SCHOOL OF INTEGRATIVE PLANT SCIENCE

SCHMITTAU-NOVAK INTEGRATIVE PLANT SCIENCE SMALL GRANT PROGRAM

Annual Request for Proposals
Request for Proposals: May 1, 2017
November 31, 2017 (annually thereafter)

Proposals Due: August 1, 2017
February 28, 2018 (annually thereafter)

Awards Announced: September 15, 2017
March 31, 2018 (annually thereafter)

Funding Start/End Dates: October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2018
May 15, 2018 – May 14, 2019

Program Budget
Number of awards: ~10 per year (~$64,000 per year)
Funding Level: $5,000-$10,000
Grant Duration: Small grants have a duration of 1 year with the possibility
of a no cost extension.

Program Duration: The program will continue until all funds are disbursed. It is
expected that the program will run for ~9 years.

Program Administration
Program Coordinator: Kim Cotton, kec36@cornell.edu
Program Directors: Dan Buckley, dhb28@cornell.edu (Chair)
Teresa Pawlowska, tep8@cornell.edu (co-Chair)

About the Award:
The Schmittau-Novak grant program is made possible by a one-time gift of $640,000 from the
estate of Jen Schmittau in honor of Professor Joseph D. Novak and in support of research related
to the integrative plant sciences. This is a current use gift made with the expectation that funds
will be spent down over a defined period of several years. To leverage this gift in a manner that
maximizes its impact, potentially reaching hundreds of people over time, it is being used to fund
a small grants program for graduate students in the plant sciences. It should be noted that
Cornell’s CSBC IGERT, which concluded in July 2017, hosted a similar small grants program
with tremendous impact on graduate students in a wide range of fields.

The primary goal of the Schmittau-Novak grant program is to catalyze collaborative and
innovative research in the Integrative Plant Sciences, and to provide graduate students with
experience in proposal preparation and review. It is hoped that these projects will catalyze new
collaborative relationships, provide a funding source for higher risk student-led research with the
potential for novel discovery, and promote graduate student cohesion and community building
within SIPS.
Eligibility:
Small grants are designed to fund research projects initiated by graduate students. Only graduate students in a SIPS Graduate Field are eligible to serve as lead Principle Investigator (PI) on proposals, while co-PIs can be graduate students or postdocs within SIPS or allied Fields. Faculty and academic staff (other than postdocs) cannot serve as PI or co-PI. An individual may serve as lead PI or co-PI on no more than two projects per cycle, and can serve as lead PI on no more than one of these proposals. Projects are not subject to renewal but PI’s are eligible to submit proposals in multiple years as long as subsequent proposals are sufficiently differentiated from research that has been funded previously.

Program Priorities:
The Schmittau-Novak Integrative Plant Science Small Grant Program funds research devised and conducted by graduate students. The program funds both fundamental and applied research that addresses topics relevant to integrative plant science defined broadly. A major focus of the program is to facilitate the professional development of graduate students in integrative plant science, to provide an outlet for student led research teams, to facilitate opportunities for interdisciplinary research, and to catalyze innovative new research initiatives.

Small Grant funding should not be considered a primary means of research support. Rather, small grant projects should allow student to explore new ideas, to realize emerging opportunities, or to form new collaborations. Projects should be student driven and written by graduate students.

Priority will be given to projects that incorporate one or more of the following elements:
- Projects that include participants from multiple SIPS Sections
- Projects that catalyze research on innovative new topics not funded previously
- Projects that promote the development of new collaborations
- Projects whose research outcomes will advance the SIPS mission
- Projects whose research outcomes will benefit the professional development of the PIs

Scope of Funding:
Schmittau-Novak Grants are intended to fund research and research related travel. Small grants may not be used for travel to conferences or meetings but travel associated with research activities or specialized research training may be considered. Small Grants may include support for an undergraduate research assistant. Funds cannot be used to provide support for graduate student stipend, computer purchases, nor equipment typically available in the laboratories of associated faculty. Funds cannot be used to pay journal page charges.

Funds are to be expended within one year of receipt. PIs can request a one year no cost extension by submitting a written request to the program coordinator. The request, not to exceed one paragraph in length, should indicate the reason for extension and plans for expending remaining funds in the time requested. A second no cost extension may be granted in exceptional circumstances if well justified. Funds that remain unexpended at the end of the grant term, will revert to the program.
Project Types:

**Standard Small Grant ($5,000 max):** These are single PI proposals.

**Collaborative Small Grant ($10,000 max):** Collaborative projects must include two or more PIs associated with no less than two different Fields affiliated with SIPS. The proposal must have a short section entitled **Collaborator Responsibilities** that defines clearly the nature of the collaboration and the responsibilities of the co-PIs.

