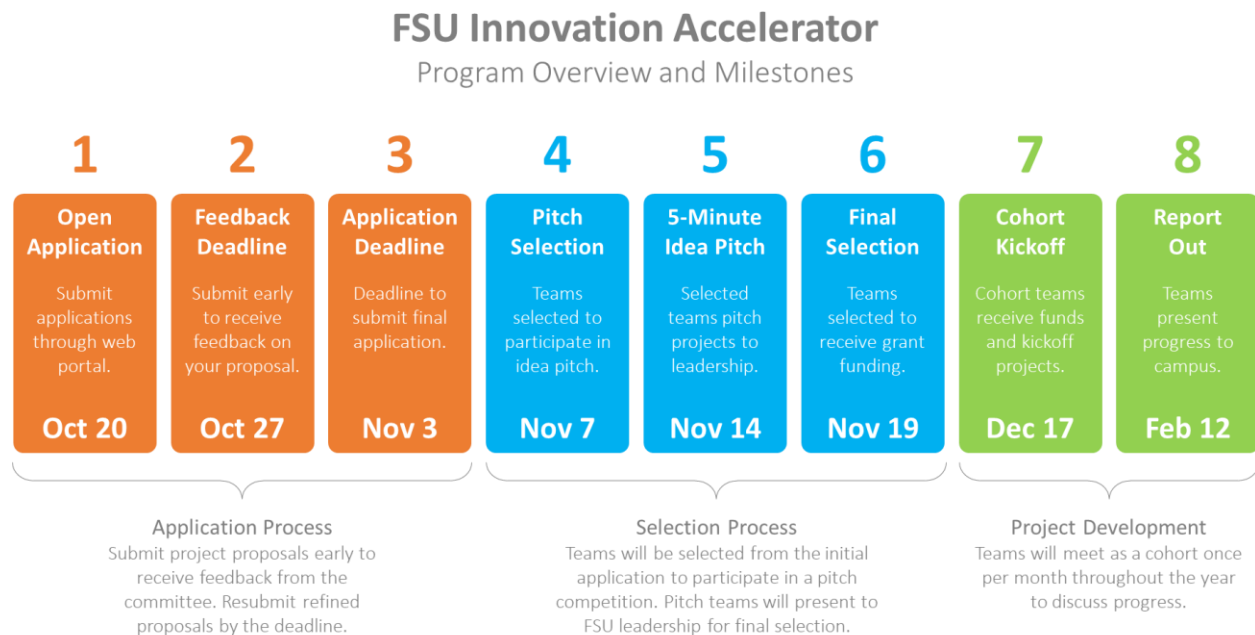


Ferris Innovation Accelerator Grant Program

Program Overview

The Innovation Accelerator Grant (IAG) Program is designed to support successful experimentation among the university community and cultivate new ideas that promote innovative thinking and institutional growth. The IAG program is managed by the [Academic Senate Innovations Committee](#). The program provides funding awards that promote collaboration across the university and beyond. Each year, approximately \$25,000-\$30,000 is available for funding innovative projects, with up to \$5,000 maximum per award. A typical timeline for submitting applications through notice of award and reporting is illustrated below:



The cycle typically begins at the start of the academic year, with applications being available starting in Aug/Sept and closing in October. Applicants are encouraged to submit pre-applications to receive input from committee members (typically due 2 weeks prior to deadline). All applications will be reviewed, and those applicants selected for the next stage will be invited to provide an In-Person Pitch in Oct/Nov (typically a 5-minute pitch like Shark Tank, with time for Q&A). Stage 2 applicants will be notified at least 1 week prior to the pitch event and will receive guidelines on presenting their innovation project to a review panel. Projects selected for

funding will be notified in November. The awardee cohort will begin developing their projects with the first accelerator cohort meeting in December. Awardees will meet each month throughout the remainder of the academic year to discuss progress and share their innovation project at the Celebration of Scholarly and Creative Work event in February of the following year.

Innovative topics in any area will be considered. As stated in the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, “Ferris State University is dedicated to cultivating a dynamic, ethical culture of continuous improvement where creativity thrives, ideas flourish, and bold innovators emerge as leaders of positive change. We are committed to educating and empowering all stakeholders to overcome challenges in pursuit of fearless exploration and the implementation of transformative ideas.”

