

Data Science Initiative Seed Funding Program 2019-2020

Overview and Purpose:

The University of Oregon launched the [Presidential Initiative in Data Science](#) (DSI) in September 2017. The goal of this cross-disciplinary effort is to bring together existing faculty members and recruit new scholars to create novel research and educational programs in data science. The acquisition of new grants to fund investigator-initiated research, graduate training, and the development of major centers or institutes centered on data science will be essential to the success of this initiative. Also critical will be the development of frameworks for educational innovation in data science at the undergraduate level. Many potential avenues of external support for such data science research and educational efforts have emerged from numerous funding agencies in recent years. The interdisciplinary nature of these funding opportunities will require faculty to utilize institutional support to prepare a competitive proposal.

To address this need, the Data Science Initiative (DSI) and the Office of the Vice President of Research and Innovation (OVPRI) are launching a [seed funding program](#) to support and promote new interdisciplinary collaborations. The goal of this mechanism is to position our faculty for success in competing for significant external funding and achieving ambitious educational objectives in the burgeoning field of data science. This seed funding mechanism aims to provide support to faculty to engage in the necessary research and development activities to incubate collaboration and prepare competitive proposals for major external awards and further educational innovation. To do so, the DSI Seed Funding program seeks to fund activities to bring together faculty through both convening and piloting activities to position faculty for success in obtaining external funding through mechanisms that align with DSI priorities.

Such mechanisms include, but are not limited to, the following opportunities:

[NSF: Growing Convergence Research](#)

[NIH: Short-Term Institutional Training Grants \(T35\)](#)

[IES: Statistical and Research Methodology in Education \(84.305D\)](#)

[Click here for a full list of relevant funding mechanisms.](#)

Research Development Services (RDS) will provide comprehensive support to faculty funded through this grant program as they pursue external funding opportunities. Staff in RDS can help facilitate strategic planning meetings, offer project management assistance in coordinating pre-award activities, and contribute to the writing and development of administrative components of an external grant. RDS staff can also provide feedback and editing support to ensure that proposals clearly articulate the goals of the proposed research in line with the funding priorities for the specific grant mechanism.

2019-2020 DSI Priorities:

There are two priority areas for the 2019-2020 Award Cycle:

- **Convening:** Convening grants support the development of research and/or educational activities to further the strategic development of the Data Science Initiative. Funds can be used to assemble faculty teams for structured meetings or other convening functions to incubate collaborative new research agendas or ideas for teaching and scholarship. Other activities may include writing joint publications, working with external consultants or experts who can advise new research teams, generating syllabi and curricula for new data science courses, or writing proposals for UO's institutional hiring plan. We anticipate funding up to 6 of convening awards for a duration of 12 months.
- **Piloting:** This mechanism provides seed funds for faculty to engage in more structured research and scholarship activities to prepare for submission of a highly competitive external grant. Funds may be used to design and conduct pilot or feasibility studies or to fund activities that develop a larger research collaboration and prepare for the submission of an external grant. We anticipate funding up to 3 of piloting awards for a duration of 12 months.

Note that the expected outcomes of the two priority areas are different. The Convening mechanism is designed to incubate collaborations that could lead to both research and educational outcomes, both of which are critical areas of growth for the DSI. The Piloting mechanism is designed to fund critical activities related to the preparation and submission of a major external award (i.e., pilot studies, joint publications, etc.). A convening proposal is not a prerequisite for submission of a piloting grant. However, successful convening projects will lead to institutionalization through maturation either to a subsequent Piloting proposal that would lead to novel funding, or through the launching of new classes that would bring students to UO who have a more diverse range of interests.

Scope of the Award/Use of Funds

The DSI Seed Funding program provides up to \$10,000 for Convening Grants and \$50,000 for Piloting Grants. The award supports expenses over a project period that may not exceed 12 months.

Funds may be used for allowable costs necessary to plan the research project (consistent with university and state rules) for travel, equipment, supplies, contractual services, and core/shared user facility use.

Note: If proposing to use Talapas or other RACS services, please include appropriate costs for service use and storage. Funds also may be used for salary to support the project efforts of graduate and undergraduate students, postdoctoral scholars and technical personnel under the supervision of project investigators.

Funds may not be used 1) to replace or fund faculty salary 2) for instructional release/course buyouts, 3) for construction or facility renovation or 4) for career development activities.

Award monies may not be used for reimbursement and direct expenditure prior to the project start date. Half of the awarded funds will be dispersed to awarded research teams at the beginning of the project period. The remaining funds will be dispersed following the submission of a 6-month progress report providing strong evidence that teams have made significant progress toward the objectives and outcomes identified in their application.

Expectation of Institutional Contribution to the Growth of Data Science at UO

The primary goal of the allocation of these funds is to encourage and support the growth of the data science community at UO through submission of large grants proposals or development of educational opportunities. In addition, the long term institutional goal is to expand research and education in data science across UO as quickly as possible. The use of awarded funds will be therefore also be predicated upon the willingness of awardees to consider institutional contributions to the growth of Data Science more broadly across campus. Examples of institutional contributions may include:

- Participation in data science activities such as seminar series and machine learning meetups
- Contributing to additional interdisciplinary research projects in data science
- Joint listing of existing courses for broader data science educational activities across campus
- Being involved in discussions for the development of new joint courses in data science.

