



Cal Poly Internal Funding Grant Program

New Initiatives - Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activities (RSCA) Program

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

Synopsis of the Program

The [Internal Funding Grant Program](#) is supported by funds from the CSU Chancellor's Office and Cal Poly's Office of the Provost and aims to support faculty engagement through three separate funding options. The program solicits proposals that articulate with any area of the teacher-scholar model.

- [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 principal investigator (PI) to clarify these potential contributions.

Please see the Internal Funding_2027-28 RFP for eligibility details.

Funding Details

Each branch of the Internal Funding program has its own budget restrictions. *Carefully review the appropriate info sheet and ensure that the budget submitted meets the stated requirements.*

Failure to submit an appropriate budget will result in your proposal being returned without review. (Please submit the provided budget template and confirm that all fields match what is entered into the InfoReady application.)

- New Initiatives - RSCA: The budget requests may not exceed \$28,000.
- Faculty compensation. Faculty can request up to \$9,000 in added compensation per faculty member, with no more than \$9,000 of added compensation across all faculty co-PIs in any proposal. Do not list staff as co-PIs; they may be included in the temporary personnel section. Total amount received may be less after benefits.

You may request additional compensation for the months when you plan to do the work directly related to the funding. Co-PI salary should be listed in field "non-PI Faculty in Project (\$)." Even though you may be equal partners, please select one person as PI and the other(s) will be co-PI/Non-PI.

- Assigned time. The maximum amount that can be requested is six Weighted Teaching Units (WTUs) per project and per person in an award cycle. Please use the estimated replacement rate of \$3,887 for budgeting assigned time.



- Support for student researchers (undergraduate and graduate).
- Support for temporary personnel. This may include staff, consultants, and/or collaborators. Nonfaculty (unit 3) employees (excluding MPPs) must demonstrate how their work on this internally funded program falls outside their regular position duties.
- Supplies, consumables, services (like printing and publishing), and equipment.
- Travel. **Conference travel (including conference registration and virtual attendance) is not allowed for the New Initiatives/ RSCA program.** All other travel (including virtual attendance) must contribute to the proposed scope of work (e.g. field work, required workshops, trainings, etc.). Travel reimbursement rates will be based on [Cal Poly travel guidelines](#) and must adhere to any restrictions in place at the time of travel.
- Incentives for participation in human subjects research. Participant incentives must meet CSU and State fiscal requirements. Contact Research Integrity and Compliance and (research-compliance@calpoly.edu) in advance of submitting your proposal if your project includes incentives so we can assist you in making sure your use of incentives is compliant.
- All funds awarded must be used for the specific approved purposes and may not be converted to other uses without authorization by the Office of the Associate Vice Provost of Research.

Proposal Submission

- Proposals are due Thursday, October 8, 2026 @ NOON PDT. **No late submissions will be accepted.** Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their proposals early. (Standard practice is 24 hours ahead of deadline).
- From the InfoReady homepage, select "Log In" in the upper right-hand corner, and click on the blue "Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Login" button. Use your Cal Poly credentials to log in. Then click on the 2027-2028 New Initiatives/ Research, Scholarly & Creative Activities Grant Program link. You will then be able to submit an application. Please remember that you will apply by entering data into InfoReady text fields as described below (rather than a single PDF proposal). Please save your application, as you go.
- If you have questions regarding this request for proposals, contact research@calpoly.edu or call 805-756-1508. You may also visit our [website](#). The Office of Research must use the InfoReady Template from the Chancellor's Office, which has questions that unfortunately can not be edited. Please refer to the guide below.



