2018 ASIRT Seed Grant program

Autonomous systems interact with human partners for extended periods of time, sometimes at remote distances and promise improved safety, reliability, efficiency, adaptability, resiliency, usability, affordability, and previously unattainable capabilities. Networked cyber-physical systems pervade modern society—From smart vehicles to medical robots, from automated infrastructure to teams of robotic explorers, from mobile devices to connected communities. The Autonomous Systems Interdisciplinary Research Theme investigates how smart, safe, and secure autonomy can expand and exploit the full capabilities of these networked systems.

The overall goal of the ASIRT investment is to position the faculty in the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences to obtain large “center-scale” research grants. In support of this goal, the Autonomous Systems Interdisciplinary Research Theme is focusing on three key areas:

1.) Building a community of autonomous system researchers;
2.) Enhancing the reputation of the University of Colorado in autonomous systems;
3.) Growing the infrastructure (equipment, people, expertise) that supports the ASIRT vision.

Seed Grants:

The ASIRT Seed Grant program will award $125K-$150K to CEAS faculty in support of the goals of the Autonomous Systems Interdisciplinary Research Theme. Seed grants can range in size from $500 - $50,000. Seed grant proposals that involve multiple faculty are highly encouraged, but are not required.

Faculty are encouraged to take a broad and creative perspective on the seed grants and how these funds can support the goals of the IRT. Seed grants can include traditional items such as equipment, travel support, student or post-doc funding, etc. However, grants could also include non-traditional activities such as web page content development, acquisition of professional illustrations for upcoming proposals, video production, outreach material, etc.

Seed grants will be awarded over two phases. Phase 1 will award $75K - $100K by February 1, 2018 (see Important Dates below). Because Phase 1 occurs before the internal kick-off meeting, a portion of the total seed grant funds are being reserved. These Phase 2 funds will be awarded by April 1, 2018, after the ASIRT kick-off event to be scheduled in mid-February. The total amount of funds available for Phase 2 will depend on what is allocated in Phase 1, but at least $50K will be available.

Note: The Seed Grant program is not the only opportunity for faculty support. The ASIRT has additional discretionary funds that can be requested as needed, however awards of those funds are likely to be on the order of $1,000.
Restrictions:

The ASIRT Seed Grant program is open to all faculty (research, teaching, tenure-track) and research staff in the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences. Awards will not be made directly to students or postdoctoral researchers, though their faculty advisors may request funds that are used to support their activities, e.g. travel to a conference.

**All awarded funds must be spent before December 31, 2018.** Unused funds will be swept back and applied to the CY 2019 budget allocation for ASIRT.

Projects with multiple researchers are encouraged, but a single Principle Investigator from within CEAS must be identified who will manage the award. Projects over $5,000 will be given their own Speed Type to be managed by the faculty member’s home department. Projects less than $5,000 will be managed directly by the IRT with staff in the Dean’s office.

The IRT and seed grant funds are intended to catalyze the research effort of CEAS faculty. As a result, support for course material and student teams is out of scope, unless a case can be made for direct impact on the research goals of the Autonomous Systems Interdisciplinary Research Theme.

Seed grant funds are awarded without overhead. Any seed grant allocations that include payroll also must account for benefits.

The use of seed grant funds for social activities is acceptable, but the funds cannot be used to purchase alcohol.

Proposal Guidelines:

All Phase 1 seed grant requests must be made by submission of a 1-2 page (pdf) document by 11:59 PM, January 15, 2018 via email to eric.frew@colorado.edu. The level of detail in the proposal should align with the amount of funds being requested. The proposal should describe the problem being addressed, itemized budget, what specifically will be done with the seed grant funds, how the seed grant will further the goals of the ASIRT, risks involved with the project, and measures of success. Where appropriate the proposal should identify specific external funding opportunities that the seed grant helps prepare the faculty to pursue.

Important Dates:

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 15, 2018</td>
<td>Application due for Phase 1 Seed grants</td>
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<td>February 1, 2018</td>
<td>Phase 1 Seed grants awarded</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 15, 2018</td>
<td>Application due for Phase 2 seed grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 1, 2018</td>
<td>Phase 2 Seed grants awarded</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 31, 2018</td>
<td>All seed grants must be completed</td>
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