The University of Maryland Catalyst Fund

Fearless Ideation Workshops
(new in FY19)

Purpose:

Fearless Ideation Workshop awards support organized events with each of the following goals:

- Identify complementary research strengths and explore potential collaborations.
- Develop high potential, innovative research ideas that require the involvement of multiple disciplines and leverage unique strengths within UMD.
- Facilitate new and enhance existing collaborations among faculty.
- Generate “competitive intelligence” analyses to identify gaps in the current body of research, assess future funding opportunities, and generate insights on next steps.

Fearless Ideation Workshop Awards are **not** intended to fund convening events designed only for information exchange among scholars, but rather exploratory events that yield new ideas for future research collaborations.

Submission Cycle:

- Applications are accepted four times a year: February 1, May 1, August 1, and Nov. 1
- Notification to applicants/awardees is anticipated within 2-3 weeks following the submission deadline.

Support Provided and Required Cost Share:

Fearless Ideation grants of up to $15,000 will support the costs of planning and hosting one or more planning events. Funds may also be applied to seed funding for ideas developed at the Fearless Ideation events. All funds must be used within 12 months if awarded.

Award support will be split evenly – 50% of the requested amount funded by the VPR, and the benefiting College/Unit(s) covering the remaining 50%.

We anticipate funding 6–8 events per year, or 1–2 per quarterly cycle.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Events must be organized by faculty champions from **at least two distinct disciplines that do not typically partner together**.
- Only tenure-track and professional track faculty at the rank of assistant professor, research scientist or higher, whose full-time, home position is at UMD are eligible to serve as Fearless Ideation Workshop champions. Visiting, adjunct, and affiliate faculty are not eligible to apply; postdoctoral fellows are also ineligible.
- Eligible ideation events may include faculty from other institutions (especially the University of Maryland in Baltimore), but a **majority** of expected attendees must be from UMD.
Review Process:

The application review process will take into account a number of factors including but not limited to:

- **Technical Vision**: Is the proposed ideation theme a high potential area for exploration? Is the timing right to explore this opportunity? Are the proposing faculty champions appropriately trained and well-suited to lead this work? Does the investigative team bring complementary and integrated expertise to the ideation effort?

- **Societal Interest**: Does this ideation proposal address a problem area with potential regional, national, or global significance? Does the proposed effort align with strategic goals of the department, college, or the University of Maryland?

- **Ideation plan**: Are the proposed timeline and budget reasonable? Do proposing faculty champions offer a solid vision, including plans to follow up with participants afterward and make sure the discussion does not end with the conclusion of the event? Does the proposal describe strategies for promoting the workshop to all interested participants and for ensuring demographically diverse representation?
  - Active participation of researchers from social sciences and humanities disciplines and incorporation of both junior and senior faculty are encouraged.
  - Inclusion of faculty champions or attendees from University of Maryland at Baltimore is encouraged where appropriate.

- **Prospects for New Funding**: Is the workshop bringing researchers together to help identify collaborations that could lead to the pursuit of new funding opportunities?

Award Fund Use:

Award funds may be applied to a range of cost categories, including but not limited to:

- Event space
- Participant travel
- Professional facilitators
- Logistics/conference services
- Small follow-up seed funding
- A proposal development manager, assigned to the group to follow the work and development of follow-on proposal writing.
Application Process:

In addition to completing the electronic submission form, all application materials must be uploaded in one PDF file and must be submitted electronically by 11:59pm on the deadline date. The electronic submission form can be found at [https://umd.infoready4.com/](https://umd.infoready4.com/).

Application materials include:

- **Abstract:** Provide a 100-word (maximum) abstract that includes the title and purpose of the Fearless Ideation effort, the intended audience, collaborators, and a summary timeline for implementation.

- **Project description:** not to exceed three single-spaced pages, with one-inch margins and at least 11-point font. The description should clearly provide:
  - Why the topics and timing are right for Fearless Ideation.
  - Objectives for the proposed ideation event(s).
  - Strategies for promoting the ideation effort to all interested participants.
  - A summary timeline for implementation.

- **Budget and Justification:** Please provide an estimated budget and justification for the planned expenditures. The budget and justification should demonstrate that you have thought through all aspects of your project and the costs associated with them. Please include any other sources of funding that will be supporting the project (if applicable) and whether those funds are committed or pending.
  - Include start-up/retention package status disclosure

Expectations of Applicants and Awardees:

The expected products of Fearless Ideation Workshop award program include

- A white paper within three months of ideation effort end summarizing:
  - Core themes that emerge from the workshop discussions
  - UMD-internal assets (faculty, research programs, infrastructure) and unique capabilities
  - Potential funders and funding programs to support this work
  - “Competitive intelligence” analysis such as: What research groups are the current leaders (or likely competitors) in this problem space? Who has converging/competing interests? Who are your institutional peers?

- Within two years of award, at least one related multidisciplinary research proposal should be submitted to an external funding agency.