Dow Sustainability Fellows Program
Distinguished Awards for Interdisciplinary Sustainability

2017 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Overview

To foster high-impact sustainability collaborations across the University of Michigan (U-M), the Dow Sustainability Fellows Program (Dow Program) includes a university-wide competition for applied sustainability projects that cut across disciplines, and involve U-M students at all academic levels. The Dow Distinguished Awards for Interdisciplinary Sustainability competition (Dow Awards competition) seeks project proposals that describe a compelling and practical new product, service, or project that seeks to protect the environment and enhance quality of life for present and future generations.

The Dow Awards competition encourages proposals spanning the full breadth of sustainability topics, including but not limited to energy, water, communities, food, built environment, transportation, etc. Proposals must be student-led (with students representing at least 3 U-M schools/colleges), faculty advised, and action oriented with a focus beyond the campus. The Dow Awards competition does not support campus-focused projects, which are supported through other competitive funding programs (e.g., Planet Blue Student Innovation Fund). Project proposals in partnership with external entities are welcome.

The 2017 Dow Awards competition provides seed funding to nurture a wide range of project ideas. The first fifteen (15) eligible proposals will be granted $5,000 in seed funding. All project teams receiving funding must submit a progress report by September 13, 2017 summarizing their accomplishments. A small number of the most impressive projects will then be selected to receive additional funding, up to $50,000, to support further progress related to existing efforts.

Key Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January – May 26, 2017</td>
<td><strong>Seed Funding ($5,000):</strong> Project Proposal submissions open until 5/26 or until 15 eligible submissions are received, whichever comes first.</td>
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<td>September 13, 2017</td>
<td><strong>Seed Funding Progress Reports Due:</strong> From project teams, includes requests for additional funding.</td>
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<td>November 2017</td>
<td><strong>Additional Support:</strong> Project teams receiving additional funding will be selected. Teams are required to give a presentation at a Symposium hosted at U-M Ann Arbor campus.</td>
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<td>April 2018</td>
<td><strong>Project Updates:</strong> Due from teams awarded additional funds.</td>
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Sustainability
The University of Michigan defines sustainability as solutions-driven scholarship and practice that seeks to safeguard the planet's life-support systems and enhance quality of life for present and future generations. The field is defined by the problems it addresses rather than the disciplines it employs. It draws from multiple disciplines of the natural, social, engineering, design, and health sciences; from the professions and humanities; and from practical field experience in business, government, and civil society.

Dow Sustainability Fellows Program
The Dow Distinguished Awards for Interdisciplinary Sustainability are open to all current University of Michigan-Ann Arbor students. This effort is part of the Dow Sustainability Fellows Program. However, students do not need to be Dow Fellows to apply.

Made possible by The Dow Chemical Company, the Dow Sustainability Fellows Program at the University of Michigan supports full-time graduate students and postdoctoral scholars at U-M who are committed to finding interdisciplinary, actionable, and meaningful sustainability solutions on local-to-global scales. We believe that diversity, equity and inclusion are key to individual empowerment, and the advancement of sustainability knowledge, learning and leadership. The program prepares future sustainability leaders to make a positive difference in organizations worldwide. See: http://sustainability.umich.edu/dow.

Eligibility
The Dow Awards competition is intended to engage the broader U-M community, extending beyond students who are awarded Dow Sustainability Fellowships. All Project teams must:
• Be led by students from University of Michigan—Ann Arbor, but may include staff, faculty, and/or external partners.
• Identify a University of Michigan—Ann Arbor faculty advisor.
• Include substantive contributions from students in at least three different schools/colleges to be eligible to receive seed funding.

Note: Dual-enrolled students may represent both of their schools/colleges. Teams that span academic levels are strongly encouraged.

U-M Policies
At all stages of the Dow Awards competition, all participants must abide by all applicable U-M policies (e.g., Academic Integrity, Conflict of Interest/Commitment, Procurement and Expenses, Research with Human Participants, etc.) including any non-academic codes and policies of their respective units. Students needing guidance regarding applicable U-M and departmental requirements and processes should consult with their faculty advisor(s) and the appropriate administrative offices within their home units. (See appendix for additional details.)

