ACC INNOVATION INITIATIVE

2023-2024

Request for Proposals

The Atlantic Coast Conference and the Center for Research in Intercollegiate Athletics at UNC-Chapel Hill are pleased to extend a request for proposals for the fourth annual **ACC Innovation Initiative Research Grant Program**. The purpose of this competitive program is to assist conference athletics administrators with data-driven decision-making. To accomplish this, several grants will be awarded to financially support faculty members and students from ACC member institutions who conduct research related to issues deemed critical by conference athletics administrators. Priority will be given to research related to the following topical areas:

1. Student-athlete welfare, including studies and analysis specifically addressing issues such as:
   a. Mental health
   b. Time management and scheduling
   c. Psychological well-being
   d. Physical health/nutrition/athletic performance
2. Revenue generation and finance/budgeting-related topics including studies and analysis specifically examining issues such as:
   a. Donor relations and donor activity
   b. Ticket sales
   c. Reducing expenditures
   d. The "Arms Race" (facility and equipment spending)
3. Organizational behavior and managerial issues within athletics departments, including studies and analysis specifically related to issues such as:
   a. Work-life balance among athletics administrators
   b. Salaries and benefits
   c. Work culture and environment
4. Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL)
   a. NIL legislation
   b. Agents, marketing managers, and boosters in a NIL landscape
   c. NIL Collectives
5. Current issues specifically examining the impact of, and administrative responses to, the following issues:
   a. Governance structure of the NCAA / FBS Football
   b. Diversity/systemic racism/implicit bias
   c. The professionalization of college athletes and college sports
   d. Sports wagering
   e. Transfer student-athletes / transfer portal
   f. Scholarship levels and amounts

Award Details

This year, a total grant pool of $25,000 is available to fund research. An anticipated five to eight grants will be dispersed. Applicants should consider this when developing proposal budgets. Faculty-led project budgets should fall in the range of $2,500 to $7,500, while student-led project budgets should range between $1,000 to $3,000. Upon approval of a proposal, funding will be sent from the ACC conference office to the institution's Office of Sponsored Programs (or equivalent). NOTE: Institutions may not charge indirect costs.

All approved research projects should be completed within a 12-month period. Researchers awarded a grant will be expected to deliver a white paper (three-page maximum) summarizing their study's results to the conference office for dissemination at the conference's fall meeting in October of 2024. Researchers may also be asked to present their findings through video conferencing. ACC administrators anticipate research projects will be submitted for publication to scholarly journals and presented at scholarly conferences, but authors should note, the ACC will make white paper results available to conference members upon submission.

Submission Requirements

In order for a proposal to be considered, the Principal Investigator (P.I.) of the submission must be a faculty member or student at an ACC institution throughout the duration of the grant. Further, preference will be given to research grant proposals that include investigators from multiple ACC institutions and from research teams comprised entirely from ACC institutions. If the research involves the use of human participants, the proposed study must receive approval from the appropriate Institutional Review Board(s) prior to any data collection. Data collection does not need to be exclusive to ACC institutions, but ACC institutional data should be incorporated extensively in the research design.

Submission Deadline

Grant applications should be submitted via Qualtrics (ACC-CRIA Grant Survey) by **5 pm (EDT) on Wednesday, September 20, 2023.** Any questions about grant eligibility or submission requirements should be directed to Danielle Smith (daniellesmith@unc.edu), Associate Director of the Center for Research in Intercollegiate Athletics.

Application Requirements

Proposals not conforming to the required format (outlined below) will not be reviewed. Proposals have a six-page maximum limit. All sections of the proposal are limited to 8.5″x11″ pages with one-inch margins on all sides, double-spaced, in 12-point font. Applicants are encouraged to use headers for each section. Submissions should be merged into a PDF document with no references to the author(s) or their institutions of the submission for purposes of blind review. Contact information including all researchers' names, titles, email addresses, institution(s), grant manager(s), and grant distribution address(es) should be included in the submission survey.

Proposal Elements

- Abstract (150 word maximum)

- Introduction

- Problem statement/rationale for the study

- Brief review of literature (two-page maximum)

- Methodology

- Significance/potential implications

- Project timeline

- Budget and budget justification

- Bibliography/references (*Not counted as part of the page limit*)

- Copies of instruments, protocols, etc. (*Not counted as part of the page limit*)

Research Proposal Review Criteria

All submissions will undergo double-blind review. The review committee is composed of the 15 ACC Faculty Athletics Representatives or their institutional designees. If FARs are on the grant proposal, they will not review their own submission. Proposal review will be guided by the criteria listed below.

1. Alignment of the project with the stated topic areas listed above
2. Practical implications for administrators
3. Methodological strength
4. Appropriateness of the budget (funds requested vs. impact of results)
5. Percentage of research team members from ACC institutions (P.I. must be from an ACC school)

Note: *As indicated above, the ACC Athletics Administration Research Grant program will prioritize projects of an applied nature. However, the ACC encourages P.I.'s to develop projects which have both applied and theoretical implications. Grant submissions should focus specifically on studies containing results which administrators can utilize to inform decision making, but this should not restrict the scope of projects which may have broader theoretical implications.*

All submissions will receive funding notification in early to mid-November.