Opportunity Grants: The Opportunity Grant mechanism intends to support research, scholarly and creative activities with the potential to attract future external funding. Submissions may propose investing in the success of an established program, as well as supporting new projects through funding for a pilot project, establishing or enhancing partnerships, or other activities that significantly advance the University’s scholarly enterprise. Because the intent of Opportunity Grants is to seed future externally funded activity, applicant should clearly demonstrate the potential of their project to lead to external funding.

GENERAL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

FOR FACULTY MEMBERS:

Please follow the prescribed format for the proposal development. All information related to Research and Artistry is available at the Research and Artistry website.

To ensure uniformity across the university, the submitted proposal should adhere to the format detailed below: (Please Note: Proposals that do not follow the format described below will not be evaluated.)

Project Summary:

Provide a brief summary of the project, not exceeding 300 words. The summary should be a self-contained description of the activities that will result if the proposal is funded. As such, the summary should include a statement of objectives, a description of the methods that will be employed and an explanation of how the project will impact the applicant, the discipline, and society. The summary should be written in language understandable to non-experts; jargon and overly specialized technical language should be avoided.

Project Description:

The Project description should communicate all aspects of the applicant's plan:

- The hypotheses to be tested, the questions to be answered and/or the concepts to be explored should be stated clearly, and should be related to prior work in the field by the applicant and others.

- The methods that will be used to achieve the project objectives and to evaluate project impacts should be defined, irrespective of whether the field is artistic, scientific or humanistic.

- A short description of the contribution of this project to the applicant’s program of research or artistry should be included. The description should make clear the extent
to which the proposed work builds on successful work already carried out by the applicant or, if the proposed work is in a new area, the motivation for the change in direction should be explained.

- A plan for dissemination of project results should be presented. (The vehicles employed for sharing the work product will depend on the nature of the project, and may include: exhibitions, performances, presentations, journal articles, books, web sites.)

- There should be a plan for continuing the proposed work beyond termination of the Research & Artistry Award. Where appropriate, this plan should identify specific funding opportunities and provide a timeline for seeking extramural support to sustain the work.

Because of the wide-range of activities supported by these grants, not all of the suggested elements will receive equal attention in all proposals. The Project Description (excluding references cited) should not exceed five single-spaced pages with one-inch margins in all directions and font size no smaller than 11 point.

**Budget and Justification:** Provide an itemized budget request and detailed justification. Examples of appropriate budget categories may include: faculty summer salary; trainee (ex: undergraduate students, graduate students, post-doctoral fellows) salary; supplies (includes consumables and minor equipment); travel to conduct research, scholarly or creative activities (but not conference travel to present results); publication costs; contractual services (i.e. transcription services, participant payments, etc). For summer salary, faculty members may request up to one month’s salary or $4,500 whichever is less. Budget categories other than faculty salary do not have to be expended during summer 2016, but must be expended before June 30 of 2017 (and not prior to May 16, 2016).

**The total budget requested may not exceed $15,000 – including summer salary.**

**OTHER SUPPORTING INFORMATION** (required for PI/PD and collaborators):

**History of prior Research and Artistry support from NIU:**
Provide a list of projects, amounts, and dates of support received from NIU. For each item, indicate:
1) the amount of extramural funding generated as a direct result of the support;
2) how the results of the supported research, scholarly and creative activities were disseminated.

**Extramural Funding (Past 3 years):**
Obtain a list from the Office of Sponsored Projects of all extramural proposals submitted during the last three years (funded, unfunded and pending), and include this list in your proposal. Describe any additional efforts you have made to develop such proposal(s) or to identify appropriate external funding sources.
Publications & Professional Activities (Past 5 years):
List all your publications (books, book chapters, proceedings, refereed articles, monographs, etc.) and related professional activities (ex: presentations or exhibits to reputed national and international meetings) during the last five years.

Qualified External Reviewers:
As part of your application you will be required to provide the names, addresses, and e-mail addresses of three to five persons outside NIU who are not collaborators, and who would be qualified to serve as external reviewers for your proposal.

