

The recently relaunched Blum Center for Developing Economies at the University of California, Merced is pleased to announce its inaugural seed grant funding opportunity to support faculty and graduate student research. Our initial research focus, and for the next two years, is on food security broadly defined as ensuring access to healthy and nutritious foods to meet human needs. We encourage faculty and graduate students conducting research in this area to consider applying for 2017 seed grant funding support. Proposed projects that connect/partner with existing food security efforts on campus (i.e., Global Food Initiative) are strongly encouraged. Potential areas of interest may include food communication and social marketing, food and nutrition literacy, food choices/environment and health, agricultural pesticide use, the intersection of food and social justice, the productive capacity of food networks and research conducted at the water-food nexus. However, our focus is not limited to these topics and we encourage all faculty and graduate students conducting food security related research to apply.

All interested graduate students and faculty will be required to submit a short proposal, not exceeding two pages (see details below) to (<https://ucmerced.infoready4.com/-competitionDetail/1758978>) for consideration. Evaluative criteria will include one's potential to receive external funding upon completion of the study as well as the potential for peer-reviewed publications. Graduate students are encouraged to outline how the funded project will facilitate their career goals.

The maximum funding amount is \$10,000 per research project. However, larger awards may be considered depending on the scale of the project. Required elements for each proposal are listed below. The deadline for submission is Monday May 1st, 2017 with awards decisions being made by May 15th, 2017.

Required elements of each proposal. Proposals are not to exceed two pages.

- Title
- Description of research team and roles
- Project description
- Description of potential external funding
 - Graduate students replace with a description of how funds will facilitate career goals
- Timeline for use of funds
- Itemized budget

Use of Funds

Funds may be used to support any activity directly related to the grant proposal. This may include data purchases, travel, salaries/benefits for UC Merced employees, student support, post-doc support, equipment, research supplies and other costs justified under the project. Funds can not be used to hire administrative support or consultants or to fund research being conducted at another institution. The Health Service Research Institute (HSRI) will oversee the awarded funds and ensure that they comply with UC Merced guidelines and standards. All funds must be spent within one year of funding.

Review

All proposals will be reviewed by the Blum Center Executive Committee as well as our community partners through the Blum Center Community Advisory Board.

Requirements for Recipients

Principal Investigators will be expected to complete an annual report upon completion of their study for submission to the Blum Federation. The grantee is solely responsible for the activities proposed. Any changes to the budget or proposal must be approved by the Blum Center Executive Director (Kurt Schnier). If a project requires IRB approval the grantee is expected to take all necessary steps to ensure that they comply with IRB procedures and policies and that they obtain approval before the funds are awarded. All publications and presentations resulting from the funding must acknowledge the support of the UC Merced Blum Center.

Additional Considerations

The Blum Center is currently working on a grant proposal for the NIMHD Specialized Centers of Excellence on Minority Health and Health Disparities (<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-MD-17-005.html>). Faculty who are interested in collaborating on this effort should indicate this in the “Description of potential external funding” section. Those selected for collaboration will receive an additional \$2,500 in discretionary research funds to assist with their efforts and collaboration.

Total Funds: \$50,000

Maximum Funds Requested: \$10,000 (exceptions allowed for large scale projects)

Anticipated Number of Projects Funded: 4-5

Deadline for submission: May 1st, 2017

Project Period: One year, starting as soon as June 1st, 2017

Questions: Contact Amelia Johnson, ajohnson78@ucmerced.edu , or the Blum Center Executive Director Kurt Schnier kschnier@ucmerced.edu

The UC Merced Blum Center grants will be awarded in a manner consistent with University requirements.