

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** College Faculty

**From:** Howard Gillman, Dean  
Michael Quick, Executive Vice Dean  
Dani Byrd, Vice Dean, Research Advancement

**Cc:** C.L. Max Nikias, Provost  
Elizabeth Garrett, Vice President  
Randolph Hall, Vice Provost  
College Vice Deans  
College Senior Associate Deans

**Date:** September 20, 2007

**Subject:** New Initiatives in Research: Seedling and Seal-the-Deal

College of Letters, Arts  
& Sciences

Office of the Dean

As USC College raises its national and international visibility as a premier research institution, we must make every effort to broaden the participation of College faculty in extramural funding opportunities and to support researchers who are seeking external support.

Currently 39% of College faculty members have their research and scholarly activities supported by external funding agencies. We recognize that not every faculty member has a research agenda that is suitable for external funding. However, there are extramural funding opportunities available to large numbers of faculty that are not currently being sufficiently leveraged. Our hope is that faculty members who could receive external support for their excellent research and scholarship will actively engage in securing that support. Our goal is to have a steady increase, every year, in proposal submissions and total external support for our faculty. Over the last 3 years, external support has increased 30%; we want to expand this trend, and to do that we seek to broaden the participation of faculty in funded research/scholarship.

The *College Research Office* continues to offer regular workshops that are designed to (a) introduce new researchers to the funding environment, (b) orient them to the grant process, and (c) review the basics of proposal preparation. Information and schedules for College and Provost sponsored workshops can be found at

[http://www.usc.edu/schools/college/research/ra/training\\_education/](http://www.usc.edu/schools/college/research/ra/training_education/).

We strongly encourage you to contact the College Research Office for help with proposal preparation, including drafting a budget, completing forms, and preparing documents ([research@college.usc.edu](mailto:research@college.usc.edu) or 740-2531). This office will also help provide preliminary reader(s) of draft proposals for faculty in departments that lack experienced mentoring in this area.

In addition, we are pleased to announce the following *new* initiatives:

University of  
Southern California

3551 Trousdale Parkway

Bovard Administration  
Building, Room 304

Los Angeles,  
California 90089-4012

Tel: 213.740.2531  
Fax: 213.740.8887

## **I. The New Investigator Seedling Initiative**

The *College New Investigator Seedling Initiative* is intended to aid in the preparation of extramural funding proposals by New Investigators (tenured and tenure-track) in the College. Under this initiative the Dean's office will contribute one-time seed research funds of up to \$2500 to College eligible faculty who commit to submitting a nationally competitive extramural funding proposal. This money is designed to support proposal preparation, data analysis, pilot data collection, preliminary research, or similar activities. Because this initiative is designed to support new investigators, faculty are not eligible for this program if they previously have been awarded nationally competitive extramural funding as a PI or co-PI; also, faculty are ineligible if they currently have more than 10K available to them in research funds (including start-up funds).

*The Seedling fine print:* Faculty interested in participating in this initiative should submit via email to Vice Dean Dani Byrd ([dbyrd@college.usc.edu](mailto:dbyrd@college.usc.edu)) a preliminary abstract of the proposal, the sponsor to whom the proposal is likely to be submitted, and the relevant call for proposals from the sponsor, if available. Please note that if a proposal is not submitted, the faculty member may become ineligible for a Faculty Research Award the following year. Chairs, please communicate this initiative to your new hires as they come into the College. This initiative is subject to annual renewal.

## **II. The New Investigator "Seal-the-Deal" Initiative**

The *College New Investigator Seal-the-Deal Initiative* is intended to increase the likelihood of a successful proposal for extramural research funding by New Investigators (tenured and tenure-track) in the College. Because this initiative is designed to support new investigators, faculty are not eligible for this program if they previously have been awarded nationally competitive extramural funding as a PI or co-PI. Eligible faculty who have submitted a nationally competitive extramural funding application that has been positively reviewed but has not yet succeeded in being funded, can request, subject to the provisions below, one course release or a research stipend of \$3000 to aid them in the preparation of a resubmission of the application to the funding agency (or under special circumstances, the submission of a closely related application).

*The Seal-the-Deal fine print:* Eligible faculty interested in participating in this initiative should submit via email to [dbyrd@college.usc.edu](mailto:dbyrd@college.usc.edu): their reviewed proposal, the reviews received (for some sponsors these can be explicitly requested when not provided automatically), the score (if any), and any information relevant to the likelihood a successful resubmission. If no reviews are available, a statement from an experienced colleague in your discipline about the merits of the proposal would be helpful. The applicant should indicate how the time frame of the requested course release would be appropriate for the re-submission of the proposal. The Deans will work with the applicant and the applicant's Department Chair to determine the most satisfactory course for release. Any course release resulting from this initiative will be granted only once per proposal, may not be used if other course releases or buy-outs for the relevant semester have already been approved, and may not result in a faculty member having fewer than 3 units of teaching obligation in the relevant year. The resubmission must occur during the time of the course release or shortly thereafter. If the time frame of the resubmission is too short to permit the necessary changes to scheduling and staffing or if it falls over the summer, the stipend choice must be elected. This initiative is subject to annual renewal.