Application Requirements

The proposal should be written for reviewers who are not experts in the applicant's specific field. It is incumbent upon the applicant to write their proposal so that their non-disciplinary colleagues can judge the merit of their proposals. If involving students, please explain how the work is educationally beneficial to students. Proposals will be submitted through [InfoReady](#). Please refer to the InfoReady template for all application fields. Please note, sections have maximum word limits. We have provided instructions for key aspects of the application below:

- **Proposal Abstract** (1,000-word limit): Introduce the proposed work.
- **Project timeline** (250-word limit): The grant period will be July 1, 2027 to June 30, 2028. Outline a schedule of tasks/milestones, including in which month(s) they will be commenced/completed, and how they connect to your project objectives.
- **Expected Major Goals and Outcomes** (1000-word limit): Project Narrative should include goals and objectives, methodology, and theoretical justification. Also indicate here the scholarly significance including the impact on student learning and involvement in research. Measures that can be used to evaluate the success of your project should also be included.
- **New scholarly direction** (250-word limit): For tenured faculty PIs, it is necessary to provide the reviewers specific information that demonstrates the proposed research is a new scholarly direction for you. A new scholarly direction may be appropriate for research areas in which you have never published, received prior funding, and for which scholarship is newly emergent. In order to be considered for funding, your proposal must include a specific description to justify the new scholarly direction, or your proposal will be considered ineligible. You may refer to your submitted CV as part of this demonstration. This does not apply to co-PIs.
- **PI Assigned/Release Time (WTUs)**: Please provide the number of WTUs the PI will use as assigned time. Please note that the assigned time is included in the overall total project budget and is calculated at an estimated rate of \$3,887/WTU. Please check with your department chair/head to confirm if 0.5 or 1 WTU are options. There are two questions here from the Chancellor's Office, please enter 0 for PI Assigned/Release Time, and enter the number of WTUs for the PI in the field PI Assigned/Release Time (WTUs). Co-PI assigned time will be captured in the field: Non-PI Assigned/Release Time in the budget section. Although this is not in the budget section, please include the cost of WTUs in your total budget.
- **Release Time Semester**: Please put the quarter the PI is taking assigned time. Please select fall 2027 and/or spring 2028. (Other options apply only to other campuses using this template). Please note the co-PI semester in the budget template, if applicable.



- **Proposal Information section, Participants:** Please click all that are applicable. This will open fields for you to note the number of each. Non-PI faculty: The terms co-applicant, non-PI and Co-PI all refer to Co-PI.
- **Intended Products:** Select the category and provide a description of the expected outcomes and how the findings will be used.
- **Intended External Grant/Contract Funding Agencies:** If the proposed project is preliminary to seeking external funding, provide details on potential sources of funding.
- **Projected PI Additional Compensation:** Please put the amount of additional compensation for PI. *Please put 0 in the Projected PI Summer Salary Costs. Add comp can be paid throughout the year, when you are working on the project. Co-PI compensation will be captured in the field: Projected costs for Non-PI Faculty in Project (\$) in the budget section.
- **Projected Costs for non-PI Faculty:** This is the total amount allocated to Co-PIs for additional compensation.
- **Projected Undergraduate Student Costs and Projected Graduate Student Costs:** the amount allocated for students, and a brief description of their activities in the respective fields. The activities of a student researcher may also be described in the budget justification. Please explain how the work is educationally beneficial to students.
- **Results from past RSCA projects (if applicable):** 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.
- **Projected Support for temporary personnel:** This may include consultants and/or collaborators (non-Cal Poly employees). Provide description of temporary personnel in budget justification.
- **Incentives for Research Participants** (amount): Incentives for research subjects must meet CSU and State fiscal requirements.
- **Projected PI travel costs:** Please input total amount (\$). Travel to conduct research as allowed by any restrictions in place at the time of travel. Conference travel is not allowed. Travel should meet [Cal Poly travel guidelines](#). Please include any co-PI travel here.
- **Projected student travel costs:** Provide the amount allocated to student travel costs, if any. Travel should meet [Cal Poly travel guidelines](#).



