SUNY Empire Innovation Program
2019-20 Request for Proposals (20-01EIP)

Issued: September 5, 2019
Submission Deadline: October 31, 2019 at 5:00 p.m.

RFP Highlights:
- Three tracks for proposal submissions: (1) Cluster hires, (2) SUNY strategic area hires, and (3) Chancellor’s Early-Career Scholars.
- Limit of four proposals per campus: up to three individual campus proposals and one joint proposal across campuses.
- Budget $400,000 to $500,000 per hire/retention.
- Total award duration of six years for all three tracks: 3-year “hiring period” ending June 30, 2023 by which all hires have to be completed and “award period” ending June 30, 2026 by which all funding is to be utilized.

I. Introduction
The Empire Innovation Program (“SUNY EIP”) is a state-funded grant program designed to help recruit and retain world-class faculty at the State University of New York (“SUNY”). EIP faculty members bring SUNY’s research mission to life through cutting-edge research activities, experiential research opportunities for students, cross-disciplinary collaborations, dynamic entrepreneurial activities, and contributions to the health and economic vitality of New York State.

SUNY EIP aims to grow SUNY’s capacity as the go-to partner for state, federal, industrial, and philanthropic research support in areas that address pressing societal challenges.

II. Program Goals
The 2019-20 Request for Proposals (“RFP”) aims to expand SUNY’s research enterprise by driving significant growth in emerging areas of strategic importance while also strengthening areas where SUNY already has established capacity and a recognized leadership position. This RFP supports the recruitment and retention of leading research faculty, early-career scholars and the acquisition of necessary research instruments/equipment to support their research through three tracks.

Proposals should be submitted in one or a combination of the below tracks. The faculty SUNY is looking to attract through Track 1 and 2 must be leaders in their fields who have established track records of scholarly and/or research achievements, collaboration with other researchers, and significant external funding.
support. Candidates for Track 1 and 2 should have at least four years of independent research experience after completion of their doctorate/post-doctorate studies. Recent Ph.D. graduates are unlikely to have the depth of research experience and professional accomplishments necessary to qualify for Track 1 and 2. Recent Ph.D. graduates or post-docs with exceptional research accomplishments may be considered in Track 3.

**Track 1 – Cluster Hires:** Proposals in Track 1 will emphasize building on past successes in recruiting outstanding faculty who exemplify EIP goals. Intended to further build strong clusters of expertise at SUNY campuses, proposals in this track should clearly demonstrate current critical mass (including both current and past EIP faculty, and non-EIP faculty) in the intended cluster area, and the collective impact of this cluster in advancing research and securing external funding. Proposals should demonstrate how the intended additional hire(s) would augment and significantly strengthen the cluster’s capabilities. Selected faculty will receive EIP designation.

**Track 2 – Strategic Area Hires:** Proposals in this track will focus on one or more of the following priority areas. Selected faculty will receive EIP designation.

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) including, but not limited to, fundamental AI and machine learning, AI applications in healthcare, education, energy transportation, business, and security, and AI ethics and trustworthy AI
- Next-generation computing and communication including, but not limited to, quantum information science and engineering, cognitive computing and wireless communication
- Medicine and biomedical research including, but not limited to, engineering driven medicine, novel imaging modalities in healthcare, and health disparities
- Aging research including, but not limited to, science of aging, technologies for elder care and healthy aging, and Alzheimer’s disease diagnosis and treatment
- Substance addiction research
- Clinical trial and translational biomedical research
- Clean energy including renewable energy harvesting, energy storage, energy efficiency, smart grid and forecasted energy management
- Resilient communities and critical infrastructure
- Environmental health and medicine

**Track 3 – Chancellor’s Early-Career Scholars:** This track is designed to support the campuses to recruit high-potential early-career researchers whose research expertise complements, extends, and critically expands existing strengths in cluster areas or strategic priority areas.

Candidates who qualify for recruitment under this track should either have already earned a Ph.D. or equivalent degree, or expect to complete the degree by the time of hiring. Post-doctoral experience is preferred, but not required.
Candidates need to demonstrate substantive track record of publications commensurate of the length of their academic careers, outstanding contributions in their fields of study, and high potential for future success.

