



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Cal Poly Internal Funding Grant Program

Submission Deadline: Thursday, October 8, 2026 @ NOON PDT

Background

Cal Poly is committed to the teacher-scholar model in which faculty integrate excellence in teaching with excellence in research, scholarly and creative activities. The teacher-scholar model enables faculty to fulfill Cal Poly's mission as an institution committed to quality undergraduate and graduate education, to the advancement of knowledge through basic and applied research, to the enrichment of society through creative activities in the arts and humanities, and to serving our community. The Cal Poly Internal Funding Grant Program, supported by funds from the CSU Chancellor's Office and the Cal Poly Office of the Provost, is intended to help faculty remain engaged in their disciplines beyond the classroom and to contribute new knowledge through robust programs of scholarship focused on strengthening California socially, culturally, and economically. The annual funding from the program is intended to provide internal resources to help faculty pursue a broader array of professional activities.

Synopsis of the Program

The Internal Funding Program aims to support faculty engagement through three separate funding options. The program solicits proposals that articulate with any area of the teacher-scholar model.

1. New Initiatives - Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities (RSCA): The primary focus of this track is to provide "seed" funding for all types of research, scholarly, and creative activities. This includes but is not limited to empirical and theoretical research, applied design and development, scholarship of teaching and learning, writing of books, and the production of art and other creative activities. Proposed projects must be related to the generation of new knowledge, and it is incumbent upon the PI to clarify these potential contributions.
2. Continuing Initiatives - Teacher-Scholar Mini Grant (TSMG): The primary focus of this track is to provide "bridge" and/or "closure" funding for all types of research, scholarly, and creative activities. Fundable areas include but are not limited to basic or applied research; artistic, archival, creative, or design products; peer reviewed publications; professional workshop



convenings; operational bridge funding for ongoing projects; develop or institute curricular or co-curricular programs; program assessment; innovative practice; collaborative engagement; or community engaged teaching and learning.

3. Proposal Development Program (PDP): The primary focus of this track is to support faculty in the preparation and submission of external funding proposals.

*Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the info sheets as each funding option has unique budget requirements and review criteria. **Failure to follow the proposal guidelines listed in the RFP and info sheets will result in proposals being returned without review.***

Eligibility

All faculty unit employees are eligible to compete for funding, including lecturers, tenure-track, and tenured faculty. Awards are provided only to those who hold a current appointment for the duration of the program (July 1, 2027 – June 30, 2028); exceptions may be granted but require review by the Office of the Associate Vice Provost of Research and the Dean of the respective college. This funding is intended to provide support to new, early career, tenure-track probationary faculty and lecturers at any stage of their career at Cal Poly. To be eligible to apply as a PI or co-PI, applicants must be faculty (unit 3) employees (i.e. tenure-track, tenured, or lecturer faculty). Non-faculty unit employees (i.e. MPP, staff, etc.) are not eligible to serve as PIs or co-PIs.

Support for temporary personnel: non-unit 3 employees may be compensated as temporary personnel; they must demonstrate that any work on this internally funded program falls outside their regular position duties.

- You may submit one proposal to each funding option (as PI or co-PI). Project topic and scope must be different for each proposal.
- Applicants cannot apply to New Initiatives-RSCA program as a PI if they have received RSCA funding in the preceding 3 award cycles (2024-25 to 2026-27); i.e. the fiscal year for the original active term of the project, not the fiscal year when the PI received the notification of award. This limit does not apply to submissions as a Co-PI.



- Applicants cannot submit a proposal to the Continuing Initiatives-TSMG program as a PI if they have received TSMG funding - twice in the preceding 5 award cycles (2022-23 to 2026-27); i.e. the fiscal year for the original active term of the project, not the fiscal year when the PI received the notification of award. This limit does not apply to submissions as a Co-PI.
- Previous recipients of RSCA funding must submit evidence of external development to demonstrate eligibility. Examples of external development include (but are not limited to): peer-reviewed publication, external funding application/award, public distribution of creative work. Please direct any questions about external development examples to research@calpoly.edu.
- For tenured faculty applying to the New Initiatives/RSCA program, it is the PI's responsibility to provide the reviewers with specific information that makes the case that the proposed research is a new scholarly direction for the PI (please see the "New Scholarly Direction" section on the New Initiatives/RSCA info sheet for more information). In order to be considered for funding, you must address this or your proposal will be considered ineligible. You may refer to your submitted CV as part of this demonstration.
- Applicants can only re-submit the same proposed project three times – one original submission and two resubmissions. Applicants must denote when they are resubmitting a proposal.
- PIs and Co-PIs are not eligible to receive a new grant if they have any past-due progress reports for previous Internal Funding awards (previously denoted as RSCA/TSMG).

Use of Artificial Intelligence

In accordance with external funding agencies, such as NSF, NIH, PRF, DoD, DOE and others, any use of AI should be readily disclosed in the proposal. Original writing takes precedence and offers maximum value to a reviewer. Proposals and topics found to have content or sections substantially developed by AI will be subject to reduced scores and in some cases will be returned without review. All PIs agree to have their proposals evaluated by AI review programs to be deemed eligible for funding. Submission of your proposal to the Internal Funding program constitutes permission to submit your proposal to AI review programs.



Start Date and Duration

Projects may begin on July 1, 2027. However, awards are subject to compliance review (e.g., human subjects, animal subjects, export control, conflict of interest) and project work may not begin until compliance requirements have been met. Additional information will be provided to the PI if the proposed project is awarded. Project spending should be completed by June 15, 2028 and final reports will be due July 1, 2028. Proposal timelines should adhere to the allowable timeframe as the program will not allow for rollover or extensions.

Application Requirements

Applications must be submitted by Thursday, October 8, 2026 by NOON PDT. **No late submissions will be accepted.** PIs are strongly encouraged to submit their proposal early (Standard practice is 24 hours ahead of deadline). Applications must be submitted through the [Cal Poly InfoReady](#) application system. Provided word count limits and page limits must be followed.

Notification and Reporting

Applicants will be notified whether their proposals have been awarded by February 2027. Final project reports are due July 1, 2028. Awardees will be notified towards the end of the project to submit the final report via InfoReady.

Cal Poly Internal Funding Program Support Acknowledgement

Award recipients must use the following language when recognizing support of their project: “This material is based upon work supported by the Cal Poly Internal Funding Program funded by the CSU Chancellor’s Office and the Cal Poly Office of the Provost and awarded by the Cal Poly Office of Research.”

If you have any questions about eligibility requirements, please email research@calpoly.edu. Information about this program can also be found on our websites:

<https://research.calpoly.edu/rsca>

<https://research.calpoly.edu/tsmg>

<https://research.calpoly.edu/pdp>