

Call for Center Proposals

Earth and Environmental Systems Institute (EESI)

Due date: April 15, 2011

What is an EESI Center or an EESI Initiative?

A Center or Initiative within EESI represents a focus of interdisciplinary research and educational activities fostered by EESI associates and affiliates. In general, such a focus generally starts as an Initiative (this step must be approved by the Director of EESI) and then progresses to become a Center (the latter step must be approved by the Senior Vice President for Research, Hank Foley). Current Centers that are receiving EESI funding include the Center for Climate Risk Management (CLIMA), Earth System Science Center (ESSC), Penn State Ice and Climate Research Center (PSICE), Center for Environmental Chemistry and Geochemistry (CECG), the Center for Environmental Informatics (CEI), and Riparia (Cooperative Wetlands Center). These Centers receive anywhere from \$5000 to \$15,000 per year for Center activities. Centers aim to accomplish one or more of the following goals over the three-year lifetime of the Center:

- promote interaction among faculty, students, and staff in a growing interdisciplinary field within the environmental sciences/engineering/social sciences
- promote excellence in scientific research, especially aligned with EESI's strategic plan
- promote access to computers, analytical instrumentation, or field sites
- foster the securing of extramural funding for multi-PI projects
- promote educational opportunities for students in environmental sciences and engineering, with special attention to students from under-represented groups
- promote interdisciplinary interactions with other Institutes, departments, colleges or universities by promoting cutting-edge ideas

Who is eligible to propose an Initiative or Center?

Any EESI associate is eligible to propose an Initiative or Center. EESI associates are defined as faculty whose salary lines pass partially or fully through EESI. These faculty return some overhead funds to EESI.

Call for Proposals for Centers

We seek proposals **from EESI associates** for new Initiatives and renewal proposals for existing Centers within EESI. We are interested in ideas for new Initiatives or ideas for maintaining current Centers – either must promote intellectually novel and growing areas. Proposers are encouraged to read EESI's strategic plan as well as the guidelines from Hank Foley concerning Center status (both on EESI website). Initiatives should be proposed especially for activities that are likely to be eligible to become Centers as described by the university guidelines. Proposals should be submitted by **April 15, 2011**

to Tracy Bernier, 2217 EES Building (txw9@psu.edu). Proposals should provide the following information:

1. *Name*. Name of proposed Center/Initiative
2. *Director*. Name and 2-page vita of proposed Center/Initiative Director
3. *Participants*. Participant list (with affiliation) for the proposed Center/Initiative (one page). If many participants are involved, include a subset of the most important.
4. *Rationale*. Description of the rationale for the Center/Initiative, including how the Center/Initiative fulfills at least some of the criteria described above, including an answer to the question, “Why is a Center/Initiative needed?” (two pages)
5. *Funding Opportunities*. One-page description of extramural funding including specifics with respect to amount, agencies, and disciplinary foci to be targeted by the Center/Initiative (one page)
6. *Center Needs*. Description of Center/Initiative needs where appropriate with respect to space and funding. If a budget is requested, please submit a proposed breakdown of how such money will be used by the center/initiative, and how such funding will be leveraged by other funds on Campus (if appropriate). *Note: a Center/Initiative may exist without requesting General Funds or space. The anticipated funding for each Center/Initiative will be no higher than \$10-15K per year and may be significantly less. We anticipate funding a very small number (1-2) of new units. In addition, current Centers may not be renewed or may not be funded, given financial considerations* (one page)
7. *Management Structure*. A short description of the management structure for the Center/Initiative indicating how funding or space will be equitably managed among Center participants (one paragraph)
8. *Past budgets and work*. For renewal proposals: summary of past budget expenditures, grant successes, scientific discoveries or successes, and other descriptions of activities demonstrating the importance of the Center/Initiative to EMS, Penn State Institutes of the Environment, and PSU in general (two pages maximum)
9. *Support letters*. A set of brief supporting letters from at least three PSU faculty who will be affiliated with the Center/Initiative (letters should document interest and rationale for the proposed Center--how will the Center provide “value-added” to EESI activities?)

Center selection procedure

EESI will plan a public presentation tentatively set for **Monday, May 2nd**. *Each (future) Center/Initiative Director or a surrogate must be present during this date to give a presentation about the proposed unit in front of a select panel of judges*. Each proposer will give a short presentation (15-20 min, including questions). We hope to make decisions regarding support to units during the summer, possibly by June 1 with implementation effective July 1.

Available resources for Centers and Other Information

Very little space is presently available in EESI, but requests for space will be considered and space may be possible. All Centers/Initiatives will enjoy staff support from EESI staff and administrative assistants. Centers/Initiatives can be proposed that are either long-term (anticipated to be funded over multiple three-year cycles) or short-term (funded for just one three-year cycle). Long-term Centers/Initiatives will be re-competed every three years. Please contact Susan Brantley (brantley@eesi.psu.edu), Alan Taylor (aht1@psu.edu), or Tracy Bernier (txw9@psu.edu) if you have more questions. Given the financial constraints, proposers are encouraged to discuss proposals with the Director.