



Kenan Institute Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research Initiative **Small Grants Program – Call for Research Proposals**

The Frank H. Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise is seeking proposals for outstanding academic research projects in the field of entrepreneurship.

Financial Support

The Kenan Institute will award approximately 5 grants of \$10,000 each. The grant term will be from June 1, 2018 through December 31, 2021. To be eligible, applicants must be full-time faculty, Ph.D. candidates, or postdocs at an academic research institution. The Kenan Institute will not pay overhead expenses.

The Kenan Institute pays 40 percent of the grant when the grant is approved. An additional 40 percent will be paid when a working paper is uploaded to SSRN (with a deadline of December 31, 2019). The remaining 20 percent will be paid upon acceptance for publication in a peer-reviewed academic journal (with deadline of December 31, 2021). All publications (including working papers) that are directly related to the grant funding must acknowledge the support of the Kenan Institute in an introductory footnote.

Priority Areas

The Kenan Institute has chosen its priority areas based on questions and themes developed during the 2018 Kenan Institute Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Conference. Please see the appendix at the end of this document for a review of these topics.

Additional Benefits and Obligations

Awardees must be willing to present their research at a future Kenan Institute Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Conference.

Application Procedure

Please submit a proposal by email to kiproposal@kenan-flagler.unc.edu with the subject line “**Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research Proposal.**” The submission should consist of a single PDF with the following:

- A cover page with project title, date of submission; and information for Principal Investigator including name, email address, phone number, mailing address, university or research institution affiliation, and title
- Proposal narrative
- Updated resume or CV for each researcher.
- If the Principal Investigator is a Ph.D. student, please include a letter of reference from a dissertation or program faculty advisory.

The proposal narrative should not exceed five (5) pages, should be single-spaced, and include:

- A one-paragraph abstract written in the third-person for posting on the Kenan Institute website, if the project is funded
- Short literature review on the topic
- A comprehensive description of proposed activities, including details about the hypothesis, research design and what data, if any, will be used
- Description of the timeline for the project

Application Deadline & Decision

The deadline for consideration is 5:00 ET, April 30, 2018. Grantees will be notified by 5:00 ET May 31, 2018.

Appendix: Priority Areas

Our priority areas include but are not limited to the following:

- Measures of entrepreneurial vibrancy and impact on organizational viability and productivity.
- Determinants of declining rates of IPOs.
- Change in the quality of start-ups. Are we missing high-growth entry or lifestyle entrepreneurs, etc.?
- The geographic distribution and determinants of new firm formation and survival rates.
- Role of solopreneurs and independent contractors in measurement of entrepreneurial activity.
- Importance of regulatory burden on incentives to firm formation across sectors.
- The role of student debt on rates of new firm formation.
- Increasing minority participation in entrepreneurship is due primarily to lower relative participation of white males. Is this due to basic demographics or other social factors?
- Causal effects of institutional, regulatory and fiscal institutions and reforms on entrepreneurial activity. How do these relate to differences in entrepreneurial activity in difference geographies (e.g., India/China vs. Brazil/Russia)? Relation between macro factors and exit strategies. Differences in determinants of survival rate (and other success measures) in challenging environments.
- What are effective mechanisms for investors/lenders protecting themselves at the firm level in challenging business environments? What is the impact of corporate governance—concentrated family holdings, state and foreign ownership in the private and financial sector—on entrepreneurial finance and success?
- What is the added-value of management training, incubators, social networks, etc. especially for women and minorities?
- The role of entrepreneurship in economic growth and development. What is the impact of NGO's/non-profit on private sector development/entrepreneurship? How do entrepreneurs benefit from connecting to global value chains (e.g. transfer of technology, access to financial markets, and improved managerial skills)?
- What is the impact of access to digital financial services on financial resilience and growth?
- If wages are unimportant in matching workers for new and established firm, than what drives workers to join new firms?
- How important is inherent skill in being a successful entrepreneur and how should we measure skill?
- What else can we learn about “entrepreneurial” employees who work in established firms? How important is the organizational setting versus the person and his/her activities? How important are they for the success of established firms?
- What are the most important distinctions between founders of new firms and employees at new firms? What do we learn by studying employees at new firms more broadly?
- There are (at least) two differing definitions of entrepreneurship: one that characterizes any owner/operator of a business and another that applies only to innovative and high-growth potential businesses. How do different definitions of entrepreneurship impact our analysis of entrepreneurial activity?
- Assessment of the effectiveness of specific frameworks meant for improving outcomes for entrepreneurs who learn them (lean, disciplined e-ship, MIT entrepreneurship strategy, etc.). How can tools and frameworks be combined?
- The effectiveness of in-class experiential training, versus online curricula, versus one-one-one mentorship.
- Does the entrepreneurship framework and toolset education matter more or less than access to networks of individuals with that know-how? Are they substitutes or complements?
- How should teaching entrepreneurship differ in business school programs versus colleges of arts and science versus engineering?

- What program components are most impactful and cost effective for promoting high quality entrepreneurship? In particular, what are the different effects of classroom time, one-on-one or small group formal mentorship, and networking events and peer effects? Moreover, what aspects of training are most important (e.g. knowledge of where to access resources, exposure to success and failure stories, understanding how to apply hypothesis testing to a start-up, etc.)?
- Why have venture capital firms been investing less and in fewer early stage companies even as overall investments by venture capital firms appear to be reaching levels not seen since the late 1990s?
- What regulatory changes would increase the supply of entrepreneurial finance?
- What types of innovations are best facilitated by different environments and how might these be connected?
- How effective are interventions for the entrepreneurial entry and success of women and/or minorities? What are preferred methods for testing (e.g., experimental vs. archival data)? What cognitive, social and political barriers to the implementation of these interventions should we anticipate?
- Experimental work on ways to mitigate bias from external stakeholders (investors, suppliers, etc.) that adversely affect success of women and minority entrepreneurs.
- In parallel research streams, scholars have defined and studied entrepreneurial ecosystems using either geographic or technology boundaries. What do we learn by linking these two streams?
- Although the current literature has extensively studied existing ecosystems, the emergence of new ecosystems deserves additional attention. How can we access and generate new data that expand our understanding of ecosystems including the role and interactions of various actors (entrepreneurs, public institutions, cultures, etc.)?