

VSU Faculty Research Seed Grant (FRSG) Program

Guidelines and Application Instructions

Competitions for Fiscal Year 2013-2014 Funds

Program Description:

The Faculty Research Seed Grant (FRSG) Program is a competitive internal funding program for Valdosta State University faculty. It is financially supported by the Division of Academic Affairs, managed by the Faculty Research & Scholarship Committee (FRSC) of the Faculty Senate, and administered by the Office of Sponsored Programs & Research Administration (OSPRA).

The **goal** of the FRSG Program is to support faculty research and creative activity in the furtherance of the scholarly mission of the University. Program **objectives** are:

- To assist early-stage scholars in establishing themselves as independent investigators or artists, thus increasing their chances of scholarly publication, extramural funding for research, or comparable recognition in the creative arts. Non-tenured faculty who are on tenure track and who have not served as a principal investigator/project director on a competitively funded federal award (excluding fellowships and individual training awards) are considered early-stage scholars.
- To assist established scholars in transitioning to a new avenue of inquiry or creative activity; in performing exploratory high risk research for which external funding is currently unlikely; in determining the feasibility of conducting a larger, more complex research or creative project; in developing preliminary data to support an extramural funding application; or, in the arts, to pursue a new avenue of creative activity. Established scholars are faculty who are tenured and/or who have served as a principal investigator/project director on a competitively funded federal award (excluding fellowships and individual training awards).

Faculty initiated research and creative activity are broadly defined as any creative, critical, scholarly, and/or empirical activity that expands, clarifies, reorganizes, or develops knowledge or artistic perception.

Research is more specifically defined as a systematic process of investigation or study that will produce facts or theories or will demonstrate or apply such knowledge to problem-solving within the discipline or in society. Results of research funded by the FRSG Program should be worthy of submission for publication in refereed journals or meet comparable dissemination standards for the discipline and/or should serve as a foundation for an external funding application.

Creative activity includes development of creative works in, or technology supporting, the disciplines of arts education, dance, design, folk and traditional arts, literature, mass media, museums, music, music theatre, opera, theatre, and visual arts. Creative activity funded by the FRSG Program should result in performance and/or juried exhibition of new works or some other form of public dissemination appropriate for the discipline.

Award Information:

A total of \$100,000 per fiscal year is available for the FRSG program, with half available for each of two competitions. In the event all of the funds available for the first competition are not awarded, the remainder will be added to the available funds for the second competition. It is anticipated that 8 – 12 awards will be made in each competition.

Maximum award amounts are as follows:

- Individual Faculty Award - \$5,000
- Collaborative Award (two or more eligible faculty members) - \$7,500

Application Deadlines:

For Fiscal Year 2013-2014 funding, there will be two calls for proposals, one in April 2013 and one in September 2013. Subject to continued Strategic Focus funding for Fiscal Year 2013-2014, funds awarded in the April 2013 competition will be available for use on July 1, 2013. Funds awarded in the second competition will be available to grantees by mid-November 2013. Although the research/creative activity may continue beyond the close of the fiscal year, the funds must be expended by June 30, 2014, in accordance with fiscal year-end procedures. The following submission deadlines, anticipated award dates, award start and end dates, and first project report dates apply for Fiscal Year 2013-2014 awards.

Application Deadline¹	Anticipated Award Date	Award Start Date²	Award End Date	First Project Report Due	Funds Available
03/18/2013	04/26/2013	07/01/2013	06/30/2014	12/15/2014	Approx. \$50,000
09/30/2013	11/11/2013	Upon Award	06/30/2014	12/15/2014	Approx. \$50,000

¹Signed proposals must be submitted to OSPRA by 5:30 P.M. on the date noted. Late proposals will not be accepted.

²Contingent upon continued Strategic Focus funding in Fiscal Year 2013-2014.

Eligibility:

All non-tenured faculty who are on tenure track and all tenured faculty at the instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, or professor level are eligible for FRSG funding, including those with administrative assignments. Eligible faculty may apply individually or collaboratively. Collaborations may involve only other eligible VSU faculty members.

Lecturers/senior lecturers, full-time temporary instructors, visiting faculty, and part-time personnel are not eligible for FRSG funding.

