Announcement Release Date: October 22, 2013
Application Receipt Date: January 27, 2014
Award Announcement Date: April 25, 2014

Purpose: ASPIRE-I funding is provided by the Office of the Vice President for Research to encourage faculty to develop individual innovative research projects leading to the pursuit of external funding or to the promotion of scholarly activities. This program will have 4 tracks of funding:

- **Track I** funds will be for Junior Faculty (tenure-track Assistant Professors only) and will be awarded to encourage the development of research projects for further extramural funding or other scholarly pursuits.
- **Track II** funds will be awarded to research faculty (non-tenure track, Assistant Professor level and above, but not for Post-Doctoral Fellows) to encourage the development of research projects for further extramural funding.
- **Track III** funds will be awarded as bridge funds to faculty (tenure-track, tenured or research faculty) who have not been able to renew their recent grants.
- **Track IV** funds will be awarded for Senior Faculty (Tenure-Track or Tenured Associate and Full Professors) to encourage the development of research projects for further extramural funding or other scholarly pursuits.

Eligibility: Eligible applicants include all faculty who have independent research programs on the USC Columbia Campus and USC Senior/Regional Campuses. Faculty previously awarded funds from the Office of the Vice President for Research must have completed a final report as per the award terms and conditions.

Faculty may only submit a single ASPIRE I proposal (faculty still may submit separate proposals to ASPIRE I, ASPIRE II, and ASPIRE III).

Faculty may resubmit a revised proposal that was not funded from the 2013 ASPIRE-I funding cycle; If so, they should clearly indicate that it is a revised proposal and should include an introduction (maximum: one page) responding to reviewer comments. The reviewers’ critique must be attached to the proposal. This introduction will not be included in the narrative page limit. In addition, the revised applications should highlight the changes made in the research narrative. *Resubmitted revised proposals lacking the introduction page will not be reviewed.* Faculty may submit a revised ASPIRE application only one time. Faculty can submit an application on a similar theme that was not funded during the previous funding cycle as a new grant. In such an instance, there should be major revisions in the proposal. If they submit an
unfunded application as a new application without making substantial conceptual changes, it will
not be reviewed.

Faculty serving on the ASPIRE-I review committee are not eligible to apply for ASPIRE-I funds
during the funding cycle in which they serve.

**Funds Available:** Track I, III, and IV projects may be funded up to $15,000. Track II projects
may be funded up to $10,000. An applicant may request a project period of 16 months
beginning May 16, 2014 and ending September 15, 2015. Under certain conditions, exceptions
to these dates may be requested. Proposals may be submitted by more than one investigator,
but only one investigator can be designated the project lead.

**Budget Information:** Budgets will be presented in general categories and require detailed
explanation. Although the ASPIRE Review Committee intends to fund projects as closely as
possible to the requested amount, it reserves the right to alter the amount depending on the
number of proposals received and funds available. Cost share is not encouraged.

**Allowable Costs**
- Salary and fringe benefits of project research personnel including undergraduate and
  graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, and technicians
- Up to one month of summer salary (or up to one month of salary for a research faculty)
  may be included for the PI if used directly to work on this project.
- Capital Equipment (article of non-expendable, tangible property having a useful life of
  more than one year and an acquisition, or valuation cost of at least $5,000)
- Project supplies
- Animal maintenance
- Travel *essential* to conduct the project; justification must be provided
- Graduate Student Tuition

**Unallowable Costs**
- Costs in connection with faculty degree requirements
- Travel to professional meetings
- Salary and fringe for Co-PI’s
- Undergraduate Student Tuition

**Application Procedure**

1. Develop a three page proposal narrative that provides:
   a. A brief discussion of the background and significance of the proposed idea,
      including its relation to the present state of knowledge in the field.
   b. A detailed narrative of the project that includes the objectives, significance of the
      research, the research task and expected accomplishments during the course of
      the project, the specific outcomes of the project, a discussion of potential external
      funding sources, and a timeline.
   c. A maximum of one page should be devoted to discussing how the
      research/creative activity that you complete will help you in your career, help you
      bridge funds, or expand your research into a new area.
   d. Proposal should be single-spaced with margins not less than one-half inch and
      using a font size not less than 11 pt.
e. Attach a cover sheet to your proposal (not included in the page limit) that includes the project title, the total budget request, the PIs’ names, colleges/departments, and e-mail addresses.

2. Attach the following supporting documentation to the end of the proposal narrative:
   a. Bibliography (should be included as appropriate, but will not be counted in the narrative page limitation).
   b. Two-page biographical sketch of the principal investigator and also of the co-investigator(s), if any, that includes:
      1. Education
      2. Professional experience
      3. Evidence of scholarship: most significant refereed journal articles, books, and book chapters, etc.
      4. Significant accomplishments and contributions
      5. Other information as appropriate
   c. Current and pending support. Include current grant funding and pending grant funding using the form (or similar) provided on the ASPIRE Program website.
   d. If you have received support from the Office of the Vice President for Research in the past, include a short paragraph on each award which includes the funding amount and the benefits of the funds to your research/creative activity program.
   e. A detailed budget on the form provided on the ASPIRE Program website and budget justification for total project costs consistent with the list of allowable costs shown above. Please see the information regarding the budget justification provided on the ASPIRE Program website.
   f. Appendices are allowed if highly relevant (e.g. letters of support and external review panel comments on related proposals); however, do not use appendices to circumvent page limits.

3. Submit the completed proposal packet:
   a. Through USCeRA (https://sam.research.sc.edu/uscera/) and APPROVED by your chair, dean and/or chancellor before 5:00 pm on deadline date.
   b. **Application Receipt Date:** Monday, January 27, 2014.
   c. Select "Internal Request VP for Research" and choose the category type (ASPIRE I) from the USCeRA drop down menu to ensure proper proposal routing. Failure to check the box will result in your proposal NOT being reviewed.
   d. The Internal Commit Form should be used to list the amount that you are requesting from the VPR. Do not enter an amount in the Start-Up box. Enter in the amount that you are requesting for each year in the corresponding box. The total will calculate automatically for you.
   e. **Upload your proposal following the directions in USCERA using Adobe PDF or MSWord formats.**
   f. Questions about submission? Contact: Beth Herron, Research and Grant Development Office, bherron@mailbox.sc.edu, 777-2885.

**Review Process:** Applications that are complete and responsive to this announcement will be evaluated for merit by the Peer Review Committee. The Committee will then provide a prioritized list of recommendations for funding to the Vice President for Research based on the quality of the proposals per the review criteria (see below). The VPR will make awards based on Committee’s recommendations and available funds.
Research Merit:
- Does the proposal provide a compelling argument for the research?
- Does the proposed project represent a significant contribution to the investigator's field of study? If so, how?

Nature of Proposal:
- Does the proposal provide a clear statement of overall project objectives?
- Are the proposed methodologies appropriate and accurate?
- Does the proposal provide a sound justification with clear and specific budget information? Is there a timeline, and is it realistic?
- Is the text of the proposal well-written?

Leverage:
- Will the project lead to further scholarly activity?
- Does it significantly improve chances for funding from existing sources?
- Does the project offer significant opportunities for funding from new sources?
- Does the project help build research networks?

For more Information: Please contact Beth Herron, Research and Grant Development Office, bherron@mailbox.sc.edu, 803-777-2885.