

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
CALS FACULTY BIG IDEAS INNOVATION PROGRAM (“BIG IDEAS”)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

VISION: Creation of an organizational culture, process and infrastructure within CALS that cultivates the strategic partnerships and collaborations necessary for the generation, development, and sustainment of faculty-driven, transformative BIG IDEAS in research, teaching and Extension.

BACKGROUND:

In the spring of 2013, CALS conducted a rigorous strategic planning effort that resulted in many suggestions for guiding the College. One major theme that emerged was the need to focus on bold interdisciplinary ideas and initiatives that would create intellectual excitement and recognition for CALS and CALS faculty. In response, in January 2014, Dean Linton hosted a BIG IDEAS Faculty Task Force meeting of nearly forty thought-leader faculty members representing all departments, career levels, and the breadth of disciplinary expertise found in CALS. The Task Force produced several outcomes, one of which was a proclamation that “CALS needs an organizational culture, process and infrastructure that result in increased interdisciplinary interactions and collaborations.” Based on this outcome, a second BIG IDEA faculty session was held on August 15, 2014 in order to build momentum and direction for institutionalizing a BIG IDEA culture and process within CALS. Over twenty of the faculty from the January meeting assembled to begin answering the difficult questions required to transform the working model of the college from traditional vertical silos into thriving interdisciplinary networks.

Following the second session, the BIG IDEAS Faculty Task Force issued several recommendations. The first four recommendations relate to the creation of a competitive grant program which allows faculty to compete for financial and institutional support of their BIG IDEA, and the identification of a point person in CALS to coordinate and manage the process. In direct response to faculty recommendations, Dean Linton established the CALS Faculty Big Ideas Grant Program (Big Ideas) and assigned Christy Sandy, CALS Proposal Developer, as the point of contact for faculty. The complete Big Ideas Task Force Report will be posted on the CALS website.

FUNDING FOR BIG IDEAS:

The CALS Faculty Big Ideas Grant Program is funded through the Dean’s “*Open Fields Initiative*.” *Open Fields* is a new leadership fund supported by external private donors who share CALS mission and vision and want to help find science-based solutions to the grand challenges facing society in agriculture and biosciences. **These funds are not state, federal, or generated by sponsored research. They are being provided to the College for solely the purpose of promoting important forward thinking, faculty-driven, “think and do” initiatives such as the CALS Faculty Big Ideas Innovation Program.**

PROGRAM PURPOSE:

The goal of the CALS Faculty Big Ideas Innovation Program is to establish a grassroots, faculty-driven process to provide CALS faculty the resources necessary to bring innovative, interdisciplinary, Big Ideas to fruition. Our College envisions the development of bold, interdisciplinary programs that show potential to significantly impact multiple [strategic priorities](#) of the College and solve grand challenges that impact us locally, nationally, and globally. The purpose of Big Ideas is two-fold: (1) to function as an umbrella that will catalyze collaboration and partnership within CALS, across the University, and beyond; and (2) to provide structure and funding.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The program is divided into four separate funding phases ranging from small awards to facilitate brain storming on a proposed BIG IDEA, to larger, recurring awards that provide seed funding and potentially permanent institutional support for the most innovative and promising BIG IDEAS. BIG IDEAS must matriculate through each step of the funding process. The four steps/phases include:

Phase I: Big Ideas Imagination Fund: Awards up to \$500 to support activities that encourage faculty collaboration, interdisciplinary team building, and BIG IDEA investigation and exploration. An idea does not have to be new to be a Big Idea. However, it should be transformative; interdisciplinary; integrate research, teaching, and Extension; and possess the “wow” factor to energize faculty, stakeholders, external funders, and media. One outcome should be a “go or no-go” decision by the team as to whether or not the BIG IDEA is ready to move to the next step, Big Ideas Proof of Concept Fund.



Phase II: Big Ideas Concept Fund: Awards up to \$5,000 to move a BIG IDEA from imagination stage to the design stage funding the development of a proof of concept. Proposals must have completed the Big Ideas Imagination Fund phase before submitting to this program.



Phase III: Big Ideas Innovation and Development Fund: Awards ranging from \$20,000-\$50,000 to move the BIG IDEA to a well-developed proposal including an interdisciplinary team, strategic action plan, preliminary data, goals, objectives, and identified potential external funding partners. Proposals must have completed phases I and II before submitting to this program.



Phase IV: Big Ideas Seed Fund: Recurring awards up to \$100,000 annually for up to five years serving as institutional support to provide stability as a promising BIG IDEA is launched and external funding secured. Proposals must have completed the first three phases before submitting to this program.

CALS FACULTY BIG IDEAS INNOVATION PROGRAM

Phase I: BIG IDEAS Imagination Fund 2014-2015 Request for Proposals

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Activities/Ideas supported: The “Big Ideas Imagination Fund” will support activities that encourage faculty collaboration and interdisciplinary idea generation. The idea does not have to be “new” to be a Big Idea. However, it should be transformative; interdisciplinary; integrate research, teaching and Extension; and possess the “wow” factor to energize faculty, stakeholders, external funders, and media.

