

NIU Strategic Planning Initiative Grants Request for Proposals

Introduction

The university strategic planning process is approaching the completion of a key phase. The strategic planning proposals and multidisciplinary research cluster proposals will be evaluated, and from them, the university and college-level strategic plans will emerge. This process should be completed, and the results announced, during the summer. We will then move into the implementation stage in the new academic year. However, strategic planning will continue to evolve over the coming years.

As part of the implementation and evolutionary phases of strategic planning, the university will offer funding for Strategic Planning Initiative Grants. These awards will complement the larger strategic planning investments, by providing modest funding to advance projects that are consistent with the strategic imperatives, but are not covered by the large-scale strategic planning proposals. Initiative Grants will be considered for two types of activities:

- Small projects that speak to the university strategic imperatives and that can be fully implemented with a short-term effort and one-time funding. This is particularly appropriate for projects that are consistent with the four strategic imperatives, but which were stand-alone projects that were smaller in scope or duration, and so were not included among the “big picture items” of the strategic plan.
- Pilot projects or “proof of concept” efforts that represent a preliminary step in a long-term project. This is particularly appropriate for projects that have been included in the university strategic plan, but which may require initial development before they can be fully endorsed or realized.

Initiative Grants are not intended to fund research projects. Projects will be funded in the range of \$5,000 to \$20,000.

Proposals should be submitted to the Provost’s Office by September 12, 2008. Proposal submittals should include a completed cover sheet and a narrative, not exceeding six pages.

**NIU Planning Initiative Grants
Cover Sheet**

Name: _____
Title: _____
Unit: _____
Email Address: _____
Phone: _____

Proposal Title _____

Proposal Category

_____ Stand-Alone Project: This is a self-contained proposal, and is not being submitted in conjunction with a Strategic Planning Proposal.

_____ Pilot Project: This proposal is submitted in conjunction with a Strategic Planning Proposal. Attach the Strategic Planning Proposal to this Initiative Grant Proposal.
Title of Strategic Planning Proposal: _____

Summary (give a one-paragraph summary of the proposed activity):

Budget Request:

Item	Amount
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
9. _____	_____
Total	_____

Proposal Format

If your proposal is a pilot project attached to a larger proposal, your Initiative Grant proposal should focus on the specific pilot project that you are proposing. You should attach the full Strategic Planning Proposal, and can expect readers to refer to that document for the background on the full proposal.

1. **Goals.** [1 1/2 page maximum] Describe the goals of this project. Your statement should explicitly indicate the expected outcomes envisioned as the object of your project. Your statement should explicitly address how achieving your goals will positively impact: the NIU strategic imperatives; college, intercollegiate, or university level goals; and/or the diversity of the university community. As far as possible, your proposal should specify how your goals could be quantified.

2. **Champions.** [1/2 page maximum] Identify the individual or group of individuals or units that will be actively engaged in the implementation of your project.

3. **Strategy.** [2 page maximum] Goals can be thought of as the ends or outcomes and strategies as the means or processes used to achieve those ends. Your proposal must explicitly identify the series of steps and activities necessary for the implementation of your goals. Your description of each strategy should include:

- a) A coherent set of **Action Steps** that when executed successfully will achieve or make substantial progress toward the goal;
- b) A **Timeline** that specifies the series of action steps, the person responsible for each step, and the time period within which each is to be accomplished;
- c) A set of **Requisites** that indicate what is needed to successfully implement the strategy. This should both policy changes and resources of personnel, equipment, or other funding. Be as specific as possible about all requisites.
- d) A rationale explaining how the strategy contributes to the stated goal. If this is a pilot project, please clarify how the proposed activity will advance the larger proposal.

4. **Evaluation Plan.** [2 page maximum] Each goal must have a clear plan for assessment that will be used to determine if the goals have been achieved. Your plan should include at least the following matters:

- a) **Milestones** (key steps in the process of implementation whose completion can track progress towards achieving the goal);
- b) Quantifiable **performance indicators** (numerical quantities that can be compared across time, across units or across institutions).
- c) A **summary process** that integrates quantitative and qualitative indicators of success to give a nuanced understanding of the outcomes produced in relation to the outcomes originally sought.
- d) If this is a pilot project, describe how the evaluation of the pilot project will be used to inform the development of the larger project.