Maximizing External Grant Application Success (MEGAS)

DESCRIPTION: In order to support faculty success in external grant applications, the Maximizing External Grant Application Success (MEGAS) program was created. The MEGAS program is aimed toward providing financial and related resource support to GSE faculty members writing for external grants. MEGAS supports interdisciplinary research projects that have the best potential to ultimately result in large (i.e., > $100,000), external research grants.

Across GSE, there are varied needs for funding to promote formative research idea generation, exploration, and proof-of-concept. In order to meet these diverse needs, the MEGAS grants can serve in a variety of roles for faculty (See Table below for examples). Within the context of these diverse uses, it is important to note the net result of MEGAS funding is to promote the application for, and awarding of, large grants to GSE faculty from external sources. (Faculty interested in funding for standalone projects should consult with the Associate Dean for Interdisciplinary research for alternative sources of project support.)

AWARD AMOUNT: MEGAS grant support is available in amounts appropriate to the scope of work proposed. Applicants are encouraged to submit competitive projects less than the budget cap, when appropriate. MEGAS funding is viewed as facilitative for progressing the team's program of research, so in most cases it will be for short-term, targeted projects.

SCOPE OF SUPPORT: Funding may be used to support graduate students and purchase of limited materials, supplies, and equipment. Funding may be used for consultants if a strong justification can be made. Competitive applications will clearly describe how the funding or resources will ensure a more competitive grant application (e.g., to respond to panel reviewer comments; to conduct proof-of-concept pilot testing). Well justified travel costs that are tied to one of the MEGAS goals may be permitted. Faculty salary is not allowed.

ELIGIBILITY: All full-time faculty in GSE (tenured, tenure-track, and clinical) may apply. Faculty outside GSE and UB may be collaborators or co-PIs. Each project must involve an interdisciplinary team consisting of faculty from more than one department. A mix of early career and tenured faculty is desirable but not required.

CONDITIONS OF AWARD: Awardees are required to submit a proposal for a large (>$100,000) external grant within 12 months of the award starting date, and resubmit at least once if the first attempt is not successful for Proof of Concept and Resubmission grants. All awardees are required to report on the progress and results of funding at a GSE meeting following the awarding of funds. Prior to issuance of the seed grant, all necessary regulatory approvals (e.g., IRB) must be in place. A progress report must be submitted midway through the project. The awardees must also submit a final report 60 days after the end of the project.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION: Applications must be submitted via email as a single PDF by March 1 or October 1 at 5:00 pm ET to the Associate Dean for Interdisciplinary Research (Fabiano@buffalo.edu). Late applications will not be accepted.

Given that there may be time urgency with "Studies to Facilitate Resubmission of a Grant" requests, these applications will be accepted on a rolling basis.

PROPOSAL REVIEW: Faculty members from the GSE will review applications. The Associate Dean for Interdisciplinary Research will chair the panel. A scoring rubric will be

used to rank-order proposals. The scoring criteria will include the following:
a. Significance (25 points)
b. Research Plan (25 points)
c. Plan for applying external grants (25 points)
d. Qualifications of interdisciplinary project team (25 points)

AWARD NOTIFICATION: The review panel will make recommendations to the Dean; the Dean will make award decisions and aim to notify applicants at the subsequent GSE meeting or shortly thereafter. Although the budget with its justification is not a review criterion, the review panel may recommend modification to the proposed budget. All applicants will receive a summary of the review panel's numerical review scores and qualitative comments on each proposal's strength and weakness.

PROPOSAL FORMAT: All proposals must be in PDF format with single space, 12-point font and 1-inch margins. Proposal format will vary based on the type of proposal submitted.

Level of Research	Examples of Activities	Funding Cap	Page limit
Exploration – formative research tasks aimed at developing research questions; establishing research teams and partnerships; facilitating early formative skill development or purchase needed equipment	Half-day faculty workgroup/conference Purchase of materials/equipment Focus group/Needs assessment	$500	1-page plus references, tables, figures
Idea Development – building specific aims and research procedures; testing out formative research ideas; gathering initial data from participants to establish feasibility of research procedures; gaining necessary training or consultation	Consultant payments/Campus visit Feasibility study Training/Conference Survey/Qualitative Interviews	$1000	1-page plus references, tables, figures
Proof of Concept – initial pilot study to explore specific aims; completion of proof-of-concept tasks; pilot study to inform a grant-supported project	Pilot study	$5000-$10,000	5-pages plus references, tables, figures
Studies to Facilitate Resubmission of a Grant – the applicant has a summary statement from a funding source and proposes a specific project to address reviewer comments	Pilot study Proof-of-concept study Preliminary data collection	$5000-$10,000	5-pages plus references, tables, figures

Proposal Requirements

All proposals must include:
1. Cover page: Listing project title, PI, and contact information, and all co-PIs and key personnel with departmental affiliations
2. 250-word abstract: Summarizing project objectives, research design, significance, and potential for external funding
3. Project Budget: Include a 1-page line item budget and a 1-page detailed justification, including a description of other resources or cost-sharing (if available) that will be applied to the project.

For Exploration and Idea Development Proposals (1-page plus references, tables, figures):
1. **Project overview**
2. **Plan to Apply for External Grants**

For Proof of Concept & Studies to Facilitate Resubmission of a Grant Proposals (5-pages plus references, tables, figures):

1. **Project narrative** Describe the project's intellectual merits and potential impacts, and make a strong case why GSE funds are necessary in order to successfully obtain large external grants to support the project. The project narrative should include the following elements:

a. Significance:
Ground the proposed project in a body of scholarly literature including pertinent theoretical frameworks. State the project's objectives and specific research questions. Elaborate the potential for the project to make impact in the academic field, practice, and/or policy.
b. Research Design
Clearly describe the research design, methods for data collection (e.g., measurement instrument) and analysis, and expected outcomes at the end of the seed grant funding. Describe the roles of PI, co-PIs, and graduate students (if applicable) in the research process. Finally, present a timeline of major activities for the project if applicable.
c. Plan for Applying External Grants
Clearly identify at least one specific external funding opportunity with a certain submission deadline and describe a plan for submitting a proposal before the deadline. Explain how the proposed seed grant project will enhance the chance to successfully obtain the external grant, i.e., how the project's short-term objectives during the funding period will enable the project team to successfully apply for large external research grants in the near future.
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2. **Key Project Personnel:** Include a 2-page biographical sketch for each of key project personnel including PI, co-PIs, and other key project personnel.

3. **Summary Statements from Prior Submission (If Applicable):** Include summary statements from the granting agency review panel if the project is related to a resubmission. Reviewers will consider feasibility of the awarding of funds, projected tasks, and feasibility of resubmission.