

Opportunity to Obtain Preliminary Feedback on Your Driving Digital Innovation Strategic Plan Round #3 Seed Grant Proposal

During the past year, the University [awarded](#) seed grant funding for 22 pilot projects designed to implement the University's 2016-20 [Strategic Plan](#). September 4, 2018 is the deadline for submission of the third cycle of Strategic Plan seed grant proposals. (Round #4 proposals will be due in January 2019).

“[Driving Digital Innovation \[DDI\]](#)” is one of the five thematic priorities in the Strategic Plan. Cycle 3 Proposals that are based on the DDI thematic priority will be evaluated by the Driving Digital Innovation [Steering Committee](#), the Driving Digital Innovation [Executive Committee](#), and an [Oversight Committee](#) before the final funding decision is made by the Provost and President.

In an effort to help proposers maximize their chances of success, the DDI Steering Committee will provide preliminary feedback before the Cycle #3 submission deadline. If you would like to take advantage of this feedback opportunity, please send a one-page “concept paper” to DDI Steering Committee Co-chair Colin J. Neill cjn6@psu.edu by Monday, August 6, 2018. The Committee expects to complete its review by Monday, August 20th after which it will provide you with feedback.

Successful DDI proposals will not necessarily be limited to the four goals set forth in [the DDI portion of the Strategic Plan](#), but if your proposal advances one of these four goals, it will be helpful for your Concept Paper to identify the DDI goal(s) your proposal advances and explain the connection. (The four goals are to develop a more robust digital infrastructure and culture; to make online education and personalized learning central to our 21st-century land-grant mission; to create digital solutions that cross academic borders; and to drive economic development.) In preparing your Concept Paper, you may find it helpful to also consider the following items:

- 1) the Driving Digital Innovation [Strategy Table](#), which has different sections for the DDI strategy goals regarding infrastructure, education, research, and the economy. (This Strategy Table provides specific examples of projects that might further each of the four goals listed in the prior paragraph.)
- 2) the Driving Digital Innovation [Progress Report](#) that explains what has been accomplished so far with respect to the DDI goals regarding infrastructure, education, research, and economic development. (This “Progress Report” document and the list of [funded proposals](#) should help proposers identify Strategic Plan DDI implementation gaps).
- 3) [the general rubric](#) used to evaluate Cycle 2 RFPs.

Factors that were weighted heavily during Round 2 included: 1) the degree to which the proposal was aligned with the Strategic Plan; 2) the potential transformative impact of the proposal on the University; 3) whether the proposal would allow Penn State, as an institution, to have a transformative impact at an international, national, or Commonwealth level in line with its land-grant priorities; 4) whether the proposal's partner list, narrative, and budget demonstrates substantive engagement and collaboration among multiple programs, campuses, and/or Centers at Penn State and the strategic use of any existing University resources; 5) the metrics used to evaluate progress; 6) whether the requested budget was likely to accomplish the proposal's goals; and 7) alternative funding sources (i.e., whether the proposal was different than a research proposal that might be funded through external channels such as NSF, NIH, foundation, or other sources).

Consistent with the documents listed above, the DDI Steering Committee welcomes digital innovation proposals that could have a transformative impact *within* the University, as well as proposals that could have a transformative impact outside of the University *by improving* digital access and fostering economic prosperity across Pennsylvania and beyond. Concept papers should clearly address how the proposed project contributes to the University's Strategic Plan paying particular attention to the DDI goals listed above. The Committee is particularly interested in proposals that increase digital access, literacy, and leverage, e.g., by providing digital resources to all corners of the Commonwealth or preparing students and Pennsylvania citizens for the digital age and economy, or revealing or maximizing the opportunities that digital technologies and data can provide in growing the economy and addressing societal challenges. The best proposals will have the potential for broad and significant impact across the University or the Commonwealth. That said, the committee would consider a localized project if the proposal explains how the successful pilot project could later be extended (i.e., scaled up). We discourage proposals that represent work typically within the remit of individual Departments, Colleges, or Campuses, and research proposals traditionally funded by external agencies.

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