**Request for Proposals: Organizational Partnerships Research Hub**

The Organizational Partnerships S-STEM Research Hub aims to advance understanding of organizational partnerships that support academic pathways for domestic low-income engineering students. Partnerships across the education system are essential for improving STEM: achieving the systematic, structural, or sustainable change desired by the S-STEM program is seldom achieved by individual isolated units and often requires partnerships across silos within an academic institution (intra-institutional partnerships) and across institutions (inter-institutional partnerships). However, understanding how such partnerships are built, designed, and sustained remains a great challenge facing the field. This research hub will bring together the S-STEM program community to explore different models of organizational partnerships—and linking those models to student outcomes across a variety of institutional contexts. Doing so will build research capacity and form a community of practice among current and past S-STEM grant holders that focuses on these key organizational structure topics.

**Accelerator Research Grant Program**

We invite current and past S-STEM PI/co-PI teams and their partners whose programs have engineering or computer science/computing students as a key focus to submit short proposals to complete a locally relevant research project that connects to our overarching question: *How can intra- and inter-institutional partnerships be designed, built, and sustained to systematically support low-income engineering or computer science/computing student success?* The accelerator research grant program will support ten teams from different institutional contexts in 2022-2023 with a budget of $15,000 for each team to advance their project. Funds can be used in whatever ways teams deem most helpful to advance this research-focused project. For example, a recipient could use funds to support a faculty member, administrator, or student researcher (as appropriate) time to analyze their own partnership structures, designs, and processes.

Following a cohort model across grant recipients, members of the Hub leadership team will serve as mentors for each research grant recipient team throughout the year to offer feedback on designing and implementing a research project focused on organizational issues. The cohort model will also facilitate cross-team idea sharing. Research grant recipients will be expected to collaborate and share de-identified accelerator grant-related project data and S-STEM program data (i.e., program-level data submitted as part of ongoing evaluation) with the Hub leadership team following appropriate IRB protocols. Grant recipients and their S-STEM organizational partners will also be expected to participate in interviews with the S-STEM Hub Leadership team. The leadership team will work with each research grant recipient to develop useful and accessible products to share with the broader community (e.g., research and policy/practice briefs, summaries of project activities, journal articles and/or conference presentations as pertinent). The Hub will host annual summits for all research grant recipient teams to share findings and build on each other’s ideas and will support attendance through a separate funding stream (covering travel and an individual stipend for attendees).

**Research Proposal Requirements**

Proposals should include the following sections:

* **Team.** Who will be on your team for this organizational partnerships accelerator research grant (names, positions, email addresses)? Who will serve as the leader? Note that at least one member of the team should have prior/current experience as an S-STEM PI/Co-PI.
* **S-STEM context.** Please describe your S-STEM program. What are the main goals? Who are the students? How many years have you been running the program, and how many years to you plan to continue into the future (if relevant, completed programs are also welcome to apply)?
* **Data.** What kinds of data have you been collecting or paying attention to so far as part of your S-STEM program? What kinds of de-identified data will be feasible to share with the S-STEM Hub team?
* **Idea.** What is your idea for a locally relevant research project that connects to our overarching question: *How can intra- and inter-institutional partnerships be designed, built, and sustained to systematically support low-income engineering and computer science/computing student success?* Part of joining this community will be to flesh out a systematic research design, but what are some of your initial ideas for focusing on and researching a local problem that ties to this question?
* **Budget.** Please provide a rough budget for how you would like to use the $15,000 one-year accelerator research-focused grant. Funds will be distributed as a sub-award from the VT-based NSF award, which we will complete once teams are selected. Due to the small amount of the subaward, it is not required that F&A be included in the budget.

These short proposals (~3 pages in length total) should be submitted via email as Word documents or PDFs to David Knight (Project PI, dbknight@vt.edu). Our team is happy to answer any questions about this program, so please feel free to reach out. We will host a Q&A on August 10 at 1:00pm on Zoom—please contact David Knight if you plan on attending.

Cohorts will be built such that they reflect the institutional diversity of the S-STEM program. We will be recruiting 10 teams per year over the next four years. Each team will be expected to participate for one year. Proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis, with reviews beginning August 15, 2022 and continuing thereafter.

We are excited about building this new community of practice focused on researching organizational partnerships within the S-STEM program!

**For more information about the S-STEM Organizational Partnerships Research Hub:**

* [New effort to connect college support networks for low-income engineering students](https://vtx.vt.edu/articles/2022/05/low-income-first-year-students-research-hub-enge.html)
* [A Research Hub for Understanding Inter- and intra-institutional partnerships that systematically support low-income engineering students](https://www.nsf.gov/awardsearch/showAward?AWD_ID=2138188&HistoricalAwards=false)

**Contact:**

David Knight, dbknight@vt.edu

Associate Professor, Department of Engineering Education, Virginia Tech

PI: Organizational Partnerships S-STEM Research Hub