Overview of the FRACAA Program

A. Name and Purpose of the Program

The Faculty Research and Creative Activities Award (FRACAA) is one of four programs provided by the Faculty Research and Creative Activities Support Fund (FRACASF). The purpose of the FRACASF, as approved by the Faculty Senate, the WMU administration, and the AAUP in Memorandum of Action (MOA) 08-03 is to “encourage and support faculty in significant research, rigorous scientific inquiry, original artistic activity, and inventive technology.” Identified in the same MOA, the purpose of the FRACAA program is “to increase external funding at WMU” in support of faculty scholarship. Thus FRACAA awardees are required to submit an external funding proposal no later than 18 months from the end of the award period. An external funding proposal is defined as one submitted via the Office of Research and Innovation (ORI) proposal management center with an approved proposal approval form.

The administration of this program follows policies recommended by the Research Policies Council (RPC) and approved by the Faculty Senate and the administration of WMU. ORI administers the fund and the FRACAA program. During October, ORI shall post the current FRACAA guidelines and application materials on the ORI website, including the criteria used by the FRACAA Research Screening Committee to evaluate proposals.

B. Eligibility

1. Individuals or groups of individuals eligible for awards are restricted to those holding board-appointed faculty rank (i.e., members of the bargaining unit) at the time the FRACAA proposals are due.

2. An applicant whose appointment at WMU terminates prior to or during the program year of award implementation may submit an application, but shall not receive an award until she/he has an appointment at WMU covering the program year of implementation (June 15 – June 14).
3. Previous FRACAA awardees and co-PIs are eligible:
   a. Every third year following the latest award,
   b. If he/she presented a research poster at Research and Creative Activities Poster Day according to the guidelines set forth herein,
   c. If he/she submitted a satisfactory final report for his/her most recent FRACAA and/or SFSA as required, and
   d. If he/she submitted an external funding proposal within the designated time frame for his/her most recent FRACAA.

4. No FRACAA Research Screening Committee member is eligible to submit a proposal during any round of competition while serving as a member of the committee.

5. Appeals on Eligibility Criteria

   If the applicant is found ineligible for funding and believes that the basis for the determination of the ineligibility as described in the notification is incorrect, he/she may contact the Chair of the FRACAA Research Screening Committee to arrange a meeting to discuss the matter. The FRACAA fund coordinator shall attend that meeting. If the applicant is found to be eligible, the proposal will be sent to the FRACAA Committee and reviewed. Appeals should be made promptly so that the Committee can review the now-eligible proposal when it reviews all other proposals. No additional appeals are allowed.

C. Award Conditions

1. FRACAA grants shall be awarded up to a maximum of $10,000.00.

2. Research proposals submitted with multiple PIs are encouraged. However, awards will be funded for no more than $10,000.00 regardless of the number of faculty members involved in the project.

3. Awards are announced in April and implemented June 15. Awards conclude on June 14 of the following year.

4. A progress report is due mid-way through the project period, at the time designated on the FRACAA calendar; a final report is due within 90 days from the end of the award period. The report forms are available on the ORI website and submitted by upload in the online system.

5. Equipment purchased with award funds reverts to the recipient’s unit. Grant recipients who have purchased equipment with grant funds should certify on the final report form that the equipment so purchased has reverted to the faculty member’s unit. The department chair acknowledges receipt of the equipment by signing the form.
6. Awardees are required to submit proposal(s) to a funding source(s) external to the University to support their scholarly activity, processed through the University’s proposal approval (i.e. Proposal Approval Form) and award management systems, for an amount at least equal to their FRACAA within 18 months of the end of their award period.

7. All FRACAA awardees shall present their findings in poster form or other medium at the annual Research and Creative Activities Poster Day no later than one year from the end of the project period.

8. Evaluation of the FRACAA program shall receive priority attention. The FRACAA fund coordinator shall carefully review each final grant report. Materials related to proposals shall be kept in ORI for a suitable period of time, no longer than three years.

Application Requirements and Submission Procedures

A. Proposal Components and Specifications

1. Proposals shall be written for general faculty comprehension. As described herein, your proposal may not be reviewed by an expert familiar with your content. Technical language should be suitably defined for a general lay-faculty audience. Do not use overly-technical text, undefined acronyms, and discipline-specific jargon.

