

FY2021 Strategic Investment Fund Advisory Committee Final Report

Review of Timeline and Process

November 9, 2020 –

Kickoff meeting with Senior VP of Business Affairs, Veronica Mendez and Senior VP of Academic Affairs, Kimberly Espy. An overview of the Strategic Investment Fund was provided to the SIF Advisory Committee along with a timeline for completion of the task. The IRM leadership and committee began drafting the review criteria.

November 11, 2020 –

The IRM team presented the updated review criteria and tools based on the feedback from the committee. The committee determined that each proposal would receive at minimum 3 individual reviews.

November 16, 2020 –

The IRM Team reviewed the proposal requests and identified possible conflicts of interest with each proposal and then randomly assigned reviewers to each proposal. The assignment was shared with the committee along with the final review tool. The committee individually reviewed the assigned proposals from November 16 – December 18th.

January 14, 2021

The committee discussed how to analyze the data to determine the final ranking of proposals. It was determined that an unidentified report of the scores was needed to identify large variances in the rankings. The committee also request to see Min and Max range for each request.

January 21, 2021

Committee discussed the data analysis provided by the IRM Team which included unidentified scores for each request, min and max, a classification into the Top 10%, 20% or 30%. The committee determined to use the top 10% as its highest priority for funding with Top 20% and 30% following.

It was noted there are proposals with divergent scores in each of those classifications that may require additional review by the final decision-makers prior to making funding decisions.

Review Criteria

The following criteria was used to evaluate each proposal.

1. How clearly does the proposal align with UTSA's Strategic Initiatives? Rank 1(low) – 5 (high)
2. Which Destination does the proposed Strategic Investment most advance?
3. Does the proposal address/resolve a required regulatory, compliance or health/safety matter? Yes or No
4. What is the impact of the proposed Strategic Investment? Rank 1 (low) – 5 (high)
5. How reasonable is the plan for the Strategic Investment? Rank 1 (low) – 5 (high)
6. How likely is the proposed Strategic Investment benefit to be realized? Rank 1 (low) – 5 (high)
7. Investment must be matched with College/Department resources (money, personnel, etc)? Yes or No
8. Provide a brief summary of the strengths of the proposal.
9. Provide a brief summary of the weaknesses of the proposal.
10. What is your recommended priority for the funding of the proposed Strategic Investment? Rank 1 (low) – 5 (high)

The review criteria were equally rated and the recommended priority rating for each reviewer was used as the final score.

Recommendation

Proposal Review and Ranking

The SIF Advisory Committee recommends to the University Leadership Council and Executive Resource Management Team to review proposals in the top 10% ranking as the highest priority, then top 20% ranking as a high priority and the top 30% ranking as a priority for receiving funding in the FY21 SIF process. The committee does recommend that additional attention be given to those proposals that have a divergence in scoring between reviewers.

The SIF Committee did not consider funding available as part of its review therefore the next step is for funding to be reviewed and matched with proposals as available. The committee understands that there may not be sufficient funding available in the SIF to fund the proposals as ranked.

The committee request ranking recommendation is attached.

Recommendation for Next Review Process

The process used in 2020-2021 was appropriate for the first implementation of the Strategic Investment Fund opportunity. With more time to prepare and one experience upon which to reflect, we suggest consideration of the following elements in the next review process.

SIF Application Process:

1. Clarify expectations for a submission (prefer shorter rather than longer), so that they are all submitted with similar materials and can be evaluated evenly.
2. Have a consistent due date that can be applied every year, so that units can be thinking year-round and working towards that common deadline. Something like – first Monday in October...

Proposal Reviewer Process:

1. Provide a written charge for the committee, so that it is clear what kind of outcomes is expected at this stage.
2. Perhaps group the proposals by categories of funding that could be assigned to them, and if possible, make the amount of funding known so that the reviewers have an idea of how many can be funded. In this way, you might be able to designate reviewers that do not have a conflict of interest, as not every proposal would be competing for the same funds.
3. Provide coffee and donuts as we will all be in person and thirsty for human contact and socialization ;)!
4. Consider having a first pass to determine if the proposal meets minimum criteria, e.g., see 5c below. There were some proposals that appeared not to meet minimum criteria. These should not be reviewed by the committee.
5. Clarify whether we should continue looking at proposals based solely on their merit/content or if we need to consider other factors, such as the availability of funds, ability to be self-sustaining after the SIF funding ends, etc.
 - a. We were told to ignore cost for the most part, but one of the stated goals is to fund as many requests as possible. There are large differences in the amount of funding requested that may need to be considered. For instance, 10 proposals have a total cost higher than that of the remaining 77 combined (2 proposals did not have a total cost listed on the spreadsheet).
 - b. We may view a high-cost proposal as high-priority based on its merit, but would that change if several proposals are judged to have a higher collective impact for the same cost?
 - c. Also, some of the proposals did not specify how funding would be sustained after the SIF period or showed a loss over time. Should that be a significant factor in the proposal's score?
6. Clarify the criteria used to evaluate the proposals and ensure scores are used as consistently as possible.
 - a. Should more weight be given to certain items? For instance, does a score of 1-2 for a factor like "impact" matter more to the overall score compared to a score of 1-2 for another factor?

- b. Although the numerical scores (1-5) allow for easy rankings, we may need to better define what these scores mean to ensure the values are used consistently by evaluators. This might help reduce the disparity in scores we saw if a value of “3” meant one thing to one evaluator and something else to another.
7. Clarify whether more information could be requested if an evaluator has questions about a proposal. Some proposals sounded good overall but were very general and/or didn’t provide key information. For example, some didn’t list anything for ROI or didn’t provide a clear explanation for why they think the initiative will impact the KPIs listed.

Individual Funding Process:

1. Clarify how the committee’s recommendations will be used by the ULC and Executive Resource Management Team.
 - a. Would all proposals still be in the running at the next level, or will the ULC/Executive Resource Management Team only look at the top 20-40%?
 - b. If we don’t sort proposals into distinct tiers (high-priority, medium-priority, low-priority), does that mean others will decide where the cutoff should be? It was mentioned that a slight change in score from one reviewer could significantly impact where a proposal fell in our rankings which could ultimately determine whether the request is funded.

Appendix I: Committee List

Appendix I. Strategic Investment Fund Advisory Committee Member List

Membership	Name	Unit	Term
Academic College Dean	David Silva	College of Sciences	8/31/2022
Academic College Dean	JoAnn Browning	College of Engineering	8/31/2023
Academic College Department Chair	Mark Leung	College of Business	8/31/2022
Academic College Department Chair	Nathan Richardson	COLFA-Modern Languages	8/31/2023
Academic College Department Chair	Nicole Beebe	College of Business - Information Systems	8/31/2024
Academic College Center or Institute Director	Dhiresha Kudithipudi	MATRIX AI Consortium	8/31/2024
Academic Support Unit Delegate	Ambika Mathur	Graduate School	8/31/2024
Faculty Senate Delegate	Chad Mahood	COLFA-Communications	Coincides with Faculty Senate Term
Staff Senate Representative	Matt Keneson	Student Success	Coincides with Staff Senate Term
Student Government Member	Taylor Edwards	student	Coincides with Student Government Term
Auxiliary Unit Delegate	Clay Haverland	Campus Services	8/31/2023
Administrative Support Unit Delegate	Sylvia Enriquez	People Excellence	8/31/2022
Space Committee Representative	Jill Fleuriet	Honors College	8/31/2022