Innovation in Research:
Research Engagement Collaboratives

Harry J. Ploehn
Research & Scholarship at USC

• We are a Carnegie “very high research activity” research university. So what?

• General Questions
  – Who in the world would be interested in ______________?
  – What real-world problems are you trying to solve?
  – Doesn’t your emphasis on research detract from teaching?
  – How does your research benefit...
    • ...[me, my child, our state, society, employers, ...]?
Research & Scholarship at USC

• Strategic Questions
  – Do our focus areas reflect the breadth and diversity of USC’s academic interests and expertise?
  – What should be our focal points in three to five years?
  – How do we more effectively “synergize” research with teaching, creative activity, community engagement?

• Answers?
  – As a research university, we must be able to articulate good answers to these questions.
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• Begin to invest now...
  – in people and ideas...
  – in future focal areas...
  – in ways that synergize our missions...

• Vision
  – Academic focal points
    • Research, teaching, service, creative activity
  – Address societal “grand challenge” problems
    • Local, national or global in scale
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• Goals
  – Form new interdisciplinary faculty teams
    • Focus on local, national or global “grand challenge” problems
  – Expand knowledge base, experience in grand challenge areas
    • Especially focused on student engagement
  – Build workforce expertise in key areas
    • Serve needs of private, public sector employers in the state
  – Prepare faculty teams to compete for external funding
    • Sustain REC activities for long-term impact
One Possible Example

• Unifying Theme: “Twenty-first Century Voting”
  – Interdisciplinary faculty team
    • Computer Science & Engineering, Information Technology
    • Political Science, Sociology, History, Philosophy, ...
  – Expand knowledge base, experience
    • Cyber-security and cyber-infrastructure
    • Voting rights, politics of voter IDs, fair and free elections...
  – Build workforce expertise in key areas
    • Interdisciplinary courses, UG & grad internships, research, ...
  – Prepare faculty teams to compete for external funding
    • National Science Foundation? Dept. of Justice? Companies?
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• Project Stages and Timeframes
  – Stage #1: Seed Projects
    • One year, up to $25K, one-time
    • Four to eight projects anticipated
  – Stage #2: Implementation Projects
    • Up to five years, $100K to $300K per year
    • Selected from among seed project teams
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• Eligibility
  – Principal Investigators
    • Tenured USC-Columbia faculty members
  – Participants
    • All USC system faculty members

• Proposal Deadline
  – September 15, 2014, 5:00 pm
  – Submit via USCeRA
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For more information:

- Request for Proposals (instructions, review criteria)
  - [http://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/provost/faculty/grants/researchcollaboratives/index.php](http://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/provost/faculty/grants/researchcollaboratives/index.php)

- Frequently Asked Questions (updated frequently)
  - [http://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/provost/faculty/grants/researchcollaboratives/recfaqs.php](http://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/provost/faculty/grants/researchcollaboratives/recfaqs.php)

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