

THE COMMONS

Interdisciplinary Research Initiative
in Nature and Culture

Call for Seed-Grant Research Proposals 2012-2013

Pre-Proposal Submission deadline: September 10, 2012

Full Proposal Submission deadline: October 19, 2012

Awards announced: November 19, 2012

Purpose:

The Commons at the University of Kansas supports research endeavors that bring together the sciences, arts, and humanities to explore the reciprocal relationship between natural and cultural systems. In so doing, The Commons intends to be a catalyst for bold innovation, unconventional thinking and unexpected discoveries (www.thecommons.ku.edu).

The Commons Interdisciplinary Research Initiative in Nature and Culture is a KU-wide, competitive seed-grant program to nurture and develop interdisciplinary, collaborative research ideas at the conceptual stage. The Commons seed-grant program targets *concepts and their interdisciplinary synthesis, not the generation of preliminary data*. Seed grant activities may include exploratory research workshops, studios, colloquia, symposia, scholarly travel and visits, and other activities that advance interdisciplinary research ideas, collaborations and extramural proposals.

Proposals must equally integrate methods and ideas from the three areas represented by The Commons: sciences, arts, and humanities. Research partnerships across KU units and between KU and other universities and institutions are strongly encouraged. Awards are co-sponsored by Research and Graduate Studies and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

The outcome of a seed grant should be the development and submission of a substantive research grant proposal to a federal agency, foundation or other funding entity.

Awards:

Up to \$40,000 is available for one or more awards. Allowable costs include workshops, travel, scholarly visits and other activities that advance interdisciplinary research ideas, partnerships and extramural research proposals. Expenditures for salaries, equipment, data collection, and faculty salaries are not allowed. While graduate student research may be included in the budget, the role of the student must be clearly explained and research-based.

All funds must be spent by June 3, 2013, at which time a final report of activities and list of applications submitted or intended for submission (with dates) is required.

Project activities:

The Commons will make its spaces and services available for all funded KU-based activities, (e.g., workshops, meetings), which are expected to occur in The Commons whenever possible. The Commons will work with awardees to observe, document, and publicize funded activities, if appropriate. Awardees will inform The Commons of project activities and extramural proposals submitted, funded or declined.

Proposals:

Applications will consist of **two** stages that must be completed for the application to be considered.

Pre-Proposal content and format

A Pre-Proposal consisting of the attached form should be emailed as a Microsoft Word or PDF attachment to thecommons@ku.edu by September 10, 2012. A pre-proposal must be submitted in order for a full proposal to be considered. **The Commons steering committee members will review pre-proposals and provide mentoring and suggestions to applicants.** In the past, we have found that offering guidance at this stage improves proposals and ensures that applications meet the award criteria. No proposals will be eliminated at the pre-proposal stage. The pre-proposal will not affect how full proposals are subsequently reviewed, as they will be evaluated by an external panel of reviewers.

Full Proposal content and format

Please follow these guidelines in preparing your full proposals in electronic format (Word or .pdf) and include the components described below. Applicants may also provide supporting "work samples" in another medium, including video (not to exceed 4 minutes) and stills (maximum of 20 images).

Project Cover Page

- title of the project;
- name(s) and affiliations of investigator(s);
- timeline of project dates;
- the amount requested and matching funds and source(s), if any;
- the agency, foundation or other entities to which the full extramural proposal will be submitted.

Project Abstract (*maximum: 200 words, 12 point type*)

Summarize the research project and its intellectual rationale, interdisciplinary nature, scope and impact.

Project Description (*maximum: 4 pages, double-spaced 12 point type*)

Describe the research project, addressing the following issues:

1. **Challenge/Purpose:** the need for the project, the question(s) being addressed, their conceptual bases, and why they require an interdisciplinary approach.
2. **Significance:** how the seed grant activity will foster
 - interdisciplinary partnerships and synthesis of concepts and methods from the sciences, arts, and humanities, and
 - the development of an extramural grant proposal
3. **Urgency:** if applicable, the urgency or special opportunity of the

- proposed research.
4. **Scope:** the scope of the project activity and how it fits the conceptual basis and interdisciplinary nature of the inquiry.
 5. **Plan:** the tasks, methods, schedule and milestones for the seed grant activities, the collaborating units or institutions, and the roles and special contributions of project personnel.
 6. **Logistics:** the logistical needs of the seed grant activities.