It is highly desirable and preferred that candidates have prior track records of academic achievements including selective academic awards, graduate fellowships, small grants, or sponsored research funding commensurate with early-career faculty status. Proposals submitted under this track should demonstrate how the proposed early-career hires will augment and strengthen the campus’s capabilities and long-term sustainability in an existing, established cluster area or in an emerging strategic priority area with plans for continued growth. Proposals should also clearly articulate how the selected early-career faculty members will be mentored and supported by senior faculty members and administrative leaders within the institution to ensure success.

Selected faculty will receive “Chancellor's Early-Career Scholar” award (instead of EIP award). Chancellor’s Early-Career Scholars who can successfully attract more than a total of $2M externally sponsored research funding within four years of their appointment starting date are eligible to receive an EIP award of up to $100,000 (up to $25,000 per year for 4 years). The $100,000 additional funding can be utilized at the discretion of EIP faculty for the purpose of growing research (it cannot be used for the salary of the faculty). The Offices of Vice President for Research and/or the Campus Provost should submit requests for these follow-on awards, providing sufficient evidence that the above criteria are met.

III. Program Guidelines

- **Eligibility**: All SUNY four-year campuses, including those currently receiving EIP funding, are eligible to submit proposals under this RFP.
- **Funding**: The award amount per faculty is $400,000 to $500,000.
- **Award Duration**: The six-year award period begins on the award effective date of July 1, 2020 and ends on June 30, 2026. The award period includes an initial 3-year hiring period that ends on June 30, 2023. All approved hires must be completed before the end of the hiring period and all approved funding must be utilized by the end of the award period. Any unused funding at the end of the award period of June 30, 2026 will be returned to the EIP.
  - In the case of single hire awards, all approved funding will be cancelled and funds returned to the EIP if hiring is not completed by the end of the hiring period.
  - In case of cluster hires, funding for completed hires, if any, will continue until the award end date. Portion of the award associated with hires that are not made by the end of the hiring period will be returned to the EIP.
- **Proposals seeking to retain existing outstanding faculty** should be limited to instances where a campus is in imminent danger of losing a faculty member whose field of study strongly aligns with SUNY strategic priorities and whose research achievements and external funding track record are in line with the goals
of the EIP.

- **All hires and retentions must be pre-approved by the SUNY Office of Research and Economic Development.**
- Office of Research and Economic Development reserves the right to deny funding for hires made without prior approval. In such instances, campuses would be solely responsible for any start-up funding promised to candidates as part of their appointment package.

IV. **Proposal Submission Guidelines**

**General Guidelines:**

- Each campus may submit a maximum of three individual proposals and one joint proposal with other SUNY campuses.
- Project leads/proposers must serve as primary contact/PI on the proposal.
- All proposals must be submitted by the Office of the Campus Provost and/or Vice President for Research (VPR).
- Proposal submission deadline: October 31, 2019, by 5 p.m. Materials should be submitted via e-mail to eip@suny.edu.

**Proposal Submission Guidelines:**

Proposals must be completed in font type Times New Roman, font size 12, with a line spacing of 1 unit and a 1 inch border margin for each page.

The proposal must include:

1. **Cover Sheet** - The attached cover sheet should be completed to provide the following information:
   i. Campus name(s)
   ii. Title of the proposal
   iii. Proposal Track
   iv. Proposed Research Area
   v. Funding amount requested
   vi. Type and number of hires planned: new hire or retention, across one or multiple campuses
   vii. Name and detailed contact information for the lead applicant (title, mailing address, email address, phone number)
   viii. Name and detailed contact information for the lead from any partnering campuses
   ix. Brief abstract of the proposal
2. **Narrative** (maximum 5 pages) – The narrative should address the following questions. Please label the responses based on enumeration of these sections.

i. **Justification of Cluster Area/Domain of Hire**

   Key questions to address include:
   - Why is the selected area important?
   - What significant state, national, and global challenges would be addressed if SUNY has leading research capacity in the area?
   - How does the selected area align with the campus’ overall strategy in research, education, and economic development?
   - What is the current funding environment in the proposed area, i.e. has this been identified as a priority area for funding agencies, industry, and/or private foundations? Provide details if so.

