Purpose:

The College of Applied Science and Technology (CAST) at Illinois State University (ISU) supports the research and scholarly efforts of tenured and tenure-track faculty through the University Research Grant (URG) Program. This program, supported by funds from the Provost’s Office and CAST, provides faculty with up to $5,000 to support projects approved on a competitive basis.

URG applications can be submitted to one of two programs: “Grant Development” or “Research Development”. The primary purposes of the URG "Grant Development" Program are to provide faculty with funds to develop significant research programs that have a high probability of acquiring external funding and to complement proposals submitted to an external agency. The primary purpose of the URG "Research Development" Program is to support quality undertakings of the faculty deemed important to the discipline but not necessarily designed to directly pursue external support.

In the URG program, research is defined as "A formal procedure which contributes to the expansion of basic knowledge or applies such knowledge to the solution of problems in society or exemplifies creative expression in a specific field of study. The results of research to be recognized by this program must be communicated to professionals outside the university through a peer review process in a manner appropriate to the discipline." The results of research, referred to in the ASPT process as Scholarly and Creative Activity, include but are not limited to peer-reviewed authorship, application for and/or receipt of grants, creative productivity, presentation of professional papers, and other achievements specific to particular disciplines and areas of study.

Eligibility:

1. Tenure track faculty members are eligible to submit proposals. An individual not returning to the University in the fall of 2013 must resign a funded grant.

2. Faculty members who have not attained the appropriate professional outcomes from a prior URG Award are ineligible for future awards until appropriate outcomes are attained. Check with the CAST Dean’s office for verification.

3. A recipient of three consecutive URGs in the "Research Development" category must apply in the "Grant Development" category or show evidence of a submission to an external agency via the ISU Office of Research and Sponsored Programs before reapplying in the "Research Development" category.

4. Only one proposal per faculty will be accepted in a fiscal year. For example, no one may apply in the "Grant Development" and "Research Development" category in the same year, nor can one individual co-author multiple submissions.

Evaluation Process:

Each proposal will be evaluated by the CAST Research Committee (CRC). The CRC serves in an advisory role to the Dean of the College of Applied Science and Technology. The CAST Associate Dean for Assessment, Research, & Curricula serves as an ex-officio member and chair of the committee. Final decisions on allocation of funds will be made by the Dean in consultation with the Associate Dean. The number of proposals funded depends on the availability of funds and the quality of proposals in a fiscal year.

The priority of the CAST Research Committee is to support probationary tenure track faculty with limited URG experience. Accordingly, the CRC will rank proposals in two categories:

“New Investigator”: probationary individuals who have been awarded fewer than three URGs
"Senior Investigator": probationary individuals who have received three or more URGs and all tenured individuals.

Each category is evaluated according to the appropriate criteria and separate rankings are created in each category. A joint proposal will be ranked in the "Senior Investigator" category if at least one applicant is in this category.

Proposals reflecting the scholarship of teaching and learning are appropriate in any category. The scholarship of teaching and learning is defined at ISU as: “Systematic reflection of teaching and learning made public.” Proposals focusing on curriculum or program development are not suitable.

Proposals focused on the design and development of processes and products are also appropriate in any category. Means by which the suitability, effectiveness, and/or feasibility of the process or product will be assessed, evaluated, or tested must be addressed in the proposal.

Evaluation Criteria:

All submissions will be evaluated by these criteria:

1. **Quality of the proposal.** The narrative must clearly a) define the research problem and b) describe an appropriate methodology that will be used to investigate the problem. Further, the specific objectives of the proposal must be clearly stated. All professional outcomes must be consistent with the highest academic standards for scholarship in CAST.

2. **Importance to the discipline.** The narrative must clearly explain how the proposal will make a significant impact on the field of study.

3. **Breadth and depth of the proposed research.** The applicant must explain how the proposal aligns with a long-range research agenda and the development of a focused line of research.

4. **Research productivity.** The applicant must demonstrate potential for scholarly accomplishments.

5. **Multiple investigator collaboration.** All multiple investigator applications must clearly demonstrate a justifiable contribution from each investigator.

6. **Potential for external funding support.** All proposals including those in the category of “Research Development” must include a statement regarding the potential for future external support of the research including one identified source of funding support. The external support described must be at or above $10,000 to be considered.

7. **Applicant's research funding.** For all applicants in the “Senior Investigator” category, the proposal must include the applicant’s past record in seeking and obtaining external research funding. The record of achievement is optional for applicants in the “New Investigatory” category.

Proposal Format:

An application must adhere to the CAST Guidelines for a URG Proposal or it will not be considered for funding.

The budget of a URG is limited to a maximum of $5,000. The CRC strongly encourages all academic units to supplement the salary of a URG recipient to the level equivalent to one full month.