**Small Grant in Support of Undergraduate Research ($9,000 max):** These projects must include a substantial commitment to undergraduate research. This could include a single student employed over the summer (>20hr per week), or multiple students engaged during the academic year. Undergraduates cannot serve as PI or co-PI. The proposal must have a section entitled, **Undergraduate Mentoring Plan**, that describes clearly the PI’s plan for engaging undergraduate students in research, and which also describes the plan for research mentoring of undergraduates engaged in research.

Awardee Responsibilities:

As a condition of accepting this award, it is expected that awardees will:

- Provide a short bio and research abstract to be made public on the Small Grant web page.
- Complete a short final report within 90 days of project completion which describes project activities and expected research outcomes.
- Acknowledge receipt of funding in publications that result from Small Grant Research as follows, “This research was funded in part by a Schmittau-Novak Grant from the School of Integrative Plant Science, Cornell University.”
- Notify the program coordinator, at time of acceptance, of any publications enabled by Small Grant Research.
- Present a lightning talk or poster at an annual SIPS research symposium.
- Agree to serve, on request, as a member of the Small Grant Review Panel.

Proposal Review Criteria:

Proposals will be evaluated in the style of an NSF or USDA program where the program officer is a faculty member and the panel composed of SIPS graduate students. Students will conduct written reviews and meet as a panel to rank proposals. Projects will be evaluated on the basis of their Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts within SIPS.

**Intellectual Merit** will be determined in relation to novelty, feasibility, scientific justification, and potential for scientific impact. While feasibility with respect to time and funding must be demonstrated, priority will be given to cutting edge, potentially high-risk research that has the potential to be transformative and for which funding is not currently available from other sources.

**Broader Impacts** will be determined in relation to potential impacts on education, outreach, and/or service. For example, criteria for evaluating broader impacts could include the potential for catalyzing new collaborations, activities that contribute to PI professional development, and/or outcomes that benefit the broader plant science research community. Broader impacts could also include activities that promote scientific leadership (e.g. leadership in student
organizations or professional societies), service to the plant science community (e.g. panel service), science outreach, and mentoring.

2017 Applications:
Send a single PDF document (saved as Last name_First name_SNIPS2017, e.g. Smith_John_SNIPS2017.pdf) including the following:

- **Cover Page:** Use the Cover Page Template, which is provided.
- **Research Interests:** Provide a brief description of your background, your current thesis project, and your long-term scientific goals (~0.5 page to 1 page max per investigator).
- **Research Proposal:** Present the rationale for your project in an Introduction section and provide sections describing your Objectives and Experimental Approach (3 pages max, excluding references).
- **References:** no page limit
- **Undergraduate Mentoring Plan:** Only required for Undergraduate Research Projects. Describe plans for mentoring undergraduates. Include details on the students that will be engaged with the project, where they come from, what they will be doing, for how long, how they will be supervised, and what opportunities they will have for professional development (~0.5 page to 1 page max).
- **Collaborator Responsibilities:** Only required for Collaborative Projects. Describe the roles of the different investigators in the conception, writing, and performance of the project (~0.5 page to 1 page max).
- **Short CV:** (2 pages max per investigator)
- **Budget Justification:** the more specific the better, include dollar sums and justifications and please do not ask for more than you need (1 page max),
- **Current and Pending Funding:** Provide the title, amount, duration, and source for all grants that currently support your research. Priority will be given to projects that are not already funded or which allow the PI(s) to explore new ideas (1 page max per investigator).
- **Letter of Support:** The Major Adviser and/or supervisor of each PI/coPI must provide a letter of support (~0.5 page to 1 page max per investigator).
- **Response to Previous Reviews:** If applicable, the PI should also include a brief statement indicating changes that have been made to the project in response to prior review by the panel (~0.5 page to 1 page max).

Assemble one PDF file with all of these parts in the above order, each starting on a separate page. All text must be single-spaced, size 12 font, Times New Roman, and with all margins 1 inch (Proposals not compliant with this format will be returned without review.).

The Proposal must be emailed to the Program Coordinator ( ) no later than 11:59pm on the due date.