Dean’s Innovation Seed Awards in Epigenetics and Gene Dynamics
Funding Opportunity

Request for Applications (RFA)

I. Key Dates
RFA Announcement: September 26, 2019 (at Epigenetics Symposium)
Letter of Intent Due: November 27, 2019 at 5:00 pm EDT
LOI Decisions Announced: early January 2020
Full Applications Due: mid-February 2020 (date announced with LOI decisions)
Funding Decisions Announced: March 2020
Anticipated Funding Start Date: May 2020

II. Award Amount, Overview, and Goals
The Dean’s Innovation Seed Awards in Epigenetics and Gene Dynamics program is pleased to accept applications for seed grants to support collaborative research at HMS in the fields of epigenetics, chromatin structure or gene regulation. We welcome proposals focusing on basic scientific questions as well as those with clinical or therapeutic applications. Two types of grants are available at this time:

Pilot: One-year grants of $30,000
Development: Two-year grants of $150,000/ year

Both types of grant are aimed to facilitate collaborative projects between two or more HMS-affiliated labs. Collaborations between labs in different departments or different locations is encouraged. Pilot grants will support innovative research ideas, with no requirement for preliminary data. Development grants will provide funds for projects with demonstrated feasibility, with a goal of supporting the generation of preliminary data for NIH or similar grant applications. Three of each type of grant will be awarded this cycle. Details on applications and deadlines are below.

III. Eligibility
PIs are invited to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) as described in Section V below. For Pilot grant requests, funding decisions will be made based on the LOI review. For Development grant requests, the LOI review will be used to select PIs who will be invited to submit a Full Application as described in Section VI below.

Lead Principal Investigator (PI) Eligibility
Faculty members with appointments as Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor at HMS, other Harvard Schools, and HMS-affiliated institutions are eligible to be the lead PI. There can be a maximum of one lead PI per application.

Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) Eligibility
A Co-PI collaborator contributes to the intellectual development of the project, designs the study or a part thereof, and is involved with the study throughout the term of funding. Faculty members with appointments as Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor at HMS, other Harvard Schools, and HMS-affiliated institutions are eligible to serve as the Co-PI of an application. At least one Co-PI is encouraged but not required.
IV. Allowable and Unallowable Costs

- All PIs and Co-PIs are expected to budget at least 1% salary and effort on the award. Faculty who are not permitted to budget salary on applications of this type (e.g., HHMI investigators) should budget effort but not salary.
- Pilot grants may request up to $30,000 for a one-year period.
- Development grants may request up to $150,000 per year for a two-year period.
- Indirect costs required by other Harvard Schools or HMS-affiliated institutions may be included up to a maximum rate of 15% and must be budgeted within the award from the program. No additional funds to cover indirect costs will be provided.
- All expenses must be directly related to the proposed research and part of the approved budget.

V. LOI Submission Information

Letters of Intent for both types of grant are due November 27, 2019, and must include:

a) Cover page including:
   1) Title of Proposal
   2) PI and Co-PI(s) information: names, email addresses, ranks, institutions, and department affiliations.
   3) Clearly indicate which type of grant you are applying for: Pilot or Development. Indicate whether IRB or IACUC approval is required for the proposed project, and if so, if you already have obtained approval.

b) Scientific Proposal (to be uploaded as a .PDF) is limited to 1.5 pages not including references. Use Arial, black font color, and font size of 11 point only. The Document should be single-spaced, with 0.7-inch margins.
   1) Specific Aims (1 page): Briefly describe the background and significance of the proposed research, list the specific aims of the project and briefly describe each. Format and content should be similar to Specific Aims page in NIH grants.
   2) Describe collaboration and follow-on plans (½ page): Briefly describe the collaboration you are proposing, as well as how the proposed project will lead to follow-on studies that might be supported in the future via external funding opportunities.

c) References: Please list references cited on a separate page and keep the length of the reference list to a maximum of one page.

The review panel for the LOIs will meet in early January 2020. Funding decisions on Pilot grants will be made at this time as a result of the LOI review. Pilot grant recipients will be required to provide the budget and institutional approval information outlined in Section VI.a before a final award can be made. For Development grants, full applications will be requested shortly thereafter from a subset of applicants. The specific due date for full applications for Development grants is anticipated to be in mid-February and will be announced concurrently with the invitation to submit.
**VI. Full Application Submission Information**

Full applications are **due in mid-February** (specific dates to be announced with LOI decisions) and must include:

a) For each institution that will receive funds, the following forms must be completed:
   1) **PHS 398 Face Page**: One Face Page per faculty member requesting funds. Please remember that each PI or Co-PI requesting funds will receive a separate award agreement to provide the funding; pass-through subawards are not allowed. Face pages from HMS Quad-based faculty or faculty from other Harvard schools require a Department authorized signature only. Face pages from PIs or Co-PIs from HMS-affiliated institutions require a signature from an institutional authorized official.
   2) **PHS 398 Form Page 4**: Detailed budget for each year of the requested award period. Refer to Section IV for allowable costs.
   3) **Narrative Budget Justification**
   4) Each PI and Co-PI is required to submit separate budget and budget justification information, making clear how the grant money would be split between collaborators.)

b) **PHS 398 Biographical Sketches** for the PI, Co-PIs and significant collaborators. An eRA Commons ID is requested for all Co-PIs.

c) **Scientific Proposal** (submitted as .PDF) is limited to 4 pages not including references. Use Arial and a font size of 11 point only. The full application (covering items 1-4 below) should be single-spaced, with 0.7 inch margins. All figures and tables must be included in the body of the application and count towards page limits. References are limited to 1 additional page. Appendix material will not be accepted.
   1) **Project Title and Specific Aims**
      i. Briefly describe the context and impact of the proposed research.
      ii. List the specific aims of the project and briefly describe each.
   2) **Background and Significance**
      i. Summarize why the project is innovative, why it will have a potentially major impact, the limitation of current knowledge, and how work will address this problem.
   3) **Experimental Approach**
      i. Provide detailed information about the work to be carried out in each specific aim
      ii. Explain the nature of the collaboration
   4) **Long-Range Objectives**
      i. Describe how the proposed project will lead to follow-on projects that could be supported in the future via external funding opportunities

Full applications for Development grants will be reviewed in Mid-March, and funding decisions announced by the end of March. The anticipated funding start date is May 2020.

**VII. Contact Information**

All inquiries related to the application process, eligibility, and/or scientific research areas should be directed to Vonda Shannon, Vonda_Shannon@hms.harvard.edu.