Policy for reviewing applications for IDBI seed grants

Goal: Ensure unbiased selection of the IDBI seed grant applications most likely to result in expansion of IDBI collaborations and acquisition of external funding.

Review committee: The review committee will be comprised of at least 3 members drawn from the IDBI leadership team and IDBI internal advisors, with other qualified SLU personnel serving as needed to provide adequate scientific expertise. IDBI support personnel may serve as *ex officio* members. The committee will select a Chair from its membership. Committee members will be recruited for each review cycle; service on consecutive committees is permitted.

Conflicts: Review committee members will be in conflict with an application if:
- They are a PI or co-investigator on the application.
- They have an active grant or a grant application under review with the seed grant PI.
- They have been co-authors on a paper with the PI published in the last 18 months.
- They have a personal association with the PI that may cause an appearance of conflict.
- They would receive funding through the grant (Discovery Services Core activities exempted).
- They consulted with the applicant at a level beyond answering programmatic or budget questions.

Potential conflicts will be declared to the IDBI leadership team, which will determine if a conflict exists. Reviewers can be in conflict with no more than 1 application per review cycle. Conflicted reviewers must not be involved in review of the application with which they are conflicted but will participate in review of the remaining applications.

Review criteria: Review criteria are similar to those of an NIH grant application. They are:
- <u>Significance to external funding potential</u>: Assuming the project is successful: Is the work proposed important to advancing a drug/biotherapeutic project for a planned external grant application? Would the seed grant project substantially increase chances of acquiring external funding? Applications that are strong in all aspects except funding potential will not be eligible to receive IDBI funding.
- <u>Investigator</u>: Is the investigator(s) qualified to do the work and/or has s/he identified a collaborator or vendor with the appropriate expertise? Does the investigative team represent a new collaboration involving SLU faculty? New collaborations are an asset but not required. Limited funding history will not be a weakness for junior investigators.
- <u>Innovation</u>: Does the proposed work advance the investigator's project beyond its current state?
- <u>Approach</u>: Is the project scientifically robust and rigorous? Is it feasible within the approved budget and timeline?
- <u>Overall impact on funding potential</u>: Balance the 4 criterion scores to reflect the overall potential for the project to substantially improve competitiveness of one or more external grant applications.

Scoring: Applications will be scored using the NIH scoring system (1-9 in integers, with 1 being the best). Scores will be assigned for each criterion. Begin the review assuming the score will be 5 and move up and down as appropriate (i.e., an average application should be scored "5"). After deliberation, the review committee will assign a funding recommendation of "Approved for funding", "Minor revisions needed", or "Major revisions needed" to each application.

Feedback: Brief reviews of the applications will be written using the IDBI seed grant review form. Reviews are to clearly convey the strengths and weaknesses. Be constructive to assist the applicant in crafting a strong external grant application. The reviews will not be provided to the applicant to promote confidentiality in the review process. The review committee chair will write a brief summary for each application addressing the reviewers' comments, suggestions for improvement, and the rationale for the committee's decision. The review committee chair will convey the review results and summary statement to the IDBI leadership team.

Funding selection: Applications will be selected for funding by the review committee primarily based on their impact on funding potential. Funding recommendations by the review committee will be reviewed by non-conflicted members of the IDBI leadership team. The committee's recommendation will become final unless the leadership team identifies inconsistencies with prior funding decisions.

Applications recommended for minor revision will be eligible for a rapid revision process in which the principal investigator submits a ≤1 page response to the critiques to the Seed Grant Review Committee Chair. The Seed Grant Review Committee can then recommend the application for funding or retain the minor revision decision, depending on whether the revision is sufficiently responsive to the critiques raised during review. The recommendation will be forwarded to the leadership team for final review and approval or disapproval. Retention of the minor revision decision will result in an application being eligible for resubmission in a later application cycle, but not eligible for further rapid revision in the current cycle.

The IDBI director will convey the results of funding decisions to the applicants after the funding decision has been finalized by the leadership team.

Review timeline: Review decisions and constructive feedback will be provided to the investigators within 6 weeks of the grant deadline.

Funding Procedures: The SLU Research Institute will be informed of successful applications by the review committee Chair. The applicant, review committee Chair, and OVPR staff will work together to establish an activity code for use in conjunction with the IDBI fund number.

Ex Officio Member Role: Ex officio members of the review committee may collect and organize applications, reviews, and responses from Seed Grant Applicants and Reviewers on behalf of the IDBI Director and Review Committee Chair. Ex officio members may also assist the Review Committee Chair with preparing Seed Grant Feedback and communicating funding decisions with IDBI Leadership and OVPR.

Document Control	Date	Comments
Original Publication	March 2020	NA
Major Revisions	Oct. 2020	Update Committee Size & Reviewer Pool
	March 2021	Update Feedback, Funding Selection: to reflect role of Review Committee Chair, IDBI Director, Seed Grant Review Committee. Addition of Section Ex Officio Member Role.