

UAB Team Science Program (TSP) Request for Proposals: Phase 1 Planning Grants

Introduction

“Forging Ahead”, the UAB Strategic Plan for 2024-28, provides a guide for our continued success as a world-class university. Our Research Strategic Initiative, “Growth with Purpose,” provides a vision, that, “*UAB will grow the research enterprise to further enhance the lives of those we serve by fostering positive, healing transformation, empowerment, and lasting societal benefit.*” Achieving this vision will require an investment in interdisciplinary research and team science, defined by the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine as, “...*a mode of research by teams that integrates information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge to advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice.*”

Addressing the most important and impactful contemporary scientific questions will require teams of scientists with distinct expertise. The development of true team science spanning disciplines across an academic campus requires cultivation and support. UAB has tremendous opportunity in proactively fostering relationships, developing scientific questions, and leveraging cutting edge innovation across all UAB Schools to address important scientific questions that will impact the lives of people in Alabama and our country as a whole. In order to do this, we must bring investigators together in supportive environments that stimulate co-creation and innovation.

What is the UAB Team Science Program?

A new university-wide program that aims to support and catalyze large team science projects that are competitive for extramural funding and will have deep scientific impact. Spearheaded by the UAB Office of Research and the University Wide Interdisciplinary Research Centers (UWIRC) program, the Team Science Program provides a pathway for interdisciplinary teams to develop successful extramural proposals for multi-project program grants (>\$1million/year in direct costs). Via a competitive, peer-review process, interdisciplinary teams can receive funding in 2 sequential phases to support preparation for submission of large extramural grants:

Phase 1 Planning Phase: 12-month awards up to \$5,000 per team

Phase 2 Preparation Phase: 24-month awards ranging from \$100,000-\$200,000 per team (anticipated)

The UAB Team Science Program will serve as an opportunity to unite university activities (research, scholarship, commercialization, patient care, education, service) along with the capabilities of partnering organizations to solve large-scale problems. It is not intended to hinder individual or departmentally based activities, but instead to augment and enhance them.

Phase 1 Planning Grant Guidelines for Submission

The planning grant is intended to provide resources to facilitate team formation, crystallization of 3-4 research projects and project leaders, establishment of potential project interconnection, develop a state of the science white paper on the thematic team area, and convene an external scientific advisory board. As a result of Phase 1 planning grant activities, Team Science Program teams will be better equipped to propose pilot projects for Phase 2 funding towards ultimately securing large extramural grant awards with large societal impact. Funding may be used to support honoraria for external scientific advisory board members and modest FTE of an administrator charged with organizing and convening the Team Science Program group and the external scientific advisory board.

Phase 1 Eligibility Criteria

- TSP teams are encouraged to include representatives from multiple schools/college, including members from multiple UWIRCs.
- Teams can include investigators at other institutions that possess expertise that is needed but not available at UAB, but UAB funds cannot be used to support these individuals.

- Teams should define the scientific topic, population, and/or technology/method that is the focus of the thematic area
- Teams should identify a leader who is charged with submitting an application on behalf of the team, convening the group and reporting to the TSP Scientific Oversight Committee and the Office of Research.
- Teams may not have previously received an institutional planning grant such as HSOM Multi-Investigator Planning Grants or O'Neal Invests funds.

Phase 1 Expected Outcomes

- Convene half-day scientific retreat to kick-off group activities
- Set a cadence of regular meetings of the group; minimum frequency of monthly
- Develop 3-4 hypothesis-driven R01-equivalent projects, project leaders and consider the interconnection between the projects.
- Develop a white paper detailing the state of the science in the thematic area nationally (or globally) and at UAB, UAB strengths and needs in the area, initial potential projects, and potential extramural funding opportunities and sponsors
- Convene an external scientific advisory board for an inaugural meeting and potentially one additional meeting

Phase 1 Deliverable: Final report including the white paper and external scientific advisory board report

Total support for planning grants will be up to \$5,000 each. Review of the proposals will be carried out by the Team Science Program Scientific Review Committee and up to 10 meritorious proposals will be chosen. Phase 1 funding is required to compete for Phase 2 funding, which will be awarded based upon scientific merit and the availability of funds.

Phase 1 Planning Grant Proposal Details

Phase 1 Proposals should be two pages in length (11-point font, 0.5 inch margins) and should include the following:

- o Title of the Team Science Proposal;
- o Overarching hypothesis to be tested.
- o Description of the thematic focus area of the team (e.g., scientific topic, population, and/or technology/method) and significance and opportunity for innovation that the focal point brings;
- o Description of the disciplinary backgrounds, Schools/Colleges, and UWIRCs represented by team members;
- o Potential impact of the work that will be conducted;
- o Description of how funding of this team in Phase 1 funding will inform preparedness for Phase 2 funding, and ultimately enhance competitiveness for large extramural grant awards in the future;
- o Listing of potential extramural funding opportunities that the team will work towards;
- o Budget and budget justification (not included in page count);
- o Biosketches of the Principal Investigator and all proposed team members (not included in page count).

Phase 1 Proposal Evaluation

In evaluating the Team Science Program Phase 1 Planning Grant proposals, the following criteria will be considered:

- o Alignment with eligibility criteria, expected outcomes and deliverable (see above);
- o Qualifications of proposed team leader and members;
- o Diversity of disciplines represented by teams including training background, Schools/Colleges, and UWIRCs represented;
- o Significance, innovation, and potential for impact of proposed thematic area of team;
- o Robustness of extramural funding opportunities in proposed priority area;
- o Clear plan for leveraging Phase 1 funding to inform a Team Science Program Phase 2 award and competitiveness for large extramural grant awards;

Other Important Information

Team Science Program Phase 1 Planning Grant proposals are due by November 22, 2024

Submit Proposal by choosing "Team Science Program – Phase I" from the InfoReady competition menu found at [InfoReady - Office of Research \(uab.edu\)](https://uab.edu/info-ready)