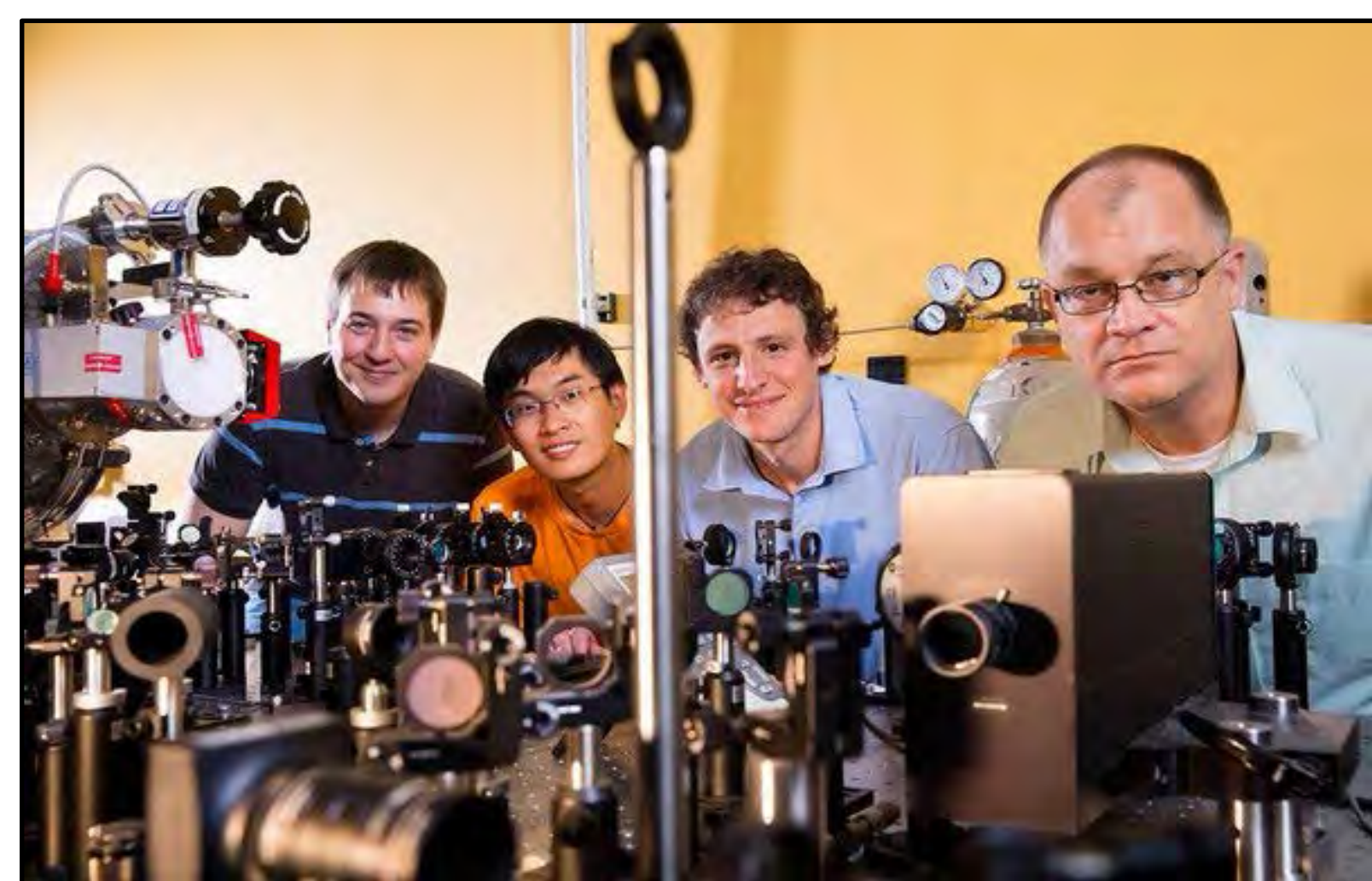




Experimenting with New Internal Funding Programs to Enhance Research Competitiveness

