

December 08, 2016 | By Paul K. Mueller

New UC San Diego Program Expands Campus Innovation Pipeline

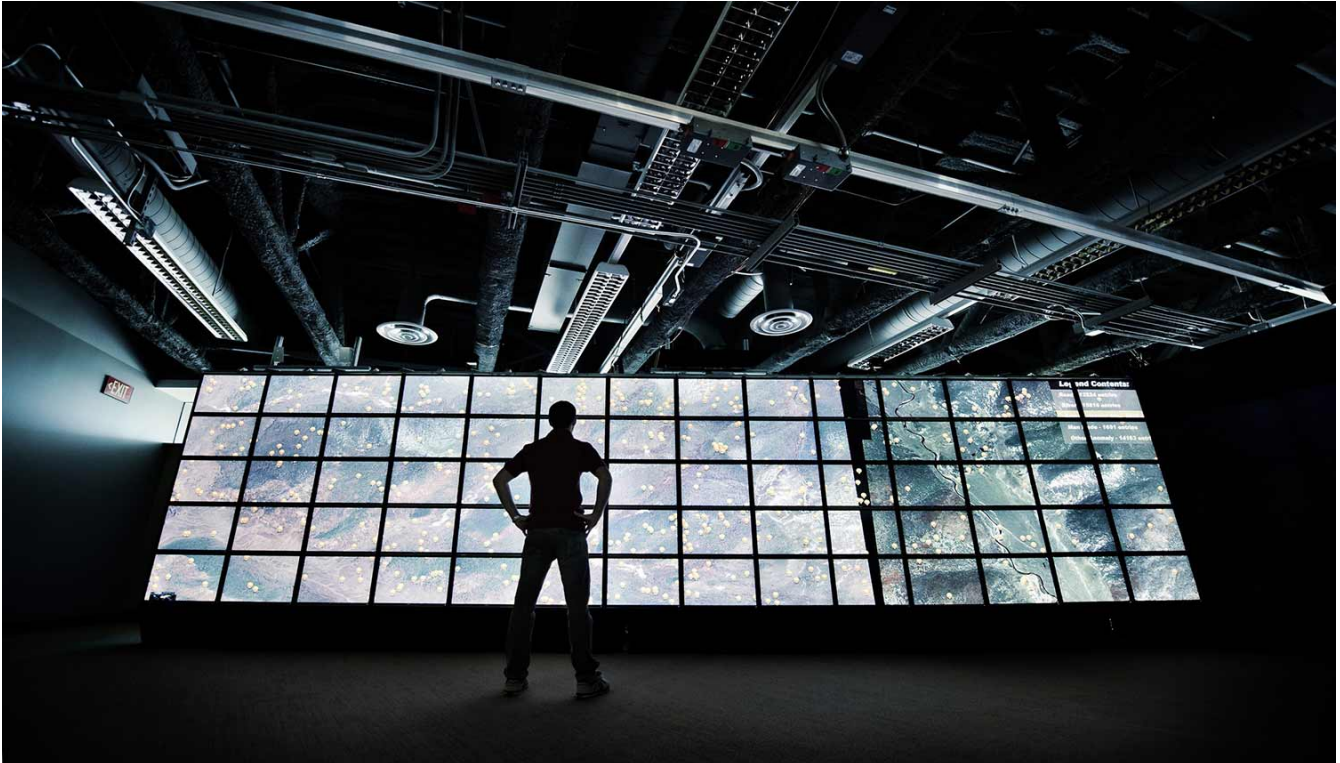


Photo by Erik Jepsen/UC San Diego Publications

The innovation ecosystem at UC San Diego will open more opportunities for campus entrepreneurs with the launch of Accelerating Innovations to Market (AIM), an ambitious program that encourages graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, researchers and faculty to develop and commercialize their problem-solving ideas.

Coordinated by the Office of Innovation and Commercialization (OIC), the program invests in milestone-based projects that develop proofs-of-concept and reduce the risk of early-stage technologies. According to Paul Roben, Associate Vice Chancellor for Innovation, a central focus of AIM is value-driven engagement with industry.

“We want to facilitate mutually beneficial early-stage collaborations between industry and academia, and help these innovators build relationships with industries,” Roben said. “AIM aligns with other campus initiatives as part of the broad innovation-support pipeline UC San Diego is developing.”