Because of the contribution of significant institutional resources, funded Piloting grants are expected to form a proposal development team at least six months in advance of external proposal submission. This team will engage in a strategic planning process for proposal preparation and will include members from RDS and DSI in addition to the PIs of the Piloting grant. To increase proposal competitiveness the team's mission will be to build upon institutional knowledge of attributes of individual grant mechanisms (e.g., NIH T32 Training Grants), and determine if there are particular efforts (e.g., short course development) that could increase competitiveness. Members of the proposal development team will vary by proposal but will always include participants from DSI and RDS. Teams may include additional individuals who bring skills or resources that increase competitiveness.

Eligibility:

Any tenure-related faculty member or career non-tenure track faculty member (with at least .75 FTE) in the research professor, research scientist, research engineer, or research associate classification who will hold a UO appointment during the academic year of the research award are eligible. Emeritus, retired, courtesy, visiting, instructor, postdoc, librarian, and pro-tem faculty are ineligible.

Faculty members may submit only ONE application as principal investigator, but may serve as a team member on other proposals. Postdoctoral scholars and graduate students may be included on a research team but are not eligible to serve as PI.

Timeline:

	Deadline
RFA Released	May 21, 2019
Letter of Intent Deadline (Optional)	Rolling- final review September 19, 2019
Application Deadline (5pm)	October 15, 2019
Funding Decisions	December 2019
Anticipated Project Start Date	January 1, 2020
Anticipated Project End Date	December 31, 2020

NOTE: Late applications will not be considered.

Review Process

An initial review will be conducted to ensure that proposals comply with all guidelines. Proposals deemed non-compliant will be returned to the applicant and will not be reviewed further.

All applications will be reviewed by faculty with relevant disciplinary expertise, who will make recommendations to the Director of the Data Science Initiative. Please note that the OVPRI provides administrative support for this program and the Data Science Initiative provides funding and overall leadership. Final funding decisions will be made by DSI.

Feedback will be provided to applicants whose proposals are not funded.

Application

1. Optional: Letter of Intent: Rolling acceptance until September 19, 2019, at 5 p.m.

The letter of intent is optional. The letter should include the project title, the name and contact information for the proposed PIs, names of other key personnel, and a brief description of the project (no more than 1/2 page). Please indicate whether the application is for a convening grant or a piloting grant. The purpose of the LOI is to quickly assess if the proposal will be a good match for the funding opportunity before an applicant commits significant time in writing a full application. Determination of an appropriate match for an LOI does not guarantee a final decision of funding. We aim to provide feedback on alignment with DSI funding priorities within 1 week of submission. Please e-mail the LOI to rds@uoregon.edu.

2. Full Application: Due October 15, 2019 at 5pm

The application should include a combined PDF of the application materials and a complete Excel budget using the template provided.

Formatting requirements: Times New Roman font (minimum 11 point) and 1" margins.

Send to rds@uoregon.edu, using the subject line "Application for DSI Seed Funding Program."

Application Components:

1. **Application Cover Page**
2. **Executive summary:** 300 words maximum
3. **Proposal Narrative:** 3-page maximum for sections A-D; include the following elements:
 - A. **Concept and Rationale:** Provide background or rationale for the proposed project, including the significance and rationale. Describe how the project either creates a new research collaboration or enhances the capacity of an existing partnership. Provide a justification for how the proposed project aligns with the DSI strategic priorities.
 - B. **Proposed Plan:** Describe the objectives of the proposed research and identify the specific activities and methodology to achieve those objectives. Identify specific research, scholarly, and/or proposal development activities to which funds will be applied, how you will complete these activities, and the roles and responsibilities of each collaborator. Address how these activities will enhance the competitiveness of the project for external funding. If proposing a meeting or series of meetings, outline plans for the meeting(s), including approximate number of attendees, potential location(s), and estimated date(s).
 - C. **Future Research and Scholarship:**
 - i. CONVENING: Describe how the proposed project aligns with future research and scholarship at relevant scales (for individual faculty members, for the DSI, and for the UO as a whole). If applicable, identify future external funding mechanisms that the research team may pursue.
 - ii. PILOTING: Identify external sponsor agencies and specific funding mechanisms, and outline the strategy and timeline to prepare and submit to these opportunities. Describe the fit between the proposed project and external funding priorities/opportunities.
 - D. **Team qualifications:** Describe the expertise of the proposed team members, the capacity of the team to conduct the proposed research, and the interdisciplinary nature of the proposed collaboration
 - E. **References** (not included in page limit)
4. **Biographical sketch or CV:** NIH or NSF-style biosketch (5 page maximum) for all key personnel involved in the project
5. **Current and pending support:** List current and pending funding for the PI and key personnel (funding source, project period, total costs); include any internal awards you have received from the University of Oregon

6. **Budget and budget justification:** Use Excel budget template; justification limited to 1 page

Questions about the DSI Seed Funding program, application, or submission process may be directed to Research Development Services, rds@uoregon.edu.