

Moment to See, Courage to Act

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Since Provost Miranda has stepped aside, is the University still committed to the MSCA project?

A: Yes, the University is fully committed to the MSCA process. It has been and will be a key component of the University strategic framework development process. The Board of Trustees are interested in the outcomes of the program. And we expect that outcomes of the program will be utilized in the next capital campaign.

Q: What are the expected outcomes of the planning grants?

A: Planning grants are expected to be used to further a big idea that builds on Notre Dame's research and/or curricular strengths and yet fills an important unmet need in the wider society and at Notre Dame. The expected outcome is a unified, bold vision for major future directions of the University with details of how this vision can be realized. This is not a competitive grant opportunity. We expect that the outcome will inform the strategic plan and the development campaign.

Q: What are permissible expenses for MSCA planning grants?

A: You and your colleagues have a great deal of discretion and a wide range of expenses are permissible. What is not permissible is a recurring expense beyond the life of the planning grant (e.g., hiring a staff or faculty member). If you have specific questions, please send these to msca@nd.edu.

Q: If I am in a cluster, what is the first step?

A: One person in each cluster has been designated the lead and basic information about the planning grant has been shared with the leads. Leads have been asked to share that information with others in their clusters and to coordinate a meeting that brings together members of the cluster to begin discussing the way to move forward with the initiative.

Q: How is the MSCA initiative related to the University's strategic planning process?

A: The MSCA projects will inform the University strategic planning process. We expect that once the University strategic framework planning effort begins, that there will be a faculty committee structure for the MSCA projects to interact with. In the meantime, we encourage those preparing updated MSCA proposals to keep the Provost's Office up to date on proposal development on a regular basis.

Q: Will successful proposals be awarded with more MSCA funding?

A: We do not anticipate providing additional internal funding for updated MSCA proposals. The next phase of MSCA is focused on supporting proposal development and connecting proposals with public and private external funding sources.

Q: How will updated proposals be evaluated?

A: Updated final proposals will be not so much evaluated as reviewed for potential and sufficiency for attracting external sources of funding (e.g., private, public, individual benefactors, corporate partners, foundations, federal agencies). They will be reviewed by the provost, deans, and associate provosts in alignment with the University's strategic planning process. The reviewing team will provide feedback and recommendations to help align the proposals with potential sources of support and/or recommend how they might be integrated into the University's strategic framework. The following questions will be key:

1. Does the proposal clearly describe a compelling vision that builds on Notre Dame's research and/or curricular strengths and yet address an important unmet need in the wider society and at Notre Dame?
2. Are external funders (e.g., private, public, individual benefactors, corporate partners, foundations, federal agencies) likely to find the proposal compelling and worthy of significant support (e.g., sufficient to sustain the proposed initiative)?
3. Should the University present the proposal to external funders and if yes, how can we maximize the chances of the proposal's success and sustainability?
4. Does the proposal include all of the necessary details of the path forward?

Q: Can we add collaborators to our project at any point?

A: Collaborators may be added at any time during the process.

Q: Can we split a cluster into smaller sub-clusters

A: Since the outcome of the planning grant effort is intended to attract external sources of funding and to inform the strategic vision of the University, it is our hope that the cluster groups will make their best effort to find a bold, big picture vision that provides direction for the entire University. But we also understand that there may be multiple outcomes that address different elements of the vision (e.g., education, research, engagement).

Q: Are the groups limited to one outcome for the planning grant?

A: No, we encourage the planning groups to consider how the vision they have developed can be implemented through multiple vehicles such as reallocation of University resources, private philanthropy, foundations, or a diverse set of federal sponsors.

Q: Will the Provost's Office provide feedback on our updated proposal before the final submission?

A: The Provost's Office is ready to provide feedback on your project at any point during the process. Please feel free to reach out to msca@nd.edu.

Q: What is the deadline for final updated submissions?

A: Updated final submissions from cluster planning grant recipients are due June 30, 2022. Updated final submissions from single-proposal and core planning-grant recipients are due June 30, 2023 (with progress reports due June 30, 2022 and December 30, 2022). Of course, final submissions are welcome before deadlines.

Q: Do the progress reports required of single and core proposals need to be 10 pages long?

A: We are expecting most progress reports will be relatively short compared to the page limits. However, we wanted to allow some flexibility in case the teams want to provide interim details about their work. On the other hand, we want to limit the progress report submissions to less than 10 pages to be mindful of both the writer and reader's time.