

2026 Pott College Innovation Fund

The Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education promotes and encourages innovative outreach, retention, and teaching-learning practices through research and instruction-based strategies focused on undergraduate success. We encourage our faculty, staff, and students to continuously work to research, update, develop, and implement new strategies to improve undergraduate enrollment and success. The Pott College Innovation Fund serves to support faculty, staff, and students in these endeavors and to develop a national reputation in effective student outreach, retention, and success.

In the higher education landscape of today, we are continuing to re-imagine what it means to be a leading public university — and the Pott College Innovation Fund is a key vehicle for that work. This fund will invest in initiatives that creatively fuel increased student enrollment and success. Projects must focus on one or more of the following: student retention; student outreach; challenging students to take an active role in their education; and transforming classrooms into active learning spaces. In short, we encourage projects that promote “learning by doing” with a focus on outreach, retention, and academic success. Interdisciplinary projects are encouraged but not a requirement of this internal award.

The Pott College Innovation Fund will be awarded to full-time faculty and staff who propose novel ways to approach outreach and retention, along with teaching and learning, with a particular focus on helping more students from all backgrounds to not only persist, but to excel. This program is closely modeled after the nationally recognized Hrabowski Fund for Innovation at the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC). Learn more about the UMBC program and their funded projects at:

<https://calt.umbc.edu/academic-innovation-competition/apply-for-an-academic-innovation-grant/>

Awards and Funding Amounts

Funding will be available and allocated through the competitive review of proposals by the Pott College Grants Committee. The three categories of awards available through this fund are:

- **Innovation Seed Awards:** Seed Awards will have a maximum budget of \$3,500 and will fund projects that aim to: (1) initiate small-scale pilot projects in an individual or small number of classrooms; and/or (2) develop small-scale retention pilot projects for a specific academic major, student population, or geographic region. The purpose of the Innovation Seed Award is to provide funding for pilot projects and preliminary data collection that will lead to submission of a proposal to the Innovation Implementation and Research Award, and/or to seek external funding. Innovation Seed Awards are funded for one year, with an option to seek an extension of up to one year to take advantage of any remaining funds associated with the funded project.
- **Innovation Outreach Awards:** Outreach Awards will have a maximum budget of \$4,000 and will fund projects that aim to: (1) support faculty and staff in outreach efforts to increase visibility of academic programs in the Pott College; and/or (2) support programing that focuses on the engagement of current High School students with academic programs in the Pott College. The purpose of the Innovation Outreach Awards is to establish methods that best engage and motivate high school students to pursue a degree at the University of Southern Indiana. Examples of potential projects include, but are not limited to, the development of firsthand programs for High School students, support events that bring High School students to campus, and programs that engage High School teachers in our region. Innovation Outreach Awards are

funded for one year, with an option to seek an extension of up to one year to take advantage of any remaining funds associated with the funded project.

- **Innovation Implementation and Research Awards:** These awards will have a minimum budget of \$2,500 to a maximum of \$5,000. Innovation Implementation and Research Awards aim to fund large-scale outreach, retention, and/or student success projects that have significant research basis and therefore a high potential for success. Innovation and Implementation Research Awards should be transformative in nature and upon completion provide data/evidence for informed decision-making and/or adoption at the University level or beyond. Innovation and Implementation Research Awards are funded for one year, with an option to seek an extension of up to one year to take advantage of any remaining funds associated with the funded project.

Recipients will be designated as a “Pott College Innovation Fellow” for the duration of the award. Individuals participating in a collaborative group project will be considered as members of a “Pott College Innovation Collaborative.”

Proposal Submission and Deadlines

Proposals will be reviewed once each year and must be submitted by 4:30 pm Friday Nov. 6, 2026 using Cayuse, USI’s grant proposal management software. Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered.

Proposal Development and Criteria

Proposal narratives for Seed Awards (budget less than or equal to \$3,500) or Outreach Awards (budget less than or equal to: \$4,000) have a maximum length of five (5) pages that includes the budget justification. Proposal narratives for Implementation and Research Awards (budget less than or equal to \$5,000) have a maximum length of eight (8) pages that includes the budget justification.