- **Budget Justification:** Please provide brief justifications/descriptions for each budget line item in your application. Line items should be clearly related to the Project Narrative. Line items requiring justification may include: PI Assigned Time; PI additional compensation; Costs for non-PI faculty (may include additional compensation, assigned time [# of WTUs multiplied by \$3,887], and travel) - must clearly describe what these costs are for; PI travel; temporary personnel support; incentives for research subjects; student research assistants; student travel; projected printing/publishing costs; other costs such as research-related hosting/hospitality; etc.
- **Project Budget Template:** In addition to filling out the specific budget fields below, applicants are required to submit a project budget template with their InfoReady application. Please use the provided budget template and upload it in the Budget Justification area of the Upload Files section in the InfoReady application.
- **Curriculum Vitae:** Provide a current curriculum vitae for the PI and all Co-PIs. Use NSF biographical sketch style from Science CV, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sciencv/> Note: If a collaborator will be unfunded but will play a Co-PI role, please list them as a Co-PI in your application and include their CV. For purposes of New Initiatives-RSCA, we define a collaborator as personnel with a designated and specific role and a co-PI as personnel who shares responsibility for the overall direction of the project. PIs, co-PIs and collaborators can be paid or unpaid. Please direct any ScienCV questions to the NIH Help Desk: NLMSciencv@mail.nih.gov
- **Citations & Other Grant Support:**
 - Citations or references.
 - List of former, current, or pending support for this or related work, the sources and amount awarded, scholarly products resulting from the support. If you have been previously supported by a Cal Poly Internal Funding Program (RSCA and/or TSMG), results and outcomes must be described.
 - *Only one document is allowed to be uploaded in this section. Please combine into one PDF or Word document.
- **Supplemental Materials** (2-page limit):
 - Graphs, tables, figures, photographs, etc. that support your application. This upload may not exceed 2 pages. **If more than 2 pages are uploaded, only the first 2 pages will be reviewed and the proposal will be penalized.**



Review Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated according to standardized criteria, including intellectual merit; significance and role in advancing the field or discipline; feasibility and benefits to the candidate's profession and/or students.

The following additional criteria will be considered in assigning funding priority. It is incumbent upon the proposer to ensure the applicability to each of these criteria is clearly stated in the proposal:

- Potential of the project to attract future funding
- Support of fields and disciplines with minimal access to external funding
- Involvement of students
- Benefits to Cal Poly (e.g., contributions to the teacher-scholar model; reputation of the institution)

To ensure proposals are equitably reviewed, the committee uses a review model based on full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty across the six colleges, ensuring proposals are reviewed against other proposals in the same college. Each proposal is reviewed by three reviewers from the Academic Senate Grants Review Committee, with one reviewer from the PI's college.

Please note that the Cal Poly Internal Funding Program is highly competitive due to funding limitations, and it is possible that high quality proposals will not be funded.

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.

New Initiatives / RSCA Rating Definitions

Intellectual merit (5 pts)

- What is the potential for the proposed activity to advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields?
- To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?
- Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale?
- Does the plan incorporate a mechanism to assess success?



1	<i>Poor.</i> Deficient in key areas for proposal evaluation or proposal does not provide a clear plan for producing results/knowledge.
2	<i>Fair.</i> Inadequate information provided to evaluate key areas, or proposal is unlikely to produce meaningful/transformational results.
3	<i>Good.</i> Adequate information provided to evaluate all areas and can produce meaningful/transformational creative, scholarly, or scientific contribution.
4	<i>Very Good.</i> Clear information provided to evaluate all areas of proposal, showing that results will likely produce meaningful/transformational creative, scholarly, or scientific contribution.
5	<i>Excellent.</i> Information provided exceeds all criteria necessary to evaluate all areas of proposal, showing that contribution(s) significantly advance creative, scholarly, or scientific contribution.

Objectives & Methodology (4 pts)

- Are the objectives specific, measurable, realistic, and feasible?
- Have the goals been clearly articulated in the timeline?
- Are measures included that can be used to evaluate success, if applicable?
- Are the proposed methods appropriate to the scope of work?

