

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The **Connecting through Research Partnerships (Connect) Program** sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Research (VPR) at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) and the Executive Office at Southwest Research Institute (SwRI), is a grant opportunity offered to enhance greater scientific collaboration between the two institutions and to increase both UTSA's and SwRI's research-funding base with cross-campus collaborative programs. The program encourages interaction between investigators in support of the acquisitions of established extramural, peer-reviewed research funding. This agreement provides unprecedented opportunities for researchers to work together in addressing issues of mutual interest and need.

The two main objectives of this program are to provide seed funding to:

1. Support the completion of an inter-institutional project, and
2. Enable the development and submission of proposals for extramural funding of research from a competitive granting agency either domestic or international, ultimately resulting in contracts from industry.

Preference will be given to proposals that:

1. Have a high potential for extramural funding
2. Have significant scientific merit
3. Represent a new direction for the Principal Investigator(s)
4. Build or strengthen cross-disciplinary research partnerships between UTSA and SwRI

Priority Areas of Funding: UTSA and SwRI have agreed on several priority areas listed below. The proposal must have direct application to solving industrial, governmental, or societal problems.

1. Materials Science including Structures
2. Chemistry/Chemical Engineering
3. Cloud Computing/Big Data/Cyber Security
4. Biomedicine
5. Energy, including Alternate and Sustainable Energy
6. Climate Change/Environment

ELIGIBILITY

The PI(s) from UTSA must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member. The PI(s) from SwRI must be a full time employee. Proposals must include multiple (2 or more: at least one from each institution) interacting investigators with PI status from both UTSA and SwRI. Projects may also include scientific/educational/industrial partners from the south Texas region; however, only UTSA and SwRI activities will be funded through this program.

FUNDING LIMITS

The total maximum amount to be requested is \$125,000 per award. Due to the indirect cost rate variation between the two institutions, up to \$50,000 will be granted to the UTSA PI and up to \$75,000 will be granted to the SwRI PI. It is anticipated that two projects will be funded, subject to available resources

GRANT PERIOD

September 1, 2018 to August 31, 2019.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

UTSA will be the lead institution for collection and administration of this grant program. There will be one submission cycle per year with deadlines at the close of business (5:00 pm) on March 31, 2018. Awarded funds will be available on September 1, 2018.

The PIs will submit one combined proposal through the UTSA CAYUSE system. The UTSA PI should contact their respective Research Service Center Director at the start of the proposal process.

RSC Contact List: <http://research.utsa.edu/contact-research/service-center-directory/>

If a Nondisclosure Agreement is required due to the sharing of proprietary or confidential information, one should be drafted (by either organization's contract office) and approved by both parties prior to funding distribution.

All required proposal elements shall be contained in a single, text-searchable Adobe Acrobat pdf file. The proposal must include the following, in the order shown below:

1. Proposal Cover Page (Use Attachment A)
2. Project Description: 5 page maximum
3. Joint Work Plan: 2 page maximum
4. UTSA Awardee Requirements (UTSA PI Must Sign Attachment B)
5. SwRI Awardee Requirements (SwRI PI Must Sign Attachment C)
6. Budget Summary (Use Attachment D) 1 page maximum
7. Budget Justification: 2 page maximum
8. Biographical Sketch: 2 page maximum for each PI/co-investigator

1. PROPOSAL COVER PAGE (USE ATTACHMENT A)

The Proposal Cover Page must include a clear, well-written executive summary that summarizes the essential content of the proposal – including the objectives, benefits, and significance of the proposed research effort.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project description must include, in this order:

- Project overview;
- Scientific merit and significance of the research – include how this project is a new direction from the PIs existing research efforts and the potential impact of this new direction;
- Impact of this research on society and application areas where this research can or will be applied;
- Specific goals, objectives, and anticipated results;
- Description of methods including anticipated barriers or technical difficulties;
- Specify the resources needed for this project (equipment, materials, etc.) and indicate their availability; and
- Describe the potential for extramural funding to support the proposed research in future years.

The project description must be concise, limited to five typed, single-spaced pages with a Times New Roman font, size of 12 points, including graphics. One-inch margins must be maintained. Additional information in an appendix is not allowed. A violation of this format will result in your proposal not being reviewed.

A list of references/citations, if necessary, should be listed after the Project Description section. This list does not count against page limitations.

3. JOINT WORK PLAN

Summarize the task-level activities to be performed by UTSA and SwRI as they relate to the overall project's objectives. Describe areas of interdependence, the coordination and handoff of interim project materials and data, and the timeline of each organization's participation in the overall project effort. While no specific graphical format or presentation is required, this section is expected to contain a mixture of narrative and graphical information to aid the evaluators' assessment of the proposed scope, roles, and responsibilities within the team, and collaboration environment.

