition to funds for travel, equipment, personnel, and other items), research projects from regular faculty on tight schedules for tenure and promotion go unfunded.

Proposal:

We propose to amend the existing regulations, adding department chairs, endowed chairs, and distinguished professors to the pool of applicants ineligible for stipends, but still eligible for regular research funds.

Given the current budgetary constraints and salary freezes, this change would contribute to increase the university's research output, and to rationalize and optimize the use of research funds.

Faculty Research Grants Program Overview

1. Structure of the Committee

The Faculty Research Grants Committee (FRGC) consists of 10 elected members, with one member elected from each College and three from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences because of the size of its faculty. Additionally, one member is elected from Atkins Library.

The full FRGC is organized into three subcommittees: Arts and Humanities; Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics; and Social Science, Business, Health and Education. Members are assigned to the subcommittees based on their disciplinary expertise. The faculty member submitting the proposal selects which subcommittee will read the proposal. Each subcommittee will evaluate proposals in the context of disciplinary expectations and conventions using the FRGC criteria, which are posted on the FRG website. The FRG Subcommittees, working with the Director of the Center for Research Excellence, will provide written feedback in a timely manner that will be shared with faculty whose proposals were declined for funding.

In addition to the elected members of the FRGC, the Director of the Center for Research Excellence, acting on behalf of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development, will invite five ad hoc reviewers to fill out the subcommittees to five members each. Ad hoc committee members are assigned to subcommittees based on their disciplinary expertise. Ad hoc committee members serve for one year only and do not vote on policy or procedure changes.

2. Eligibility

The FRG program is available to all full-time faculty with the title of assistant professor or higher whose job description includes professional expectations for research. In addition to tenure-track and tenured faculty, this includes Atkins Library faculty and faculty on research or clinical appointments.

Faculty members are eligible with either 9-month or 12-month appointments. Faculty with 12-month appointments may not receive faculty stipends nor may department chairs, endowed chairs, or distinguished professors.

Members of the FRGC are eligible to apply; however, they neither rank nor participate in the discussion of their proposals. The FRGC chair submits the score for any proposals submitted by an FRGC member.

Part-time faculty, EHRA staff, lecturers, visiting professors, adjunct professors, postdoctoral associates, and faculty on phased retirement are NOT eligible to apply. Faculty with active FRGs who enter phased retirement must give up the remaining funds.

A faculty member may participate in only one proposal for the FRG program. Additionally, an award recipient may hold only one (1) FRG during any single 18-month award period.

3. FRGC Process

The full FRGC meets at the beginning of the Fall semester to establish the scoring procedures to be used in evaluating proposals. After this first meeting, the subcommittees work independently to select which proposals to fund.

All FRGC members, whether elected or ad hoc, are required to declare if they have a conflict of interest with any of the proposals submitted to their subcommittee. The FRGC defines a conflict of interest in the following manner: any proposal from a spouse or partner, any proposal from a collaborator whose receipt of funds would benefit the committee member, or any proposal where the committee member feels s/he can't provide an objective evaluation. When a committee member declares a conflict of interest, the FRGC Chair supplies the score for that proposal.

4. FRG Resubmission Program

In order to provide support for newly appointed junior faculty, those first- or second-year assistant professors who submit a proposal and are turned down by the FRGC will be allowed to revise their proposal (working with a faculty mentor in their department) and re-apply in the same current funding cycle. Faculty mentors are assigned by the department chair. The FRGC will reserve a separate pool of money to fund these resubmitted proposals. Any subcommittee that doesn't expend all of its funds allocated to the Resubmission Program will return the unexpended funds to the larger pool to fund additional proposals submitted by new assistant professors. New assistant professors who submit a joint proposal with a more senior faculty member (*i.e.*, anyone who is not a first- or second-year assistant professor) will have their proposal considered in the "Continuing Faculty" category and will lose the right to resubmit during the current funding cycle if their proposal is declined for funding. In order to participate in the Resubmission Program, a faculty member must have submitted a proposal to the Fall competition and have written reviews from the committee. The FRGC will not accept first-time proposal submissions in the Resubmission Program.

5. External Proposal Requirement

All faculty who are funded through the FRG program are required to submit a proposal to an external funding agency before they may reapply to the FRG program. Faculty must submit an external proposal between the submission date of their previously funded FRG proposal and the current FRG submission date. The external proposal does not have to be related to the FRG project. The Center for Research Excellence will help faculty identify appropriate external funding opportunities and give guidance where needed on writing external proposals. A proposal is "counted" as submitted to an external agency once it has been approved in the Office of Research Services and Outreach (ORSO) electronic research administration system. All external proposals must be routed through official University channels prior to submission to the agency. Service contracts in recharge units and consulting agreements are not considered proposals for the purposes of this requirement.

6. FRG Budget Options

FRG awards are 18-month grants. The normal start date is January 15 after the Fall semester review of proposals, but faculty may elect to delay their start date until July 1 in order to have funds available during two summers.