

BREAKING BARRIERS INTERDISCIPLINARY INCENTIVE GRANT

2025 CALL FOR PROPOSALS

FASS is launching the 2025 *Breaking Barriers* competition to encourage interdisciplinary scholarship. For this year's competition, the Dean's Office seeks interdisciplinary grant applications from teams led by FASS researchers. As prioritized in What's Next: The SFU Strategy, the research proposed by these teams should aim to deepen our understanding of the world's most pressing issues or aim to create solutions or otherwise address these problems. Teams should explain how their research advances the [strategic priorities of FASS](#) and/or the University as a whole. For a non-exhaustive list of ideas about what kinds of topics might be strategic priorities for the University, see SFU's [Strategic Research Plan](#), the President's [What's Next: The SFU Strategy](#), or propose another area of research and explain why FASS/SFU should develop that area of research.

Proposals should draw on research from at least two disciplines and ideally will also involve a faculty member or members from outside FASS.

With the support of [SFU Climate Innovation](#), at least one grant will be awarded to a project related to community-centred climate action and innovation research.

Information Sessions:	January 27 from 3:30 to 4:30pm via Zoom Registration is required to get access to the Zoom link Registration link
Notice of Intent (NOI) Due:	March 12, 2025 (<i>Mandatory</i>)
Final Proposal Due:	May 12, 2025 (<i>By Invitation</i>)
Award Notification:	June 2025

ELIGIBILITY

REGULAR COMPETITION

Research teams of 3-5 SFU faculty members must meet the following criteria:

- The PI – the principal investigator/team leader—must have a faculty appointment in FASS.
- Team members from other Faculties are encouraged but not required.
- The majority of co-applicants must be SFU faculty members, but team members outside SFU can be included if they offer expertise that is not readily available at SFU.
- Two or more units, departments, or schools must be represented. Priority will be given to projects that involve collaboration across Faculties (i.e., that involve faculty members from FASS and also from outside of FASS).
- Preference will be given to projects that foster or enhance new or existing collaborations such as research networks or partnerships between different departments, Faculties, institutions or communities.
- Proposals for funding up to \$40,000 CAD.
- Proposals must outline how this funding will be used over the granting period, starting as early as June 2025 and ending no later than August 2028.
- Proposed projects must address a pressing issue of strategic importance for FASS and/or SFU (e.g. One of the five Priority Areas in the SFU Strategic Research Plan as well as Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Indigenous Approaches and Knowledge.)
- Proposals must demonstrate that attention to EDI is woven into the proposed research practice and project design, including minimizing risk or harm.

ELIGIBILITY

CLIMATE ACTION COMPETITION

Research teams of 3-5 SFU faculty members must meet the following criteria:

- The PI – the principal investigator/team leader—must have a faculty appointment in FASS.
- Research team members must represent at least two Faculties.
- The majority of co-applicants must be SFU faculty members, but team members outside SFU can be included if they offer expertise that is not readily available at SFU.
- Preference will be given to projects that foster or enhance new or existing collaborations –such as research partnerships and networks between different departments, Faculties, institutions or communities.
- Proposals for funding up to \$40,000. (see Graduate Student Climate Innovation Pollinator Awards for up to an additional \$10,000; see below)
- Proposals must outline how this funding will be used over the granting period, starting as early as June 2025 and ending no later than August 2028.
- The research project must either directly (climate hazards and risk, emissions, equity,

etc.) or indirectly (health, biodiversity, poverty alleviation, food/water security, etc.) qualify as climate action and innovation. Anticipated research outcomes that address multiple community objectives will be prioritized.

- The research project must foster existing or enhance new community-centred collaborations [Community is defined as a collectivity in local geography and/or with shared place-based identities that have the capacity to express themselves as a collective.]
- Proposals must demonstrate that attention to EDI is woven into the proposed research practice and project design, including minimizing risk or harm.

GRADUATE STUDENT CLIMATE INNOVATION POLLINATOR AWARDS 2 x \$5,000 (Community-centered climate action & innovation)

Graduate students play an important role in supporting cross-disciplinary exchange and fostering interdisciplinarity in research design, engagement with partners, project management, and developing research outputs. Two FASS graduate students are eligible for this award to help pollinate interdisciplinary and cross-sector exchange with the goal of greater research impact.

The research team may identify up to two graduate students to receive a Climate Innovation Pollinator Award of a value of \$5,000 each. The following requirements apply:

- Must be enrolled as a graduate student in FASS.
- The research committee must include supervisors from at least two faculties.
- Priority will be given to applications where the research is community-centred, focused on climate action and innovation research at the community scale and includes at least one community partner (e.g. a local government, First Nation, non-profit organization, intermediary organization, private sector partner, etc.)
- The project seeks to co-create low-carbon, resilient, and sustainable solutions with and for communities.

DELIVERABLES

REGULAR COMPETITION

Projects must produce:

- New knowledge addressing one of the world's most pressing issues. Note that the issue should be of strategic importance to FASS and/or SFU.
- A clear plan to share this new knowledge with communities of interest.
- One or more research outputs in the form most appropriate to the disciplines involved (performance, conference paper, publication, etc.)

A plan for an individual or team external grant application (see [FASS webpage](#) for a list of potential opportunities).

DELIVERABLES

CLIMATE ACTION COMPETITION

Projects must produce:

- New knowledge addressing real-world challenges, with anticipated impact that, when implemented in practice, has the potential to multi-solve to reduce climate risk and greenhouse gas emissions while advancing equity, biodiversity, clean economic development, and other sustainability goals.
- A clear plan to share this new knowledge with communities of interest.
- One or more research outputs in the form most appropriate to the disciplines involved (performance, conference paper, publication, etc.)
- SFU Climate Innovation requires a plan that supports the advancement of the research and, ideally, the partnerships toward a larger external grant application (see FASS webpage for a list of potential opportunities).
- Include community engagement, exchange, and co-creation throughout the research process.

