

VIP Catalytic Seed Funding Opportunity: Call for Proposals

Full description

FAU is pleased to announce the 2027 Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP) Catalytic Seed Funding call for proposals, funded through a \$2.2 million awarded Department of Education FIPSE cost-share grant. The VIP Program aims at creating and supporting innovative cross-disciplinary research teams involving students in large-scale, long-term projects, contributing to FAU's R1 status. The program prioritizes early student engagement in research through the participation of degree-seeking, lower division students in VIP Teams, and leveraging AI technologies and data science principles within their projects.

We invite full-time faculty across all colleges at Florida Atlantic to submit seed funding proposals to establish cutting-edge, cross disciplinary VIP research teams. These projects should be **co-led by full-time faculty from *different colleges and disciplines***, and engage students across multiple disciplines in long-term, large-scale, multidisciplinary research.

Eligibility: Faculty VIP Teams should comprise at least two full-time faculty working in collaboration across multiple ***colleges and disciplines***. Four VIP Teams will be selected each year.

Seed Funding: Faculty VIP Teams will be eligible for up to \$46,500 in one-time seed funding to establish a cross-disciplinary VIP Team for a one-year period.

Evaluation Criteria:

- **Sustainability of a VIP Team for many years beyond the Year 1 seed funding**
- **Feasibility**
- **Artificial Intelligence/Data Science research integration**
- **Cross-college collaboration towards convergent research**
- **Long-term scope of project**
- **Large scale of the research team**
- **Vertical integration of people, processes, or products**
- **Minimum of 5 to 7 NEW degree-seeking FTIC Freshmen or Sophomores involved in the VIP Team**
- **Budget funding directed towards student support**



VIP Informational Webinars: Friday, March 27 from 10-11:30 am and Wednesday, April 28th from 10-11:30 am.

*Projects that are selected cannot begin until research compliance approvals have been obtained. The full amount of seed funding will be housed and managed by the **Lead Faculty Mentor's (i.e. PI) College.***



Vertically Integrated Program (VIP) Proposal Submission

Instructions

Thank you for your interest in submitting a VIP Seed Funding proposal. Please complete information about faculty team leads (PIs and Co-PIs) for the proposed VIP Team and include a project description and proposed student involvement. You will also be asked to attach a budget and justification spreadsheet and will have space to upload any supporting letters of commitment if applicable.

VIP Seed Funding Proposal

Complete the information about participating faculty (PIs, Co-PIs and other faculty collaborators) for the VIP Team being proposed, and information about the nature of the project and student involvement in it.

VIP Faculty Leadership Information

VIP Lead Faculty Mentor Information

NOTES:

- *The **Lead Faculty Mentor's (i.e. PI) College** will house and manage the full amount of seed funding if this project is selected.*
- ***There must be at minimum two full-time faculty from different Colleges as PI and Co-PI.** An additional Co-PI from a third unique College is optional.*

Lead Faculty Mentor First Name:

Lead Faculty Mentor Last Name:

Lead Faculty Mentor Title/Rank:

Lead Faculty Mentor FAU Email:

Lead Faculty Mentor College:

[dropdown]

Lead Faculty Mentor Primary Department:

VIP Faculty Mentor 2 (Co-PI) Information

Faculty Mentor 2 First Name:

Faculty Mentor 2 Last Name:

Faculty Mentor 2 Title/Rank:

Faculty Mentor 2 FAU Email:



Faculty Mentor 2 College:
[dropdown]

Faculty Mentor 2 Primary Department:

VIP Faculty Mentor 3 (Co-PI) Information

Faculty Mentor 3 First Name:

Faculty Mentor 3 Last Name:

Faculty Mentor 3 Title/Rank:

Faculty Mentor 3 FAU Email:

Faculty Mentor 3 College:
[dropdown]

Faculty Mentor 3 Primary Department:

Additional VIP Faculty Mentors

Please list the names and information of any other faculty mentors or external collaborators for your VIP Team:

If applicable, for any additional collaborators listed above, please use this space to upload collaborator's commitment letters as PDF or DOC/DOCX files.

 **Upload a file**

VIP Team Project Proposal

Evaluation Criteria:

- *Sustainability of a VIP Team for many years beyond the Year 1 seed funding*
- *Feasibility*
- *Artificial Intelligence/Data Science research integration*
- *Cross-college collaboration towards convergent research*
- *Long-term scope of project*
- *Large scale of the research team*
- *Vertical integration of people, processes, or products*
- *Minimum of 5 to 7 NEW degree-seeking FTIC Freshmen or Sophomores involved in the VIP Team*
- *Budget funding directed towards student support*

VIP Team Name (30 words or less)

Select which of the following cross-disciplinary theses your VIP Team project is related to. Check all that apply.

- Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias/Falls
- Artificial Intelligence/Data Science
- Cancer
- Coastal Resilience
- Criminal Justice/Forensics
- Cybersecurity
- Education/ Workforce Development
- Entrepreneurship
- Environment/Ecology
- Futuristic Healthcare Delivery
- IoT and Smart Cities
- Neuroscience
- Quantum
- Substance Use/Abuse
- Transportation
- Other: if you check "Other", please identify a cutting-edge, cross-disciplinary theme your VIP fits into: _____

Provide 5 keywords that summarize your Team's disciplinary foci, areas of interest, branches of inquiry, etc.

