

# PRESIDENT'S INNOVATION FUND

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The President's Innovation Fund is inviting proposals from faculty\*, staff, and students that will increase student engagement and accessibility by creating or supporting programs and practices that accelerate innovation at Westfield State University. Proposals should foster creativity, enhance the value of our students' educational experience, support increased student enrollment, engagement, and retention, champion Westfield State University's values, and contribute to the financial growth of our institution.

### 1.1 PURPOSE

The President's Innovation Fund is dedicating \$200,000 to implement novel strategies and initiatives that will spur innovation, creativity, and excellence at Westfield State University.

### 1.2 ELIGIBILITY, TIMELINE, AND SCOPE

All members of WSU's campus community are eligible to submit a proposal for funding, including students, faculty\*, and staff.

Applications for funding will be accepted from April 1, 2024, through May 10, 2024. Grant awards will be announced on May 31, 2024. Funding will be available to awardees at the beginning of the Academic 24/25 year on September 3, 2024. This will be the only formal grant cycle for the President's Innovation Fund for Academic 24/25.

Awards are capped at \$25,000 for single applicants or \$50,000 for interdepartmental proposals.

### 1.3 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

1. Aligns with the purpose of the President's Innovation Fund:
  - a. Presents a new strategy or initiative that will increase access to innovative ideas and approaches.
  - b. Advances new opportunities for experiential learning, creative problem-solving, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Multi-departmental or interdisciplinary collaborations are highly encouraged.
  - c. Increases community engagement and career exploration.
  - d. Increases global student engagement in innovation.
2. Enhances the value of the student experience and supports increased enrollment, recruitment, and retention
3. Champions WSU's values of embracing diversity, building a strong community, maintaining excellence and integrity, engaging the outside community, collaborating, and providing an accessible education.
4. Whether the proposed initiative is programmatically and financially feasible and sustainable and/or has the potential to generate revenue.
5. All proposals will be reviewed, evaluated, and recommended for funding by the President's Innovation Fund Advisory Committee. The President and Cabinet will review the final grant awards.

\*Adjunct faculty are asked to apply in partnership with a full-time faculty or staff member.

## 2.0 INSTRUCTIONS

**Applicants must comply with the following instructions when preparing their responses. Incomplete applications will not be considered.**

### 2.1 GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- Complete the President's Innovation Fund (PIF) Grant Request Form. The form can be found here: <https://forms.gle/UCRdCMTj6G8rzVdS7>
- Complete the PIF Budget Template.
- Faculty must obtain approval from their Department Chair and Division's Dean. Staff must obtain approval from their Supervisors and Dean/Vice President. The attached form letter signed by the appropriate supervisors acknowledging this process must be uploaded at the time of submission.
- If facility or space changes are needed, the applicant must contact Maureen Socha, Associate Vice President, Capital Planning and Facilities, at [msocha@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:msocha@westfield.ma.edu) for guidance, approval, and a general cost estimate. The attached form letter signed by Maureen Socha acknowledging this process must be uploaded at the time of submission.
- If technology purchases and/or services are required, the applicant must contact Alan Blair, Assistant Vice President, Information and Instructional Technology, at [alan@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:alan@westfield.ma.edu) for guidance, approval, and a general cost estimate. The attached form letter signed by Alan Blair acknowledging this process must be uploaded at the time of submission.
- Proposals requesting funds for research and scholarship are not eligible.
- Proposals requesting funding solely for capital improvements or additional staffing will not be considered.
- The President's Innovation Fund is designated as a one-time infusion of financial support and must not be added to a department's base budget.
- Proposals should include a plan for sustainability beyond the grant term.
- Initiatives that have the potential to generate revenue will be highly favored.

### 2.2 BUDGET INSTRUCTIONS

- Awards are capped at \$25,000 for a single applicant or \$50,000 for inter-departmental proposals.
- Informed estimates regarding facility, space, technology upgrades, and equipment are acceptable. However, all estimates must be approved by Maureen Socha (Facilities) or Alan Blair (Technology).

### 3.0 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- The grant term will run from September 3, 2024, through March 31, 2025.
- Awardees will be required to communicate the impact of their projects in a written report (format will be provided) no later than April 16, 2025, at 5 pm. Awardees may be asked to present their results as part of a campus celebratory forum.

Additional questions can be directed to Lamis Jarvinen, Executive Director, Research, Innovation, Design, and Entrepreneurial Center, [ljjarvinen@westfield.ma.edu](mailto:ljjarvinen@westfield.ma.edu)