Some example project areas may include:

- Curriculum and/or Teaching and Learning
- Recruitment
- Cost Avoidance/Efficiency
- New Areas of Revenue Generation
- Partnerships with Industry
- Student Engagement (outside the classroom)
- Seed money for larger projects and grants
- Other innovations that expand boundaries

Your innovation must lead to a measurable outcome. We are looking for innovative projects that produce action and require funding not typically covered by the individual College or Department. Please note that there are other grants that provide funding for attending conferences, seminars etc. (i.e. Timme Travel Grants, Bulldog Student Travel Grant), Senate Faculty Research Grants (FRG), as well as summer student research (Summer Fellows Program).

Additional examples of grant project areas include:

- Investing with a private industry partner that allows students new opportunities to work in the field.
- Investing in a process that allows students to work on a product using Ferris facilities and/or equipment.
- Purchase of new technology (or tool) that allows students to learn a new process or skill used in their career.
- Forming partnerships outside of Ferris promotes innovative ways of recruiting students.
- Collaborating with others provides innovative and new opportunities for students beyond graduation. Example – cross teaching partnership that includes business writing and English classes.
- Immersive learning experiences and exploration around technology that help reshape curriculum.
- Investing in AACU High-Impact Practices (HIP) that are linked to learning success, such as service learning, internships, e-Portfolios, undergraduate research, and intellectual experiences (See examples at: <https://www.aacu.org/trending-topics/high-impact>).

Eligibility

All faculty and staff employed at Ferris State University are eligible. Priority will be given to new applicants over repeat requests from applicants. You cannot apply for funding if your project is receiving grant money or funding from another Ferris source.

Funding

- What may be funded? (allowable expenses)
 - Equipment: Any equipment purchases must be directly related to the innovation being proposed (ie, computer for running applications, equipment for producing parts, etc.).
 - Material and Supplies: Expendable supplies such as laboratory items, computer software, research supplies.

- Professional Services: The costs of limited services provided by individuals and firms external to Ferris, including for example, transcription, consulting, project evaluation, and laboratory services, are allowed. Costs for such services can be calculated on an hourly, daily, or flat-fee basis, depending upon project needs. Ferris employees are not allowed to serve as paid consultants on a proposal budget.
- Licenses for computer programs or mechanical devices.
- Student assistants: Can be paid at the current Ferris rate for student workers. The student's work must be directly related to the implementation of the innovation project.
- Miscellaneous expenses – other costs not associated with any of the above categories (must be specified in budget description).
- What won't be funded (unallowable costs):
 - Unallowable items include general-purpose equipment such as desks, chairs, shelves, file cabinets, or general-purpose computers.
 - Faculty salary, release time or other stipends will not be paid through this funding.
 - Budget adjustments are not allowed once the grant is awarded. Any expenses exceeding those awarded are the responsibility of the applicant.

Alignment with the University's Strategic Plan

Your project must fit within the four broad-based pillars as identified in the 2024-2027 Ferris State University Strategic Plan. The four key pillars are Belonging, Innovation, Student Excellence, and Sustainability. Your project must fit within one or more of the pillars as described below. You will have to identify the pillar(s) your project aligns with in your initial application (<https://www.ferris.edu/strategic-planning2/2024-2027/index.htm>)

Pillar One - Belonging

Ferris State University embraces and is committed to cultivating an environment of belonging. As part of the institution's fabric, the work of belonging is the shared responsibility of students, faculty, staff, administrators, and stakeholders.

Initiative 1: Create and sustain a University environment of access, inclusion, and representation.

Initiative 2: Develop, revise, and implement trainings, programs, opportunities, and spaces that elevate safety, belonging, and connection within the University and its surrounding community.

Initiative 3: Center and incorporate belonging in teaching and learning.

Pillar Two -Innovation

Ferris State University is dedicated to cultivating a dynamic, ethical culture of continuous improvement where creativity thrives, ideas flourish, and bold innovators emerge as leaders of positive change. We are committed to educating and empowering all stakeholders to overcome challenges in pursuit of fearless exploration and the implementation of transformative ideas.

Initiative 1: Foster a culture of innovation that encourages and empowers University stakeholders to develop and experiment with new ideas.

Initiative 2: Promote learning around innovation through community engagement and collaboration with strategic partners.

Initiative 3: Celebrate and promote the work of University stakeholders who are engaged in innovative work.

