

OCEAN UNIVERSITY OF CHINA - AUBURN UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS IN AQUACULTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

OUC-AU JOINT CENTER GRANTS PROGRAM - FY2017
SUBMISSION DEADLINE - OCTOBER 28, 2016

REVISED 10/11/2016

THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

Ocean University of China (OUC, Qingdao, Shandong Province, China) is a leading university in China with particular strengths in oceanography and fisheries science. Auburn University (AU, Auburn, Alabama, USA) is a land, sea and space grant university renowned for its strong programs in fisheries, aquaculture and environmental sciences. Both institutions are dedicated to advancing research and education in aquaculture and environmental sciences and have developed long term academic partnerships in these disciplines. Building on their existing relationship and shared vision, OUC and AU have recently established the “OUC-AU Joint Center for Aquaculture and Environmental Sciences” (Joint Center). The goal of the Joint Center is to promote collaborations between the two institutions in research and education in the fields of aquaculture and environmental sciences.

The OUC-AU grants program is a key element of the Joint Center. The purpose of this program (Request for Proposals) is to facilitate and strengthen research collaborations in the fields of aquaculture and environmental sciences by providing seed funding support. Funded projects will stimulate research collaborations between OUC and AU scientists in the priority areas listed below. **Specific objectives of proposals should be to develop, facilitate and expand research collaborations between OUC and AU scientists.** This program is to be viewed as a source of funding to initiate or stimulate a research project, not as a primary source of research support. Principal Investigators (PIs) and Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs) are encouraged to seek additional research support from extramural or other sources.

PRIORITY AREAS

The OUC-AU Joint Center for Aquaculture and Environmental Sciences aims to stimulate collaborative research in both broadly defined disciplines. Specific priority areas for this RFP include aquaculture/fisheries science, water quality, environmental science, climate change, genomic basis for breeding of aquatic animals, and molecular basis of host-pathogen interactions.

ELIGIBILITY

The goal of this program is to facilitate research collaborations between OUC and AU scientists. Thus, a proposal must be jointly authored by scientists from both institutions (i.e., PIs/Co-PIs must include at least one scientist from each institution - see the section on “Proposal Types” for further information). All investigators must have an appointment at OUC or AU. PIs/Co-PIs at AU must be tenured or tenure-track faculty members with an Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station (AAES) appointment or in an AAES college. Contracted and non-tenure track faculty members at AU may serve as Co-Investigator (Co-I) on proposals but only tenured or tenure-track faculty members can serve as PI/Co-PI.

DEFINITIONS

- **Principal Investigator (PI)** - is defined as the individual designated by the proposer, who will be responsible for the scientific or technical direction of a project, as well as reporting requirements.
- **Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI)** - is an individual who has responsibilities similar to that of a PI. While the PI has ultimate responsibility for the conduct of a project, the Co-PI is also responsible for the scientific or technical direction of the project.
- **Co-Investigator (Co-I)** - is an individual involved with the PI/Co-PI in the scientific development or execution of a project. The Co-I (or collaborator) does not have the responsibilities of a PI or Co-PI.

PROJECT DURATION

All awards are for the duration of one year but may be renewed for additional year(s) based on demonstration of progress and availability of funds.

PROPOSAL TYPES

We are requesting proposals for two project types aimed at developing or strengthening research collaborations between OUC and AU scientists:

1. FOUNDATION/INTEGRATED GRANT PROPOSALS

To foster collaborations between OUC and AU scientists in the priority areas. Foundation/Integrated grant proposals must include one PI from OUC or AU and a Co-PI from the other institution, and provide evidence that the project will have a high probability of success in terms of leveraging of extramural funding. Suggested maximum funding per proposal is \$75,000 per year. Up to 8 proposals may be funded in this category. Projects can be proposed for up to three years, but proposals will be funded one year at a time.

2. PLANNING/TRAVEL GRANTS

Planning/travel grants support OUC and AU scientists to travel to the other institution to develop collaborations or for project planning. Planning grant proposals can be submitted by a single PI from one of the two institutions, but must include information on potential partner(s) at the other institution. Recommended funding levels per proposal are \$5,000-\$10,000 per year. Up to 10 proposals may be funded in this category. Planning/travel grants are for the duration of one year and non-renewable.

