

Call for Center and Initiative Proposals

Earth and Environmental Systems Institute (EESI)

Due date: April 20, 2020

Call for Proposals

We seek proposals **from EESI associates** for new Initiatives or Centers, and renewal proposals for all existing Centers or Initiatives within EESI (if they want to proceed as a Center or Initiative). Proposers are encouraged to read the University guidelines (RAG05) concerning Center status (<https://policy.psu.edu/policies/rag05>). Initiatives should be proposed especially for activities that are likely to be eligible to become Centers as described by the university guidelines.

What is an EESI Center or an EESI Initiative?

A Center or Initiative within EESI represents a focus of interdisciplinary research, outreach, and/or educational activities fostered by EESI associates and affiliates. In general, such a focus generally starts as an Initiative (this step can be approved by the EESI Director) and then progresses to become a Center (the step must be approved by the Senior Vice President for Research). Current Centers/Initiatives that are receiving EESI funding include the Center for Climate Risk Management (CLIMA), Center for Environmental Informatics (CEI), Center for Landscape Dynamics (CLD), Earth System Science Center (ESSC), Energy and Environmental Economics and Policy Initiative (EEEP), Penn State Ice and Climate Research Center (PSICE), and Riparia. These Centers receive anywhere from \$5000 to \$15,000 per year for Center activities. Centers target 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, and/or outreach and education, 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
- show growth and impact on the university academic culture

In addition, each Center will be asked to organize one EarthTalks seminar series (to include at least 5 speakers) which would be held on Mondays at 4:00 pm. Since this is an

EESI-sponsored seminar, Centers should not schedule meetings or other events during the EarthTalks time slot.

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. On occasion, a non-EESI associate may propose a Center or Initiative, upon approval from the EESI director.

Proposal Requirements

Proposals should be submitted by **April 20, 2020** 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 only 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, and how does this proposed unit fit in to the ecosystem of Centers/Institutes/Initiatives already operating on campus?” (one page)
5. Funding Opportunities: Half-page description of opportunities for extramural funding, including specifics with respect to amount, agencies, and disciplinary foci to be targeted by the Center/Initiative. (half 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 generally not be higher than \$10-15K per year and may be less. We anticipate funding a small number (1-2) of new units. In addition, some current Centers may not be renewed. (0.5 to 1 page)
7. Management Structure: A short description of the management structure for the Center/Initiative. The description should include specific information indicating how funding and/or space will be equitably managed among Center participants and the manner in which Center participants or members of a leadership team will be involved in this decision-making. It may also be helpful to include a plan for managing the center during sabbaticals or other leaves of absence. (one paragraph)

8. Prior expenditures and past 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. In particular, please answer the question, “How has the Center/Initiative made opportunities happen that would not have happened otherwise?” (two pages)
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, i.e. how will the Center provide a “value-add” beyond existing EESI, EMS, or University capabilities and resources?

Center Selection Procedure

EESI will plan a public presentation tentatively set for **Monday, May 4th**. *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 panel of judges.* Each proposer will give a short presentation (15-20 minutes, 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 within EESI, but requests for space will be considered and space may be possible. In addition, the third floor of the EES building may be renovated to create an entity tentatively called the “Joint Energy and Water Environment Laboratory” that would be run as a collaborative space for centers, initiatives, and projects. Proposals could address needs in JEWEL. 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) or Tracy Bernier (txw9@psu.edu) if you have more questions. Given the financial constraints, proposers are encouraged to discuss proposals with the Director in advance of submission.