Any faculty member who received a FRSG award for the previous fiscal year is ineligible to apply for Fiscal Year 2013-2014 funding (i.e., a faculty member is eligible for an award only every other year).

Any faculty member who previously received a Faculty Research Seed Grant who is delinquent on any reports is also ineligible.

Any faculty member who receives FRSG funding is expected to generate at least one scholarly product that results in part or in whole from the FRSG support within three years following the year of receipt of the award. Scholarly products include a manuscript submission to an academic journal, a peer-reviewed publication, or a comparable standard for the discipline; submission of a research proposal to an external funding agency; or, for creative activity, performance or showing of new works or submission of works for juried competition or performance. Failure to meet this expectation may negatively affect the faculty member's ability to compete for future FRSG funding. It should be noted, however, that the Faculty Research & Scholarship Committee recognizes that research, by its very nature, is unpredictable, and that an investigation or creative activity may not produce results that are appropriate for dissemination. FRSG recipients who find themselves in this situation when applying for additional FRSG funding are advised to provide an explanation in the application.

Ineligible Activities:

FRSG funding is not intended to support the following:

- Faculty development activities, such as learning a new technique, language, or methodology or completing a thesis or dissertation;
- Departmental curriculum development, such as preparation of curriculum materials, curriculum modifications, and student interest surveys (Note: Curriculum development that includes empirical study of the effectiveness

of new program formats or techniques and content that are generalizable and have application beyond VSU are considered research eligible for FRSG funding);

- Professional or public service or provision of consulting services;
- Projects judged to be profit-oriented (such as production of a textbook or development of works of art intended for sale);
- Institutional research (i.e., studies related directly to the operation of the University that are not generalizable and have little application beyond VSU); or
- Research that is conducted by a graduate student to meet thesis or dissertation requirements.

Allowable Expenditures:

FRSG funds may be used for the following types of expenditures to support research or creative activity:

- Release time during the academic year at part-time faculty rate plus applicable employer-paid fringe benefits (maximum of one course release, subject to approval of the department head);
- Summer compensation for nine-month faculty (maximum 10% of base salary; total summer compensation limit established by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents applies);
- Employer's share of fringe benefits on summer compensation;
- Graduate and/or undergraduate student assistants (including Graduate Assistant tuition) or other assistants at a data collection site;
- Travel required for data collection and/or collaboration that is necessary for project development;
- Supplies and materials that are directly related to the conduct of the project, such as postage, photocopying, datasets, illustrations and photographs, art and performance supplies, chemicals and other expendables, software, and small equipment items (<\$3,000 per unit), etc. (Software and small equipment requests require documentation of lack of availability from IT, Media Services, Library, and/or the department, as appropriate);
- Contractual services provided by an external vendor, such as transcription services, data entry assistance, analytical services, editing and indexing services, etc.;
- Telecommunications costs for telephone surveys or for Internet survey services (e.g., SurveyMonkey, SurveyGizmo, etc.);
- Equipment (\geq \$3,000 per unit) that is specific to the proposed project, not normally provided by the department or other university departments, and/or is not an appropriate request for the University's equipment pools (requires explanation with signature of department head);
- Repair of used equipment donated to the University in the current fiscal year, provided the equipment is required for completion of the proposed project; and
- Research participant payments.

FRSG funds may not be used for the following types of expenditures:

- General supplies and items that normally are or should be provided by the applicant's department;
- Literature searches;
- Journal subscriptions or book purchases;
- Memberships in professional organizations;
- General conference travel and travel for presentation/dissemination of project results;
- Dissemination of research results or creative works (e.g., publication page charges, shipment of art work to galleries, production of shows, etc.);
- General telecommunications;
- Repair of donated equipment in inventory before the beginning of the current fiscal year; or
- Routine or ongoing maintenance of equipment.

