THE COMMONS
THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

Interdisciplinary Starter Grants

Call for Proposals

Application deadline: Ongoing until funds are expended.

STARTER GRANTS
SPRING 2017

Starter Grants support research projects/creative works that:
- are bold and examine ideas in new ways;
- would not be considered by more conventional funders;
- are in the initial stages of development; and
- are collaborative and generated by interdisciplinary research teams that seek to find their common languages and methodological approaches.

PURPOSE
Starter Grants are intended to provide resources for prototyping and growing bold, innovative, nascent ideas into mature research and creative propositions. *When successful, Starter Grants will result in novel, groundbreaking, and interdisciplinary collaborative research projects and creative works that will eventually be competitive for extramural support.*

FUNDING
Applicants should think about: (1) compelling research questions and creative works that only an interdisciplinary, collaborative approach can bring to life; and (2) mechanisms for achieving such an approach through interdisciplinary collaboration and understanding among project participants.

Funds may be applied to a variety of activities, including, but not limited to: hosting a single event or series of events that facilitates dialogue between disciplines; developing a physical installation in The Commons that leads research in a new direction; or forging relations with a community that will contribute to the larger research portfolio of KU. All expected costs should be listed in the Budget & Budget Justification section.

PROPOSALS
Eligibility. The Principal Investigator(s) must be a KU tenure-track faculty or academic equivalent. However, non-KU faculty researchers may be included as collaborators.

Content and Structure.
The complete application requires: (1) an email expressing intent to apply; (2) a short interview with The Commons' Partners; (3) a completed application to be informed by the discussion with The Commons' Partners.

(1) **Intent to Apply.** All applicants should declare their intent to apply by sending a short description of their idea, not to exceed three sentences, to thecommons@ku.edu. This email should include
- the names of the collaborators,
- the main research question, and
- a sentence describing what makes the topic compelling.

This message will initiate the application process, after which, applicants will be prompted to reserve an interview time.

(2) Interview. To encourage bold, interdisciplinary and truly collaborative ideas, this initial meeting gives applicants a chance to share their ideas with The Commons' Partners and to receive feedback. The presentation and discussion are intended to help clarify and develop applicants' ideas for the written proposal. The meetings begin with a short (10-minute) presentation by the research group, after which The Commons' Partners ask questions and offer suggestions for the project, to be incorporated in the final proposal.

Presentations should include:
- Central Research Question: What is the research question/challenge/idea?
- Importance of research: What makes this investigation compelling?
- Interdisciplinary Value: Why does the research question demand this approach, and what will be gained from the specific expertise of each team member?
- Proposed activities: How will the Starter Grant funds be used?
- Future of the project: What are possible next steps for the research?

(3) Written Submission. The written component of the application includes:
- Proposal Form
- Budget & Budget Justification
  Itemize and explain the costs of the proposed project activities and matching funds (if applicable.)

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creativity of Idea/Approach.
Is the proposed research supporting a bold idea? Is it original? Is it risky?
Does the Starter Grants initiative seem the best funding source to seed the research?

Interdisciplinary Strength.
Are the fields represented appropriate to the research question? Does the interdisciplinary nature of the project strengthen the proposed research? Does each discipline represented contribute to the project at a fundamental level? Are the disciplines well integrated in the project activities?

Clarity of Plan.
Is the proposed research question clearly stated? Are outcomes articulated? Does the plan include necessary steps to achieving the intended outcomes?

Potential Benefit to KU.
Does the proposed research relate to wider university initiatives? Does the proposed research contribute new and/or meaningful activity to the research portfolio of the University? Does the proposed activity engage other universities or entities (eg: industry, government) outside of KU? How will the funding enable maturation of the project toward potential extramural research proposals?

Sustainability of Project.
How will the project be carried out? Does the plan allocate sufficient resources (e.g. personnel, time, budgetary) for necessary steps to achieve intended outcomes? Does the plan include ideas for next steps, beyond the initial outcomes? What are the plans for growing the research project into an extramural research proposal?