AWARD INFORMATION

Deadlines and Award Amount: After this year, solicitations will be open annually in July. This year’s solicitation opens December 1, 2014. Proposals will be accepted and awards made on a rolling basis. The duration of the project if funded is up to four months (120 days). Awards are up to \$500, no match required.

Eligibility/Interdisciplinary Team: All CALS faculty are eligible for funding. In addition to CALS PI, team must include at a minimum: two other CALS departments; 1 non-CALS NCSU college; or external partners / stakeholders.

PROPOSAL CONTENT AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Proposal Content: Big Ideas Imagination Fund proposals should not exceed one page and should:

1. Identify the issue that the Big Idea will address;
2. Demonstrate how the Big Idea will impact two or more of the five [strategic priorities](#) of the college;
3. Identify the interdisciplinary team/experts expected to be involved in the Big Idea conversation; and
4. Explain what activities the \$500 investment will support to bring people together for the “Big Idea Imagination” conversation.

Submission & Due Date: Proposals should be submitted by email to cals_research@ncsu.edu at any time until June 30, 2015 with a subject heading: Big Ideas Imagination Fund – PI last name.

Review Criteria: Each proposal will be reviewed by the Dean on a monthly basis. Competitive proposals will:

- be well aligned with at least two of the CALS strategic priorities;
- have an interdisciplinary team exploring an interdisciplinary issue;
- show potential to have broad impacts on grand challenges facing agriculture and biosciences;
- show potential for large scale external funding; and
- Integrate research, teaching and Extension.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Reporting Requirements: Within four months (120 days) from date of the award, PIs must submit a one page summary on the outcomes of the \$500 investment, what activities were conducted, the results of those activities, participants, and if/how the team plans to continue developing the Big Idea to the next step. If the decision is to not pursue the idea, the final report should provide the same information minus next steps, but including the basis for the “no-go” decision. Should the team decide to apply for funding through the next step, (Phase II) “Big Idea Proof of Concept Fund,” this one page report will serve as the cover page for that proposal.

Inquiries regarding this solicitation should be directed to Christy Sandy, CALS Proposal Developer, Christy_Sandy@ncsu.edu, 919-513-3150.

CALS FACULTY BIG IDEAS INNOVATION PROGRAM

Phase II: BIG IDEAS Proof of Concept Fund 2014-2015 Request for Proposals

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES:

Activities: The “Big Ideas Proof of Concept Fund” will support activities that move the BIG IDEA from the imagination stage to the creativity stage of development. Eligible activities include, but are not limited to: identifying interdisciplinary team/necessary expertise, identifying stakeholders, networking, seminars/workshops, identifying external funders, collection of data, feasibility assessment, and travel.

AWARD INFORMATION

Deadlines & Award Amount: After this year, solicitations will be open annually in July. This year’s solicitation opens December 1, 2014. Proposals will be accepted and awards made on a rolling basis. The duration of the project if funded is no longer than nine months. Awards are up to \$5,000. No match required.

Eligibility/Interdisciplinary Team: Eligible proposals will have completed the “Big Ideas Imagination Fund” (Phase I). In addition to a CALS Lead PI, team must include at a minimum: two other CALS departments; or one non-CALS NCSU college; or external partners or stakeholders.

PROPOSAL CONTENT AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Proposal Content:

1. Cover Page: The one page summary submitted at the completion of the “Big Ideas Imagination Fund” phase, will serve as the proposal cover page.
2. Program Description: No more than two pages that includes, but is not limited to:
 - Justification for moving forward with the Big Idea;
 - Proposed activities;
 - Potential future funding opportunities for the Big Idea; and
 - Anticipated impacts and/or deliverables that could come from the Big Idea and how it addresses the [strategic priorities](#) of the College.

Submission Instructions & Deadline: Proposals should be submitted by email to cals_research@ncsu.edu at any time until June 30, 2015 with a subject heading: Big Ideas Proof of Concept Fund – PI last name.

Review Criteria: Each proposal will be reviewed by the Dean on a monthly basis. Competitive proposals will:

- be well aligned with at least two of CALS strategic priorities;
- have an interdisciplinary team exploring an interdisciplinary issue integrating research, teaching and Extension
- show potential to have broad impacts on grand challenges facing agriculture and biosciences; and
- show potential for large scale external funding.

NOTIFICATION OF AWARD AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Reporting Requirements: Within nine months from date of award, PIs must submit a two page summary on the outcomes of the \$5,000 investment including: what activities were conducted; the results of those activities; participants; next steps if the team plans to continue developing the Big Idea; and budget report. If the decision is to not pursue the idea, the final report should provide the same information minus next steps, but include the basis for the “no-go” decision. Should the team decide to apply for funding through the next step, (Phase III) “Big Ideas Innovation and Development Fund,” this two page report will serve as the Introduction for that proposal.

Inquiries regarding this solicitation may be directed to Christy Sandy, CALS Proposal Developer, christy_sandy@ncsu.edu, 919-513-3150.