1. Cover Page (1 Page)

- a. Explicitly state if the proposal is being submitted for a Seed, Outreach, or Implementation and Research Award.
- b. Include title, names of faculty and departments involved in the project; a concise summary or abstract of the project including project goals; and total funding amount requested.
- c. The cover page requires a signature indicating endorsement of the proposal by each applicant’s department chair and/or supervisor.

2. Narrative (5 pages for Seed and Outreach Awards; 8 pages for Implementation and Research Awards)

a. Introduction

- Provide a summary of relevant background and a brief literature review. Provide a clear description of the project and/or problem to be investigated.
- Describe the goals and outcomes of the proposal. Discuss the potential impact on student success and/or increased enrollment.
- Where appropriate, discuss the relationship between the proposed work and relevant existing research (especially important for Innovation Implementation and Research Awards).

b. Methods and Assessment

- Outline the methodology and procedures proposed.
- Describe data collection, activities, surveys, experiments, and research tools.
- If the proposed research involves human subjects, a brief statement acknowledging that Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is required prior to conducting the work.
- Provide a detailed plan to assess/evaluate/measure the effectiveness of the project in reaching the stated goals of the project. Outline plans for formative and summative assessment of the impact on student outreach, retention, and/or success.

c. Dissemination: Indicate plans and intentions for dissemination within the USI community including the potential to transfer this methodology to other courses, disciplines, and/or programs.

d. Timeline

- Describe the feasibility of the project to be accomplished successfully during the initial one-year period of the award.
- Outline anticipated start and end dates within the initial one-year period of the award.

e. Budget and Justification: Provide a narrative justification of each line item in your budget.

3. Budget Worksheet (template attached): Complete the Budget Worksheet attached to this document and include it in your proposal.

4. Literature Cited (1 page): Include all referenced and relevant sources of information that support the proposed research.

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by the Pott College Grants Committee. After an initial screening and evaluation of proposals, the review panel may require finalists who have applied for Implementation and Research Awards to make a brief presentation to the selection panel and answer questions about their proposed work.

Selection Process

The Pott College Grants Committee will evaluate proposals submitted to the Interdisciplinary Research Grant program and select recipients, with the Assistant or Associate Dean of the Pott College serving as *ex officio*. The Pott College Grants Committee consists of a representative from each Department selected in a manner determined by their respective Chair. Each representative will serve a two-year term on this committee, and membership will be staggered across Departments to maintain long term consistency. Members of the Pott College Grants Committee are not eligible to submit proposals for consideration to this program.

Submission Instructions

1. Submit an "Intent to Apply" request for internal grant applications **no later than one week prior to the award deadline**. The form may be found on the Office of Sponsored Projects and Research Administration (OSPRA) website at: <https://www.usi.edu/sponsored-projects/grants-and-sponsored-projects/internal-awards-and-grants>
2. Once OSPRA has received the intent to apply notice, your proposal template will be created in Cayuse. Once the template is ready, you will be notified by email that you have been added as a user and may begin completing your application and proposal.
3. Access Cayuse through myUSI. You can search for Cayuse using the search box at the top of the page. Once in Cayuse, locate your project proposal shell and enter in your contact information.
4. Complete the Research and Related Budget (RR Budget) in Cayuse that includes all line items from your proposal budget. See Cayuse budget instructions on the OSPRA website at: <https://www.usi.edu/sponsored-projects/grants-and-sponsored-projects/cayuse-424>
5. Attach your proposal as a PDF file to the documents section under Proposal Summary in Cayuse. Please be sure to include your detailed budget and justification in your proposal's narrative. For detailed instructions on uploading documents to Cayuse, please see: <https://www.usi.edu/sponsored-projects/grants-and-sponsored-projects/cayuse-424>
6. Submit the proposal for routing through Cayuse no later than **4:30 p.m. Friday Nov. 6, 2026**.

Note: To submit your proposal, you will need to approve the proposal in Cayuse by checking the box next to your name in the routing and approval section. The routing feature of the software allows your Department Chair and the Dean to approve the proposal electronically following your submission.