4. UTSA AWARDEE REQUIREMENTS (SIGN ATTACHMENT B)

Each UTSA PI must have this document signed by their Department Chair, acknowledging that they have also read all responsibilities and obligations of the PI, their Department, and the respective institution.

5. SWRI AWARDEE REQUIREMENTS (SIGN ATTACHMENT C)

6. BUDGET SUMMARY (USE ATTACHMENT D)

Awards will be up to \$125,000 for a grant performance period of September 1, 2018 to August 31, 2019. Due to the indirect cost rate variation between the two institutions, up to \$50,000 will be granted to the UTSA PI and up to \$75,000 will be granted to the SwRI PI.

Roll over to the next fiscal year is not allowable and project extensions are not allowable. Funding that is not spent or encumbered by each organization's funding timeline requirements will automatically revert back to the originating office.

Budget summaries must be submitted on the approved budget page (Use Attachment D).

7. BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

A budget justification (no more than 2 pages total) must be submitted providing details for all proposed expenditures, for both institutions.

For each institution, the budget justification must address each budget line item on Attachment D that contains a proposed cost. The budget justification must convey an integrated understanding of the types of resources (labor, materials, other) necessary to complete the proposed effort. The proposed budget for each institution must conform to that institution's requirements for internally funded research or grant activity.

Labor: Describe the labor types and levels of effort being proposed. The PIs from each institution must be identified by name; other labor can be characterized by labor category or type and level of effort. Since each institution may use the term 'level of effort' differently, define the basis for level of effort as presented in the justification. If faculty summer salary is proposed, identify that separately from the regular labor proposed.

Non-Labor: Describe the type, amount, and estimated cost of allowable purchased materials, services, or travel for the proposed effort.

UTSA Budget Considerations

Grant funds **can** be used for the following:

- Salaries and/or wages for faculty, postdoctoral fellows, graduate and undergraduate students. Fringe benefits are paid centrally- *exclude* fringe benefits on the budget template worksheet.
- Supplies but must be justified as needed for project success.
- Expenses for field work, data collection, archival research, training, educational purposes and/or presentations on research, creative or scholarly activities directly related to the proposed project.
- Consultant fees.
- Contracts and sub-awards for activities outside of UTSA but must be clearly and convincingly described as necessary for successful execution of the proposed project.
- Travel to conferences or other conference support if directly related to the proposed work.
- Travel for data collection or other purposes when justified as essential to the project.

Grant funds **cannot** be used for the following:

- Office equipment, including computers or laptops.
- International travel.
- Student travel, unless the student is paid by the grant and directly related to project research.
- Stipends, scholarships and/or tuition.
- Indirect costs (F&A) costs.

SwRI Budget Considerations

Acceptable expenditures of SwRI's internal research funds are described in the IR&D Program Descriptions and Guidelines for Applicants, which is available to SwRI staff.

Generate a formal IR&D cost proposal that captures SwRI's portion of costs only. The formal cost proposal is required internally to demonstrate organizational commitment to the proposed effort. It is also necessary to capture this information for the formal Budget Summary and Budget Justification.

NOTE: This formal cost proposal is a SwRI-internal document. It is not to be released to UTSA, **other than transferring the cost elements and proposal number to Attachment D – Budget Summary.**

8. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Complete for each PI and co-investigator. Do not exceed two pages for each. Each PI may use its own organization's preferred format (NSF, NIH, or SwRI PDS) and content for their biographical sketch for this Connect proposal.

PEER REVIEW

All Connect seed grant program proposals will be reviewed by a committee consisting of up to three (3) senior representatives from SwRI and three (3) from UTSA. Committee members will be chosen by the UTSA Vice President for Research (VPR) and SwRI’s Executive Vice President (EVP). Substitutions will be allowed depending upon the proposal area of expertise. The committee will make a recommendation; however, the UTSA VPR and SwRI EVP will make the final determination on all funding decisions.

Proposals will be evaluated on a 100 point scale. The PIs are expected to include all required proposal components and fully and clearly answer each of the project description questions.

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Maximum Point Allocation</u>
Did proposal address priority areas of funding?	5
Did proposal demonstrate enhancement of cross-disciplinary research partnerships between UTSA and SwRI?	5
Proposal Cover Page w/400 Word Executive Summary	
1. Does the Executive Summary sell?	5
Project Description	
1. Did the project overview adequately convey the scope of work?	5
2. Was the scientific merit and significance of the research explained? Did the proposal address whether the project is a new direction from the PIs existing research efforts and the potential impact of this new direction?	10
3. Was the impact of this research on society and application areas discussed and did the proposal describe where this research can or will be applied?	15
4. Did the proposal describe the specific goals, objectives and anticipated results of this project?	15
5. Was there a description of methods including anticipated barriers or technical difficulties?	10
6. Did the proposal specify the resources needed for this project (equipment, materials, etc.) and indicate their availability?	10
7. Does the proposal address the potential for extramural funding to support the project in future years?	10
Joint Work Plan	
Is the Joint Work Plan executable and realistic? Does it include approaches to resolving barriers or technical difficulties?	10
UTSA Awardee Requirements	Pass/Fail
SwRI Awardee Requirements	Pass/Fail
Budget	Pass/Fail
Budget Justification	Pass/Fail
Biographical Sketch	Pass/Fail
Total Points Possible	100