Budget & Budget Justification (*1 page, 12 point type*)]

Itemize and explain the costs of the proposed seed project activities and matching funds, if any. **Please note that Seed Grant awards do not support: individuals to attend conferences, salary for faculty, data collection, or the purchase of equipment.**

Sources Cited (e.g., literature, exhibitions, performances)

Appendices

Include a bio sketch or abbreviated curriculum vitae (no more than 2 pages per person) of project participants.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Intellectual Merit and Broader Impact

- **Strength of the research problem or exploration.** Does the research/exploration have the potential for significant discoveries and advances in knowledge?
- **Appropriateness of proposed activity.** Will the proposed seed-grant activity help develop the ideas and partnerships to address the research problem?
- **Interdisciplinary strength.**
 - **Degree of interdisciplinarity.** Does the research/exploration integrate disciplines from the sciences, arts and humanities? (Projects should integrate disciplines from all three areas at a foundational level.)
 - **Appropriateness of interdisciplinary concepts.** How well do the interdisciplinary concepts and areas fit the research problem?
 - **Integration of interdisciplinary concepts.** Will the activities lead to the development of conceptual advances that serve to further integrate the sciences, arts, and humanities?
- **Strength and capability of personnel.** Do the personnel fit the project?
- **Potential for extramural research proposal.** Will the proposed activity result in the development of a strong extramural research proposal to a federal agency, foundation or other funding entity?

Eligibility:

All KU tenure-track faculty and academic equivalents are eligible and encouraged to apply to The Commons Interdisciplinary Research Initiative in Nature and Culture.

All full-proposal applications must have been preceded by a pre-proposal.

Administration:

Proposals for the 2012-2013 round are due **October 19, 2012** with funding decisions announced **November 19, 2012**.

All seed grant pre-proposals and full proposals should be submitted in electronic format (Word doc or pdf file) to The Commons Coordinator (thecommons@ku.edu). An external panel of reviewers, chosen by The Commons, will review the full proposals and make funding recommendations.

Past Grant Recipients

2012

Jay T. Johnson, Gene Rankey, Johannes Feddema, et al. Learning from the Indigenous Science: Indigenous Perception and Adaptation to Environmental Change in Kiribati

A. Townsend Peterson, Luke Jordan, Stephen Egbert, et al. Land Use Change over the Twentieth-Century in Central Mexico: Modern Photographs and Landscape Paintings from José María Velasco

2010-2011

Paul Atchley, Chris Depcik, and Gregory Thomas, SmartGrid/SmartHome/SmartCar: The New American Dream

Ford Ballantyne, The Texture of Desert Landscapes: Visualizing Interactions Between Humans and Their Environments

Mary Dusenbury, The Power of Color in Early and Medieval East Asia

2009-2010

Glenn Adams, The Socio-Ecological Foundations of Intimacy

Chris Brown, Putting Global Commodity Chains in their Place: a KU Mongolia Initiative to Mitigate the Socio-Cultural and Environmental Effects of Mining

Michael Crawford, Why do we migrate? Interdisciplinary Exploration of Human Migration

Inquiries / Further Information

The Commons Steering Committee

Victor Bailey – Hall Center for the Humanities, vbailey@ku.edu

Leonard Krishtalka – Biodiversity Institute, krishtalka@ku.edu

Saralyn Reece Hardy – Spencer Museum of Art, srh@ku.edu

Emily Ryan – Coordinator, eryan@ku.edu

Celka Straughn – Spencer Museum of Art, straughn@ku.edu

Jorge Soberon – Biodiversity Institute, jsoberon@ku.edu

Sally Utech – Hall Center for the Humanities, sutech@ku.edu

**The Commons Interdisciplinary Research Initiative in Nature and
Culture
Pre-Proposal Form**

Please respond to the following questions. You may attach additional sheets if necessary. This form should be emailed as a Microsoft Word document or PDF to thecommons@ku.edu by September 10, 2012.

Name and contact information for point of contact (should be someone at KU):

Name: _____

Title: _____

Department: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Title of Project: _____

1. Please provide a brief (5-8 sentences) abstract of your research project.

2. What are the science, arts, and humanities disciplines relevant to this project, and how will each be integrated into the project?

3. Who are the scholars (internal to KU and external) involved in this project, and what are their qualifications?

4. What are the activities or results that will be funded with seed grant support?

5. How will the seed grant funding help result in external grant applications?