



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY
RESEARCH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Title – Aligning Stakeholders & Structures to Enable Research Transformation @ Boise State University

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Prelude – Why don't more scientists formulate and pursue transformative research questions? According to our National Science Foundation EAGER grants (award #1629659 and #1745944) and drawn from our literature reviews, qualitative research in the philosophy of science reports a *vital tension* between productivity and innovation. While career advancement often requires predictable performance, through conservative ideas, impact requires exploration of bold questions.

In response to reduced national funding for science, known bias against innovation during peer review, and issues with how scientists are educated today, research incrementalism is on the rise in the US. When combined with the relentless need to chase funding, the decreased probability of securing it, and the increasing burden to manage it, many scientists do not have the time to do science, let alone pursue transformative research questions. In light of growing challenges in higher education, there is underwhelming faculty development related to scholarship other than on how to submit and sometimes how to write proposals. While valuable, this service model misses out on everything before and after the proposal-writing process. In support of bigger ideas, *we invite you to partner with us as we pilot a Center for Transformative Research at Boise State to further support creative innovation on our campus.*

The pilot program will structurally live inside the Division of Research & Economic Development and will be in full partnership with the Institute of STEM & Diversity Initiatives. It will also have strong ties to the Provost's Office, as well as the College of Innovation + Design. Our collective vision is to support and sustain an ASSERTive community – *for Aligning Stakeholders and Structures to Enable Research Transformation*. This community will: (1) provide professional development for research-active and research-aspiring faculty and postdoctoral scholars; (2) align university structures and cultures to support the germination of transformative research questions and ideas among the participants; and (3) begin the longitudinal tracking of the participants to measure the long-term impact of this model. Over the 2 years of this grant and the year following the formal project period, thirty participants will receive intense professional development, enhancing their ability to expand their research identity, formulate transformative research questions, and move their bold ideas forward in spite of today's funding landscape and our response to it.

Expectations – We are now ready to accept up to 15 faculty into our third year ASSERT cohort. As a cohort, we will explore how to pursue transformative research ideas – from initial question to proposal and funding. Exploration will require working on: (1) what attitudes and skills are needed to work in bold areas of inquiry, (2) how to adopt a growth mindset and embrace an enterprising mentality, (3) how to balance the vital tension between productivity and innovation on and off campus, (4) how to succeed in spite of known bias against innovation on and off campus, (5) how to create and sustain a risk-tolerant research portfolio via a Vertically Integrated Project, (6) how to successfully hold crucial conversations in support of taking risk and moving your ideas forward, and (7) how to nurture career-long relationships in support of a lifetime of scientific impact.

Logistics – This is a two-year commitment – with full cohort work the 1st year and individual or group follow on tasks the 2nd year. We will meet no more than every other week during one semester as a learning community and will go on two fully-funded off-campus retreats. By the beginning of the second

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academic year, you will have proposed a research question for further pursuit, and will work towards that end during the second year with mentorship from the Division for Research & Economic Development, as well as other campus leaders. In support of sustaining this activity, there is an expectation that you will also create (alone or in collaboration with others) a Vertically Integrated Project (VIP) team related to your research question during the 2nd year. In support of your time and effort, there is a small fund available to you during the second year to assist with your goals.

Testament – We had a full cohort of 15 faculty from across campus (including Biology, Physics, Electrical Engineering, Materials Science and Engineering, Computer Science, English, Philosophy, School of Public Service, and Education) this past year. They are now working on moving their ideas forward during this academic year. According to a participant, when asked about what stands out about the past year, *“I think what stands out most are the connections and interpersonal relationships that I made as part of being in ASSERT, as well as the visibility it provided me....These connections make me feel a part of a bigger research community...I also appreciate the sustained emphasis on thinking bigger.”*

Deadline – Monday October 15th @ noon

Requirements – All participants must be full-time faculty at Boise State who are either research-active or have a strong desire to become research active. Before final acceptance into the program, we will be requiring your School/Department leadership, Dean, and the Provost to sign an MOU regarding your participation in the program that makes it clear that this is considered scholarly activity towards your workload and annual review criteria. In addition to the above listed, you must be available for:

- Regular meetings (every other week throughout Spring semester) – these will be held either:
 - Mondays from 1:00 – 2:30pm
 - Thursdays from 1:00 – 2:30pm
- Two off campus retreats – the fall retreat will be held the weekend of February 8th (Friday evening to early Sunday afternoon), and the spring retreat will be held either the weekend of May 3rd or May 10th.

Application Process – To apply, please go to <https://tinyurl.com/ASSERT2018>

The application will ask for you to indicate your availability, answer three questions (see below), and to upload your CV. The three questions can each be answered in one of three ways (any combination across the questions, but each method must be used for a question): (a) Write an Instagram post that includes a photo and caption, (b) Write a tweet with no more than 140 characters including hashtags, and (c) Write a haiku which is a traditional form of Japanese poetry that consists of 3 lines that rarely rhyme – the first and last lines have 5 syllables and the last line has 7 syllables.

Application Questions –

- Why do you want to participate in the ASSERT 2019 cohort?
- What is one thing that you will bring to the cohort?
- What is one thing that you wish to learn from the experience?