VIP Project Overview

Please describe for a student audience unfamiliar with your work your VIP Team's purpose, what will be investigated and/or research questions/design/objectives in a few paragraphs. (300 words, max.).

Attach any supporting images for your proposal here. (optional)

Maximum: 2

 Upload a file

Artificial Intelligence/Data Science

Describe how your project engages students with Artificial Intelligence/Data Science within the research. (300 words, max.).

Leveraging Institutional Research Resources

For example: Research Centers, Faculty expertise relevant to the topic, Cores, computing resources, etc.

As appropriate, please describe how your VIP research project(s) intends to leverage existing institutional research resources and areas of expertise. Have these connections already been made? (300 words, max.)



Structure of VIP Team

NOTES:

- Your VIP Team should include some existing students with targeted spots for new students as well.
- **Total VIP Team Makeup: Minimum of 10 students on a VIP Team, 5 to 7 must be NEW degree-seeking Freshmen/Sophomores**
- All VIP students must complete research compliance.

Please complete the tables below

How many students will be on your VIP Team? Please enter numeric values for each category in the spaces below.

When student interest forms are sent to you, you will be expected to select students in alignment with the distribution of students you indicate here.

Recruitment of New Students

Total VIP Team Makeup: Minimum of 10 students on a VIP Team, 5 to 7 must be NEW degree-seeking Freshmen/Sophomores

Existing Team Members

Existing students are those you are already working with that will be included in your VIP Team. VIP Participants must be degree-seeking and must not be graduating before Summer 2027 to fulfill the two-semester requirement for participation in VIP.

	New Students		Existing Team Members
Freshmen & Sophomores (minimum 5 to 7)		Freshmen & Sophomores (minimum 5 to 7)	
Juniors		Juniors	
Seniors		Seniors	
Graduate		Graduate	
Total number of new students		Total number of existing Team members	



Faculty mentors are encouraged to make their VIP Teams as accessible as possible to multiple disciplines—most VIP Teams are open to all majors. From which disciplines do you intend to recruit and involve students? Please list both the disciplines of your existing team members and those of new students you would seek to recruit. (50 words, max.)

Your selections will guide the review process, and you will be expected to adhere to the distribution you provide.

Vertical Integration

How will your project empower long-term and vertical integration of people, process, and/or product development? (300 words, max.). Consider the following questions:

- a. How will you bring new students and students from different disciplines/backgrounds to your VIP Team as students graduate?
- b. How will you manage/leverage existing students who are working on the project to contribute for more than one semester, and mentor new students coming in?
- c. Will there be different project phases (e.g. literature review, discourse analysis, data analysis, implementation, etc.) for VIP Team members from different disciplinary backgrounds to engage with?
- d. How will you support long-term student engagement in your VIP Team?

Hours Commitments from Students

What is the minimum number of hours per week, starting in Spring 2027, that you would expect an individual student to commit to your VIP Team?

Please note: Undergraduate students are required to commit **at least 5 hours per week, and we encourage flexibility as some students may be freshmen, hold jobs, or have limited prior research experience.**



Undergraduate student expectations (hrs/wk) _____

Graduate student expectations (hrs/wk) _____

Team Modality

What's your team's preferred modality for student participation in research activities? Please indicate whether your project can be conducted in-person, virtual, or a combination of both. If flexibility is possible, please describe. (200 words, max.)

Team Location

If in-person attendance is required, from which campuses will your VIP Team primarily operate? For example, will students be expected to be in person at Jupiter or Davie several days per week? (200 words, max.)

VIP Sustainability and Feasibility

Sustainability

Funding from the Vertically Integrated Projects Program for establishing a VIP Team is only available for the first year. Describe your plan for seeking extramural funding from additional sources for sustaining this project for years 2 through 5. Your plan should list extramural grants, community funding, and industry funding opportunities you intend to pursue **each year (Years 1 through 5)** in support of sustaining your VIP Team beyond the seed funding period and contributing to FAU's R1 status. Please include a clear timeline of intended grant submissions or partnership initiations for Years 1 through 5. Include details on the grant program titles and dates, and ensure the grant program is still active at the time of submitting this application.

(750 words, max.)

If you will be leveraging any currently existing funding towards this project, you may use this space to upload any award letters. (optional)



Compliance Feasibility

It is necessary to have all compliance completed and approved before funding is transferred.

Environmental Health & Safety (EHS)

Please check all that apply to your proposed VIP Team:

- Use of radioactive materials, X-rays, or lasers
- Involves snorkeling, diving, or boat use
- Involves use of hazardous chemicals or nanomaterials
- Involves production of flame, smoke, heat, or any combination of the three
- Involves field work
- Involves use of helicopters, airplanes, or drones
- None of the above

Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)

Does your proposed VIP Team involve the use of biological materials, human blood, select agents, or recombinant DNA?

- Yes
- No

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Does your proposed VIP Team involve the use of human subjects or human subjects data?

