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 Scholarily 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 “Grant Development” category must apply in the “Research 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.


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 Monday, February 4, 2013. Applicants will receive tentative notification of the results of the review process from the CAST Associate Dean on or before May 1, 2013. 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 January 31, 2015.