Funding Incentive Seed Grant Program
Instructions
Deadline: October 31, 2011

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION
The NSF CEMRI (Center of Excellence in Materials Research and Innovation) at the University of Utah announces a competition for Funding Incentive Seed Grants (ISGs) that will support new areas of research for a principal investigator(s) in relation to CEMRI research goals involving the properties and applications of novel materials. Research that is already supported by other sources will not be approved for funding. Gap funding to bridge support between external grants or contracts will not be considered. The applicant(s) must clearly and convincingly demonstrate that the proposed project represents a new direction in materials research for the PI(s), and one that is likely to generate a new research direction for the CEMRI. Thus, the proposal must not have overlap with any existing grants. Seed funding under this program is to be used to successfully compete for research avenues and/or extramural funds to support the project in the long term.

Preference will be given to proposals that:

1. Have significant scientific merit.
2. Have a high potential to lead to new long-term research of novel materials.
3. Build or strengthen cross-disciplinary research partnerships within the CEMRI.
4. Can either be integrated into one of the two Interdisciplinary Research Groups (IRGs) or form the basis of a new IRG. The two existing IRGs are focused on (i) Plasmonics and (ii) Organic Spintronics.
5. Represent a new direction for the PI.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY
An applicant may not be a PI or co-PI on more than one proposal during an application cycle. Proposals that have already been submitted to an extramural agency, or those already reviewed and found non-competitive by an extramural agency will not be reviewed. Applicants must be tenure track faculty in residence at the time of application and be at least 0.75 FTE OR research track faculty of at least 0.75 FTE with a minimum of a one-year residency, in rank, at the University of Utah.

If an application is turned down by the review panel, the PI is allowed one re-submission of a revised proposal on the same subject during the next cycle (~one year later). Revised proposals must indicate changes from the original proposal and respond to reviewer comments.
PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

There will be one submission cycle per year. This year’s deadline is the close of business (5:00 pm) on October 31, 2011. An applicant may submit only a single proposal each cycle, whether individually or in combination with others (see above).

Proposals should be e-mailed to cemri@eng.utah.edu.

If human subject testing or animal research is involved, the PI(s) should provide an IRB or IACUC number or state that approval is pending. IRB or IACUC applications must be approved prior to seed grant funds being released.

The application must include the following:

1. Abstract: 1 page
2. Technical Proposal: limited to 3 pages
3. References: limited to 1 additional page
4. Budget (Excel format: http://www.research.utah.edu/funding/SeedGrantBudget.xls)
5. Current and Pending Support – list yearly direct funds for each grant
6. Biographical Sketch(es): limit 3 pages per PI/co-PI
7. Letter of Support from Department Chair
8. List of 4 potential reviewers – 2 can be within your department and 2 outside your department; must be University of Utah faculty, excluding members of the CEMRI Executive Committee

If any information items requested above are not included at the time of submission, the proposal will not be reviewed.

PROJECT BUDGET

Awards will be up to $40,000 in direct funds for one year with the possibility (on rare occasions) of extension for a second year of support.

Funding is available for salaries and fringe benefits of post doctoral fellows, students, technicians, and other non-faculty project personnel, technical supplies, equipment and miscellaneous expenses.

Grant funds cannot be used for faculty salaries (summer or academic year); travel that is not directly related to project research (e.g., conferences cannot be supported by this grant); consultants; or office equipment, including computers (unless specifically justified).

Personnel time is limited to 12 months of any combination of post doc, technician, or graduate student. An additional 12 months of graduate student time may be budgeted when the application is from multiple departments/programs.

The PI may transfer up to 25% of the award into different categories of spending without written permission from the CEMRI Executive Committee.
PROPOSAL EVALUATION
Applications will be reviewed by University of Utah faculty members, and then evaluated by the CEMRI Executive Committee. Applicants will be informed of the Committee recommendations on or about November 30.

REVIEW CRITERIA
Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

1. Does the proposal have a high chance to generate a new research direction for the CEMRI, which would either be integrated in one of the two existing IRGs or become a new third IRG?
2. Are the significance and merit of the research clearly documented?
3. Have other research projects and/or faculty members been identified to be able to create a new interdisciplinary research group in the near future (2-3 years)?
4. Does the PI(s) provide information necessary to determine if this is a new direction and that the research does not overlap with existing funded projects?
5. Have potential barriers or technical difficulties been identified?
6. Does the PI(s) have the experience necessary to carry out the project?
7. Are the goals, objectives and expected results stated clearly and are they reasonable, given the funds and time provided?
8. Are the methods outlined and do they reflect the goals and objectives stated in the proposal?

GRANT ADMINISTRATION
The Principal Investigator is responsible for the administration of grant funds. In particular, he/she must ensure that over-expenditures do not occur. Capital equipment purchased from the funds is the property of the University of Utah.

If the work cannot be completed in the initial twelve-month period, the Principal Investigator may request one six month extension by sending a letter to the CEMRI office at least one month prior to the end of the project. If the project requires additional funds and time to be completed, the PI must complete another application to compete in the next cycle of the ISG competition.

REPORTING REQUIREMENT
Successful applicants must (1) submit an intermediate report no later than 6 months after the start of the research investigation, (2) submit a final report no later than 2 months after the completion of the grant, and (3) make a presentation as part of the CEMRI annual review. The reports should be submitted to the CEMRI office for an in depth review by the Executive Committee. Timely reports are a precondition for any further participation of seed grant recipients in the CEMRI.