Confidentiality:
If the proposal discloses ideas, practices or processes for which patent protection will be or is being sought, the word “Confidential” should appear at the top and bottom of each page which contains such information. In addition, the following statement should appear on the cover sheet:

“The data in this proposal are confidential and proprietary. This material shall not be duplicated, used or disclosed in whole or in part for any purpose other than internal evaluation of the proposal without the explicit written permission of the applicant.”

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

• The scholarly, technical or artistic merit of a proposed project will be the primary criterion used for evaluation.

• For Opportunity Grants, priority will be given to the support of research, scholarly and creative activities with the potential to attract external funding. These may include expansion of externally funded work, creation of new projects, new or enhanced partnerships, or other initiatives that significantly advance the University’s scholarly enterprise.

• Additional consideration will be given to:
  o The potential for the proposed activity to advance the field or discipline.
  o The potential for the proposed activity to advance the applicant’s reputation and expand his/her program of research, scholarship or artistry.
  o The potential for the proposed activity to engage students in mentored research, scholarly and creative activities.
  o The applicant’s training, past productivity and estimated potential for future accomplishment.
  o The applicant’s commitment to the pursuit of external funding, and/or the formation of innovative, high impact partnerships.
  o Achievements resulting from the applicant’s previous receipt of Research and Artistry support (if applicable).
Evaluation Process

Proposals will be reviewed by the Research & Artistry Executive Council and by referees external to NIU. For each proposal, at least one external opinion will be obtained from a reviewer suggested by the submitting faculty member.

External Reviewers will be provided with a copy of the Research & Artistry Program Guidelines along with the materials submitted by the faculty members in response to the request for proposals. External Reviewers will be advised to rate each proposal using the 5 point scale shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Proposal Attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Excellent: outstanding proposal in all respects; deserves highest priority for support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 – 4.9</td>
<td>Very good: high quality proposal in nearly all respects; should be supported if at all possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 – 3.9</td>
<td>Good: a quality proposal worthy of support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 – 2.9</td>
<td>Fair: proposal lacking in one or more critical aspects; key issues need to be addressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 – 1.9</td>
<td>Poor: proposal has serious deficiencies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final funding recommendations will be made by the Executive Council based on the external reviews and in consideration of the additional criteria described below. The vice president for research will make final funding decisions based on the Council recommendations and balancing discipline and career stage representation. The budget will be reviewed and adjusted (if necessary) by the Division of Research and Innovation Partnerships if the proposal is selected for funding.

- Applications from assistant professors who will not have tenure prior to fall 2016 will be designated as belonging to Group 1. The remaining applicants will be placed in Group 2.
- Group 1 and Group 2 proposals will be considered separately to allow the Research and Artistry Executive Council to emphasize summer support for beginning faculty in funding decisions, and to preclude unreasonable comparisons among the submissions and scholarly records of beginning and experienced faculty members.
- In formulating their final funding recommendations, the Research & Artistry Executive Council will evaluate each submitted proposal in the context of the program specific criteria detailed above.
- When considering the relative merit of proposals across categories, the Council will emphasize the following factors:
  - The scholarly or artistic merit of the proposal.
  - The relevance of the project to the research, instruction and public service missions of NIU.

\[1\] This one-year early termination in eligibility is based on the rationale that data collected from Research and Artistry support will not appear in peer-reviewed journals or yield extramural funding before the deadline of the tenure application submission.
The potential scholarly outcomes of the project (i.e., new grant proposal, publications, artistic products, student engagement opportunities etc.).

The track-record and future potential of the applicant

D. Eligibility

a. Award recipients must be on full-time regular appointments, during both the 2015-16 and 2016-2017 academic years; however, they do not have to be members of the graduate faculty.

b. Tenured faculty members who received Research & Artistry awards in 2015 are not eligible to apply for 2016 funding. Untenured faculty members may apply for funding in two consecutive years.

c. An application may be submitted for a project proposed jointly by more than one faculty member. Collaborative proposals may include interdisciplinary submissions by faculty from different units/departments/colleges. (Note: Each of the submitting faculty members must meet application eligibility requirements. Proposals submitted jointly by persons falling into both Groups 1 and 2 are to be ranked within Group 2. Joint proposals will be assigned a single score.)

E. Deadlines

Proposals must be submitted by October 19, 2015. The process will be completely electronic, no hard copies of documents need to be submitted. Please see General Submission Guidelines for details on submitting your proposal.