

UC Davis STAIR Grant Program (2014-15)
Executive Summary

The **Science Translation and Innovative Research (STAIR) Grant** program, managed by Venture Catalyst, is designed to provide funding to support translational science and innovative research performed by UC Davis researchers. The intent of this program is to facilitate demonstration of early proof-of-concept and commercial potential or feasibility for technologies being developed with the intent of commercial translation. Examples of outcomes that might be realized from these research results include development of research or early commercial prototypes, generation of translational data from experiments typically not fundable by traditional research grants, enablement of patent claims, and promotion of more competitive licensing opportunities, or SBIR/STTR grant applications by subsequent startups benefiting from license rights to the underlying technologies. The program is one element of a suite of Venture Catalyst programs designed to stimulate translational research and facilitate early engagement by entrepreneurial researchers with campus programs that support technology commercialization, including the Child Family Institute for Innovation & Entrepreneurship, as well as external resources, such as corporate partners for the STAIR Grant program: Allied Minds and Allied Bristol Life Sciences (ABLS).

The STAIR Grant program was announced on March 24, 2015 through the solicitation of a completed application form and submission of a 3-page research proposal (not including biographical sketches, budget justification, milestones, citations and references). Briefings and information sessions were organized by the Office of Research to raise awareness of the program and answer questions regarding objectives, eligibility and process. A total of 34 applications were received by the application deadline of May 4, 2015.

Following a rigorous review process involving external industry reviewers (investors, company professionals and entrepreneurs) and internal domain experts, 14 proposals were selected as finalists in the review process. Of these 14, after further in-person reviewer deliberation, evaluation and ranking, 5 were selected for award recommendation, based on their potential for future high impact discoveries and innovation, as judged by their technical merit, commercial potential and alignment of budget and milestones with translational enablement. A total of \$250,000 was allocated by Office of Research to the program with maximum allowable funding of \$50,000 per successful grant recipient. The funding period is one year. Over \$1.5 million in total support was requested by PIs from 25 different departments representing a board range of schools and colleges. The budget requests from the 5 award recipients totaled \$234,000.

A proactive engagement plan has been developed and involves assignment of industry mentors to each of the 14 finalists, follow-up with all applicants, mentor involvement with award recipients on milestones and timelines, and facilitation of access to innovation resources on campus and externally. This plan will be implemented by Venture Catalyst in collaboration with InnovationAccess and the Office of Corporate Relations.

The objectives of the STAIR program align with major goals of the Chancellor's Vision of Excellence: Foster a Vibrant Community of Learning and Scholarship; Drive Innovation at the Frontiers of Knowledge and; Nurture a Sustainable Future and Propel Economic Vitality.