REVIEW PROCESS

The Notice of Intent (NOI) will be used for screening for eligibility and feedback for teams advancing to the next stage. To assess the Final Proposal, a multidisciplinary review panel of faculty and laypersons will be established based on the NOI.

COMMUNITY-CENTRED CLIMATE ACTION AND INNOVATION GRANT

Applicants who would like to be reviewed for a Community-Centered Climate Action and Innovation Grant will do so by selecting this category on the form. To be considered, projects must satisfy all Community-centered climate action & innovation eligibility criteria. The best fundable project will receive the Community-centred climate action & innovation grant. All other fundable projects in this category will be considered for the regular Breaking Barrier Grant competition.

REVIEW CRITERIA

Proposals must be written in plain language, accessible to an interdisciplinary audience, and should avoid disciplinary jargon. Proposals will be assessed on the following criteria:

RELEVANCE AND STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

The proposal must define the pressing issue, and why it needs to be addressed from an interdisciplinary perspective. It answers the following questions:

- What is the pressing issue?
- Why is it pressing? Who or what does it affect?
- Why does it need to be addressed?
- Why is this issue of a strategic importance for FASS and/or SFU or BC?

ROBUST INTERDISCIPLINARITY

The proposal demonstrates how the project is drawing from theories, methodologies and approaches from the humanities and social sciences and/or disciplines outside of FASS (if applicable). It succinctly articulates how and why the proposed interdisciplinary approach is essential to solving the pressing issue, and relevant research from multiple disciplinary perspectives and approaches is clearly integrated. Preference will be given to projects that integrate disciplines that are not commonly combined and includes a discipline or disciplines outside of FASS. It answers the following question:

- How does the collaboration across boundaries offer new insight?

SCHOLARLY EXCELLENCE

The proposal identifies the scholarly strengths of individual team members and demonstrates how these strengths are essential to tackling the research question. Preference will be given to teams with at least one member from outside of FASS.

ENGAGED RESEARCH: VISIBILITY AND IMPACT

Strong proposals will have a clearly developed plan for high visibility that ensures the research is shared with a broad audience. It identifies both possible academic publications and public publications such as a policy brief, a piece in *The Conversation*, newspaper op-eds, social media, podcast, or graphic novels. Successful teams may be eligible to receive additional support from the Strategic Research Plan team in sharing their research with a broad audience over the two-year period. Strong proposals will also point to communities of interest with whom they will work to develop a communication plan.

SUSTAINABILITY AND LONG-TERM PLANS

There is a plan for where the research will go once the initial funding ends after two years.

- How will this project help to nurture research in this area in the long term? (i.e. new collaboration—internal or external)
- What additional support do you anticipate needing to make that happen? (i.e. Further grants)

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

The proposals demonstrate how EDI best practices are woven into the interdisciplinary research practice and design. Please see New Frontier in Research Fund—[Best practices in equity, diversity and inclusion in research practice and design](#) for further guidance on how to develop teams and proposals.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

NOTICE OF INTENT

Teams must submit a mandatory Notice of Intent (maximum 250 words) by **March 12, 2025**. The Notice of Intent (NOI) must be submitted by the Principal Investigator using the online application form. It should include a list of team members and a 250-word overview of the research topic.

Online Application form: <https://forms.office.com/r/RZ0UGKP52r>

Team members and elements of the proposal may change between the submission of the NOI and the Final Proposal, but the PI may not.

FINAL PROPOSAL

The final proposal must be submitted by the Principal Investigator using the online form by May 12, 2025.

Please contact Steeve Mongrain, FASS Associate Dean Research & International, for support at fassadri@sfu.ca.

Applicants should contact the FASS Research Grants Facilitators for help developing their proposals.

Budget will be governed by the usual [SFU Budget Guidelines](#) and [Travel and Business Expenses policy](#)— see [Research Personnel costs](#), [Research Travel and Subsistence](#), and the [Award Management Guidelines](#) for eligible expenses. This grant cannot be used for teaching buy outs.

The application will be submitted by uploading documents to this online application form: <https://forms.office.com/r/2NwxW7BJdh>

FINAL PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

1. Online application form will require the Principal Investigator to provide the following information:
 - a. Title
 - b. Principal investigator
 - c. Co-investigators
 - d. Total budget amount
 - e. Information as to whether ethics, biohazard or animal care review is required.
 - f. The PI's attestation as to the accuracy and completeness of the information in the proposal.
2. Research proposal addressing the review criteria and including a timeline of research, (single-spaced, one-inch margins, 12-point font, doc, docx, PDF) 4 pages maximum.
3. CVs of all team members listing the more relevant contributions to the proposed topic and any career interruptions (**2 pages max per person**).
4. Budget Justification **2 pages maximum**.
5. Breaking Barriers Budget form.
6. Demonstration that attention to EDI is woven into the proposed research practice and project design, including minimizing risk or harm. (**250 words maximum**)

REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals will be assessed by a multidisciplinary committee appointed by the Dean. Proposals must be accessible to a broad audience.

POST-AWARD REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

At the end of year one, teams are expected to give a brief presentation on the work-in-progress to the other successful interdisciplinary grant holders, the Dean and Associate Deans outlining what they have accomplished in their first year of holding the grant and what they hope to accomplish in the remaining year.