AIM provides UC San Diego graduate students, postdoctoral associates, researchers, and faculty up to 12-month awards in two tracks: 1) software-based technologies, and 2) devices and materials. Grants are competitive, and initial funds will be disbursed in March 2017. The program provides additional opportunities to build industry relationships and move technologies toward commercial application.

The deadline for letters of intent is Wednesday, January 11, 2017.

KEY DATES

- Letter of intent (required)—January 11, 2017 by 5 p.m.
- Full proposal (by invitation)—February 15, 2017 by 5 p.m.
- Advisory board presentation—Late February
- Notice of awards — March 6, 2017 (anticipated)

TRACKS

- Software-based technologies (awards up to \$20,000)
- Devices and materials (awards up to \$50,000).

ELIGIBILITY

The program is open to UC San Diego graduate students, postdoctoral associates, researchers, and faculty who have signed a patent agreement with the University of California. Graduate students and postdoctoral associates should include a faculty mentor. Applicants may submit a single proposal per funding cycle.

Projects

Proposals should be designed for completion within 12 months and reflect a milestone-based structure.

Projects involving university intellectual property (IP) require a disclosure on file with OIC, and any IP must be available for licensing. IP generated in the course of the project must be assignable to UC San Diego. If your technology originates from UC San Diego and you have not filed a disclosure, or if you have questions regarding intellectual property status, please contact OIC for discussion. We encourage the use of the [eDisclosure system](#) in filing invention-related disclosures to OIC.

Use of funds

Projects in the software and technology track may request up to \$20,000 in support. Projects related to devices and materials are eligible for up to \$50,000.

Funds support proof-of-concept activities that generate additional data, reduce the risks to the commercialization path of approaches, develop prototypes, or otherwise advance research toward commercial impact.

Eligible costs include student and postdoc salaries, materials and supplies, prototyping costs, use of facilities, and other essential expenses. No indirect costs apply.

Funds may not support faculty salaries (including summer), basic research, clinical trials, legal expenses, general-use capital purchases, or publication.

The funding period will be March 2017 – February 2018. Funding will be disbursed in a minimum of two tranches based on individual milestones. Funds must be spent in accordance with submitted budget. Eligible costs must be incurred after notice of the award and all funds must be spent within 12 months of the award date.

APPLICATION

The AIM application process is designed to assess the originality and viability of proposed projects. Proposals should not include confidential/proprietary information.

Letter of intent

The purpose of the letter is to assist OIC in confirming eligibility and potential impact. Letters should include a cover page (1 page), preliminary budget, project summary (maximum 1 page), and biographical sketches. Download the template for instructions.

Submissions are due by email (aimgrant@ucsd.edu) on January 11, 2017 at 5 p.m.

Proposal and budget

Following internal review by OIC, select applicants will be invited to submit a full application (5-7 pages) by February 15, 2017 at 5 pm. Templates will be provided.

Advisory board presentation

Following submission of a full application, proposers (or a representative of the research team) will present to a panel of industry and investment experts.

In collaboration with OIC, the advisory board will work with applicants to help develop value-adding project milestones and recommend priorities for funding in terms of innovation and commercial applicability.

EVALUATION

Proposals will be reviewed on 5 criteria:

- **Innovation and technical excellence.** Is the project scientifically feasible and achievable within a 12-month timeframe? What is the significance of the proposed approach, and how does it differ from existing solutions?
- **Commercial potential.** Has the technology been disclosed to OIC (if applicable)? Can a market opportunity be identified? What is the role for industry engagement?
- **Team.** Is there evidence that the research team can deliver the project?
- **Project plan.** Does the proposal address a perceived obstacle to commercial application? Does the project plan lend itself to well-defined milestones?
- **Financial justification.** Are costs well justified? Will AIM support enable the team to achieve significant milestones that would not otherwise be possible?

REQUIREMENTS

Successful applicants will work with OIC to report ongoing project milestones. Final reports are due at the conclusion of the project period. Recipients will be invited to participate in roundtable and/or showcase opportunities.

Activities funded through the AIM program are subject to university IP policies and guidelines.

Industry engagement is a cornerstone of the program, with experts participating in a voluntary, advisory capacity, and so an open flow of information is encouraged, to the extent it does not increase the risk to the path to commercialization.

Awards will be announced publicly in March 2017. The full proposal includes a section requesting a synopsis appropriate for public use.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For projects involving UC San Diego intellectual property, OIC officers are available to discuss disclosure requirements.

CONTACT

For specific questions or concerns, please contact aimgrant@ucsd.edu

MEDIA CONTACT

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