2. Proposals are submitted under one of three methodological categories, which are aligned with the review categories and criteria: quantitative sciences, qualitative scholarly, and creative arts. The principal investigator designates the proposal category upon submission.

3. A FRACAA proposal consists of the following sections. Note that in these sections, a printed page means text printed on one side of a piece of paper. Text printed on both sides of a piece of paper is counted as 2 printed pages.

a. A proposal narrative of a maximum of 7 printed 8 ½ X 11” pages, consecutively numbered. This page limit includes figures, tables, photographs, and charts; it does not include reference list, budget worksheet, and/or the budget justification. Proposals greater than 7 printed 8 ½ X 11” pages will not be reviewed.

b. Detailed budget worksheet and justification with a maximum of 2 printed pages. You must use the FRACAA Budget Worksheet and Justification form on the OVPR website.

c. List of references cited in the narrative (no page limit).

d. Other supporting documents only if absolutely necessary to illustrate the project can be completed; maximum of 2 printed pages.
4. All sections of the proposal must conform to the following formatting requirements. *If the proposal does not meet formatting requirements, it will not be reviewed. Thus, the sum of the budget items cannot exceed $10,000; if the sum exceeds $10,000, the proposal will not be reviewed.*

   a. One-inch (1”) margins on all sides of each 8 ½ X 11” page.
   
   b. Minimum font size of 12 pt.
   
   c. Either single- or double-spaced text.
   
   d. Black text only (color photos and/or figures are allowed as needed).
   
   e. Each page consecutively numbered.

B. **Budget Requirements**

1. The maximum FRACAA award is $10,000.00. *If the proposed total FRACAA budget exceeds this maximum amount, the proposal will not be reviewed.*

2. The 2-page budget worksheet and justification must be uploaded through the online application system using the [FRACAA Budget Worksheet and Justification](#) provided on-line with the application materials. On the FRACAA Budget Worksheet and Justification, each proposed expenditure must be listed in the appropriate budget category (e.g., personnel, supplies, travel, etc.). The Research Screening Committee will review each budget item in relation to the proposed activities. Applicants must explain each of the requested budget items outlined on the Budget Worksheet and Justification in relation to the proposed work. That is, each line item on the Budget Worksheet and Justification must be specifically justified in relation to the proposed project activities. Items not fully justified may be disallowed during the review process. For example, the amount of time, pay rate, and number of hours must be included for all paid personnel and a rationale for their inclusion in the project must be provided.

3. The FRACAA Research Screening Committee shall have a line item veto over the budget. The Committee may vote to reduce the budget or to require a more comprehensive budget justification from the applicant prior to recommending approval for funding.

4. Typical budget categories include:

   a. Faculty release time, during the academic year only (to cover the cost of a part-time instructor, at a rate consistent with University policies).
   
   b. Student research assistance or student help (at a pay rate consistent with University policies).
   
   c. Travel for the conduct of project activities.
   
   d. Supplies.
e. Equipment.

5. The following items are not funded by the FRACAA program and must not be included in the proposed budget.

   a. No FRACAA funds may be used for faculty salary. Funds to cover faculty release time for work on the FRACAA project during the academic year can be budgeted for one course at the rate for a part-time instructor. Rates for part-time instructors must comply with university policies. Faculty members may use funds designated for faculty release time only at the actual cost of the part-time replacement and with the approval of the department chair and dean.

   b. FRACAA grants to faculty members for the purpose of completing graduate study or professional training are not permitted.

   c. The FRACAA program does not fund projects solely for student research and creative activities or student tuition.

   d. Travel for the sole purpose of presenting research and creative activity results is not permitted. Travel for presenting research results is funded through the Faculty Research Travel Fund (FRTF) and other sources. Refer to the Office of the Vice President for Research website for additional information on funding programs available to WMU faculty and students.

C. Proposal Submission

1. Submit one complete application package through the online system, which includes uploading the following documents as applicable:

   a. Proposal narrative – seven 8½” X 11” pages maximum – must not contain applicant’s name

   b. Budget Worksheet and Justification on form provided – 2 pages maximum.

   c. References cited in the narrative – no page limit.

   d. Supporting documents, only if essential – 2 pages maximum.