All budget items must be justified on the budget page. As funding permits, the Dean’s Office of CAST will consider a supplementary match of up to $1,500 in funding for non-salary budget items. It is possible that the final budget will be negotiated with the CAST Dean’s office depending on the total pool of funds available.

For example, an applicant requesting $3,500 in salary can request $1,500, plus a College match of $1,500, to purchase a piece of equipment required to carry out the proposed project. The equipment would remain in the applicant’s academic unit on completion of the URG. As further illustration, an applicant requesting $4,250 for
salary could request $750, plus a College match of $750, to fund justifiable travel and commodity expenses associated with the proposed study.

Due Date and Notification of Award:

All applications are due by email (pdf attachment) to tamcloda@ilstu.edu by 4:00 pm on February 6, 2012. Applicants will receive tentative notification of the results of the review process from the CAST Associate Dean for Assessment, Research, & Curricula in May, 2012. As much of the URG funding is provided by the Office of the Provost and the availability of that funding is dependent upon the release of the State of Illinois budget, applicants are hereby notified that funding cannot be guaranteed and that provided funding may not reach the PI until late in the fall semester. You should plan for this in your timeline but keep in mind that the outcomes must still be reported by October 15, 2013 with a follow up report due by October 15, 2014.
Please follow carefully the instructions for preparing applications. Save your final URG Application as a pdf file using the following file format: <Your Last Name_Your First Name_Academic Unit>.pdf, such as Lacy_Alain_KNR.pdf. Use 12 point font, one inch margins, and no more than 42 lines per page. Your proposal will be evaluated by the CRC, so remember that you are writing to individuals outside your discipline. Use non-technical language.

The proposal must be organized according to the following sections:

I. Cover Page
II. Abstract
III. Narrative (not to exceed five single-spaced pages)
IV. Special Items
V. Budget Page
VI. Professional Outcome Form

II. Abstract

The abstract must be limited to 300 words in length and written in non-technical language. The abstract should describe the study’s major objectives, summarize the proposed methods, and outline the anticipated contributions of the research project.

III. Narrative

The narrative must be limited to 5 single-spaced pages. Content beyond the 5 page limit will not be considered during the review process and will negatively impact the scoring for the proposal. The narrative should be written using non-technical jargon and be easy for faculty from varied disciplines to evaluate. Evaluation Criteria items 1, 2, and 3 should be succinctly addressed in the narrative.

The narrative includes three sections: Introduction, Objectives, and Methodology. This structure may be slightly abridged or parts combined depending on the nature of the project.

1. The Introduction should educate the CRC by describing the proposed research with emphasis on the significance to your area of study, whether direct and immediate or indirect and long-term. The review of relevant literature, providing a conceptual framework converging on the problem addressed, should clarify the significance of the research as a contribution to knowledge.

2. The Objectives section should contain precise statements defining the goals and scope of the overall project. Research questions could be clarified in this section. Applicants often confuse “objectives” with the “professional outcomes” required at the conclusion of the proposal. The objective(s) of a study are not a grant proposal, peer reviewed presentation, or a manuscript. Objectives clarify a) what research question(s) will be answered, b) what new knowledge will be generated, and c) what problem(s) will be solved?

3. The Methodology section concisely and explicitly outlines the research design. Methods detail the instrumentation and data collection protocol, and should relate back to the specific objectives of the project. Statistical analyses of quantitative data and/or techniques of analyzing qualitative data should be addressed, relating how the analysis to your objectives. Conversely, the technique of assessing the suitability, effectiveness, and/or feasibility of any process to be evaluated or tested must be clarified.
IV.  **Special Items**

All proposals MUST address the following items, with a separate heading for each response:

1.  **The Bibliography** lists the relevant and appropriate references used in the narrative. The Bibliography should be comprehensive but not exhaustive.

2.  **Summary of Applicant’s Research Program.** Provide a comprehensive statement describing how the proposed project relates to your research agenda.

   For collaborative projects, explain the unique and worthy contributions of each investigator to the planned research.

3.  **Timeline.** Provide a timeline of the major activities of the project and the outcomes listed on the Professional Outcome Form. Please note: This proposal is for funding for FY2013 (July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013). Outline your activities from the start of the project considering when funding will likely be released (sometime in late summer or fall) but ensure that all professional outcomes can be completed before October 15, 2013.

4.  **Scholarly Publications.** List your publications and scholarly accomplishments of the past five years. To aid in the evaluation process, applicants should list the following separately:

   Scholarly publications (research articles, reviews, books and monographs). Use the following format: Name of author, title of article or chapter, name of journal or book, exhibitions and performances. *List refereed and non-refereed articles separately.*

   Scholarly accomplishments, e.g., papers presented at professional meetings, productions, exhibitions and performances.