Review Process and Evaluation Criteria:

Late proposals will not be accepted. In order to be eligible for review, a proposal must be complete and in a single package (either a single PDF file or a hardcopy). Questions about eligibility for review will be decided by the Chair of the Faculty Research & Scholarship Committee, who may, at his/her discretion, consult with the entire committee. Faculty Research & Scholarship Committee members will independently review eligible proposals and assign a preliminary score to each based on the criteria below. Preliminary scores will be averaged for each proposal and a preliminary ranking will be established. The committee will meet face-to-face to discuss the applications, using the preliminary rankings to guide discussion. The committee will decide as a whole whether any proposed budget should be reduced or, in rare circumstances, increased, if the proposal is ultimately funded. Following the group discussion, committee members will independently finalize their scores. A final average score will be calculated for each proposal and a final rank order established.

The maximum proposal score is 100. Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- **Alignment of the project with FRSG program goal and objectives (maximum 30 points)**
- **Intellectual merit of the proposed project (maximum 20 points)**
- **Clarity and appropriateness of the research/project design and procedures (maximum 20 points)**
- **Appropriateness of the budget and strength of the budget justification (maximum 10 points)**
- **Likelihood of external funding and/or scholarly publication/presentation of results (maximum 20 points)**

Only those proposals with an average score of 70 and higher will be automatically eligible for funding. Awards will be made in rank order until available funds are exhausted or until all proposals scoring 70 or higher are funded, whichever occurs first. The size of the award may be decreased (or in rare cases, increased) at the committee's discretion based on the nature of the work and the budget justification provided.

In the event funds available for the second competition of the fiscal year are not exhausted, unfunded proposals from the first competition that scored 70 or higher will be funded in rank order. If funds still remain, the committee will consider proposals from the second competition that scored below a 70 on a case-by-case basis for possible funding. Funding of any proposals below the 70 score will be decided by majority vote, and the committee may require changes to the proposed project as a condition of award. The committee may also allow funds to lapse if remaining proposals are not deemed to be of the quality that reasonably assures peer-reviewed publication or other scholarly outcomes. At all times, the committee's decisions will be based on proposal quality without regard to discipline, department, college, or faculty rank/status represented.

Following the selection process, all applicants will be informed of funding decisions and the final average proposal score will be provided to each applicant.

The funding decisions of the Faculty Scholarship and Research Committee are final and cannot be appealed.

Other Terms and Conditions of Award:

- For collaborative proposals, the faculty member whose name first appears on the Application Cover Page will be responsible for financial management of the award and reporting.
- All FRSG funds must be expended in accordance with University policy and procedures by the close of fiscal year (June 30). **Deadlines for fiscal year close must be observed.** Unexpended funds cannot be carried over to the next fiscal year.
- If a proposal is withdrawn before the Faculty Research & Scholarship Committee makes a final funding decision, the submission is not counted.
- Awards may not be deferred to a future fiscal year. If funds cannot be used in the year for which they are awarded, they will be deobligated and, if possible, awarded to another applicant. The faculty member may reapply in a future year, subject to the limitation on proposal resubmission.

- Nine-month faculty may request FRSG funding for summer salary (not to exceed 10% of base pay). However, if the awardee resigns his/her position at the end of the preceding academic year, he/she will forfeit the summer salary and associated fringe benefits.
- Funds may be requested for one course release during the academic year. A proposed course release must be approved in advance by the department head, as evidenced by signature on the budget page. If an award includes funding for a course release, no teaching overload or extra compensation for additional duties will be permitted during the semester of the FRSG funded release.
- The FRSG program is funded in part with Strategic Focus funds, requiring long-term outcomes assessment. Award recipients will be required to report annually, for up to six (6) years following expiration of the award, on scholarly products and extramural funding received that resulted in full or in part from the work funded by the FRSG. Failure to provide such reports will make the recipient ineligible for future FRSG funding until delinquent reports are received.
- FRSG recipients must acknowledge support of the research/creative activity by the Valdosta State University Faculty Research Seed Grant program in any publication or presentation of results.
- In the event a project funded by the FRSG program generates unanticipated sales or royalty income for the faculty member at any time in the future, the faculty member agrees to report such income to the Faculty Research & Scholarship Committee and to reimburse the University the amount of the award from the first proceeds received.

Application Instructions:

With exception of the forms provided, all proposal sections should be prepared in one of the following typefaces:

- Arial - 11 points or larger
- Times New Roman - 11 points or larger

A font size two (2) points smaller may be used for mathematical formulas or equations; figure, table or diagram captions; and when using a symbol font to insert Greek letters or special characters.

