

NEWS

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Samuel Ginn
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Announcements

SGCOE Faculty Colloquium Today

Please join us today in **Brown-Kopel's 2nd Floor Grand Hall from 12:00 pm–1:00 pm** to hear from Dr. Brendon Allen (Department of Mechanical Engineering) and Dr. Hossein Jahromi (Department of Biosystems Engineering). Lunch will be provided for all attendees. Other information about the colloquium, including past presentations, can be found [here](#).

Engineering Analytical Lab: SEM Rental & Training

Students, faculty, and staff may now reserve a **Zeiss EVO-10 Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) with an EDS detector** from the SGCOE's shared-use analytical lab. The rate for using the SEM is **\$20/hr for SGCOE-affiliated users** and **\$25/hr for non-engineering users**.

Training is mandatory for all equipment users. Please contact [Dr. Md Fahim Salek](#) to request in-person training. For additional information, please visit the [Engineering Analytical Lab website](#).

Complete Your ORCID Profile with AU Libraries

The Department of Defense (DoD) will be requiring an **ORCID ID starting April 1, 2025**. NIH and the Department of Energy (DOE) will follow suit, requiring ORCID IDs **by May 2025**. Please follow these steps to complete the process:

1. Register for your [ORCID](#) account.
2. Click your name in the top right corner and select "Trusted Parties"
3. Scroll down to "Trusted Individuals" and add orcid@auburn.edu.
4. Send a copy of your CV to orcid@auburn.edu to ensure all publications, educational background, and employment history are included.

Funding Opportunities

NSF Trailblazer Engineering Impact Award

National Science Foundation (NSF), Emerging Frontiers and Multidisciplinary Activities (EFMA) Office

1-Page Letter of Intent Due: November 15, 2024 (5 pm CT)

Preliminary Proposal Due: January 14, 2025 (5 pm CT) (Submit via [Research.gov](#))

Full Proposal Deadline: April 15, 2025 (5 pm CT)

Total Award Amount: \$3,000,000

The NSF TRAILBLAZER program will fund individual investigators who seek to address new areas of research related to national needs and/or grand challenges in the engineering and science domains. TRAILBLAZER PIs should propose projects that can positively transform engineering research and education, stimulate the development of emerging technologies, and/or imagine novel investigative tools.

Eligible PIs must hold a tenured or tenure-eligible faculty position at the Associate or Full Professor rank or equivalent. Additionally, all PIs must hold appointments in the College of Engineering and/or have earned an Engineering Doctorate degree.

All funded projects will form an NSF TRAILBLAZER cohort, and participating PIs will be expected to attend an annual meeting.

The Emerging Frontiers and Multidisciplinary Activities (EFMA) Office will host an informational webinar on **October 15, 2024** to discuss the TRAILBLAZER program and answer questions about the solicitation. Details on this webinar will be available on the [Directorate for Engineering](#) and [EFMA](#) pages.

Read more about this award opportunity [here](#).

Condensed Matter and Materials Theory (CMMT)

National Science Foundation (NSF)

Proposals accepted anytime

Areas of Interest: composite/hybrid materials, nanomaterials, AI/machine learning (ML)

Total Award Amount: \$375,000

The Condensed Matter and Materials Theory (CMMT) program supports research and education on hard and soft materials and related phenomena; the development of analytical, computational, and data-centric techniques using data-analytics or machine learning; and predictive materials-specific theory, simulation, and modeling for materials research.

Read more about this funding opportunity [here](#).

Defense Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (DEPSCoR)—Research Collaboration

Air Force Office of Scientific Research (AFOSR)

Proposal Due: November 25, 2024

Estimated Award Range: \$200,000 – \$600,000

This funding opportunity aims to create basic research collaborations, namely between (1) the Applicant, or PI, who has never served on a prior DoD directly-funded research Prime award and (2) the Collaborator, or co-PI, who *has* served as a PI on a DoD directly-funded Prime award (between 10/1/2016 and 9/30/2023) and who will provide mentorship to the Applicant.

Read more about this funding opportunity [here](#).

Best Practices

How to Craft a Compelling Introduction

Never underestimate the power of a well-written introduction. While its purpose is to define the scope of your proposal, it should also strive to capture the interest of your review panel. Check out the following three tips for making your introduction clear and compelling.

1. Don't bury the lead.

Start by pinpointing the *specific need or problem* you plan to address. Then ask yourself the following:

How is this idea unique from what others will propose? What makes it innovative? What larger problem does it aim to solve?

Avoid placing the great idea 'kernel' 5 paragraphs deep. Instead, put it right up front—let it be the hook that draws your readers in.

2. Know your audience.

Anticipate what prior knowledge your reviewers have. If, for instance, you are writing a proposal for a DOE biofuels program, is it necessary to explain the importance of biofuels and why they should be developed?

If your review panel is already familiar with the subject matter, direct their attention to the specific problem or challenge within the frame of your proposed project.

3. Provide context, but keep it concise.

Your introduction should concisely summarize *what* you're going to do, *why* you're going to do it, and *how* it's significant. In addition, ensure that your readers can gain insight into the motivation behind your proposal.

Finally, while it is crucial to show the agency that you understand the importance of the subject area and the motivation behind the funding opportunity, these components can be saved for the background section.

The likely reality is, your proposal will be reviewed alongside a stack of other proposals that respond to the same funding opportunity. Making yours stand out as more original, more significant, and more exciting than the rest will greatly improve your chances of funding—and that starts with a strong introduction.

Adapted from the September 2024 edition of the [Research Development & Grantwriting Newsletter](#).

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