

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Item Name: Request for Approval of the FY 2024 Regents' Research Grants

Action Item

Requested Action: The board office asks the board to approve the FY 2024 Technology and Research Initiative Fund (TRIF) Regents' Research Grants Recommendations.

Background/History of Previous Board Action

Arizona law established TRIF from Proposition 301 state sales tax revenue and gives ABOR the authority to administer the fund on universities' behalf. The board manages and administers the TRIF revenues through awarding and allocating revenues.

Discussion

Purpose

The purpose of Regents' Grants is to address and deliver solutions to critical issues facing the State of Arizona and its citizens. The Regents may award TRIF funding to Arizona public universities in the form of Regents' Grants to support:

- Academic research in areas of greatest need and interest to the State of Arizona and/or its citizens.
- Programs and initiatives aimed at having a large economic impact directly tied to the State of Arizona.

The Regents' Research Grants are designed to address and deliver solutions through academic research to critical issues facing the State of Arizona and its citizens by:

- Accelerating and delivering solutions to critical unmet needs for the State of Arizona;
- Bringing together and leverage synergistic skill sets resident at multiple Arizona public universities; and
- Establishing centers of excellence that will generate sustainable future research funding.

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Proposals evaluations were based on:

- Potential Near-term Benefit to Arizona. The proposal's potential to impact Arizona citizen’s most pressing unmet needs. Arizona agency feedback and scoring of the proposals are a prime factor in evaluating the potential to impact Arizona.
- Strength of Research Team and Creativity of Proposal.
- Sustainable Funding. Potential to attract future sustainable external funding.
- Budget. Is the budget requested appropriate for the work to be performed?
- Timeline. Is the research timeline appropriate for the tasks proposed?

Discussion

For the FY 2024 round of Regents’ Grants, ABOR worked with the Arizona State Mine Inspector and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality to develop Opportunity Statements for critical unmet Arizona needs. A total of three Opportunity Statements were assembled and distributed to Arizona State University (ASU), Northern Arizona University (NAU) and the University of Arizona (UArizona). Thirteen research proposals were submitted for consideration and evaluated by state agency experts.

Three highly-scored proposals were selected and are recommended for funding. The following table contains the proposal title with suggested funding, term and university team.

Proposal Title	Funding and Term	University Team
Reprocessing Copper Mine Tailings: Critical Minerals Recovery from Past Current and Future Copper Mine Tailings	\$3,632,359 over 3-years	UArizona, NAU & ASU
Evaluate Contaminant Fate and Transport in Biosolids	\$2,157,277 over 3-years	ASU, UArizona & NAU
Environnemental Communication & Engagement Best Practices	\$1,507,855 over 3-years	ASU

Committee Review and Recommendation

The University Governance and Operations Committee reviewed this item at its September 14, 2023, meeting and recommended forwarding the item to the full board for approval.

Statutory/Policy Requirements

A.R.S. § 15-1626 “General Administrative Powers and Duties of Board”
 ABOR Policy 3-412 “Administration of Technology and Research Initiative Fund”