5.  **Previous Funding:**

    **Internal Funding.** List all URG proposals submitted during the past five years and indicate those which were funded. Explain how any URG proposals are related to external grants submitted and/or received, and if a proposal is related to the scholarly publications and accomplishments listed for item 4 above.

    External Funding: For all applicants submitting in the “Senior Investigator” category, you must list all external proposals submitted (including dollar amounts) during the past five years, indicating those funded and those which were not. Use an asterisk to identify external applications resulting, in total or in part, from an internal grant in the past five years. Use the following format: title of proposal, co-investigators, agency, date, dollar amount. (funded/not funded)

6.  **External Funding Potential.** *All proposals must address this item.* Explain how this proposal could contribute to the eventual development of a proposal for external funding. List as specifically as possible the potential funding source(s). The funding agency identified must fund at or above the level of $10,000.

V.  **Budget Page Instructions:** A clear, justified budget is very important. The total budget must not exceed $5,000. Proposals requesting matching College funds for non-salary expenditures must justify the matching funds. Contact the Associate Dean for Research for clarification.

1.  **Personnel Services**

   a. The salary request is limited to $5,000. The College Research Committee (CRC) strongly encourages all academic units to supplement the salary of a URG recipient to the level equivalent to one full month.
b. Student Help. Requests for student wages must abide by the University minimum wage. Please contact the Student Employment Office (8-2027) for further details.

c. Graduate Assistants. Monthly stipends vary within CAST by department but must not be less than the minimum values set by the Graduate School Office & Human Resources.

d. Civil Service - Extra Help. The hourly wage for Extra Help corresponds to the position level. There is a 900 hour limit for Extra Help employees. Check with the Human Resources Office (8-8311) for details.

2. Operations
   a. Contractual Services, which include:
      
      professional and artistic services
      purchase of computer software
      photographic services
      off-campus copying
      electrical supplies
      mechanical supplies (repair & maintenance items)
      parts and fittings for furniture & office equipment (repair parts)
      structural and maintenance materials and repair parts
      statistical services
      subscriptions & information services
      rentals - real & personal property
      mailing list purchase
      postal services**

* If the copying is done on campus the line item to be used is Printing. If the copying is to be done off campus, with reimbursement to the investigator or to the place of business, the line item is Contractual.

**Postal charges must go through the University Mail Service.

b. Commodities, which include:

      educational and instructional materials*
      office and library supplies
      digital media costing under $100
      storage media for computers
      food supplies
      industrial and shop materials
      medical, scientific and laboratory supplies
      printing**

If the cost is under $100, the following are also classified as commodities:

      office and furniture equipment
      all tools
      medical scientific and laboratory equipment
      household, laundry and cleaning equipment
      equipment parts and fittings (minor accessories for equipment purchases)
      parts and fittings for furniture and office equipment (minor accessories)

*Do not request funds for books and journals without a strong justification.

** Printing includes paper, duplicating, and printing; printed forms, reports, pamphlets, booklets and flyers; letterhead and/or envelopes. Off-campus copying is classified as contractual.
c. Travel

Professional travel is an expectation of CAST faculty, and all use of travel funds is governed by regulations of the Board of Trustees (including current mileage rates, and the University rate on cars and vans). Copies of these regulations are available in your academic unit and from the Comptroller’s Office. Travel includes transportation, per diem for meals, lodging and other costs in connection with official business. Justify all estimated travel requested in your budget by identifying the expected destinations.

d. Equipment

Includes items of a durable nature costing $100 or more. Equipment items costing less than $100 are purchased from Commodities.

If the cost is over $100, the following items are considered Equipment:

- office furniture and accessories
- household equipment and furniture
- machinery and major tools
- scientific instruments and apparatus
- digital media
- equipment not elsewhere classified

Do not request funds to duplicate equipment already available within the University unless you provide a very strong justification.

All equipment purchased becomes the property of the University and it will normally remain in the investigator’s academic unit for instructional or research operations.

Budget Justification Instructions: Each budget item must be clearly and completely justified. Proposals requesting matching College funds must include justification of the matching funds.

Special attention should be given to the following.

1. If salary is requested, indicate the exact dates for the time period in which remuneration is requested, because a University contract (extra pay process) will be required. The designated time period for receiving salary must be specific dates within the fiscal year (July 1-June 30). Plan on the funding not becoming available until the fall. Identify the tasks these salary dollars will support.

2. If a proposal is submitted by more than one person, each may request up to $5,000 in total funding. Describe the unique and worthy contributions each investigator will provide to justify all salary.