1	<i>Poor.</i> Objectives and methods are lacking. Goals are not specific, measurable, realistic, and feasible. Measures to evaluate success are not described
2	<i>Fair.</i> Objectives and methods are presented. Goals are not specific, measurable, realistic, and feasible. Measures to evaluate success are not well described
3	<i>Good.</i> Objectives and methods are sound. Goals are specific, measurable, realistic, and feasible. Measures to evaluate success are described
4	<i>Excellent.</i> Objectives and methods are sound and well described. Goals are specific, measurable, realistic, and feasible. Measures to evaluate success are clearly articulated.

Broader Impacts (5 pts)

- What is the potential for the proposed activity to benefit society or advance desired societal outcomes?
- To what extent do the proposed activities advance lasting institutional or disciplinary goals?
- To what extent does the project contribute to student-related outcomes?
- To what extent does the project contribute to the PI/co-PI's professional development?



1	<i>Poor.</i> Deficient in key areas for proposal evaluation or proposal does not provide a clear plan for producing results/knowledge
2	<i>Fair.</i> Inadequate information provided to evaluate key areas, or proposal is unlikely to produce meaningful/transformational results.
3	<i>Good.</i> Adequate information provided to evaluate all areas and can produce meaningful/transformational creative, scholarly, or scientific contribution.
4	<i>Very Good.</i> Clear information provided to evaluate all areas of proposal, showing that results will likely produce meaningful/transformational creative, scholarly, or scientific contribution
5	<i>Excellent.</i> Information provided exceeds all criteria necessary to evaluate all areas of proposal, showing that contribution(s) significantly advance creative, scholarly, or scientific contribution.

Feasibility (4 pts)

- Does the proposed research include a plan to accomplish the proposed scope of work?
- Are there adequate resources available to the Principal Investigator (PI) either at Cal Poly or through collaborations to carry out the proposed activities?
- Is the timeline appropriate to the proposed scope of work?

1	<i>Poor.</i> Deficient in plan, resources or qualifications to achieve stated aims.
2	<i>Fair.</i> Inadequate information provided to evaluate plan, resources or qualifications to achieve stated aims.
3	<i>Good.</i> Adequate information provided to evaluate plan, resources or qualifications to achieve stated aims.
4	<i>Excellent.</i> Articulate and relevant information provided to evaluate all areas of plan, resources and qualifications to achieve stated aims.

Budget Justification (3 pts)

- Is the requested funding clearly justified?
- Does it meet the scope of New Initiatives-RSCA funding?
- Have justifications been provided for the use of assigned time, additional compensation, need for supplies and travel, support for student research assistant salaries, plus any other types of expenses that will be needed?



0	Funding <i>does not meet</i> New Initiatives-RSCA scope, such as a request for a purpose fully disallowed by the RFP.
1	Funding is <i>not</i> well-justified but meets all components of New Initiatives-RSCA scope, or part of the funding justification is disallowed by the RFP.
2	Funding is <i>adequately</i> justified, meets all components of New Initiatives-RSCA scope, and fully allowed by the RFP.
3	Funding is <i>strongly</i> justified, meets all components of New Initiatives-RSCA scope, and fully allowed by the RFP.

Benefit to Cal Poly (2 pts)

- Was a statement provided of the benefits that will accrue to the University and/or to students?

0	<i>No</i> justification is provided addressing the project's benefits.
1	<i>Adequate</i> justification addressing the project's benefits has been provided.
2	<i>Excellent</i> justification addressing the projects' benefits has been provided.

Benefits beyond the University (2 pts)

- Was a statement provided describing the societal impacts of the project and how those outside of the University will benefit?

0	<i>No</i> justification is provided addressing the project's benefits.
1	<i>Adequate</i> justification addressing the project's benefits has been provided.
2	<i>Excellent</i> justification addressing the projects' benefits has been provided.

Other Review Criteria

- Eligibility Verification
 - PI(s) is/are qualified (Y/N)
 - Change in focus (for tenured)
- Potential to attract future funding (+1)
- Support of fields and disciplines with minimal access to external funding (+1)
- Involvement of students (+1)