ii. **Vision for growth**

   Key questions to address include:
   - What is the campus’ existing research strength in this area? Highlight current critical mass (including both EIP and non-EIP faculty) and the impact of this group in advancing research and securing external funding.
   - What would it take to increase current capacity to the point where the campus would become a leader in this field?
   - What specific research expertise, instrument/equipment, and partnerships are critically needed to realize steady, rapid growth in external sponsored program activities in this area?
   - What expertise, key qualifications and accomplishments will the campus be seeking in prospective new hires?
   - How will the intended hire(s) augment and significantly strengthen the campus’s capabilities? How will they enable the campus’s growth vision?

iii. **Sustainability** - Describe campus plans for retaining and supporting faculty recruited beyond the award period. Specific items to address include: campus match in new faculty hires, physical capacity of the campus to support EIP faculty and Chancellor’s Early-Career Scholars, the funding to maintain research-related equipment, and support for graduate students/post-doctoral support/research staff (if applicable).

iv. **Current Capacity** - Summarize the campus’ current capacity in the field (at the lead campus and any partner campuses):
   - Number and qualifications of existing faculty in proposed area (current level of research activity, grants, patents, centers, etc.).
   - Number of staff, research assistants, graduate students, and fellows.
v. **Hiring Track Record**
   - What is the campus’ track record in attracting, recruiting and retaining faculty in this cluster?
   - How effective have the prior EIP faculty members been in attracting external research funding?

vi. **Evaluation/Assessment** - Detail an evaluation plan that will be used to monitor and track new hire's progress toward program goals. *Please be specific about the metrics and process that will be used to complete such evaluation.* Annual progress reporting will be required of every award. **External sponsored research funding attracted by EIP faculty and Chancellor’s Early-Career Scholars will be a key factor in the assessment of campus program performance.**

3. **Current Faculty Expertise**
   Please include a maximum of a **two-page** biographical sketch for each existing faculty to demonstrate current research strength and capacity in the proposed area, clearly identifying which faculty are current or past EIP awardees.

   A biographical sketch should include:
   1. Professional preparation
   2. Appointments
   3. List of up to 5 most recent publications closely related to the proposed area
   4. List of up to 5 external sponsored research grants in the last 5-7 calendar years that are most closely related to the proposed area (the external research funding in each grant attributed to the faculty as PI or co-PI must be listed)
   5. Collaborative research activities
   6. Other relevant research achievements.

4. **Budget and Budget Narrative**
   - Please use the provided budget template.
   - Expenses should be categorized as PS and OTPS (broken into materials, travel, equipment and “other” categories). The template may be modified to list expenses specific to the campus and project.
   - EIP and Chancellor’s Early-Career Scholar funds may be used for items such as post-doctoral research associates, graduate student stipends, tuition (not to exceed 10% of the award), travel, equipment, software, etc.
   - EIP and Chancellor’s Early-Career Scholar funds may not be used for:
     - Faculty Salary
     - Fringe
     - Search firm costs
• Moving expenses
• Membership fees
• Furniture

• Campus match information should be included in the budget. Match should be for the duration of the award cycle and should be at least 1:1.
• Budget Narrative (maximum one page): Describe and justify overall budget plan, planned expenditures and timing of expenditures. For cluster hire proposals, indicate the hiring timeline, either staggered or sequential hiring, and this should be reflected in both the budget narrative and in the budget itself.

V. Proposal Review Criteria and Process

The proposal review criteria includes, but is not limited to:
  a. Vision for growth and sustainability
  b. Funding potential for research area
  c. Prior success of the campus in recruiting EIP faculty who have been very effective in attracting externally sponsored research funding.
  d. Qualifications of existing faculty
  e. Expected qualifications for proposed new hires
  f. Facilities related to the area of interest and any campus plans to improve facilities in support of the project
  g. Evaluation plan for tracking performance metrics

All proposals will be reviewed by a panel appointed by the Office of Research and Economic Development. The panel will consist of members from SUNY campuses, as well as SUNY System Administration. Necessary measures will be taken to avoid any potential conflicts of interest.

Curricula Vitae of prospective candidates under consideration should be provided with the proposal for approval. Candidates are eligible for funding only after approval by the Office of Research and Economic Development.

VI. Reporting Requirements

• Annual reporting on the use of grant funds and progress towards meeting project goals is a requirement of the program. Details of the required reporting will be communicated at a later time.
• PIs will be contacted by the Office of Research and Economic Development for informal updates throughout the award cycle.