

## Computational Social Science Seed Grants

(April 6, 2016)

In line with its mission as a social sciences research collaboration incubator, Project Mosaic has established a new seed grants program specifically geared towards the formation of new interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary teams of campus researchers in the social, behavior, and economic sciences **for the explicit aim of pursuing external funding**. The Computational Social Science Seed Grants (CSS-SG) Program is specifically looking for cutting-edge ideas that seek to jointly leverage the power of new “organic” data that are available to social scientists and more conventional design data (census or survey data) to answer critical social science research questions. Traditionally, social scientists engaged in data-intensive research have relied on design data to test their hypotheses and theories. Organic data are seen by some scholars as a game changer because of the volume of data, their currency and quasi-continuous streaming, and fine granularity. Yet organic data present numerous challenges. Research designs that closely articulate the use of organic and design data may be the next frontier in computational social science research.

The program targets seed funding requests in the range of \$10,000 to \$25,000 that are **critically important** in the early stages of the formation of a team, early stages of development of research ideas, or even in assembling a pilot data set or conducting a small case study that can be used to suggest the usefulness of a concept to secure a larger external grant. All proposals must be submitted by a team of UNC Charlotte researchers in different disciplines (which commonly would mean different departments). Some team members may hail from traditions other than the social sciences (e.g., data sciences, natural sciences, statistics, engineering, etc.). Although collaborators external to UNC Charlotte may be included, our focus is on supporting the **formation of new research teams** based at UNC Charlotte.

Project Mosaic will work with the awardees to secure access to organic data layers that may be available through the Data Science Initiative’s System for Observation of Populous and Heterogeneous Information (SOPHI).

**Further information is posted on Project Mosaic’s web site:**

**<https://projectmosaic.uncc.edu/research-incubator/computational-social-science-seed-grants/>**

- CSS-SG proposals range from \$10,000-\$25,000.
- CSS-SG proposals should be concise and must be submitted by May 15, 2016 at 5pm.
- The Project Mosaic Director will appoint a review panel to evaluate the proposals whose purpose will be to advise on the funding priorities of the CSS-SG Program.

**Conditions:**

- At least two PIs from two different disciplines (i.e., with a focus on different content areas). All faculty involved in the project must be listed as co-PIs or as consultants.
- At least one PI must have a track record of research and scholarship in social, behavioral, or economic sciences.
- Research projects must be collaborative, interdisciplinary, and data-centric.
- New research teams are particularly welcome to apply.
- Support is for new, innovative and interdisciplinary research projects in social, behavioral, and economic sciences.
- All faculty eligible for UNC Charlotte Faculty Research Grants (<http://research.uncc.edu/proposal-development/locating-funding/faculty-research-grants-program#Eligibility>) are also eligible for CSS-SGs.
- Funds are allocated for a 9-month period maximum and a request for external funding must be submitted within 12 months of funding decision. If external funding is not successful at first submission, the team must revise the proposal with coaching from Project Mosaic and resubmit to the same funding agency or to another agency (with approval from Project Mosaic).
- With proper justification, funding can be allocated to:
  - Software, hardware, and data
  - Field work
  - Support for meetings among team members (including travel) or workshop attendance
  - Graduate assistance
  - Faculty summer stipends
  - Outside consultants
  - Small pilot studies
- Partial awards are possible. Project Mosaic reserves the right to adjust the budget to reflect funds availability, scientific priorities of Project Mosaic, and funding restrictions.

### **Restrictions:**

- Projects already externally funded or for which an external proposal is currently under review are not eligible.
- Projects that have already received internal funding (FSSG, CSG, FRG, college grant, CRI, etc.) are not eligible.
- A researcher cannot be recipient of more than one CSS-SG CCSG, CSG or FSSG per academic year.
- Continuation of an ongoing research project by the same or similar group of researchers will not be supported.
- Expenditures that are not allowed:
  - Expenditures generally made by departments and colleges (e.g., office supplies, travel to professional conferences, etc.)
  - Delivery of outreach programs or services
  - Requests for funds for meals and snacks should be minimal
  - Student projects (masters, dissertation research)
  - Publication charges

## Criteria for Review

- Novel ideas that involve cross-department or cross-program (interdisciplinary) collaboration.
- Novel ideas in computational social sciences that combine organic and design data pertaining to social, behavioral, and/or economic matters. The ideas must be solidly grounded in a theoretical framework.
- Projects that best fit the research priorities of Project Mosaic on (1) social capital, human capital, innovation, social mobility, and inequality, and (2) trade, globalization, urbanization, and metropolitan growth. Other topics will also be considered on their own merit.
- Projects leading to proposals that are more likely to be externally funded.
- Size and scope of the “overall proposal” to be submitted for external funding, following the granting of a CSS-SG.
- Funding agencies or organizations of national or international significance will be given priority over regional ones.
- Clarity of the objectives of the CSS-SG request.
- Scientific merit and feasibility of the project envisioned for external funding.
- Quality and coherence of the research design and detailed plan of activities funded by the CSS-SG.
- Teams comprised of investigators who range in seniority and research experiences.
- Criticality of the CSS-SG to produce a fully competitive proposal for external funding.
- Proposals must make a clear contribution to social, behavioral, or economic sciences.

## Structure and Submission of Proposals

Proposals (including the budget) must be submitted as one single PDF by email to Project Mosaic [ProjectMosaic@uncc.edu](mailto:ProjectMosaic@uncc.edu). To complete your proposal submission, please follow the instructions provided below and download the proposal budget template from the Project Mosaic web site.