COST SHARE

Cost share is not required.

PROPOSALS

Proposals are limited to 6 single-spaced pages for the Foundation/Interdisciplinary research projects and 3 single-spaced pages for the Planning/Travel grants. Proposals must be formatted using 8¼ x 11 inch pages with 1 inch margins, 12 point font, and should consist of the following sections:

- a) Title; PI, Co-PI and Co-Is, affiliations and contact information. Note that Foundation/Integrated grant proposals must include one PI from OUC or AU and a Co-PI from the other institution. Planning/travel proposals may be submitted by a PI from one of the institutions, but must include information on potential partner(s) at the other institution and a letter of invitation from the partner.
- b) A project summary.
- c) A proposal narrative containing justification for the work, objectives, experimental approach, timeline, expected results and outcomes, and plans for leveraging of funds.

The following sections must be included in the proposal, but do not count toward the page limit:

- d) References cited in the narrative.
- e) Budget and Budget justification (for all elements of the budget). Note that the budget for Foundation/Integrated grant proposals can include a portion of summer salary of the AU PI/Co-PI (if applicable). Budget must include separate columns for investigators/activities at each institution (see Budget form - only one year budget is required).
- f) Letters of commitment/support submitted by the PI/Co-PI/Co-I/potential partner(s) from both institutions with expressed commitment to the proposed project (i.e., personnel, infrastructure, etc.).

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Please email your application packet including the appropriate signatures, all in a single pdf file to ogp@auburn.edu by **October 28, 2016**.

PROPOSAL REVIEW AND EVALUATION

The Advisory Committee of the OUC-AU Joint Center will provide oversight for proposal evaluation. This committee includes representatives from the participating colleges/schools at both institutions. Proposals will be peer-reviewed using appropriate AU/AAES grants review process. A technical review panel which will include scientists from OUC, AU and/or similar institutions will be selected considering representation of expertise of research areas to evaluate the proposals. In addition to the review panel, written comments may be solicited from ad hoc reviewers. The review panel will meet (most likely via a virtual conference) to discuss, evaluate, rank, and make recommendations for funding. To be successful, a research proposal must include investigators from both institutions and demonstrate how the seed money will be used to leverage extramural funding.

PROPOSED TIMELINE

September 20, 2016: RFP released
Early October 2016: Joint AU-OUC webinar to facilitate collaboration
October 28, 2016: Proposal due date
November 2016: Proposal review and recommendations
November 30, 2016: Award notification/announcement
January 1, 2017: Project start date

AWARD NOTIFICATION

At the completion of the evaluation process, the PI/Co-PI will be notified of the panel decision. In case of funding, the PI/Co-PI will be provided further instructions on release of funds. Requirements for release of funds may include approvals for work with animals, human subjects, hazardous materials, and recombinant DNA (where appropriate).

REPORT

Within 3 months of the conclusion of the project, a final report (maximum of 6 pages) must be submitted to the OUC-AU Joint Center. This report must detail all aspects of the project, including all products and outcomes and attempt to leverage funds. Any publications and presentations deriving from the funded project must acknowledge support from the OUC-AU Joint Center and both institutions.

CONTACT

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

BUDGET PREPARATION

- The budget for each proposal must be jointly proposed by investigators from both institutions. A budget sharing formula based on the proposed activities and roles must be agreed upon by the PI/Co-PI from both institutions. The AU portion of the budget can be up to 85% of the total budget request for each proposal but the sharing formula has to be approved by the PI and Co-PI.
- The budget for each proposal must be jointly proposed by investigators from both institutions. A budget sharing formula based on the proposed activities and roles must be agreed upon by the PI/Co-PI from both institutions. The AU portion of the budget can be up to 85% of the total budget request for each proposal but the sharing formula has to be approved by the PI and Co-PI.
- Budget must include separate columns for investigators/activities at each institution.
- Only one year budget will be accepted.
- Updated budget template form can be downloaded at <http://agriculture.auburn.edu/academics/global-programs/ouc-au-collaboration/>