INTRODUCTION

- In the face of increased competition for research funding and federal budget reductions, success rates for federal grant applications are flattening or decreasing, which leaves many meritorious proposals unfunded
- At the same time, updated proposal preparation guidelines and merit review criteria increase the need for compelling preliminary data in many federal grant proposals (e.g., those submitted to NIH)
- To help researchers navigate this “new normal,” the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL)’s Office of Research and Economic Development (ORED) and Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR) have begun offering new types of internal awards:
 - **Revision Awards (ORED)** assist faculty who are revising and resubmitting proposals by providing developmental and/or financial support to improve highly meritorious proposals eligible for resubmission
 - **Biomedical Research Seed Grants (ORED)** facilitate preliminary study or data collection and provide two rounds of expert external review to improve the quality of NIH R01 applications
 - **Bridge/Revision Grants (IANR)** provide funds to help investigators cover gaps in funding or to facilitate the revision and resubmission of highly ranked, unfunded proposals



What Others are Saying

“The BRSG seems like a really fabulous program, I’ve not heard of anything quite like it elsewhere. Feedback and money - exactly what junior faculty need!”

“I...really think the programs you are putting in place to help investigators at UNL are great. I hope we can move toward something like this....”

“I think this program is a very innovative and excellent way to use the tobacco monies.”

APPROACHES

Office of Research and Economic Development: Revision Awards and Biomedical Research Seed Grants

Purpose

- Enhance UNL investigators’ competitiveness for external funding
- Revision Awards provide developmental and/or financial support to improve highly meritorious proposals eligible for resubmission
- Biomedical Research Seed Grants help PIs accumulate evidence in support of a working hypothesis; demonstrate the feasibility of a new approach; or demonstrate the ability to handle new technologies, understand methods, and interpret results.

Eligibility

- Applicants must commit to submitting a new or revised proposal within 12 months following the end of the internal funding period
- Projects submitted for Revision Awards must have been highly ranked but unfunded after initial submission
- Applicants must agree to a complete review of their proposal by ORED’s Office of Proposal Development

Application Format

- Abstract/Non-Technical Summary
- Complete copies of original proposal and review comments for Revision Awards
- Applicant’s response to previous review and plan of work for Revision Awards
- Complete drafts of R01 narrative components and plan of work for Biomedical Research Seed Grants
- Biosketches for key personnel
- Budget of \$25,000 to \$50,000 for 12 or 24 months

Review Criteria

- Revision Awards are reviewed internally to assess the quality of the revision plan, PI or team’s ability to address critiques, and fit between budget and work plan
- For Biomedical Research Seed Grants, two external reviewers provide feedback on standard NIH review criteria: Significance, Investigator(s), Innovation, Approach, and Environment

Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources: Bridge/Revision Grant Programs

Purpose

- Support IANR faculty whose recent applications for extramural research funding received favorable reviews but were not funded
- Bridge program funding provides support between extramurally funded projects to sustain research projects during the re-application process
- Revision program funding provides support for faculty to revise and resubmit a new application that received meritorious scores, but was not funded

Eligibility

- Applicants must have been the PD/PI on a competitive application for at least \$450,000 (total costs) within the previous 18 months
- Applications submitted to NIH must have been scored
- Applications submitted to USDA NIFA or NSF must have been ranked in medium priority (or higher) or in the top 33% of all applications
- Applications include evidence of program officer communication

Application Format

- Abstract/Non-Technical Summary
- Complete copy of reviewers’ recommendations
- Program officer correspondence
- Applicant’s response to previous review and work plans with IANR funding
- Biosketches for key personnel
- Current and pending support forms for key personnel
- Project budget (\$50,000 total costs for one year)