2. Submission deadline is 5 p.m. on the third Tuesday in January preceding the FRACAA implementation year.

D. Appeals

If an applicant’s proposal is found to violate a requirement or restriction (e.g., a section exceeds the page limit, the budget exceeds the maximum funds allowed, etc.) and the applicant believes that the basis for the determination of such violation as described in the notification is incorrect, she/he may contact the Chair of the FRACAA Research Screening Committee to arrange a meeting to discuss the matter. If the proposal is found to have not
violated a restriction, the proposal will be provided to the FRACAA Committee and reviewed by the appropriate panel. If it is determined that the proposal violates the restrictions or requirements, it will not be reviewed; no further appeal is allowed.

Proposal Review Procedures and Criteria

A. The structure for the process of reviewing proposals includes the following:

1. FRACAA program coordinator
   
a. The Vice President for Research and Innovation shall designate one professional staff person from ORI to serve as FRACAA program coordinator.

b. The FRACAA program coordinator shall assist in the determination of eligibility and administer all grant activity, including fund announcements, correspondence, and record keeping, regarding the FRACAA program. The FRACAA program coordinator shall attend all Research Screening Committee meetings in a staff support capacity.

2. Chair of the FRACAA Research Screening Committee
   
a. The Chair of the FRACAA Research Screening Committee will function as coordinator of the Committee’s work and the three panels, not as a proposal reviewer. The Chair’s role is to make sure that the three review panels are working properly, according to timelines and in the provision of feedback to applicants. Additionally, the Chair is responsible for other routine administrative duties (e.g., communication with faculty applicants on behalf of the Committee; convening the FRACAA Committee for orientation by the Vice President for Research; and the preparation and presentation of an annual FRACAA committee report to the RPC and to the Vice President for Research).

b. The RPC will appoint the Chair of the FRACAA Research Screening Committee for a two-year term. Eligible candidates shall have served at least two years as a member of the FRACAA Research Screening Committee, and thus meet the criteria established for committee membership. The RPC will consult with the vice president for research regarding appointment of the Chair of the FRACAA Research Screening Committee.

c. In years in which the term of the FRACAA Research Screening Committee Chair expires, the Research Policies Council shall appoint another Chairperson of the FRACAA Committee at its May meeting.

d. As indicated in the Faculty Senate bylaws, the FRACAA Research Screening Committee Chair will serve as an ex officio member of the Research Policies Council.

3. FRACAA Research Screening Committee organized into three groups of review panels
   
a. The FRACAA Research Screening Committee will consist of the committee Chair and
13 to 20 tenured and tenure-track, bargaining-unit faculty who will comprise three groups of review panels: quantitative sciences, qualitative scholarly, and creative arts.

b. At the beginning of each academic year, the vice president for research will work with the Chair of the FRACAA Research Screening Committee, and the FRACAA program coordinator to appoint new members of the Research Screening Committee and its designated panels from a pool of faculty compiled by the FRACAA program coordinator. The FRACAA program coordinator will assist the Chair of the FRACAA Research Screening Committee and the vice president for research to identify potential members for appointment through solicitations for nominations from RPC and the associate deans.

c. The pool of committee members will consist of faculty who have, in the previous five calendar years (1) received external funding awards and (2) either: (a) served as external reviewers, readers, evaluators, journal editors, or authored research published in a peer-reviewed journal; or (b) performed equivalent creative activities (e.g., awarded public commission, accepted in a juried exhibition, judged performance or exhibition, contributed to a public collection).

d. Appointments to the FRACAA Research Screening Committee will be for up to a three-year term of service.

e. Whenever possible, members of the review panels will vary by college, discipline, gender, and ethnicity

f. Orientation for the FRACAA Research Screening Committee, as well as for interested faculty at large, shall be provided by the fund coordinator, the Chair of the Committee, and by the Office of the Vice President of Research.

4. Responsibilities of the Committee and its members

a. In the spirit of ethical practice, and in recognition of the University’s policies regarding conflicts of interest, nepotism involving a family member or domestic partner relationship, and research misconduct, each member of the Research Screening Committee will submit a statement stating that they do or do not have a conflict of interest or family member or domestic partner relationship with an individual submitting a FRACAA proposal during a specific submission round in which they are serving as a reviewer. That is, if a proposal is assigned for review by a member of the screening committee, and that member has a conflict of interest or a familial or domestic partner relationship with the proposal author, the member must disclose the conflict and/or relationship.