Seed Funding
Project teams seeking support of the Dow Distinguished Awards for Interdisciplinary Sustainability must submit a project proposal for $5000 in seed funding. Seed funding will be granted on a rolling basis until May 26, 2017 or until 15 eligible proposals are received, whichever comes first.
• Program staff will conduct a rapid review of project proposals (see guidelines below) to ensure they meet the minimum criteria with the expectation that all valid proposals will receive an immediate award of $5,000 for the team to begin implementing their proposals.
• Receipt of seed funding will be subject to terms and conditions as outlined in the appendix below. Funds will be transferred to the home unit of the project's faculty advisor for administration.
• All project teams who receive seed funding must submit a written progress report to the Program by September 13, 2017 summarizing their accomplishments.

**Project Proposals**
Proposals for seed funding may be submitted anytime from date of issuance of this RFP until May 26, 2017 or until 15 eligible proposals are received, whichever comes first. All project proposals should:

• Be no more than 2 pages in length.
• List team members and their U-M school/college affiliations, including the faculty advisor and the team lead or point of contact (must be a student). Teams must meet the eligibility requirements outlined above.
• Clearly articulate a new and innovative concept (e.g., process, policy, program, service, technology, product, etc.) and have the potential for significant societal benefits and sustainability impact.
• Fully describe the project scope, milestones and include a project timeline.
• Address how project success will be measured (e.g. metrics related to the project scope & objectives) and over what time frame.
• Include a preliminary budget (see “Awards” below for funding rules and limitations)

**Guidelines for Progress Reports**
Project teams who have received seed funding must deliver a written progress report by September 13, 2017, summarizing their achievements and outlining any additional work planned for which they would like to receive a funding award. The written progress report should:

• Be 10 pages or less, including references and appendices.
• Contain an executive summary written for a non-technical audience.
• Describe progress toward milestones according to the project timeline submitted in the proposal.
• Summarize the achievements, outputs (e.g., analysis, surveys, reports), outcomes, and impacts accomplished to date.
• Describe the remaining project plan.
• Include a 2-page CV for each team member; each CV should outline relevant experience and skills (not included in the 10-page progress report limit).
  o Large teams should include CVs for the most relevant team members with a max of 10 CVs.

If requesting additional funding teams should also include (inclusive of the 10 pages):

• Include a revised scope of work, milestones, and timeline.
• Address how project success will be measured moving if granted additional funding (e.g., metrics related to the project scope and objectives) and over what time frame.
• Include how much additional funding your team is requesting (up to $50,000). Include a detailed proposed budget; and include an alternative budget, addressing what could be accomplished with funding at 50% of the level proposed by the team.
• Identify any skill gaps in the existing team, and a plan for how they will be filled.

**Awards**
Accepted project teams will receive $5,000 in seed funding. The most promising project teams requesting additional funding in their Progress Report may be awarded up to $50,000 in additional support. Only projects granted seed funds are eligible for larger awards.

• Typically, two or more projects are selected to receive additional funding, which will not exceed $50,000 per project to facilitate further progress.
• The total of all seed funding and additional awards will not exceed $150,000 annually.
• All funds awarded through the Dow Distinguished Awards competition will be used only for direct expenses incurred in the implementation of the projects, including purchase of equipment necessary to execute the project and travel-related expenses incurred in project implementation.
• Given the action-oriented objectives of this competition, any funding requests for student wages must include a detailed scope of work and not exceed 20% of the total budget request. Funding for student wages is subject to the approval of the Dow Program staff.
• Project funds may NOT be used for expenses unrelated to project execution, to offset faculty or staff salaries, for graduate student assistantships, or for travel to conferences.
• Disbursement of project funds will be available through the unit of the faculty advisor and will be contingent upon satisfactory progress and achievement of milestones listed in the approved project proposal.
• The Dow Sustainability Fellows Program is administered by the Graham Sustainability Institute. Any unused funds must be returned to the Graham Sustainability Institute.
• Seed grant funds are expected to be expended by the beginning of the next RFP cycle (January 2018). Additional funding must be expended within two years of the project award date. Extensions may be granted under special circumstances, but must be approved in advance by the Dow Program staff.
• Changes in project scope, budget, and team composition must be reported to and approved by the Dow Program staff, or funds will be returned to the Graham Sustainability Institute.