AWARDS

Individual Starter Grants will not exceed $10,000. All expenditures must be coordinated through The Commons. Examples of exploratory activity that may be covered by Starter Grants include workshops, travel, scholarly visits, extramural proposals, etc. A student's hourly research stipend may be included, but the role of the student must be clearly explained and must serve to advance the research. Funding is made possible by KU Research.

ACTIVITY

The Commons will make its spaces and services available for all KU-based activities (eg: workshops, meetings), which are expected to take place in The Commons if possible. The Commons will work with awardees to observe, document, and publicize funded activities if appropriate. Throughout the term of the project and beyond, awardees are expected to inform The Commons of project activities, publications, applications for extramural proposals, and other outcomes.

REPORTING

All funds must be expended within one calendar year of the date of the award, at which point, a final report of activities is due to The Commons. *(maximum 2 pages)*

> The report must include:
> - Description of the project, including initial goals
> - Activities funded by the grant
> - Outcomes of the research, including insights, advances in theoretical, methodological, and conceptual approaches and understandings, etc., achieved as a result of the interdisciplinary activities, partnership, and process
> - Next steps for the research

HISTORY

The Commons supports interdisciplinary exploration across the arts, sciences, and humanities. It encourages research and programming that examine reciprocal relationships between natural and cultural systems through asking bold, often controversial questions. In so doing, The Commons endeavors to be a catalyst for innovative, unconventional thinking that can lead to unexpected discovery.

Programming at The Commons integrates many disciplinary perspectives in order to ask new questions about common, complex issues and ideas. Guest scholars are invited to present, perform, and make work that challenges traditional canons, concepts, and ways of thinking. *Red Hot Research* sessions provide an opportunity for faculty to learn about each other's current work via 6-minute slideshow presentations. *Idea Café* brings together scholars from many disciplines around a central, challenge subject to be discussed and explored as a group. Classes that meet in The Commons include students from many disciplines and benefit from the physical versatility of the space. Starter Grants round out the panoply of offerings at The Commons. They fund the formative steps of truly innovative, integrative research, accomplished by working across disciplines.

Spring 2016

Abbey Dvorak, Kip Haaheim, Michelle Hayes, Nicole Hodges Persley, and Sherrie Tucker. *Improvising Inclusive Communities: From AUMI to the Center for Improvisation Studies*

Michelle Johnson-Motoyama and Donna Ginther. *Exploring the Causal Impact of Economic Policies on Child Maltreatment in the U.S.*

Fall 2015

Joo Ok Kim, Joshua Miner, Chris Perreira, and Magalí Rabasa. *Trans/forming Activist Media in the Americas*

Spring 2015

Mary Anne Jordan and Caroline S. Chaboo. *Indigenous natural dyes of the Sacred Valley, Andean Peru*

Rachel Krause, Ward Lyles, and Uma Outka. *Localized Energy and Climate Adaptation: Advancing Community-Scale Social Justice Goals*

Michael Vitevitch and Arienne Dwyer. *NetSci-LASH: Network Science in Languages, Arts, Sciences & Humanities*

Fall 2014

D. Bryon Darby, Paul Stock, and Tim Hossler. *The New American Farmer*

Joe Colistra, Martha Rabbani, Jeremy Shellhorn, Amanda Schwegler, and Andi Witczak. *Engaged Design: An Interdisciplinary Approach to the Public Impact of Design*

Spring 2013

Brent Metz, Aida Ramos Viera, Jodi Gentry, Belinda Sturm. *Combining Engineering, Public Health, Anthropological, Geographic, and Film Knowledge for Sustainable Development among the Ch'orti' Maya of Guatemala*

Fall 2012

Paul Stock, Tim Miller, Kelly Kindscher, Kate Meyer, James Gunn, et al. *Food Utopias: An Interdisciplinary Exploration of Ideal Food Systems*

Spring 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 Maria Velasco*

Fall 2010

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

Ford Ballantyne, Jorge Soberón, Donald Worster, Andrés Lira-Noriega, Patrick Dermyer. *The Texture of Desert Landscapes: Visualizing Interactions Between Humans and Their Environments*

Spring 2010

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

Fall 2009

Glenn Adams. *The Socio-Ecological Foundations of Intimacy*

Chris Brown, John Kennedy, et al. *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*