Use **1" margins** all around and **double space between paragraphs**.

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1. **APPLICATION COVER SHEET:** Download, complete, and sign the Application Cover Sheet. Use the checklist to ensure that you have included all required sections of the proposal and have met formatting requirements.
 2. **PROJECT NARRATIVE:** The Project Narrative is comprised of six (6) sections. Each section of the narrative should be separately identified. The **maximum length of the Project Narrative is four (4) pages, single-spaced**. A maximum length for some sections is suggested but is not mandatory. A Project Narrative that exceeds the four-page maximum for all sections combined will be ineligible for review. **Please note that proposals may not be reviewed by specialists in your specific discipline. Care should be taken to write your proposal so that it can be understood by an educated general audience.** Include the following sub-sections (**with headers**) in the Project Narrative:
 - A. **Project Summary (maximum one-half page suggested):** The Project Summary should be a self-contained description of the activity that would result if the proposal were funded. It should include a statement of the need for, or importance of, the proposed research/creative activity, project objective(s), a brief description of methods to be employed, and anticipated outcomes. The summary should be written in the

third person and **should be understandable to an educated lay reader.** (Note that the Project Summary may be disseminated broadly if the project is funded.)

- B. **Alignment with FRSG Goal and Objectives (maximum one-half page suggested):** Provide an explanation of how the proposed project aligns with the objectives of the Faculty Research Seed Grant Program as stated in the program guidelines. **Tenured faculty must clearly explain how the proposed project differs from their current research or creative program or otherwise meets eligibility requirements for established scholars.**
 - C. **Background and Objective(s):** Provide an overview of the research project or creative activity, including a clear statement of the problem/challenge, the objective(s) of the proposed project, and a brief review of the pertinent literature or state of the art.
 - D. **Intellectual Merit:** Provide a statement regarding the intellectual merit of the proposed activity. Intellectual merit may encompass the importance of the proposed activity to advancing knowledge and understanding within the field or across different fields; the extent to which the proposed activity suggests and explores creative and original concepts; the conception and organization of the proposed activity; and/or special access to resources.
 - E. **Project Plan:** Describe the methodology to be used to conduct this research or creative activity. Include a project timeline. (Note: Although funds must be spent by the close of the fiscal year in which they are awarded, the timeline may extend beyond expiration of funds.) The description should reflect the nature of the project. Quantitative and qualitative research projects should clearly describe the research design and the methods for acquiring and analyzing data. Creative projects, such as those in the humanities and fine arts, may include a description of the works to be examined, research sources (e.g., library and manuscript collections), and an appropriate plan for carrying out the work. **If the proposed project is a collaboration, clearly describe the roles of the applicant and all collaborators.**
 - F. **Anticipated Results:** Describe the anticipated results of the project and how they fit into any larger, long-term research or creative plan. Identify possible avenues of dissemination (i.e., journal, conference, or venue names) that meet standards for scholarship in the discipline and/or any possible sources of external support (i.e., sponsor name and program) that will be pursued to fund continuation, expansion, or next steps in the research/creative project or plan.
3. **REFERENCES CITED (no page limit):** Use the publishing conventions of the discipline. **List only those references cited in the Project Narrative.** If the document is available electronically, the website address also should be identified. **Do not include other bibliographic references.**
 4. **BUDGET:** Provide a detailed budget using the downloadable Budget Template. Please review the FRSG Guidelines regarding allowability of costs before completing the budget. If a course release is requested, secure the department head's signature where indicated. **The budget total may not exceed the maximum award (\$5,000 for an individual or \$7,500 for a collaboration).** The Committee understands that the FRSG award will rarely cover all the costs of a particular research or creative project; there is no need to quantify other costs associated with the project in the budget form.
 5. **BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (maximum one page, single-spaced):** Justify the funding request in narrative form. Each individual line item request on the Budget Request Form must be fully explained and carefully justified.

