Introduction

The University of Massachusetts (UMass) President’s Office is pleased to announce the 2011 Science and Technology (S&T) Initiatives Fund. Total funding available will be contingent on the University’s budget situation.

The fund represents President Wilson’s continued commitment to advancing UMass’s interests as the Commonwealth’s public research university and to ensuring that the University contributes significantly to social and economic development in Massachusetts. It also directly responds to the Trustees’ strategic priority on strengthening the University’s research enterprise and growing its portfolio substantially. Investments to date from the fund have totaled nearly $6.5 million, and have generated additional funding of more than $140 million for projects such as the Center for Hierarchical Manufacturing (Amherst), the Massachusetts BioManufacturing Center (Lowell and Dartmouth), the Massachusetts Medical Device Development Center (Lowell and Worcester), the UMass Center for Clinical and Translational Science (systemwide, led by Worcester) and the Center for Personalized Cancer Therapy (Boston, in partnership with Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center).

Purposes and Allowable Uses of Funds

The Fund is a tool to catalyze research collaborations among UMass campuses and with other partners to create impact and economic engagement at many levels. It will provide resources to the most outstanding researchers on the campuses working in areas of demonstrated institutional commitment and priority. It will also enable growth of networks for the purpose of enhancing UMass’s contribution to the Commonwealth’s economy.

The intent of the program is to 1) advance campus strategic research priorities, 2) provide seed-level support to help position researchers for larger, long-term investment (i.e., federal and state awards and private support in the form of research funding, licensing and venture creation) and 3) directly catalyze partnerships with Massachusetts industry that leverage UMass expertise and effort in ways that enhance company and cluster competitiveness.

It is expected that the Fund’s portfolio of projects will attract over time significant new investment to the University. This includes not only sponsored research awards, but also funds for infrastructure development, revenues from industry-related services and philanthropy.

Funds may support research, faculty release time, sabbaticals, travel, hiring of project staff or consultants, and other such expenses associated with developing major new S&T initiatives. Funds are not intended to be used directly as match for proposals under development. However, it is anticipated that activities undertaken with an S&T award will be synergistic with efforts to
secure external support. Funds are also not intended to support technology development (e.g., prototyping, proof-of-concept activities). The Office of Commercial Ventures and Intellectual Property (CVIP) manages a “gap” fund which provides this type of assistance.

Proposals in fields important to the Commonwealth’s economy—such as energy, life sciences and healthcare, and information technology and communications—are encouraged. With the establishment of the Life Sciences Moment Fund in 2008 (which is targeted specifically for projects that strengthen clinical and translational research), proposals focused on other areas of the life sciences are of particular interest.

Awards will likely be in the range of $100,000 - $150,000, but the President’s Office reserves the right to be flexible in this regard. The project period is typically twelve months, starting at the beginning of the University’s fiscal year (July 1). Funds are disbursed in two equal shares at the beginning (July 1) and end (June 30) of the project period. An interim project report is requested in mid-December and a final report in mid-June.

Criteria for Awards

The criteria of the Fund include:

- **Intellectual Merit**: Only high-quality science and technology projects will be considered for funding;
- **Growth Opportunity**: Potential for leveraging substantial outside funding from federal, state, industry and other sources is expected;
- **Institutional Partnerships**: Collaboration with other Massachusetts academic and research institutions is highly valued, especially partnerships among UMass campuses;
- **Economic Impact and Industry Collaboration**: Projects should demonstrate their ability to support economic growth in Massachusetts, through partnerships with individual companies or regional/statewide industry associations, or through other mechanisms;
- **Project Leadership**: The presence of strong project leadership by both faculty and administrative staff (as appropriate, including the use of external consultants) is considered crucial for success; and
- **Campus Commitment**: The endorsement of the Chancellor(s) and evidence of campus commitment to the proposed initiative (such as financial support) is essential.

Application and Review Process

The goal of the President’s Office is to keep the process simple and non-bureaucratic. The timeline is as follows:

- Fri., February 25: Concept Papers due to campus research offices.*
- Wed., March 16: President’s Office feedback provided to campus research offices.
- Fri., April 15: Proposals due to campus research offices.*
- Fri., June 3: Announcement of awards.

* Campus research offices are expected to complete internal processing and forward materials to the President’s Office within one week – Fri., March 4 for Concept Papers and Fri, April 22 for Full Proposals.
Guidance for Concept Papers

Concept papers should:

- Be no more than two (2) pages in length;
- Outline the thrust of the project and how it will achieve the goals of the fund;
- Identify project leadership and team members;
- Provide a cost estimate for the project;
- Describe the external funding opportunities to be pursued and the expected nature of collaborations (on a preliminary basis if necessary); and
- Demonstrate the endorsement of the Chancellor. Submission via campus research offices will be presumed to indicate approval of the Chancellor. For multi-campus proposals, evidence of approval of each campus research office is needed.

Concept papers will be reviewed by the Vice President for Economic Development and office staff, in consultation with campus research offices. Applicants who submit the strongest concept papers will be asked to submit full proposals. In cases where opportunities for synergy exist, proposers may be advised to combine their ideas into a single proposal.

Guidance for Full Proposals

Full proposals should:

- Be no more than five (5) pages in length;
- Elaborate on the intellectual focus presented in the concept paper and provide a more thorough project description, including anticipated performance milestones and success measures;
- Specifically address how the project will meet the selection criteria for the fund;
- Identify and address key administrative and managerial challenges to the project;
- Provide a budget for the proposed use of funds; and
- Demonstrate the endorsement of the Chancellor. Submission via campus research offices will be presumed to indicate approval of the Chancellor. For multi-campus proposals, evidence of approval of each campus research office is needed.

Proposals will again be reviewed by the Vice President and office staff, with input from the campus research offices. The President’s Office staff will also actively consult with relevant government (e.g., the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, Massachusetts Life Sciences Center, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center) and industry stakeholders (e.g., industry associations and technology councils). Proposers will likely be invited to meet in person with staff as part of the review process. The monthly President’s Council meetings will be used to provide updates to and solicit input from the Chancellors. Staff will make funding recommendations to the President, who has final decision-making authority.
Proposal Submission and For Further Information

All materials should be sent via campus research offices to Jeff Brancato, Associate Vice President for Economic Development, UMass President’s Office. For additional information, he can be contacted at (774) 455-7273 or jbrancato@umassp.edu.