



STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

Office of the President

President's Innovation Fund

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU) promotes and encourages innovative recruitment, retention and teaching/learning practices that focus on student success. We encourage our faculty, staff and students to continuously work to research, update, develop and implement new strategies to improve enrollment and student learning. The President's Innovation Fund, launching during the 2021-2022 academic year will support faculty, staff and students in these endeavors with the expectation of developing a national reputation in effective and innovative student recruitment, retention and success.

In today's higher education landscape, we continue to re-imagine what it means to be a leading public university — and the newly-launched President's Innovation Fund is a key vehicle for that work. Specifically, this fund will invest in initiatives that creatively fuel increased student enrollment, engagement and success. Projects must focus on one or more of the following: student recruitment and retention; challenging students to take an active role in their education; or transforming classrooms into active learning spaces.

The awards will be awarded to faculty and/or staff who propose novel ways to approach recruitment, retention, and teaching and learning, with a particular focus on helping more students from all backgrounds to not only persist, but to excel.

Award Amounts:

For academic year 2021-2022, approximately \$100,000 in funding will be available and allocated through a competitive proposal review by a selection committee. Awards will be funded for a period of twelve months and are available in two types – **Innovation Seed Awards** and **Innovation Implementation and Research Awards**.

Innovation Seed Awards: Seed Awards will have a budget of less than \$7,500 and will generally fund: 1) small-scale pilot projects in an individual or small number of classrooms; 2) small-scale recruitment or retention pilot projects in a specific academic major, student population, or geographic region. In some cases, Seed Awards are

granted for initial projects in which collected data can be generated in support of a larger Innovation Implementation and Research Award or for submission of a proposal to an external agency.

Innovation Implementation and Research Awards: These awards will have a budget between \$7,500 to the maximum amount of \$15,000. Innovation Implementation and Research Awards will generally fund large-scale recruitment, retention and/or student success projects which have significant research basis and therefore a high potential for success. Innovation and Implementation Research Awards should be transformative in nature and upon completion, provide data/evidence for informed decision-making and/or possible adoption at the University level or beyond.

How to Apply

Proposal Development and Criteria:

The proposal narrative must describe the: 1) project background; 2) project goals and objectives; 3) detailed methodology; 4) detailed plan to assess/evaluate/measure the effectiveness of the project in reaching the stated goals; 5) detailed budget and narrative; 6) plans to disseminate.

Proposals should address, and will be evaluated upon, the following criteria:

1. Clear description of a well-defined project or problem to be investigated;
2. Potential impact on student success and/or increased enrollment and the metrics that will be used to assess this impact;
3. Where appropriate, the relationship between the proposed methods and/or concepts and relevant existing research (especially important for Innovation Implementation and Research Awards);
4. The feasibility of the project to be accomplished successfully during the granting period;
5. Plans for formative and summative assessment of the impact on student recruitment, retention and/or success;
6. Plans for dissemination within the SFA community including the potential of the transfer of lessons learned to other courses, disciplines, programs, etc.

Proposal Submission Format and Review

Applications must consist of:

1. A **cover page** that captures essential information from the proposal narrative, such as: title of the project; names of faculty and departments involved in the project; a concise summary or abstract of the project including project goals; and overall cost. The cover page requires a signature indicating endorsement of the entire proposal by the applicants' department chair/supervisor.
2. The **proposal narrative** develops these ideas fully, clearly addressing the criteria described above. The proposal narrative must include a budget justification and include:
 - 1) Project background
 - 2) Project goals and objectives
 - 3) Detailed methodology
 - 4) Detailed plan to assess/evaluate/measure the effectiveness of the project in reaching the stated goals
 - 5) Detailed budget and narrative
 - 6) Plan for dissemination

Proposal narratives for Seed Awards (budget less than \$7,500) have a maximum length of four (4) pages including a detailed budget justification.

Proposal narratives for Implementation and Research Awards (budget greater or equal to, \$7,500) have a maximum length of eight (8) pages including a detailed budget justification.

Selection Panel

All applications will be reviewed and evaluated by a selection panel.

The selection panel may require finalists who have applied for Implementation and Research Awards to make a brief presentation to the selection panel to answer questions about their proposal.

Members of a selection panel will review and evaluate applications. The selection panel consists of:

- One representative from the Provost's Office (Ex-Officio)
- One representative from the Division of Student Affairs
- One representative from the Office of Enrollment Management
- One faculty member from each College

- Panel Chair (ex-officio) – Grants Office

Budget

Expenses that can be covered by these grants may include, but are not limited to: supplies and equipment, programming or research assistance, fees and expenses for student field trips, benchmarking, school visits, support for external classroom guest speakers, fees and expenses for conferences or workshops directly related to teaching, and summer stipends. Awardees will have an account set up after meeting with the grants and business offices.

The maximum award will be in the total amount of \$15,000, and all awardees are responsible for appropriate use of, and accounting for, the funds provided. All awards will be made for one year with no extensions or carry-over of funds not expended during the period of the award. Awardees who wish to continue or expand their projects beyond the first year should submit a new proposal prior to the end of the project or seek external funding avenues.

Proposal Submission and Deadlines

Applications will be reviewed once each year. For the 2021-2022 competition, the proposal deadline is May 17, 2021. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

Application materials are to be submitted by e-mail to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies (grants@sfasu.edu) in Word format or (preferably) as a single PDF file. Hardcopy applications will not be accepted. Announcement of awards is anticipated within 30 days of the deadline for submission.

Start Date

Projects will officially start June 21, 2021 and will end May 30, 2022.

Expectations of All Awardees

Within three months of project completion all awardees will deliver a campus-wide presentation and brief written report about key outcomes. These reports will be publicly displayed on the Provost/Executive Vice President's website. Report format will be posted at a later date.