The proposal must be clear, readily legible, and conform to the following requirements:

- Font size of 12 points
- Double spaced
- 1-inch margins

To be considered for funding, the following must be included in your submission:

1. **Cover Sheet** (one page) The cover sheet contains the project title, abstract (200 words maximum), 3-5 descriptive keywords, PI and collaborator(s) name and contact information, total funds requested, projected start and end dates, proposed funding agency (including specific programs that will be targeted) and anticipated budget request on the external proposal submission(s).
2. **Project Description** (not to exceed 1500 words) The project description should address the following points:
  - a) *Purpose, Significance, Planned Activities*: Provide a clear and concise explanation of
    - (i) rationale of this funding request, (ii) the proposed activities for which CSS-SG

- funding is requested, (iii) how these activities will enhance your ability to apply for external funding as a larger project.
- b) *Overall Project*: Provide a clear and concise explanation of (i) the objectives of the overall project that will be submitted for external funding, (ii) the research design, (iii) the agency/ies, initiatives, and target date(s) to which you will apply, (iv) the significance and value of the overall project for which external funding will be sought to the social, behavioral, and economic sciences, (v) interdisciplinarity of the overall project. Provide the key idea that motivates the work. Explain the core question or questions that the overall project seeks to address, and why these questions matter in social, behavioral, and economic sciences (significance of the contribution).
  - c) *Research Team*: Describe the qualifications, roles, and responsibilities of all research project team members, and what value collaboration adds to the project.
  - d) *Work Plan and Timeline of the CSS-SG*.
3. **Bibliography** (no more than 15 references) Optional, supply only if needed.
4. **A one-page Biosketch (vita) for each participant which includes:**
- a) Education, including the dates when degrees were awarded;
  - b) Current employment status;
  - c) Three most relevant publications (to the current project);
  - d) Most relevant social science experience (including but not limited to software programs, methods known, and training)
  - e) Funding history. Supply a list of all proposals (both internal and external) prepared in the past three years. Indicate whether the proposal was funded, is pending or was not funded. Indicate for each whether it is UNC Charlotte-internal or external.
5. **Budget and Justification**
- Complete the form provided (<https://projectmosaic.uncc.edu/research-incubator/computational-social-science-seed-grants/> ) and supply a budget justification for the costs requested.

## **Project Reports and Credit**

Investigators are expected to provide a brief (two pages) final report upon completing the project (9 months from granting date or earlier), including the activities conducted and progress towards the submission of a proposal for external funding. An update of this report should be submitted when the proposal is successfully submitted for external funding. Individuals having received a CCSG, CSG, or FSSG in a prior period, but who did not comply with the requirements (i.e., did not submit a final report, did not submit a grant proposal, etc.) must provide details documenting the reasons for non-compliance. The Director of Project Mosaic will be responsible for determining whether the justification for non-compliance permits the individual to be considered for a present or future CSS-SG, CCSG, CSG or FSSG.

External funding must be sought for the “overall project” for which seed funding was requested within the indicated time frame. It is expected that PIs will credit Project Mosaic at the time of submission and approval of the proposal through NORM. If external funding is not successful at

first submission, the team must revise the proposal with coaching from Project Mosaic and resubmit to the same funding agency or to another agency (with approval from Project Mosaic).

If during the course of your project you find that you need to make changes to the project team, description, design, or budget, please send a note to the Project Mosaic Director, [ProjectMosaic@uncc.edu](mailto:ProjectMosaic@uncc.edu) with specific details of these changes.

Should you have any questions about this seed funding opportunity, please contact:

- Jean-Claude Thill, Director, Project Mosaic, Phone: (704) 687-5909, [ProjectMosaic@uncc.edu](mailto:ProjectMosaic@uncc.edu).

## **Budget Instructions**

- *Project Costs*

All of the items listed, must be reasonable, necessary to accomplish project objectives, allowable in terms of the applicable federal cost principles, auditable, and incurred during the grant period. Charges to the project for items such as salaries, fringe benefits, travel, and contractual services must conform to the written policies and established practices of the University.

- *Budget Items*

### **1. Salaries and Wages**

Provide the names and titles of the principal project personnel. For support staff, include the title of each position and indicate in brackets the number of persons who will be employed in that capacity. For persons employed on an academic year basis, list separately any salary charge for work done outside the academic year.

### **2. Fringe Benefits**

List each rate and salary base.

### **3. Consultant Fees**

Include payments for professional and technical consultants and honoraria. Provide detail as to daily rates, any consultant travel, etc.

### **4. Travel Costs**

The lowest available commercial fares for coach or equivalent accommodations must be used and foreign travel must be undertaken on U.S. flag carriers when such services are available. For each trip, indicate the number of persons traveling, the total days they will be in travel status, and the total subsistence and transportation costs for that trip. All foreign travel must be identified as such and listed separately from domestic travel.

### **5. Supplies and Materials**

Include consumable supplies, materials to be used in the project and items of expendable equipment (i.e., equipment costing less than \$5,000 and with an estimated useful life of less than a year).

**6. Services**

The costs of project activities to be undertaken by a third-party contractor should be included in this category as a single line item charge. A complete itemization of the cost comprising the charge should be provided in an attachment. If there is more than one contractor, each must be budgeted separately on the form and must have an attached itemization.

**7. Other Costs**

Include any participant stipends and other items not previously listed. Please note that “miscellaneous” and “contingency” are not acceptable budget categories.

**8. Total Direct Costs**

Total the sum of items 1-7.