Expectations of Award Recipients

Projects will officially start at the beginning of the following year (Feb 1) and extend to end of the following fiscal year (June 30). Faculty members may submit a request for a one-year extension, pending an interim report. The maximum award will be in the total amounts indicated above based on the type of award, and all awardees are responsible for appropriate use of, and accounting for, the funds provided. Award recipients are encouraged to continue or expand their projects by seeking external funding. Within three months of project completion, award recipients will provide a brief written report that summarizes key outcomes of the project, along with a list of professional presentations and/or publications resulting from the work. The report should also include a budget summary of funds used. Award recipients may also be asked to make short presentation (5 to 10 minutes) at a fall or spring college meeting to summarize the results of their work.



**POTT COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, AND EDUCATION
INNOVATION AWARD
TITLE PAGE**

Project Title: _____

For each applicant for this proposal, please provide their name, signature, and department:

_____ Name	_____ Signature	_____ Department
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_____ Name	_____ Signature	_____ Department
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Date Proposal Submitted: _____

Project Start Date: _____ **Project End Date:** _____

Total Amount of Funding Requested: \$ _____

Reviewed and approved by (Department Chair or Supervisor):

_____ Name	_____ Signature	_____ Department
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Project Summary: Please provide a concise description of the objectives, intellectual merit, and anticipated outcomes of your research project (200 words maximum):

INNOVATION AWARD BUDGET WORKSHEET

Instructions: Fill in the table below with detailed information on materials needed, cost per item, quantities, and total amount requested. Additionally, you need to provide a budget justification that includes a narrative describing the need for each item included with your budget.

Supplies and Materials

Item	Description	Unit Cost (\$)	Quantity	Total (\$)

Salary/Wages/Stipends*

Item	Description	Unit Cost (\$)	Quantity	Total (\$)

Research Travel*

Item	Description	Unit Cost (\$)	Quantity	Total (\$)

Equipment and/or Instrumentation

Item	Description	Unit Cost (\$)	Quantity	Total (\$)

Professional/Technical Services

Item	Description	Unit Cost (\$)	Quantity	Total (\$)

Publication Costs

Item	Description	Unit Cost (\$)	Quantity	Total (\$)

Other Needs/Expenditures

Item	Description	Unit Cost (\$)	Quantity	Total (\$)
Total Estimated Cost (\$)				
Total Requested				

*See appendix for instructions to calculate wage, salary, and travel expenses.

APPENDIX: Budget Calculations

If applicable, use the following rates and equations to calculate salaries, wages, stipends, and travel costs. Enter each item on a separate line in the **Innovation Award Budget Worksheet**. Include rates, hours, and distances in the description box.

SALARIES/WAGES/STIPEND Calculations

a. Project Director

To determine stipend or amount above salary (summer or overload pay) = 2.5% per credit hour + FICA (7.65% of salary)

(Contact the Special Funds Accountant for the current F&A rate.)

b. Undergraduate/Graduate Student

\$ _____ hourly rate X _____ hours/week X _____ weeks = \$ _____

If Stipend: Stipend Amount = \$ _____

**In Budget Justification describe how was stipend amount determined.

c. Secretarial/Clerical (Contact Human Resources for the appropriate hourly rates.)

\$ _____ hourly rate X _____ hours/week X _____ weeks = \$ _____

d. Professionals (Technician/Programmer)

Position, time frame, amount.

TRAVEL

a. Mileage: \$0.49/mile X _____ miles = \$ _____

[Mileage capped at best available airfare 30 days out.]

b. Airfare: include destination and estimated cost for roundtrip ticket

c. Room/Hotel:

\$ _____ room rate + tax (12%) X _____ days = \$ _____

d. Board/Per diem

\$41 in Indiana (\$52 out-of-state) X _____ days = \$ _____

[Out of Country Per Diem Rates Vary by Country: China, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Singapore, and the United Kingdom: \$65 per day; Japan: \$90 per day; Korea and Taiwan: \$85 per day; Other Countries: \$52 per day]