Internal Call for Proposal Concepts: W.M. Keck Foundation

Program: W. M. Keck Foundation Research Grants
Award amount: $1-2M direct costs only
Internal Deadline for 1-page concepts: June 3, 2016

The W.M. Keck Foundation's Science & Engineering Research and Medical Research Programs support high-risk/high-impact projects that are distinctive and novel in their approach to intractable problems, push the edge of their field, or question the prevailing paradigm. Past grants have been awarded to major universities to support pioneering science, engineering, and medical research and the development of promising new technologies.

Guidelines: Funding is awarded to institutions nationwide for research projects that
- Focus on important and emerging areas of research
- Have the potential to develop breakthrough technologies, instrumentation or methodologies
- Demonstrate a high level of risk due to unconventional approaches, or by challenging the prevailing paradigm. They do not want to receive proposals that scale-up an already proven principle, but do seek proposals with enough proof to suggest that the project will accomplish its aims or will fail in an instructive manner.
- Have the potential for transformative impact, such as the founding of a new field of research, the enabling of observations not previously possible, or the altered perception of a previously intractable problem. Keck especially likes to create new instruments and technologies that make it possible to ask and answer previously unasked or unanswered questions.
- Proposals must not focus on clinical or translational research, treatment trials or research for the principal purpose of drug development. They will not fund a project that is narrowly focused on a specific disease.
- Fall outside the mission of public funding agencies, and require private philanthropy to succeed. Proposals rejected by public or other funders as “too risky” or “beyond our scope” are welcome.

Process:
Brandeis has been invited to submit up to eight one-page concept papers (four in each program) for review this summer, before submitting up to two Phase I (pre-)proposals by November 1, 2016. If invited, Phase II (full) proposals would be due February 15, 2017 for funding July 1, 2017. The Keck Foundation requires that proposals come with the endorsement of the university’s president.

If you wish to propose a project, please prepare a 1-page concept paper (12pt font with 1” margins), including:
- Overview of the proposed project, the challenge or frontier you propose to break through and why it’s important/potential impact, what is distinctive, high-risk, counterintuitive etc. about your approach to this challenge, and any preliminary data or pilot studies that suggest this might be possible;
- Description of the methodology, proposed timeline, and key personnel;
• Justification of the need for Keck Foundation support; and
• Estimated budget broken down, if possible, by major areas, e.g., personnel, equipment, consumable supplies, etc. (budgets can be rough approximations at this stage)

Concept papers should be sent as Word documents to limited-submissions@brandeis.edu no later than 5pm, Friday, June 3, 2016. Questions? Please address questions to Michael Dettelbach (dettelbach@brandeis.edu).

NB: The Keck Foundation has asked that all communication about future funding be directed through the University’s Office of Corporate & Foundation Relations. Please do not contact the foundation directly.