Pillar Three - Student Excellence

Ferris State University's commitment to student excellence is comprehensive and multifaceted, encompassing academic rigor, a supportive learning environment, career readiness, celebration of achievements, collaboration, and resources for holistic development. Through these

commitments, we strive to empower our students to excel academically and thrive as individuals prepared for future challenges and opportunities.

Initiative 1: Foster holistic student development to address student success barriers.

Initiative 2: Foster career readiness through occupational related experiences.

Initiative 3: Recognize and celebrate student excellence.

Pillar Four - Sustainability

Responsible citizenship to our community and a willingness to learn, adapt, and transform our practice to meet the challenges of our dynamic global society is at the core of who we are and what we do. Ferris State University is committed to embracing and implementing environmentally sustainable practices and approaches in how we operate our campus, engage with our community, and prepare the leaders of the future.

Initiative 1: Build capacity for sustainability.

Initiative 2: Commit to carbon neutrality.

Initiative 3: Review and improve University infrastructure and systems.

Expectations for Program Participation

While it is important to show that your project has achievable goals, we do understand that innovation work often involve a focus on process and “problem solving” versus “problem solved.” Your innovation may take different forms than you envisioned at the onset. Our goal is to not confine or limit your innovation, but to assist in the process as your innovation develops. Failure is not an option; it is a learning opportunity and a chance to innovate even more. Adapting and improvising are essential!

Initial Application

Your preliminary application can be submitted using the online intake form. The application must include a budget estimate. You may contact a member of the Innovation Committee for feedback on your application prior to submitting it by the final deadline.

Your application will be judged based on how well you can substantiate your request. You should have a concise description and understanding of how you will implement your innovation. It is important that you also have a thorough description of your funding amount and a precise breakdown of your budget. Your budget must have the costs pre-determined. Your funding application cannot be increased after your submission. Once submitted, your initial application will be reviewed by members of the Innovation Committee. If your initial application is approved, you will move on to the In-Person Pitch competition.

In-Person Pitch

If selected for the In-Person Pitch, you will prepare a five-minute “pitch” in front of a panel explaining your innovation in more detail. You will tell your story and share your vision for innovation with the jury of University leaders. How you choose to present your application is up to you. Feel free to incorporate charts, graphs and other evidence that sells your innovation. Be innovative! You may include collaborators in your presentation. This is like a *Shark Tank* experience (without the panel hostility) where you sell your innovation to the judging panel. Your in-person pitch will be evaluated by the panel. Count on follow-up questions after your pitch. Your project will be evaluated by the panel. Your project will either be approved (may include recommendations for small changes) or not approved. If your project is approved, you will receive notification of funding.

Project Development

Your project does not end once you have received your grant funding. Once you start your innovation project, you will report your progress via monthly cohort meetings with the other project award recipients. All recipients will meet to share their progress and learn from each other as a team. Think of them as a resource for your project. They are a team of collaborators. Your team will continue to offer recommendations as needed for your project. You should be thinking ahead of a possible team member that shares expertise in your innovation. Your team of

collaborators will be focused on making your innovation successful and for expanding your innovation.

Innovation Showcase

You will be asked to participate in Ferris's Annual Celebration of Scholarly and Creative and Works (CSCW) event during the spring semester. Here, you will present a brief overview of your innovation project and progress made to members of the campus community, including University leadership and fellow innovators. This will help inspire others to think as problem solvers and advance the University's strategic plan with experimentation around new ideas.

In-Person Pitch Guidelines

Selected applicants will prepare a five-minute in-person presentation on your innovation project. Members of the innovation committee, along with University leadership, will be evaluating your project. You and your collaborators will be given five minutes to “sell” your innovation. You may use a PowerPoint presentation or other selling devices to accompany your pitch to the evaluation panel. Feel free to incorporate charts, graphs and other evidence that sells your innovation. Be innovative! Prepare for a “Shark Tank” like experience. At the end of your pitch panel members may or may not have follow-up questions for you. Items to address in your presentation.

- Your name and title
- Title of Innovation
- Identify and describe the innovation.
- Explain the project-based nature of the innovation.
- Describe why it is innovative.
- How will it benefit the university/students/program?
 - Who/what will be the benefit – measure the benefits.
- Identify collaboration resources/partners.
 - Collaborators in the university and in industry
- Plan of action with timeline
- Expected funding amount with justification – budget details. Include bids and cost analysis.
- What will be the measure of success? How will this benefit Ferris? Possible obstacles or hurdles.