

# Transformative Learning Fund: Vertically Integrated Projects

Spring 2023

The Provost's Transformative Learning Fund in partnership with the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation has been established to support the engagement of undergraduate students in faculty-led research, design or entrepreneur projects focused on finding solutions to societal challenges. The inaugural competition commits \$200,000 to support establishment of a university-level Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP) initiative at VCU.

## What is a VIP?

***VIPs prepare students for the future of work by engaging them in the work of building a better future.***

Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP) is an experiential learning model that creates long-term, large-scale projects that unite undergraduate and graduate education, faculty research, innovation, design, and entrepreneurship through multidisciplinary teams. VIPs emphasize solutions, often technology centered, to complex, human-centered problems.

VIP brings together teams of undergraduate students – from various years, disciplines and backgrounds – to work with faculty and graduate students to address big questions in their areas of scholarship and exploration. Undergraduate VIP students can earn academic credits, while faculty and graduate students benefit from the design/discovery efforts of their teams.

## Spring 2023 award objectives

Funded proposals will meet the following criteria:

- Be based on a lead faculty advisor's innovation projects and expertise;
- Address transdisciplinary problem-solving through engagement of additional faculty as well as students from different disciplines;
- Be multi-year in scope with multi-faceted objectives in research, design, entrepreneurship, and/or community outreach & service;
- Be open to undergraduate students across disciplines, academic years and diverse backgrounds and to graduate students with the goal of engaging teams over several semesters;
- Have a plan or evidence for community or industry partnership as a discrete goal (not required, but strongly encouraged);
- Address learning outcomes focused on preparing students for the future of work, including the development of disciplinary and professional skills.

## Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on alignment with the Spring 2023 award program objectives:

- Must be transdisciplinary
- Direct connection to a societal issue or problem (see the [One VCU Research Strategic Priorities Plan](#))
- Letter of support from the community or industry partner, if applicable
- Letters of support from potential faculty partners
- Project plan to operate as a multi-year project

## Eligibility and amount

- The competition is open to all full-time faculty who will serve as the principal investigator.
- Selected teams will be awarded amounts ranging from \$10,000 - \$20,000 to be expended over two years to support student participation: Examples include
  - Student stipends
  - Material/equipment fees for student engagement and learning
  - Travel costs

\*\*No seed money may be used for faculty stipends. Funding must be 100% directed toward addressing student access and experience

## Program design

\$200,000 is available in the Transformative Learning Fund. Grants will be awarded to projects that demonstrate promise towards meeting VIP objectives. Grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$20,000 will be awarded for two academic years (2024-2025). Award amounts will depend on the number of students engaged and plans for sustainability. Award recipients must agree to the following as conditions of funding:

- Participate in a faculty cohort for the duration of the award period.
- Participate in mandatory kickoff event in June 2023
- Participate in ongoing assessment of the initiative, including recommendations for adjustments to the VIP seed award program, and VIP related policies and structures.
- Develop a sustainability plan for the project such that the project can continue after the initial seed cycle.

## Application process and timeline

To be considered, signed applications with full PDF of proposal documents must be received via our online form by **Monday, April 10, 2023**.

**Apply on RAMS-SPOT internal opportunities via this link: [OP0000531](#).**

Notification letters will be distributed on or before June 1, 2023, with an expectation that work recruiting students will begin immediately following.

### Disbursement and use of funds

- Funds will be disbursed to the faculty or staff member's fiscal agent for administration upon acceptance of the award, and all awards will be in compliance with state and university fiscal policies.
- Awards must be expended by May 31, 2025.

## Questions

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