GRANT ADMINISTRATION

Each PI is responsible for the administration of grant funds within their respective institutions' rules and regulations. In particular, he/she must be certain that over-expenditures do not occur and that all funds are fully expended according to institutional fiscal year end deadlines. All work must be completed in the 12-month performance period.

INTERIM & FINAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

A Project Update Meeting will be requested by the UTSA VPR and SwRI in early March 2019. Each PI is responsible to submit a Final Grant Report no later than September 30, 2019. Awardees will be provided final reporting instructions prior to the start of their project.

Extramural Grant Submission Required

Awardees must produce a new proposal for extramural funding as part of the final reporting requirements within one year of completion of the project. In exceptional cases, where seed funding may prove the project to be ultimately non-competitive, a waiver of the extramural proposal requirement can be requested from the UTSA VPR and SwRI. If neither an extramural proposal nor letter of explanation is submitted, no new Connect research funds will be made available to the PI or co-investigators from either institution until the letter or extramural proposal is submitted. The PIs must submit a report describing the extramural proposal submission details by September 30, 2020.

PROGRAM TIMELINE

December 1, 2017 – Grant Request for Proposals (RFP) Announced
March 31, 2018 – Grant Proposals Due in CAYUSE (by 5:00 pm)
June 1, 2018 – Connect Awardees Announced
September 1, 2018 – Grant Performance Period Begins (Funds Available)
March 1-15, 2019 – Project Update Meeting Requested by UTSA VPR and SwRI
August 31, 2019 – Grant Performance Period Ends and All Funds Must Be Expended
September 30, 2019 – Final Project Report Due
September 30, 2020 – Deadline for Extramural Funding Grant Submission

CONTACT INFORMATION

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If this research proposal is funded, I agree that my acceptance obligates me to:

- 1. Include the following acknowledgement on all publications resulting from this grant award.
2. If human subjects or animal research is involved, protocols to the UTSA Institutional Review Board (IRB) or UTSA Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) must be approved prior to funds being released.
3. Submit at least one extramural proposal for funding to support the future progress of the project, within one year of the completion of the Connect Grant.
4. Adhere to the assigned Connect Grant timeline:
5. Respond to all inquiries and communications from the Office of the Vice President for Research related to the Connect funded project.

Principal Investigator
Signature:
Project Name:
Date:

Department Chair
Approved By:
Department Chair Signature:
Date:

If this research proposal is funded, I agree that my acceptance obligates me to:

1. Include the following acknowledgement on all publications resulting from this grant award.

“This project was funded (fully or in-part) by the University of Texas at San Antonio, Office of the Vice President for Research and Southwest Research Institute.”

2. Submit at least one extramural proposal for funding to support the future progress of the project, within one year of the completion of the **Connect Grant**.
3. Adhere to the assigned **Connect Grant** timeline:
 - September 1, 2018** – Grant Performance Period Begins (Funds Available)
 - March 1-15, 2019** – Project Update Meeting Requested by UTSA and SwRI
 - August 1, 2019** – All UTSA Funds Must Be Spent or Encumbered
 - August 31, 2019** – Grant Performance Period Ends
 - September 30, 2019** – Final Project Report Due
 - September 30, 2020** – Extramural Proposal Submission Report Due
4. Comply with SwRI policies for proposing and executing internal research projects as described in SwRI’s internal OPP and *IR&D Program Descriptions and Guidelines for Applicants*.

Principal Investigator

Signature:	
Project Name:	
Date:	

SwRI Proposal Number:	
Approved By:	
<i>(Per Division or OPP Approval policies)</i>	
Signature of Approval:	



A budget justification (not to exceed two pages) must also be submitted describing each of the proposed line item expenditures for both institutions.

UTSA Budget	
1. Staff Salaries:	
2. Wages:	
3. Faculty Salaries	
4. Equipment:	
5. Travel (Domestic only):	
6. Participant Support Costs:	
7. Material and Supplies:	
8. Other Direct Cost:	
Total <u>UTSA</u> Request:	

SwRI Budget	
1. Total Proposed Labor Cost:	
2. Equipment:	
3. Travel (Foreign or Domestic):	
4. Materials and Supplies:	
5. Services and/or Other Direct Costs:	
Total <u>SwRI</u> Request:	