

FOA Announcement Number N00014-18-S-F008  
FY2019 VANNEVAR BUSH FACULTY FELLOWSHIP (VBFF)  
Amendment 0001

Questions Received during the VBFF Informational Webinar – Tuesday, 10 July 2018

We have posted the entire Vannevar Bush Faculty Fellowship webinar on the VBFF website  
<https://basicresearch.defense.gov/Programs-Workshops/Vannevar-Bush-Faculty-Fellowship/>

1) What is the policy regarding Co-PI/collaborators?

The FOA specifically states Co-PIs are not allowed. The primary work must be done by the PI. Some collaboration is allowed. The management plan must include a discussion of how much work will be done by the collaborator. Collaboration can be done through sub-awards to universities.

2) Is it OK to send draft versions of white papers to DoD to receive feedback?

We do not provide feedback on individual white papers before the deadline.

3) For past DoD funding, is it required to mention CDMRP grants (I had a Co-Investigator role)?

Yes. Any DoD grants that you have received should be listed on your CV as part of your application. Having received grants in the past does not make you eligible or ineligible for this award. It just helps us understand you a little better.

4) Can you explain what the "PI Time expectation" is? Is this a hard requirement similar to the Pioneer award requirement?

We don't have a hard requirement, but we do evaluate the commitment of the PI in terms of the time they propose to spend on this project. We also want to know if the PI has significant other responsibilities so that we can judge how much time you will actually have available. This is an award that is an investment in you as a Fellow, so we are expecting that your contributions and your creativity will be what is driving your time on this award.

5) Is this funding appropriate for junior faculty?

No. This fellowship is not for junior faculty. There are young investigator programs out of AFOSR, ONR and DARPA, and junior faculty members are encouraged to look into these programs. We consider junior faculty members as those who have not achieved tenure. Once they obtain tenure, they become eligible to apply to the VBFF program.

6) Is there a preference for the stage of the faculty member's career for this fellowship, for example, mid-career?

We don't have a preference for career stage as long as the applicant has achieved tenure. Some Fellows are only a few years past tenure, and others are very well-established in their careers, very senior.

FOA Announcement Number N00014-18-S-F008  
FY2019 VANNEVAR BUSH FACULTY FELLOWSHIP (VBFF)  
Amendment 0001

Questions Received during the VBFF Informational Webinar – Tuesday, 10 July 2018

7) Is possible for a social scientist that uses quantitative data to apply? Is there room for the social sciences in this program?

In the DOD's Basic Science Office, there is another program called MINERVA which explicitly deals with social science programs. But if the idea is using mathematics, applying mathematics concepts/modeling to social sciences, then that is appropriate for the VBFF program.

8) Is the competition trying to get at least one recipient in each technical area or just take the best ones overall?

We want to pick the best ideas possible, across the board. We do not have a quota on technical subjects.

9) Will external peers or DoD personnel review the White Papers?

Only government people will review the white papers, including people from DoD and other funding agencies.

10) One clarification question with respect to 'manufacturing science'. Is the following statement true? "We are not interested in a single manufacturing process proposal, for example, subtractive or additive manufacturing."

We're not looking for materials processing proposals. We're looking for new manufacturing ideas. In other words, can your idea change the way that people do manufacturing.

11) How important is collaboration in the weighting of proposals?

The VBFF award is unlike a MURI; it is a single PI effort. We evaluate the collaboration in the context of the proposal and see if it fits the goal of the white paper. Collaboration by itself is not part of the review criteria.

12) Are non-tenured research staff from university affiliated research centers (UARCs) eligible to apply?

Yes. Full time research staff at a UARC (but not a FFRDC) are eligible to apply as a part of a U.S. institution of higher education. An important objective of the program is to "educate and train student and post-doctoral researchers for the defense workforce" and we would expect to see student and postdoc training in your plan.

FOA Announcement Number N00014-18-S-F008  
FY2019 VANNEVAR BUSH FACULTY FELLOWSHIP (VBFF)  
Amendment 0001

Questions Received during the VBFF Informational Webinar – Tuesday, 10 July 2018

13) What level of collaboration is suggested? Would you expect/like letters of support (and are these different from the letters of recommendation)? Can a collaborator(s) be funded in the budget?

There is no level of collaboration expected. If collaboration is proposed, it needs to be justified in the context of the research plan. A letter of support for commitment for the collaboration is expected. Collaboration can be supported through sub-awards.

14) Where can we find the topics currently awarded under this initiative?

Please check the website <https://basicresearch.defense.gov/Programs-Workshops/Vannevar-Bush-Faculty-Fellowship/> for the most recent information posted. This site has a list of Fellows from previous years with their institutions and topics.

15) Is there an in-person interview process as part of the selection processes?

No.

16) I'm surprised to see computer science is not on the list of named topic areas. Does CS thus fall into the "Other" category?

It can be, depending on the topic area. It could also fit in the Applied Mathematics and Statistics area. We fund a lot of computer science-type work, and that's what a lot of applied math is. It helps remind people that we're looking for the basic science, by using those kind of nomenclatures associated with the topic areas. We also have two computer scientist Fellows working on quantum algorithms; these topics would fit in the Quantum Information Science topic area.

17) I know this is for a single PI driven project. But what happens if a PI wants to work with a scientist at a UARC, can they both be funded under this fellowship?

Yes. Sub-awards to scientists at UARCs are permitted.

18) Will you provide the webinar slides to attendees?

We have posted the entire webinar on the VBFF website <https://basicresearch.defense.gov/Programs-Workshops/Vannevar-Bush-Faculty-Fellowship/> The slides are shown in the playback.

19) Is it necessary to tag which of the seven areas the proposal falls under?

Yes, the application website requires that you place your white paper into a technical area, or "other". All submissions are reviewed for proper placement in technical evaluation panels and may be moved between technical panels if it is deemed appropriate.

FOA Announcement Number N00014-18-S-F008  
FY2019 VANNEVAR BUSH FACULTY FELLOWSHIP (VBFF)  
Amendment 0001

Questions Received during the VBFF Informational Webinar – Tuesday, 10 July 2018

20) The current funding profile seems very heavily weighted toward novel materials. Does this imply that materials research is less likely to be funded this year?

Materials are one of the fundamental problems in the DoD that have traditionally been a large part of our investment. One of the reasons for the novel engineering materials having had such a high success rate is that all three services have interests in novel materials. There are different reasons for having those interests, but the development in materials has been ground-breaking for the three services, therefore DoD has a particular strength in this area.

We have combined all kinds of materials into one overarching materials category for this competition. We do not have a plan for what the topical areas are going to look like when this particular competition is completed. We don't expect there to be fewer or more of any one category or other.

21) Are the proposal titles of past Fellows available on your website?

No. A list of Fellows are their universities and general technical topics are listed there.

22) What if the proposal is in between "novel Materials" and "others"?

All submitted proposals are reviewed and placed in the most appropriate technical evaluation panels.