In the case where a conflict is disclosed, the Chair of the Research Screening Committee will either (1) assign the subject proposal to a different panel for review or (2) identify additional panel members to serve as reviewers for the subject
Failure to disclose a conflict of interest or nepotism-type relationship may result in appropriate disciplinary action.

b. Responsibilities of the Research Screening Committee include:
   i. To review proposals in the three research methodology categories,
   ii. To submit descriptive, written comments and scores for reviewed proposals within the timelines established for review completion,
   iii. To recommend proposals for funding,
   iv. To assist the committee Chair in preparing a report for the Research Policies Council, including recommendations and changes to improve the FRACAA program. Appropriate information collected and approved by the RPC from this Committee will be forwarded to the OVPR for future use in determining eligibility of applicants and making improvements to the FRACAA program.

B. Procedure for Proposal Review

1. The FRACAA fund coordinator shall review proposals to determine that the applicants meet all eligibility criteria.

2. The FRACAA fund coordinator shall provide the members of each FRACAA committee panel with copies of the proposals assigned to their panel.

3. Each member of the Research Screening Committee will read various proposals in the quantitative, qualitative scholarly, or creative arts categories. In the event that the number of proposals in an area requires an additional number of readers, additional readers will be identified from lists solicited from appropriate associate deans.

4. Based upon scores and the recommendation for funding from the Research Screening Committee, the meritorious proposals will be rank ordered and funded until funds are no longer available or until all those recommended for funding are funded. Along with the letter of award or declination, each applicant will receive copies of the summary evaluation form.

C. Criteria for Evaluating Proposals

1. FRACAA grants are awarded solely on the basis of eligibility and proposal merit.

2. Once an applicant is deemed eligible, at least three members of the FRACAA Research Screening Committee will review the entire proposal for merit in four major categories: Merit, Context, Approach, and Budget. The following criteria concepts will be addressed by each reviewer who reads a specific proposal:

   a. Merit of the proposed activity
i. Proposal advances new hypotheses, research questions, art forms or modes of exhibition.

ii. There is a clear rationale.

iii. Proposed activity is well conceived and organized.

iv. Based on its merit, the proposal has the potential to secure external funding.

b. Context of the project

i. Proposal is clearly written for an audience of peers and professionals, yet non-specialist.

ii. Proposal makes a strong case that activity will make a meaningful contribution within its own field.

iii. Activity will address a broad scholarly issue.

iv. Adequately describes steps to be taken in order to secure external funding.

c. Project procedure and planning

i. Methods are clearly stated & appropriate for proposal.

ii. Timeline is clear.

iii. Data analysis/evaluation is planned & appropriate.

iv. Proposal details access to appropriate resources, equipment, facilities needed to complete activity.

v. The costs for the proposed budget are clearly itemized and justified (using university guidelines when available).

D. Scoring of Proposals

An online evaluation form will be used for submission of application reviews by the FRACAA Research Screening Committee. Items on the evaluation form will align with the evaluation criteria outlined for each proposal category. The evaluation form will also provide space for reviewer comments regarding each proposal’s strengths and weaknesses.

The FRACAA Screening Committee will review the entire proposal for merit. The rating scale used for each criterion will consist of: 1 = Unsatisfactory/Inadequate, 2 = Weak/Lacking, 3 = Satisfactory/Adequate, 4 = Substantial/Strong and 5 = Outstanding. The rating factor assigned by the reviewer times the weight factor designated for each set of criteria will determine the overall score.

E. Confidentiality
The confidentiality of applicants and reviewers shall be protected. Individual applications are assigned a proposal number upon submission. *Names of applicants shall not be included on the application copies submitted by the applicant and subsequently provided to reviewers.*

**F. Appeals on Review of Proposal’s Merit**

Applicants may not appeal a decision based on the evaluation of the proposal’s merit. All applicants will receive a summary review of their unfunded proposal and are encouraged to use this information to revise and resubmit the proposal the following year or use the evaluation feedback to seek other sources of funding.

*Note.* These Guidelines have been revised and approved by the Research Policies Council (RPC) of the Faculty Senate on June 9, 2011, September 11, 2014, February 12, 2015, and December 10, 2015. All other forms are obsolete.