

**Portland State University
Center for Sustainable Processes and Practices**

**Request for Proposals—Round One
Announcement**

*Complete Proposals Due 5:00 pm Monday, November 24, 2008
Send Proposals to Beth Lloyd (elloyd@pdx.edu)*

The Center for Sustainable Processes and Practices announces the first of a series of Requests for Proposals from Portland State University faculty or staff for activities and initiatives that promote sustainability at Portland State and within the community. The James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation's generous challenge grant of \$25M is making these grants possible. <http://www.investinportland.org/>.

Objectives of the RFP

This first round of a planned series of Requests for Proposals is intended to quickly infuse Portland State's sustainability initiatives with increased funding. The Request for Proposals is aimed at projects that already have momentum due to the leadership of Portland State faculty and that can make strategic use of funds in the current academic year. Multi-year activities will be considered but will be more favorably considered if the budget indicates expenditures in this fiscal year. Future Requests for Proposals will provide the opportunity for a longer term investments and will be more developmental in nature.

Funded activities will promote the intention of the Miller Gift to build institutional capacity to positively impact the Portland metropolitan region and enhance Portland State's national and global leadership in one or more of the following three areas related to sustainability:

1. Enhancing the student experience
2. Expanding excellence in faculty research and teaching
3. Strengthening community engagement activities

The goal of this Request for Proposals is to lay the foundation for successful activities over the coming years, and therefore proposals need to address the "fiscal sustainability" of the activities proposed for funding. Activities that position the initiative for external funding or that strategically leverage activities sponsored by external funding will therefore be given favorable consideration.

Examples of Priority Activities

1. Enhancing the student experience. These proposals should provide opportunities for innovative scholarly and educational activities - examples might include support for student participation in academic conferences, undergraduate and graduate student participation in research, or participation in sustainability-related exchanges.

Activities should seek to lay an institutional foundation for future programs and activities.

2. Expanding excellence in faculty research and teaching.

- Proposals to enhance and expand sustainability in the curriculum. Examples might include proposals that focus on integrating sustainability more effectively into existing courses, strengthening the sustainability content of the curriculum in a major or graduate degree program, integrating a major more effectively with a minor that has a sustainability focus, enhancing or expanding sustainability content in graduate certificate programs, developing faculty learning communities that support the further development of sustainability in the curriculum, etc.
- Proposals to develop multi-disciplinary “research groups” and research capacity that address issues that are of regional relevance and national or global significance. Examples of investments might include:
 - Purchasing research equipment
 - Supporting participation to scholarly conferences
 - Developing specialized laboratory or other research facilities
 - Testing and demonstration of hardware or software to advance innovative sustainability practice
 - Developing innovative, high-risk new ideas/technologies to the point where they are competitive
 - Supporting action research activities that document and reflect on the learning opportunities related to Portland State’s sustainability program development
 - Collaborating with nationally prominent colleagues to assess current capabilities and assist in creating development plans
 - Connecting with funding agencies to better understand opportunities in both the short and longer term
 - Enhancing strategic connections with community partners to develop long-term research and curricular projects

3. Proposals for strengthening community engagement activities. These proposals should build on existing projects or propose new projects that promote innovative approaches to engagement or sustainability-related scholarship for faculty and/or students.

Budget and RFP Cycle

- The total funding dedicated to this first RFP cycle is not to exceed \$1.5 million¹. There is no minimum or maximum limit for individual proposals.

¹ The balance of the 2008-2009 Miller gift is allocated to the expansion of the Center for Sustainable Processes and Practices, including core staff, Faculty Fellows, and organizational infrastructure; strategic planning; support for faculty search processes; establishment of student support programs for 2009-2010 (scholarships, internships, post-docs, etc); and for other strategic investments that will contribute to the achievement of the goals of the Miller gift in the near term.

- Start date. January 1, 2009 or later.
- While this first Request for Proposals will consider multi-year activities, more favorable consideration will be given to proposals that will expend a significant portion of the total proposed budget by June 30, 2009². Proposers will need to re-apply for subsequent years' funding, as receipt of the annual allocation from the Miller Foundation is contingent on the University achieving the dollar-for-dollar match in the previous year.
- The next scheduled Request for Proposals cycle will take place during Winter quarter, 2009, and will focus on activities to be undertaken in 2009-2010 and subsequent academic years.

Strategic Attributes Sought to Guide Investments

To guide the investment process for making investments in sustainability, an initial list of strategic attributes has been developed, drawing on Portland State's ongoing strategic planning discussions. For this first round of funding, projects must address the following two considerations:

- **Evidence of existing activity and leadership**—the level of activity, progress and leadership already demonstrated around the proposed activities or scholarship
- **Ability to generate external support** -- project is positioned to generate additional financial support from the external community to help meet the Miller challenge and build additional institutional capacity.

In addition, proposals should clearly demonstrate one or more of the following attributes:

- **Multidisciplinary**—the level to which the activities and/or scholarship involve multiple disciplines, departments, schools and programs
- **Community Engagement**—the involvement and level of engagement of community partnerships
- **Replicability**—the potential for scalable and transferable results at the local, regional, national or global levels
- **Visibility and Near-term results**—the anticipated visibility, near-term results and likelihood of positive publicity for Portland State
- **Unique Intellectual Contribution**—the ability to provide unique intellectual contribution within the area of sustainability over time

In addition, this first Request for Proposals will seek to support a balanced portfolio of investments that both leverages Portland State's current strengths and catalyzes promising emerging areas for further development.

Review Process

This initial Request for Proposals has a focus on supporting projects that are already poised for implementation as well as catalyzing projects that will lay a foundation for

² No-cost extension may be requested with justification (i.e. delay of delivery of equipment, unforeseen and unavoidable delays in other aspects of the project, etc).

sustainability-related activities in the future. In order to provide a transparent review and evaluation process which also takes into account the developmental context of this funding cycle, the following approach to review and evaluation will be taken. A panel comprised of both internal Portland State faculty or administrators and external academic and community representatives will be formed to review the proposals and recommend a portfolio of projects to fund to the Provost and Interim Director of the Center for Sustainable Processes and Practices. Proposals will be reviewed based on the attributes described above using the following scale:

Excellent: Outstanding proposal in all respects; deserves highest priority for support.

Very Good: High quality proposal in nearly all respects; should be supported if at all possible.

Good: A quality proposal worthy of support should be supported if funds remain after supporting the categories listed above.

Fair: Proposal lacking in one or more critical aspects; key issues need to be addressed.

Poor: Proposal has serious deficiencies.

The Provost and Interim Director of the Center for Sustainable Processes and Practices will make the final allocation of funds based on the recommendation of the panel, taking into consideration the desire to have a balanced portfolio of projects that address the three areas of focus – student experience, faculty research and curriculum, and community engagement – and that both reward leadership and catalyze emerging areas of opportunity.

Reporting Requirements

Proposals that receive funding must submit a status report by August 1, 2009 to enable the Center for Sustainable Processes and Practices to report on progress to date during their annual meeting with the Miller Foundation. Format for status report will be provided under separate cover. The format for the report will be provided under separate cover, but is likely to include a description of the activities undertaken, the contribution of the activities funded to building Portland State's sustainability-related capacity, the lessons learned related to program development, and any next steps that would build upon the funded activities.

In some cases this report may serve as the final report on the project, if activities have been completed prior to submission of that report. Projects that are still under implementation as of August 1, 2009, will be required to submit a report within 45 days of the completion of the funded activities.