

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

MIZZOU ADVANTAGE

Brian Foster, Provost

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MU has begun the “roll-out” of the Mizzou Advantage program—what was previously called “Strategic Initiatives.” After a three year process, which engaged hundreds of faculty and other MU constituents, we identified five strategic initiatives—areas in which MU is uniquely positioned in the worlds of higher education and research. In each of the five areas—strategic initiatives—a network of MU faculty, centers, departments, corporate partners, national labs, and other organizations will develop creative research and educational approaches and collaborate on large grants and contracts, conferences, and other kinds of events to further enhance MU’s stature and impact in these five areas. The five areas are:

- One Health, One Medicine: The Convergence of Human and Animal Medicine
- Food for the Future
- Media for the Future
- Sustainable Energy
- Understanding and Managing Disruptive and Transformational Technologies

A detailed description of this roll-out can be found on the Provost’s web site:

www.provost.missouri.edu/mizzouadvantage.

All of these five areas are very broadly interdisciplinary. For instance, health involves not just medicine and veterinary medicine, but also the cultural issues of health, the ethics of medicine, health policy and public health, the business models of the health care system, global issues in health and health care, and so on. Similarly Food involves not just food production, but also cultural issues of food, business issues in the production and distribution of food in the current global environment, the nutritional issues of food consumption and marketing, intellectual property issues related to new food products, and legal environment related to food quality and regulation, public policies affecting food distribution and many other matters. The point is that all five initiatives are extremely broad, each with potential to engage faculty from nearly every college/department of MU.

The goal of the Mizzou Advantage is to raise MU’s stature and impact by enhancing our activities in the five areas in which we have world-class research and education programs today. To achieve this goal, we must strengthen relationships among faculty, centers, departments, and external collaborators working in the five areas—to build networks of very high-achieving

individuals and organizations that will be even more competitive than now for very large grants and contracts, for attracting the best faculty and students to MU, and for gaining recognition for our faculty (e.g., election to the National Academy of Sciences) and students (e.g., being employed in the best university and corporate positions).

A key element of building the networks will be hiring approximately 30 faculty in key areas. As these networks are better defined, we are certain to see “holes” in the structure—areas where potential network links would enable productive collaborations that are not now possible. The first RFP below is to fund networking activities that will build relationships, seed new and productive collaborations, and deepen MU’s presence in each of the five initiatives...and define the network such that we can identify areas for productive faculty hires. These activities, then, will forge relationships among departments, individual faculty, and external collaborators who are working on related topics in the broad initiative areas, and who are not now working together. Ideally, these collaborations would enhance the work of all and perhaps open new opportunities that no one person or center could pursue alone.

The second RFP has a very different orientation: it is for grants that will seed substantive research, education, service, or economic development projects in the initiative areas—to build the foundation for future activities in Mizzou Advantage. These grants should bring together PIs and other collaborators from around the campus and/or from outside campus in innovative ways that enhance opportunities for major efforts in the future. The point is this: the fellows’ grant projects are building the substantive foundation for future successes—for our goal of enhancing MU’s existing prominence in the five areas.

It is important to emphasize that the two RFPs are complementary, and both are essential foundations for the success of the Mizzou Advantage.

RFP for Activities to Define the Networks (Maximum \$20,000)

Strong, interdisciplinary collaborations among our best faculty, our high-achieving centers, and strong external collaborators will be key to achieving the goal of Mizzou Advantage. MU currently has a strong national position in the five areas, and the networking activities for this RFP must be grounded on our strengths. But it is important to note that there are many strong faculty members on campus who work in each of these five subject-matter clusters who are not connected with each other. Bringing faculty together in effective collaboration is key to enhancing our international position.

Forming the relationships among such faculty—building strong networks of such relations—is the critical objective of this RFP. We are looking for creative and novel ways to ensure the success of our networking strategy. To that end, we are seeking proposals for

networking activities on how to build/strengthen relationships and create the impetus to launch and sustain the initiatives such as to increase our already remarkable strengths. This might involve outside catalysts, internal mechanisms and events, new methods of communication and sharing research on campus, etc. Examples could include workshops, bag-lunch series, receptions, bringing nationally prominent speakers to campus for conferences, and/or other kinds of events that bring faculty together in each of the five areas.

Proposals should be no more than five single-spaced pages. The networking activities should be brought to closure as quickly as possible—no later than the end of the fall, 2010 semester. The Networking events must bring together multiple constituencies on campus; involving potential partners from off campus will also be considered favorably. These networking activities are NOT intended to provide additional funding for existing activities as such, but rather to build on our biggest successes to bring together individuals and units that do not usually work together. The idea is to propose activities that will establish sustainable relationships that will constitute the networks for one of the strategic initiatives. Each proposal must contain a one-page resume for each lead faculty member. A budget is required showing all sources of revenue and all expenses. Possible expenses could include (but are not limited to) backfill for the lead faculty members' time, expenses for speakers (travel, housing, stipend), catering, and/or rental of space for the event. The maximum award will be \$20,000.

Proposals should be sent to the Office of the Provost no later than March 1st, and awards will be announced no later than April 1st. Each proposal must be approved by the chair/dean of each lead faculty member. Proposals will be reviewed by the Advisory Committee for Mizzou Advantage, and by Faculty Facilitators, and by the Provost.

RFP for Faculty Fellow Grants (Maximum \$50,000)

We will award a limited number of grants for faculty fellowships to give our strongest faculty an opportunity to organize projects that move forward one or more of the initiative areas. The objective of these grants is to build the foundation for substantive projects in the initiative areas. The fellowship awards cannot in themselves be major grants, but are significant seed funds to position MU well for major projects in the near future—e.g., enhancing relations with funders, corporate collaborators, and/or other universities. The projects may be in research, education, service, or economic development. In a word, the grants are to jump-start substantive activities by our most accomplished and most creative faculty.

Examples would include such things as doing preliminary research on the basis of which a significant grant proposal could be developed. Other examples could include a major international conference, developing a year-long innovative course in the initiative area(s), launching a consortium of MU and external collaborators, or launching an economic

development project with REDI or the Missouri Department of Economic Development. Funds could be used in many ways, including (but not limited to) buying out teaching time for a semester, seeding conference expenses, hiring student assistant(s), catering, speaker fees/travel expenses, and costs of preliminary research.

Proposals will be due no later than March 1st, and awards will be announced no later than April 1st. Proposals should be no more than ten single-spaced pages. Projects should be brought to closure as quickly as possible—no later than the end of the fall, 2011 semester. Proposals that bring together multiple constituencies on campus will be seen favorably; involving potential network partners from off campus will also be considered very favorably. These projects are NOT intended to provide additional funding for existing activities as such, but should build on currently successful activities to bring together individuals and units that do not usually work together, in innovative activities that can quickly move the initiatives forward. A strong property for successful proposals will be to establish sustainable work that builds on MU's strengths, but work that is not now in play.

Each proposal must contain a one-page resume for each PI. A budget is required showing all sources of revenue and all expenses; matching funds from departments and/or colleges will be seen as advantageous. Possible expenses could include backfill, for the PI(s), for seeding conference expenses (transportation, housing, and stipend for speakers and/or collaborators, catering), and research expenses. The maximum award will be \$50,000. Proposals will be reviewed by the Advisory Committee for the Mizzou Advantage, the Faculty Facilitators, and the Provost.