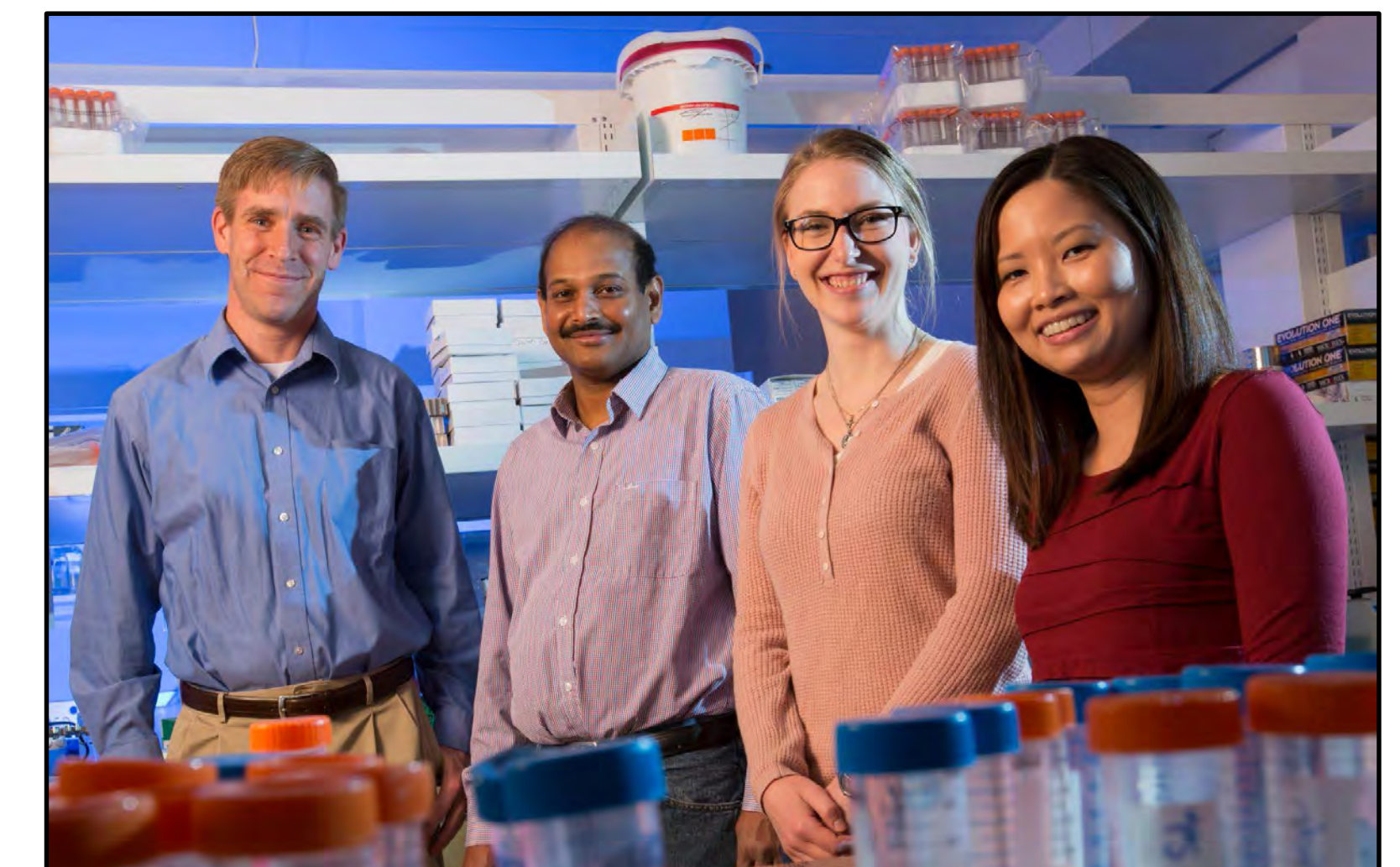
Review Criteria

- Applicant’s response and plans to address the reviewers’ comments (40 points)
- Merit, relevance, alignment with sponsor goals, funding potential (40 points)
- Qualifications of project personnel (10 points)
- Budget and budget justification (10 points)

RESULTS

ORED Results

- Applications were accepted in 2013 (n=8), 2014 (n=23), and 2015 (N=15)
- Success rate: 39% (18 awards)
- Average award size = \$37,655
- Number of PDs/PIs with external funding after ORED support: 11 (61%)
- External funding leveraged to date: \$6,281,456 (9.8:1 return)