Awards Review Process

Project progress reports requesting additional funding received by September 13, 2017 will undergo a rapid review by Dow Program staff who will select the most promising project proposals and teams to move forward in the selection process. This pool of proposals that may be selected for additional support is provided to an independent committee of U-M faculty, staff and external practitioners from business, government, and civil society. This committee will possess extensive knowledge and experience related to sustainability and will review each proposal selected by the Dow Program staff. The review will include a short presentation by each of the teams to the committee. Members of the committee may ask team members questions about their project. All projects will be reviewed using the following selection criteria.

Winning proposals will:
• Prominently feature interdisciplinary work, blending natural science, engineering, business, behavior, social sciences, and policy considerations as appropriate.
• Demonstrate how team members representing a minimum of 3 disciplines will contribute to project goals and objectives.
• Clearly articulate a new and innovative concept (e.g., process, program, service, product, etc.).
• Outline the potential for significant societal benefits and sustainability impact.
• Demonstrate a well-crafted premise with convincing supporting data and/or analysis.
• Have scalable and/or replicable attributes and a strong likelihood of success.
• Include a firm commitment by the team to implement the project with demonstrable results delivered within one year of funding.
• Engage project partners and stakeholders in a needs assessment to ensure that efforts of the team are practical and will foster sustainability at the local, national or global level.

Updated: 1-23-2017
Appendix – 2017-2018 Terms and Conditions of Dow Distinguished Seed Funding and Awards

**Funding Team Requirements:** All teams must submit a written progress report to the Dow Program staff by September 13, 2017. At all stages of the Dow Awards competition, all participants must abide by all applicable U-M policies (e.g., Academic Integrity, Conflict of Interest/Commitment, Procurement and Expenses, Research with Human Participants, etc.) including any non-academic codes and polices of their respective units. Students needing guidance regarding applicable U-M and departmental requirements and processes should consult with their faculty advisor (PI) and the appropriate administrative offices within their home units. Teams must mention support from the University of Michigan Dow Sustainability Fellows Program in any publications or presentations of project results and provide information to Dow Program staff on any publications generated through this project. Projects must be student-led and composed of an interdisciplinary team, representing a minimum of three different disciplines at all times. Projects selected to receive additional funding must present a summary of their work to date at the November 2017 Program Symposium and provide a final written report in April 2018.

**Funds:** Disbursement of funds will be staged to the unit of the faculty advisor and will be contingent upon satisfactory progress and achievement of project milestones identified in the approved project proposal. That unit is responsible for administration of the funds to the project team. Change in scope or budget revisions (see below) must be approved by the Dow Program.

**No Cost Extension of Time:** Any extension of the project timeline is subject to Dow Program staff approval under special circumstances. However, no additional funds will be awarded.

**Change in Scope:** A change in scope constitutes a significant change in direction, objectives, and methodology, and may delay or materially affect the ability to complete the project objectives or meet time schedules provided in the approved proposal. If such a situation occurs, the student team lead must contact the Dow Program staff to discuss this. If your request for a change in scope is approved, you will be notified of the acceptance of the request and your project may continue. If your request is denied, all activity for this project must cease immediately and any remaining funding will be returned to the Graham Sustainability Institute.

**Budget Revisions:** Each project proposal is a guide of expected expenditures. However, situations may occur that the budget may need to be revised. If you anticipate that line item expenditures will exceed 20% of the total award amount in the approved proposal budget, the student team lead must contact the Dow Program staff to discuss budget revisions and submit a budget revision request before any unapproved expenditures occur. No additional funds will be granted – requests must adjust line items to be approved but keep total amount granted the same. If your request is approved, you will be notified of the acceptance of the request and your project may continue. If your request is denied, all activity for this project must cease immediately and any remaining funding will be returned to the Graham Sustainability Institute.

**Over Expenditures:** Any over expenditure of the awarded amount on the project is the responsibility of the Faculty Advisor (PI) and the department disbursing funds to the student team to cover.

**Faculty Sponsor (PI) Leaves U-M:** In the event that the faculty sponsor listed in the project proposal terminates their appointment with the University during the award period, any remaining funds will be returned to the Graham Institute and the project will be considered closed unless the team receives approval from Dow Program staff to work with a new faculty sponsor.

I have read the above terms and conditions and agree to them as written.

____________________________________  ______________________________________
PI Signature (Faculty Advisor)    SPI Signature (Student Team Lead)

_______________________    ___________________________
Date       Date

*Please return one signed copy of this page to:*
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Contact: (734) 615-3826 (office), 734-647-6730 (fax), houghtak@umich.edu (email)