

Call for Proposals for NSF-supported mini grants

The Rutgers University Office for the Promotion of Women in Science, Engineering, and Mathematics (WiSEM) has been awarded a five-year Institutional Transformation grant for \$3.67 million dollars from the ADVANCE program of the National Science Foundation (NSF). The grant, entitled Rutgers University for Faculty Advancement and Institutional Re-Imagination (RU FAIR), will run from September 1, 2008- August 31, 2013 and will serve the Camden, Newark, and New Brunswick campuses of Rutgers University. The overall goal of the RU FAIR initiative is to remove barriers to recruitment and retention of women faculty, to advocate for greater diversity in senior leadership positions, and to provide higher visibility to the achievements of Rutgers women faculty in science, engineering and mathematics (SEM) disciplines.

RU FAIR Mini grants will be awarded to qualified individuals and/or teams of researchers across Rutgers for initiatives that encourage interdisciplinary research across school campuses and improve the climate for SEM women on all three campuses of Rutgers. More specifically, these grants are designed to stimulate interdisciplinary course development, training, leadership and research as well as to increase retention through strengthened networks and informal mentorship, thus furthering the professional advancement and collaboration potential of SEM women, especially minority women. Of particular interest is the desire and need to provide seed money for interdisciplinary research collaborations between Rutgers women's programs, such as the nationally acclaimed Rutgers Institute for Women's Leadership (IWL), and Rutgers SEM faculty. The vision is to use RU FAIR mini grants to bring these academic cultures together.

These small grants are part of our efforts to transform Rutgers University, with the long term goal of making the university more supportive of women in SEM fields. Young women faculty, especially assistant professors, need to expand the prominence of their research. All professors need to expand and strengthen their networks.

The mini grants are intended to foster interdisciplinary activities between departments, centers, schools and campuses, especially those activities that would promote collaborations between women's studies programs and SEM faculty, or activities that would encourage collaborations between the Camden, Newark and New Brunswick campuses.

RU FAIR Mini Grants will be selected based on an annual competitive application process and are open to all faculty on all three campuses. Grant awards will range in amount from \$500 to \$15,000, with the expectation of annually awarding 5-10 grants. The first mini grant awards will run from March-December 2009. In subsequent years, the grant cycle will run from Sept. 1-Aug. 30th.

Proposals can be directed towards a broad range of topics. Some illustrative examples are given below.

- Funds to invite an outside speaker who would attract an interdisciplinary audience (e.g. a philosopher who specializes in bioethics).
- Research exploring the different career paths of men and women.
- The coordination of electronic communications and program development for improved dissemination of information.
- Sponsorship of SEM-related events at different locations (e.g. bringing a panel of speakers from Newark and New Brunswick to Camden).
- Creation of partnerships between social and natural scientists that focus on gender equity.
- Development of programming on topics relating to women's professional development.
- Sponsorship of a colloquium exploring the interface between women's studies and scientific discourse.
- Sponsorship of events or research that deals with diversity in SEM fields.

- A study of childcare needs at Rutgers.
- Support of an art exhibition that examines scientific and technological themes in contemporary life.

Brief Background concerning NSF RU FAIR

The NSF grant will support five major initiatives to increase the participation and advancement of faculty women in science, engineering, and mathematics on all three Rutgers campuses. The five initiatives are:

- The Recruitment and Retention Initiative: Seeks to increase the number of women, more specifically minority women, on the Rutgers SEM faculty.
- The Communication Initiative: Focuses on communications across campuses and departments.
- The Networking and Liaison Initiative: Seeks to build collaborations between Rutgers SEM faculty and the Rutgers Institute for Women's Leadership (IWL) through such mechanisms as interdisciplinary mini-grants.
- The Visibility Initiative: Promotes Rutgers women SEM faculty through expanded faculty profiles and mini autobiographies on the WiSEM website, sponsorship of a lecture series of prominent women faculty, targeted nominations of distinguished faculty members and outstanding postdoctoral associates for awards and solicitations of press coverage for Rutgers search.
- The Family Initiative: Seeks to bolster the resources available for dual care families and for families with children.

The full text of the NSF RU FAIR proposal is posted under the announcements for August 15, 2008 at <http://sciencewomen.rutgers.edu/>

Application Process

The text of the proposal should be 2-3 pages in length, including a narrative outlining the proposed activities. The narrative should include details for how the proposed plan will help meet ADVANCE objectives, and a description of how it will foster interdisciplinary activities and collaborations. Where appropriate, provide citations to the literature.

In addition, submit a current *curriculum vitae*, a proposed budget and a budget justification. The *c.v.*, budget, and budget justification are not a part of the page limit. The template of the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects is preferred for proposed budgets; however, an excel spreadsheet is acceptable. Proposals should be submitted in pdf or doc format online to sciwomen@rci.rutgers.edu **by 5 pm on March 27, 2009.**

Faculty members who are awarded RU FAIR Mini Grants will be expected to provide a final report to the RU FAIR Management Board within 12 months of the proposal award. This report will be submitted to NSF and the university as part of our annual reports. Where appropriate, we will seek press coverage and other publicity for programs and events supported by mini grants.

Selection Criteria

The criteria for evaluating proposals will include feasibility, campus needs, and potential to promote interdisciplinary, inter-school and intercampus activities that will lead to a permanent change in the culture of Rutgers University.