3. For Regular and Work-Study student help, describe duties, number of hours and hourly rate in each category.

4. For Graduate Assistants, describe duties, the number of months or semesters to be employed, and the monthly stipend.

5. Describe work to be done by Civil Service Extra-Help and number of hours of anticipated use.

6. Itemize and detail all Contractual Services, Travel, Commodities, Equipment, and Telephone Services.

VI. Professional Outcome Form

A. Instructions

1. Provide each piece of information requested.
2. Your “Description of the project” should be brief (3-5 lines) and in non-technical language suitable for informed, non-specialist readers. The purpose of this description is to inform the reader of the primary focus of the project and the appropriateness of the intended professional outcomes.

3. Professional outcomes can include a wide range of scholarly activities as identified in the ASPT guidelines. Possibilities include: conference presentations, research articles, research books, and chapters or articles in books, external grants, exhibitions and performances, research lectures or recitals, or other professional outcomes appropriate to your discipline. The professional outcomes will be products that are consistent with the highest academic standards for scholarly productivity in your discipline. A summary of characteristics and examples of professional outcomes follows in the next section.

Applicants for a “Grant Development” URG are expected to indicate submission of a proposal to an external funding agency as a professional outcome. The proposal must be processed through the ISU Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.

Recipients of a URG for FY 2013 must initially report the professional outcomes of the URG approximately 15 months after the start-up of the project (October 15, 2013). A second report must be submitted an additional 12 months later (October 15, 2014) which describes additional outcomes that resulted from the grant but that were not reported on the first POF. Applicants should keep in their personal files a copy of the intended professional outcome form submitted with the initial URG. Failure to attain appropriate professional outcomes consistent with your discipline by the initial report (October 15, 2013) will make you ineligible for URG funding until appropriate outcomes are met.

4. Outcomes for jointly authored proposals should proportionately reflect the contributions of each investigator.

B. Characteristics and Examples of Professional Outcomes (provided by Research and Sponsored Programs Office)

Acceptable Professional Outcomes: discrete, finite, achievable, related to goals identified in URG, typically involve dissemination of scholarly work, must be completed within established deadline of October 15, 2013.

Examples
• Primary focus of this project is to determine the economic competitiveness of crop production systems which reduce soil erosion and improve water quality. The primary result of this research will be a journal article submitted to the Journal of Soil and Water Conservation (peer reviewed). Also intend to submit a paper to the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association for presentation at the 2013 Annual Meeting. Project will be completed by October, 2013. (Strength: peer reviewed journal identified, outcome clearly identified as paper and journal articles, project completed by deadline)

• In the long term, I plan to submit a first draft of this project (a book chapter) for review to a publisher during the 2013 school year. During the tenure of this grant, I will produce either a scholarly paper to be presented to a national conference in the fall or spring, 2013-2014, or an article to be submitted to a "specific" scholarly journal during the same period. Project will be completed: Paper or article by June, 2014. (Strength: outcome clearly identified as book chapter, project completed prior to October 15, 2013 deadline)

• The primary foci of this project are to (1) test alternate formats of benefit communication, and (2) empirically test one of the existing models of benefit satisfaction. A grant proposal will be forthcoming as will at least two journal article submissions (one for each of the primary focus areas). The grant proposal will be sent first to the SHRM Foundation (which has become very aggressive in funding applied projects related to human resource management). If not funded there, a grant proposal will be submitted to the Employee Benefits Research Institute. Finally, a small grant will be submitted to the subject organization for project cost sharing. Project will be completed between July 1, 2013 - July 31, 2014. (Strength: outcome clearly identified, describes an alternate plan for submission, project completed prior to October 15, 2013 deadline)
• The primary objective of this project is to assess the extent to which youth with learning disabilities are identifying post-school goals and making plans to reach their goals. Two products will result: 1) A proposal to present the findings at the 2023 National Conference of the Council for Exceptional Children, and 2) An article submitted to a special education journal with a national readership. First, it will be submitted to Exceptional Children and if not accepted, it will be submitted to Rural Special Education Quarterly. Project will begin: July 1, 2023. Project will be completed: June 30, 2024. (Strength: outcomes clearly identified, describes an alternate plan for submission, project meets October 15, 2023 deadline)

Unclear Professional Outcomes: nonspecific, unrealistic, not related to goals in URG proposal, not achievable by October 15, 2023.

Examples
• This research project will result in a paper to be submitted to a major journal on regulation. (Problem: fails to specify journal planned for submission, does not include completion date)

• During the grant period, I will continue to work on my book. The novel is a fictive study of the attitudes of siblings and parents. Project will be completed: August 1, 2023. (Problem: fails to specify what work will be accomplished, e.g., chapter, draft of book, introduction)

• Publication/manuscript submission. Project will be completed by December, 2023. (Problem: too general, need to specify journals planned for submission, completion date after October 15, 2023)

• Primary Objective of the Project: Manuscript publication. Other Products: Submission for national/regional or state presentations (possible search for external funding). (Problem: too general, does not specify where the manuscript might be published, which type of presentation, nor name the organization, does not include completion date)