- Yes
- No

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)

Does your proposed VIP Team involve the use of animal subjects?

- Yes
- No

Please include all approved or submitted protocol numbers related to your VIP Project in the space below.

EHS _____

IBC _____

IRB _____

IACUC _____

If applicable, upload any research compliance certificates or letters of approval here as PDFs.



Budget and Justification

NOTE:

- The **Lead Faculty Mentor's (i.e. PI) College** will house and manage the full amount of the seed funding if selected.
- Additional budget support for students is strongly encouraged.

Budget and Justification

Please use the attached Excel spreadsheet to describe how the funds will be utilized in support of the VIP Team research project and VIP students. Additional budget support for students is *strongly encouraged*.

[Budget Spreadsheet](#) (click to download)

Funding Category	Allowable Expenses
Startup Funding and Summer Stipend (\$31,500)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional summer student fellowships • Consumables and supplies • Instruments/equipment • Graduate student stipend (fringe must be included) • Postdoctoral stipend (fringe must be included) • Undergraduate academic year student stipend (fringe must be included) • VIP Faculty mentor(s) stipend (fringe must be included)
Summer Scholars (\$12,000) - fixed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Undergraduate Summer Scholars at \$4,000 each • 1 Graduate Scholar at \$4,000 • Faculty to attend VIP Consortium Meeting at GA Tech (registration, travel, and hotel; REQUIRED)
Travel and Publication Costs (\$3,000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference presentation - faculty (registration, travel and hotel) • Conference presentation - graduate student (registration, travel and hotel)



- Conference presentation - undergraduate student(s) (registration, travel and hotel)
- Undergraduates to present at Florida Undergraduate Research Conference (hotel and registration)
- Undergraduates to present at National Conference on Undergraduate Research (hotel, travel and registration)
- Publication costs (on publications including students as co-authors)

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Commitments/Assurances

VIP Program staff will support the guidance/mentoring of the Teams to address these logistics as an on-going process.

Before submitting a VIP proposal, please confirm that you understand the following aspects of FAU's VIP Program.

Core Elements of FAU's VIP Teams

We understand:

- VIP Teams are large, with at least 10 to 20 degree-seeking students each semester.
- A minimum of 5 to 7 new students must be degree-seeking freshmen and sophomores within a VIP Team.
- VIP Teams are expected to be long-term, i.e. the VIP Team should run over multiple years after the seed funding has been provided.
- VIP Teams include vertical integration of people, processes, or product development to foster mentorship, collaboration, and the continuity of research.
- VIP Teams must be co-led by at minimum two full-time faculty from two unique colleges and disciplines.
- VIP Teams must integrate and leverage Artificial Intelligence and/or Data Science skills in the research and offer opportunities for all involved students to gain experience in these technical skills.

Student Selection & Enrollment

We understand:

- VIP student applicants are not screened by GPA. While this may seem counterintuitive, years of experience have shown enthusiasm to be the strongest predictor of success in VIP.
- VIP students (undergraduate and graduate) must be registered for specific VIP Directed Independent Research (DIR) courses for each semester they participate in the VIP Team.
- VIP students (undergraduate and graduate) must complete all research compliance prior to enrolling in the specific VIP Directed Independent Research (DIR) courses.

Faculty Team Lead Obligations

We understand we must:

- Attend VIP Technical Advisory Group meetings two times per year (introductory and at the end of the year with program evaluator) which includes progress assessment and data collection via an annual report to the VIP Program staff.



- Respond to VIP business communications and emails related to VIP student interest to recruit VIP students.
- Support (or delegate support) for offering DIR course credit to VIP students; and/or support pursuit of work-study opportunities as appropriate.
- Acknowledge FIPSE funding in any publications, presentations, or grant submissions (as appropriate) resulting from this work.
- Facilitate VIP Team meetings once every one to two weeks throughout each semester and invite the VIP Associate Director/GA.

We understand:

- The Lead Faculty Mentor's (i.e. PI) College will be responsible for housing and managing the seed funding budget

OURI's Generative AI Use and Policies

OURI's Policies on the Use of Generative AI in the Submissions Process

The Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP) Program inherits Policies on the Use of Generative AI in the Submissions Process from the Office of Undergraduate Research and Inquiry (OURI). Please review OURI's Policies on the Use of Generative AI in the Submission Process [here](#). Please see [FAU's page on AI here](#) for further resources. All AI generated text should be appropriately attributed, with proper AI citation documented [here](#).

Did you utilize generative Artificial Intelligence in the development of this application, including tools like (*check all that apply*):

- ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Claude, Google Gemini/Bard
- DALL-E, Google Imagen, Adobe Firefly, OpenAI Sora, Stable Diffusion
- Google Translate, DeepL
- GrammarlyGo (AI writing assistant for Premium)
- NO AI services were used in this application
- Other AI services (please type in what was used): _____

Please indicate the extent to which generative AI was utilized in this application (*check all that apply*):

- Did not use generative AI for this application
- Literature review
- Support composing first draft
- Writing
- Creation or refinement of figures and images
- Translations
- Other, please specify..._____

Please discuss overall how generative AI was used in the preparation of this application.