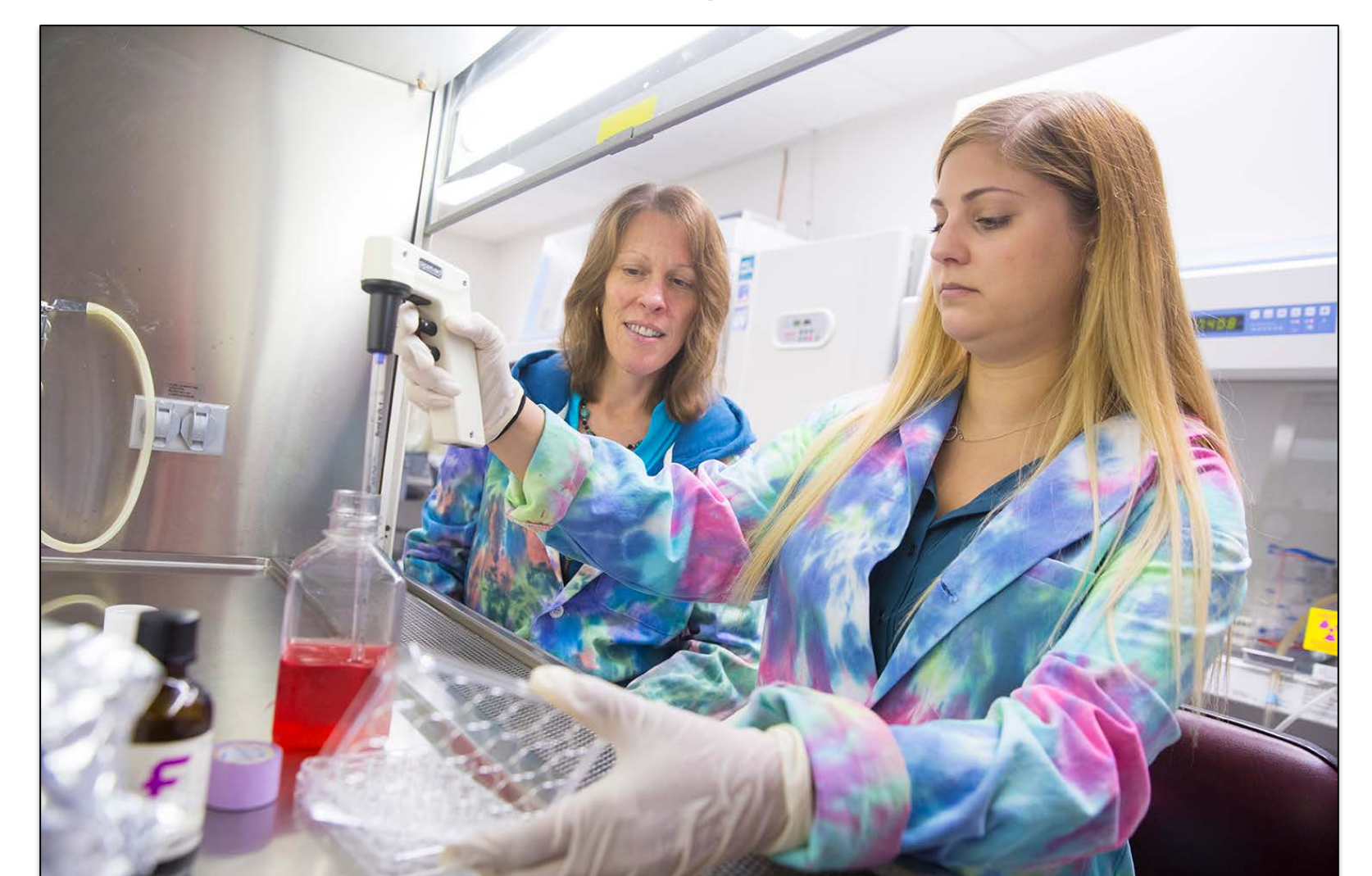


IANR Results

- Applications were accepted in 2014 (n=10) and 2015 (n=4)
- Success rate = 57% (8 awards)
- Average award size = \$61,118
- Number of PDs/PIs with external funding after IANR support: 5 (63%)
- External funding leveraged to date: \$3,720,580 (7.6:1 return)

CONCLUSIONS

- Internal investments made through alternative funding mechanisms can yield significant return on investment
- Internal funding for “seed,” “bridge,” or “revision” grants help investigators maintain support for key personnel and/or collect additional preliminary data to strengthen external proposals
- Investing in excellent scientists and projects enhances competitiveness for external funding



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