



MCSI Research Seed Grant Program in Sustainability

Application Deadline: Friday, February 23, 2024

Awardees Announced: April 15, 2024

Funds Distributed: May-June 2024

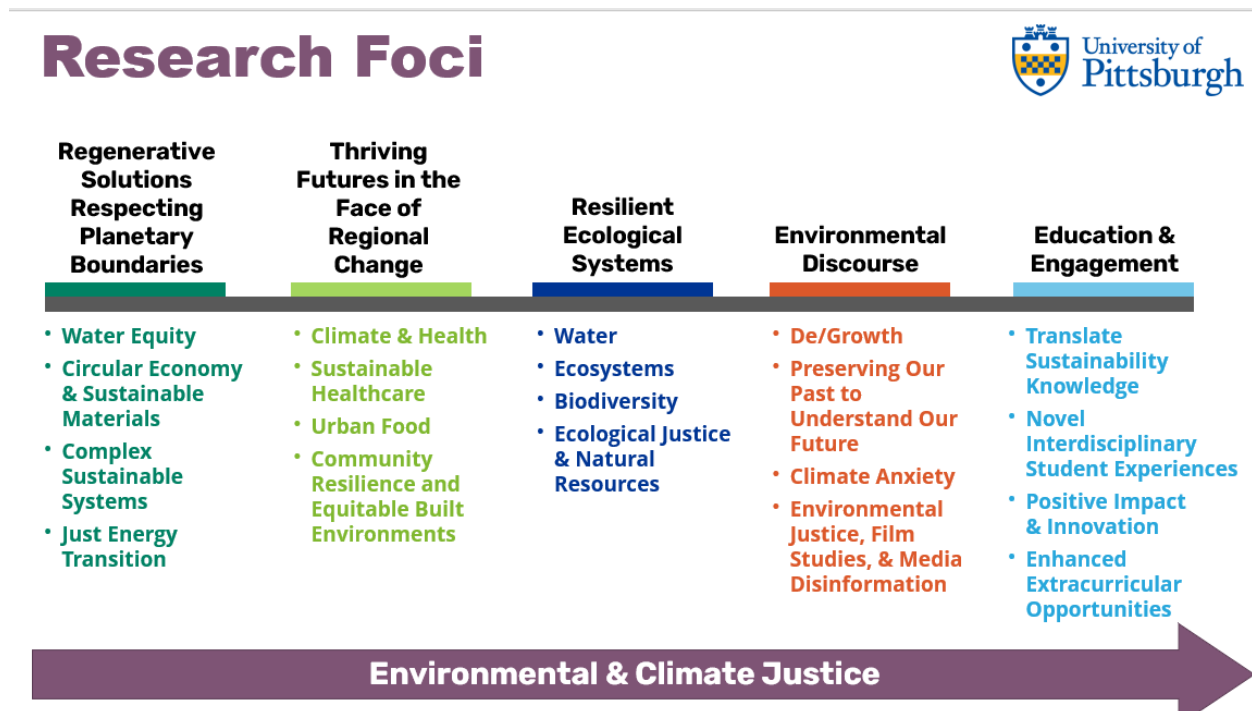
Reports Due: May 2025

The Mascaro Center for Sustainable Innovation (MCSI) at the University of Pittsburgh is requesting faculty grant proposals for interdisciplinary sustainability education and research initiatives. The goals of the grants are:

- (1) catalyze the formation of convergent research teams focused on sustainability and associated solutions;
- (2) fund projects capable of obtaining external funding upon completion; and
- (3) enhance Pitt’s national recognition in sustainability and the visibility of interdisciplinary sustainability research and education on campus.

Over the past 20 years, MCSI has provided seed funding for 115 faculty in support of sustainability research and as a result, has secured follow-on funding from federal agencies totaling over \$34.5MM.

To help advance the University’s sustainability goals as outlined in the Pitt Sustainability Plan and to facilitate convergent research, we have worked with our [Ad-Hoc Faculty Committee for Sustainability](#), [Sustainability Task Force](#), and our end-users to identify the following [research areas](#). Should you have another idea that does not fit within these topical areas, the PI should contact Melissa Bilec (mbilec@pitt.edu).



Resources:

- Climate impacts and health <https://www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/default.htm>
- Environmental justice <https://www.hhs.gov/environmental-justice/index.html>
- Pitt Sustainability Plan http://issuu.com/upitt/docs/2018_pittsustainabilityplan_final?e=2614445/56117752
- What is a circular economy? <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/circular-economy>
- What is Convergent Research? <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/24767/a-new-vision-for-center-based-engineering-research>

Requirements

Eligibility:

A University of Pittsburgh faculty member (tenure or non-tenure stream) must be a Co-PI on the proposal, however, collaborations with Pitt staff and students are encouraged. In addition, due to the interdisciplinary nature of sustainability we highly encourage collaborations between departments and schools especially those topics that connect science and engineering with the social sciences.

Budgets:

A maximum of \$65,000 can be requested. All grants will be funded for a one-year period beginning July 1, 2024. Funds can be used for undergraduate and graduate student support and post-doctoral support. Funds can also be used to support sustainability projects related to campus improvements and living laboratory projects. Small amounts of funds will be considered for equipment, supplies, and travel. If your work requires different budget considerations, please email Gena Kovalcik (gmk9@pitt.edu).

Body of the Proposal:

The body of the proposal should not exceed **five single-spaced pages** and should employ a 12-point font size and one-inch margins. The five-page limit excludes references. The body of the proposal should provide:

- A clear statement of goals and rationale for the work.
- A strong connection to sustainability. Please [Pitt's Sustainability Plan](#) for ideas.
- A detailed work plan.
- A description of the proposed work that describes how it differs from previous approaches.
- If a proposed solution is designed to be more sustainable than current analogs, then a means by which the new solution will be validated (vis-à-vis sustainability) should be included in the proposal.
- A set of milestones that will allow judgment of project success.

Budget

Proposals must include a 1-page budget and 1-page maximum budget justification.

Note regarding graduate students: For SSOE, in developing your budget, please note that graduate students will be supported as **Graduate Student Researchers (GSRs)**. For GSRs the budgets should include: stipend, 50% fringe, and \$8000 in tuition **per term** (fall and spring; no summer tuition). (Note: Students on FTDH do not require tuition support, so this choice is also available, pending current student support.)

OPTIONAL Appendices (CVs, current support):

- While not required, the PI and all co-PIs **may** include their NSF (or NIH) 2-page CVs.
- Please provide current support if related to the proposal.
- If any matching support is being provided, this should be detailed in a letter of support.

Important Submission instructions:

Proposals are due February 23, 2024.

In a single-PDF please include (Proposal Cover Page, Body of the Proposal, Budget)

Your single PDF File should be named ***LastNameSeedGrant2024*** and be submitted via our Qualtrics [Form](#)

Proposals are reviewed by a committee of internal and external advisors.

Reporting Requirements:

Recipients of an award from the MCSI Seed Grant program must fulfill the following requirements:

- Three to five PowerPoint slides summarizing the goals and outcome of the work due on May 1, 2025.
- Acknowledgement of MCSI funding in any publications resulting from the work.

For additional information contact: Melissa M. Bilec (mbilec@pitt.edu), Gena M. Kovalcik (gmk9@pitt.edu)