

CALL FOR RESEARCH CLUSTER APPLICATIONS

The Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute (DCII) is pleased to announce a call for applications for research clusters for academic year 2026–27.

The purpose of this program is to provide a home for informal, collaborative groups of scholars who wish to gather to discuss and advance shared interdisciplinary interests. Clusters should have a clearly defined impact on participants' research or teaching activities, and should convene at least twice per semester for substantive meetings or events (planning meetings among the conveners do not count toward this requirement). Clusters should actively seek the participation of the SMU community and must be continuously open to faculty and graduate students from across campus, though they may also welcome participants from other universities and the broader DFW community.

The DCII provides the space for meetings in Ford Hall, limited staff assistance to organize cluster meetings and events, and up to \$4,000 in funding to support cluster activities. In the past, clusters have sponsored reading groups, brought in speakers, organized workshops, and undertaken joint research activities, among other functions. To meet the "open door" spirit of the program, cluster activities must not be restricted to pre-defined participants and should not be tailored so narrowly as to appeal only to one academic department or degree program. In addition, all substantive cluster meetings and events must be submitted to the DCII for publicization.

Cluster funds must be used for expenses that directly support the work of the cluster and cannot be used for the exclusive benefit of individual cluster conveners or participants. The DCII has historically approved meeting expenses for research talks, symposia, trainings, workshops, discussion groups, etc.; speaker travel expenses and honoraria; reasonable entertainment expenses; direct research and teaching expenses; book purchases; and compensation for student aids. We invite conveners to consider new ways to collaborate and make use of available funds but encourage consultation with the DCII prior to submitting a proposal that includes novel activities or budget items. Renewing clusters may also propose a budget exceeding \$4,000—evaluation of such proposals will be based on the cluster's record of prior accomplishments and on the ambition of its upcoming plans.

For examples of previous and current research clusters sponsored by the DCII, visit <https://www.smu.edu/Dedman/Research/Institutes-and-Centers/DCII/Programs/ResearchCluster>.

Clusters should have at least two SMU faculty (tenure-track or NTT), staff, post-doctoral fellow, and/or graduate student conveners who are responsible for the cluster's activities, though they may have additional conveners from SMU or other institutions. Conveners will ideally come from different academic disciplines, but proposed clusters whose conveners are from the same discipline will be considered so long as there are clear plans to recruit participants from other fields. Likewise, proposed clusters will ideally have at least one faculty or graduate student

convener, but clusters without any faculty or graduate student conveners will be considered so long as there are clear plans to recruit faculty or graduate student participants. Conveners must also submit an end-of-year report about the cluster's activities.

The deadline for applications is **Friday, May 15**. Applications should be submitted via the following link: <https://www.smu.edu/dedman/research/institutes-and-centers/dcii/research/research-cluster/applications>

Applications for New Clusters:

The application should include a completed online application form and a proposal describing the purpose of and plans for the cluster.

Proposals (maximum length two pages), should:

1. Explain the significance of the collaboration for research and/or teaching
2. Describe the cluster's interdisciplinary dimensions
3. Describe the specific activities the cluster plans to undertake in the coming year and the concrete outcomes (e.g., publications, grant proposals, conference presentations, course/syllabi revisions) these activities are expected to produce
4. Describe plans for at least two substantive meetings or events per semester that are open and accessible to faculty and graduate students from across campus (and additional constituencies as appropriate)
5. List the names and department affiliations of potential cluster participants (beyond the conveners), including faculty and/or graduate students
6. Provide an itemized budget

Applications to Renew Existing Clusters:

The application should include a completed online application form and a proposal describing upcoming plans for the cluster.

Proposals (maximum length one page), should:

1. Describe the specific activities the cluster plans to undertake in the coming year and the concrete outcomes (e.g., publications, grant proposals, conference presentations, course/syllabi revisions) these activities are expected to produce
2. Describe plans for at least two substantive meetings or events per semester that are open and accessible to faculty and graduate students from across campus (and additional constituencies as appropriate)
3. Provide an itemized budget. Unused funds from AY 2025–26 will not automatically roll over to AY 2026–27, and any rollover request must be accompanied by a clear justification for the extension.

Note that renewal requests will not be considered in the absence of a completed end-of-year report for AY 2025-26.

Questions about the program or application process should be addressed to Dr. Karisa Cloward, Ruth Collins Altshuler Director of the Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute, at kcloward@smu.edu.