PROPOSAL REVIEW

- All proposals will be peer-reviewed by two separate review panels (i.e., OUC panel and AU panel).
- The OUC panel requires a Chinese version of the proposal, while the AU panel requires an English version. Please submit English and Chinese versions (each as a single pdf file) of the proposal to ogp@auburn.edu and CC to qfgao@ouc.edu.cn by October 28, 2016.
- Proposal files should be named using the format: OUC-AU grant-Last name of PI and Last name of Co-PI-language
Example: OUC-AU grant-Fadamiro and Gao-English
- Proposals will be evaluated and rated independently by both panels using the evaluation criteria outlined below.
- Review of proposals by the AU panel will follow the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station (AAES) grants review process. A technical review panel which will include scientists from AU will be selected to evaluate the proposals. In addition to the review panel, written comments may be solicited from ad hoc reviewers. The review panel will meet to discuss and rate proposals.
- After both panels have concluded, each proposal will be assigned a final score which is the average of the scores assigned by the two panels.
- Highly rated proposals will be jointly discussed by OUC and AU program directors and advisory committee, prior to award announcement.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Panelists will rate every proposal based on the following evaluation criteria.

- **Proposal preparation.** Proposal is complete and follows the format and page limits specified in the RFP. Information is presented clearly. **(10 points)**.
- **Relevance of the project to the goal and priorities of the OUC-AU Joint Center for Aquaculture and Environmental Sciences and potential for leverage.** A clear justification of how the proposed project is aligned with the goals and priorities of the OUC-AU Joint Center for Aquaculture and Environmental Sciences and how such alignment will lead to future extramural funding **(20 points)**.
- **Scientific merit of the proposal.** Including comments on novelty, uniqueness, and originality; conceptual adequacy of the hypothesis; research question or problem(s) to be addressed; clarity and delineation of objectives; adequacy of project description and suitability and feasibility of methodology; and probability of success of project. **(40 points)**.
- **Quality of collaboration.** Proposal includes investigators (PI/Co-PI/Co-I/partner) from OUC and AU and clearly demonstrates a substantial and meaningful collaboration between the partners. Team is complementary with roles of each investigator clearly delineated. Proposal includes letters of intent/support from PI/Co-PI/Co-I/partner **(20 points)**.
- **Appropriateness of the budget.** Budget is well-defined, reasonable for the proposed project, and follows guidelines described in the RFP and budget template. Budget narrative follows the order of the budget form and fully justifies budget items **(10 points)**.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **IS THERE A REQUIREMENT FOR COST SHARE?**

No. Cost share is not required.

- **CAN A PROJECT BE FUNDED FOR MULTIPLE YEARS?**

No. Awards are made on an annual basis for one year only. Investigators may compete for funding each year the program is offered.

- **CAN AU FACULTY MEMBERS WITH NO AAES APPOINTMENT OR IN A NON-AAES COLLEGE SERVE AS PI OR CO-PI?**

No. Only AAES tenured or tenure-track faculty members with an AAES appointment or in an AAES college may serve as PI/Co-PI. However, faculty members with no AAES appointment or in a non-AAES college may serve as Co-I (see *Definitions* section, page 1).

- **DO PROPOSALS HAVE TO INCLUDE PIS FROM BOTH INSTITUTIONS?**

Yes. Foundation/Integrated grant proposals must include one PI from OUC or AU and a Co-PI from the other institution (i.e., a project must be jointly proposed by researchers from both institutions). Foundation/Integrated proposals may also include additional co-investigators (Co-Is) from one or both institutions (see *Definitions* section, page 1). Planning grant proposals can be submitted by a single PI from one of the two institutions, but must include information on potential partner(s) at the other institution. All proposals must include letters of commitment/support submitted by the PI/Co-PI/Co-I/potential partner(s) from both institutions.

- **CAN A FACULTY MEMBER AT OUC OR AU SERVE AS PI/CO-PI ON MULTIPLE PROPOSALS?**

No. A faculty member at OUC or AU may serve as PI/Co-PI on only one proposal. However, an individual (including PIs/Co-PIs) may serve as Co-I on multiple proposals.