

## **Proposal to Merge the Research Excellence Initiative and General Research Fund in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences**

### **Attachments:**

1. General Research Fund (GRF) application materials and forms (Proposal to eliminate)
2. Research Excellence Initiative (REI) application materials and forms (Proposal to modify these materials to include GRF)
3. REI Progress Report Form
4. REI Project Report for Year 1

### **Proposal:**

**We are proposing to merge the GRF and the REI in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences by combining the (1) call for applications, (2) application materials, and (3) panel reviews.** Merged panels will consist of faculty reviewers from multiple departments who serve as discipline experts as well as those who can evaluate multi-disciplinary proposals. For GRF allocations, we will continue funding each category (School of the Arts, Behavioral Science, Humanities, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Social Sciences) as required by the Office of Research. Also, GRF and REI awards will never be combined within a single award due to different rules and reporting for these separate sources of funding. Furthermore, GRF proposals will be reviewed within the Discipline-Specific category of the REI (DSR, page 9 in the REI application materials) and the application materials for REI will be modified to reflect the addition of GRF funding sources.

### **Why the request:**

1. We see an advantage in soliciting one call for proposals each year (rather than two) and combining them under one review process in order to select the best research across the College in any given year. This avoids the pitfalls of two separate processes where proposal quality may vary between the two.
2. We view this process as more equitable because it involves a similar review process for all faculty rather than some groups being reviewed within their department and other groups being reviewed across departments as was occurring in the former GRF process.
3. The combined process is more equitable because both GRF and REI funding will be determined by a review panel based on the quality of individual proposals and their respective budgets rather than unilateral decisions to use funds for other purposes that are currently being made within single departments.
4. This merger now allows a few faculty who previously had no option to apply to GRF under the old system to now be represented in the process.
5. We are challenged in the College to find enough reviewers for multiple panels for the REI in the fall and a new set of panelists in the spring. The combined panel reviews for REI and GRF will reduce the number of panelists needed each year and will save faculty service time.

6. We have received a \$9 return in external funding by faculty for every \$1 provided through the REI in year 1, and therefore we believe that our review process for REI is exceptional and will serve to enhance the return on investment for GRF resources as well.
7. The REI has a procedure in place for receiving final reports documenting award outcomes (attached). This is not the case for the GRF and this merger would therefore allow for better tracking of GRF outcomes using similar reporting requirements.
8. The faculty have stated in many comments that they prefer the REI application materials over the GRF materials and this merger would solely rely on the REI materials that were modified to include GRF funding sources and would eliminate forms that result in many complaints.

**Proposed Annual Calendar for REI and GRF (following merger):**

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| Early September:  | Call for GRF and REI applications  |
| November:         | Receive total allocations for REI from the College and total allocations for GRF from the Office of Research |
| Early December:   | Proposals for both REI and GRF are due   |
| January-February: | Panel reviews  |
| March:            | List of REI awards sent to the College and list of GRF awards sent to the Office of Research                 |