If software, computer equipment, or small equipment items such as audio recorders, cameras, and the like are requested, **attach additional documentation that the requested items are not available for use from IT, Media Services, and/or the department,** as appropriate. For a major (\geq \$3,000) equipment request, attach an additional page, signed by the department head, that explains why the department cannot provide the equipment and why a request for equipment pool funds is not appropriate. These documentation/justification materials do not count in page limits.

Applicants are advised that the reviewers rely heavily on the Budget Justification when making decisions about funding. Explanations that are cursory or justifications that are weak can result in proposal rejection or substantial reduction of award amount.

6. **BIOSKETCH:** Provide a biographical sketch (**maximum two pages**). For collaborative proposals, include a biosketch for each person. The biosketch should include the following.
- A. **Professional Preparation:** Provide a list of undergraduate and graduate education and post-doctoral training. For undergraduate and graduate education, provide institution name, major, degree, and year. For post-doctoral training, indicate institution, area, and inclusive dates (years).
 - B. **Appointments:** List, in reverse chronological order, all academic/professional appointments beginning with the current appointment.
 - C. **Scholarly Works and Related Activities:**
 - 1. **Scholarly Works Most Closely Related to Proposed Project:** List up to, **but no more than, five (5)** peer-reviewed publications, invited presentations, books or book chapters, juried exhibitions, performances, patents, copyrights, software systems developed, or other scholarly activities most closely related to the proposed project.
 - 2. **Other Significant Scholarly Works:** List up to, **but no more than, five (5)** other significant scholarly works, whether or not related to the proposed project.
 - 3. **Related Activities:** List up to, **but no more than, five (5)** activities that relate to the proposed project.

For publications, use the publishing conventions of your discipline. If the document is available electronically, the URL should be identified. List only those unpublished manuscripts that have been submitted or accepted for publication (along with anticipated date of publication).

7. **OTHER RESEARCH/CREATIVE ACTIVITY SUPPORT SOUGHT AND RECEIVED:** Use the downloadable Other Research/Creative Activity Support Sought and Received form to report both internal and external requests for financial assistance to support your research or creative endeavors during the past five (5) years. Instructions are included at the top of the form. For collaborative proposals, include a form for each person. Use additional pages as necessary. If you have not sought internal or external funding in the past five(5) years, enter your name in the form and check the box to the right. **Do not omit this form; failure to include it will render your proposal ineligible for review.**
8. **FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, AND OTHER RESOURCES (maximum 1 page, single-spaced):** Describe the non-FRSG funded institutional and external resources that will be used in the conduct of this project. Resources may include office, laboratory, or studio space; use of equipment; student research assistance; supplies and materials; travel support; photocopying services; computer equipment and software; access to university archives or collections; etc. **Do not omit this form; failure to include it will render your proposal ineligible for review.**

Appendices, letters of support/collaboration, and other supplementary documents are not permitted and, if attached, will not be forwarded to the reviewers for consideration. All pertinent information for review must be contained within the application sections described above.

Submission Instructions:

Proposals must be received by the Office of Sponsored Programs & Research Administration no later than close of business (5:30 P.M.) on the deadline dates noted above. Late submissions will not be considered. No exceptions will be made. Proposals may be submitted in one of two ways:

1. One hardcopy of the proposal, with required signatures included, may be submitted to OSPRA in the Psychology Building, Suite 3100. Applicants are encouraged to hand-deliver the proposal rather than using campus mail, as no exceptions will be made for misplaced mail and/or late delivery. Please ensure that the OSPRA staff person receiving your submission notes on your proposal the date and time received.
2. The scanned proposal may be submitted electronically as a single PDF attachment to an email to FRSG@valdosta.edu. (Note that the “sent” electronic time stamp will be used to determine if the submission deadline is met.) The proposal must be signed and assembled in order with each page properly oriented, and the document must be legible. Software for managing PDF files, such as Adobe Acrobat Pro, may be required. Adobe Acrobat Pro is available for a nominal cost from the VSU Division of Information Technology.

!!! IMPORTANT FINAL REMINDER !!!

Please review your proposal carefully before submission to ensure that you have met all the content and formatting requirements and that it is written for an educated lay audience. Incomplete information or failure to follow formatting requirements and page limits may disqualify your proposal from consideration.