Overview

The Office of the Vice Dean for Research Strategy and Innovation is pleased to announce a new pilot grant program to support innovative research ideas at Columbia Mailman School of Public Health. Supported by the Dean’s Office, this new program will provide seed funding for unusually inventive and innovative research ideas. This program will emphasize the development of bold new ideas to solve major public health problems. The modest size of the award is intended to support and cultivate ideas that may be considered too daring or premature for other pilot research programs.

One of the hallmarks of innovation is the melding of ideas from different disciplines. As such, we anticipate that the majority of the awards will go to teams that cross disciplinary or departmental lines. Collaborations with investigators outside of Mailman are encouraged, as long as the efforts are led by Mailman faculty.

Timeline

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Proposal Process

Applicants should submit the following materials via email, in .pdf format, by the December 5th deadline:

1. **Project Proposal (1-page)**
   - ½ page outlining the project concept or idea
   - ½ page detailing the proposed activities (with estimated budget)

2. **Project Team (1-page)**
   - Identify the names and titles of the project team and any collaborators, as well as a brief description of their role in the project

Applications will be reviewed by a committee consisting of faculty, industry partners, and public health professionals. As such, the proposal should be written in a manner that is accessible to a broad readership.
Budget and Reporting

Funding is available for 12-15 projects, up to $10,000 annually, for a maximum of 1 year. As a condition of funding, awardees will be required to submit a monthly 1-2 sentence email progress report, as well as a final report.

Eligibility

The Mailman Innovation Pilot Grants are open to PIs who hold a primary faculty position within Columbia Mailman School of Public Health. All eligible applications are encouraged to apply.

Allowable Expenses

Funds may be used in any manner that advances the research project and follows university rules of spending. Equipment, travel, event-related expenses (retreats, seminars, meetings), software, compute time, personnel, editing services, and staff expenses are all acceptable. No funds can be used for faculty salary.

Examples of Potential Columbia Public Health Innovation Fund Projects

The following are some examples of the types of projects that could be supported through this program:

- You have an idea for an innovative and interdisciplinary research proposal. You require funds to assemble the team and conduct a systematic search for potential funding opportunities. The deliverable would be a clear timeline and aims for a specific grant proposal (and ultimately a submitted proposal).

- You recently completed a pilot grant, but you still have 100 samples that must be analyzed before you are ready to submit a larger R01. With the additional analysis you will be in a position to submit the proposal. The new data and the submission of the proposal would be the deliverables.

- You are working on a new center grant. You have been working with Research Resources for grant preparation support, but you would like to convene a meeting of your proposed external advisory board prior to submission. You propose to use the funds to host the EAB meeting. The deliverable is the submission of the center grant.
• You submitted a grant to NIH and the reviewers indicated that you needed to bring in an expert in another discipline. You have identified that person and want to arrange an all-day retreat that includes both of your research groups. Funds would be used to pay for the retreat and the deliverable would be the submission of the revised grant.

• Columbia Tech Ventures has expressed interest in your to develop an app, but has requested that you further develop the idea. You need input from a subject matter expert in California and would like to propose a series of meetings with colleagues on the Morningside Campus. Funds to travel to California and to pay for lunch meetings would be appropriate. The deliverable would be the filing of the disclosure to CTV.

• You and your colleagues have a great idea for a Columbia World Project, but need time to devote to developing the application. You propose a biweekly 2-hour meeting with the team members to develop the proposal. Funds could be used to pay for meeting-related expenses and to bring to external experts in who will serve on an advisory board. Submission of the proposal would be the deliverable.

• Your team has an idea for a new water filtration system and you need to have engineers build the prototype for a patent application. You propose to work with engineers in CEAS to create the prototype. Submission of the disclosure and/or patent application would be the deliverable.

• A postdoctoral fellow in your group wants to use a new bioinformatic tool to a recently acquired data set that will set up a new grant. There is a course offered by the European Molecular Biological Laboratory. You propose to send your postdoc to the training so that she can train the rest of your group on the analysis. The deliverable would be a report of the meeting and the submission of the new grant.

• You want to take a one week sabbatical to Seattle to work with a team at Microsoft and UW to advance your skills in Azure. You will apply these skills to the submission of a new grant application. A summary of the training and the submission of the grant would be the deliverables.

For questions or more information, contact: Dr. Gary Miller, gm2815@cumc.columbia.edu