Bass Connections Project Proposal Guidelines
for 2019-2020 Project Teams

PROPOSAL DEADLINE AND SUBMISSION
Proposals for year-long Bass Connections projects will be accepted from September 4 until November 5, 2018 at 5:00 p.m. All proposals must be submitted through the online proposal form. You may work directly within the online form and save and return to the form as you work. You may also preview the proposal questions and draft your responses using the following Word template.

These guidelines are intended to provide guidance on the proposal process and address common questions. Interested faculty, particularly those who have never led a Bass Connections team, are also encouraged to contact a Bass Connections theme leader or Laura Howes, Director of Bass Connections, at laura.howes@duke.edu or (919) 684-9021 with questions or to discuss potential ideas.

OPPORTUNITY
Bass Connections brings together faculty, postdocs, graduate students, undergraduates and community partners to tackle complex societal challenges in interdisciplinary research teams. Faculty may apply for between $5,000 and $25,000 for a year-long project.

For some faculty, Bass Connections provides a mechanism to pilot a new research initiative and lay the groundwork for external grant proposals. For other faculty, Bass Connections offers an innovative teaching model and the chance to mentor students in a small group atmosphere. For still other faculty, Bass Connections makes it possible to initiate or deepen engagement with a community organization or other collaborators outside of Duke who can provide input into the construction of research questions and translate research findings into action.

ELIGIBILITY
• Proposals may be submitted by any faculty member. Graduate students, postdocs and trainees/fellows may also propose projects, but all projects must have at least one faculty team leader.

• Team leaders are expected to be regularly available (i.e., not on sabbatical away from Durham or extended leave) during the year in which the project would take place (2019-2020).

• A given faculty member may propose more than one project, but should not serve as a team leader on more than one project per year. Faculty may serve as a team contributor on more than one project.
THE BASS CONNECTIONS MODEL
Bass Connections project teams should establish three core connections:

1. across areas of disciplinary expertise
2. across learner levels
3. between the academy and the broader world

Project teams are expected to be more than a collection of individuals working in parallel. Instead, they should foster dynamic collaboration in which all members are exposed to the diverse aspects of each project, and work together toward shared goals.

Projects should provide students and faculty the opportunity to struggle collectively with a complex problem and produce meaningful deliverables. Products may take several forms, including published reports and articles, curated exhibitions, datasets to spur further research, marketable services or commodities and strategic solutions for community needs. Projects are encouraged (but not required) to involve external community partners (e.g., private companies, school systems, international NGOs and U.S. or international government entities).

THEMATIC AREAS
Projects may be proposed in relation to one or more of the five broad, interdisciplinary themes of Bass Connections, or to Bass Connections Open.

- Brain & Society
- Education & Human Development
- Energy & Environment
- Global Health (including U.S. health disparities)
- Information, Society & Culture
- Bass Connections Open

Bass Connections Open
Faculty may propose a project that meets the three core connections of Bass Connections but does not align with one of the five themes. You cannot apply to both Bass Connections Open and a theme. Proposals submitted through this channel should explore new topics beyond the current theme areas, keeping in mind that those themes are broad interdisciplinary themes.

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1 While Bass Connections is primarily focused on applied research, through Together Duke we are now able to support a handful of projects that address interdisciplinary research questions of a more fundamental nature, and as such do not directly engage with a community organization or concrete societal problems (e.g., lab research with mouse models, explanatory research around natural phenomena, philosophical questions related to understanding the human condition, archival research on a historical topic).
THE MODEL IN PRACTICE
For faculty who have never led a Bass Connections project, the following information may be helpful in understanding how the program works operationally:

- **Team leadership:** Teams should be led by at least two leaders – at least one of whom must be a faculty member. Postdocs, staff and graduate students may also co-lead projects. Team leaders should represent different disciplinary perspectives (even if within the same school or department). If team leaders do not represent different disciplines, the project proposal should clearly articulate how the research, and the team of students to be formed, will take an interdisciplinary approach.

- **Team size:** The size of Bass Connections teams varies widely and depends on the scope of work, how you might envision dividing tasks and your leadership structure. On average, our teams include about nine students (graduate and undergraduate). Given the high degree of student interest, we encourage teams to create opportunities for at least five students per team. All teams must include undergraduate students. Teams are strongly encouraged to include differentiated roles for graduate students to serve as mentors, sub-team leaders and/or project managers.

- **Student recruitment and selection:** Bass Connections works with team leaders to market the project to prospective students and to solicit applications through a central application process. Student recruitment and selection takes place from January to March.

- **Timing of projects:** Projects generally run for a year. For some teams this means a full calendar year in which students do baseline research or fieldwork during the summer preceding or following the academic year; other teams take place during the academic year alone. Teams may apply for renewal funding, but funding is only provided one year at a time.

- **Student credit and compensation:** Undergraduate and graduate students generally receive academic credit during the academic year (which means you will need a plan to issue grades to students). Bass Connections will work with you to set up credit options and get students enrolled. If your team includes a summer component, students receive an hourly stipend or travel funding (if applicable). Advanced graduate students and/or students serving in a differentiated role that requires additional responsibilities (e.g., project managers) may also receive compensation in lieu of credit during the year. Any compensation for students should be included in the budget.

- **Meeting times:** Teams should plan to meet at least once a week, with individual task assignments falling in between meetings. Some teams divide into sub-teams and choose to meet within sub-teams weekly and then combine as an entire team every other week or monthly. Appointing a graduate student or postdoc as a project manager can help with the facilitation of these meetings as well as general team productivity and communication.

- **Administrative management:** Each Bass Connections theme is led by one or two faculty and a theme administrator. Themes, working with the Bass Connections office, will provide support to teams throughout the year including helping with student recruitment, course credit options, financial management, troubleshooting, etc. Themes also provide opportunities for faculty and students to share practices and lessons across teams.
**SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES**

When completing a proposal, faculty will also have the opportunity to take advantage of the following opportunities. Please note that applying for these opportunities will not increase your project budget, but rather *may* increase the likelihood that your project will be selected by allowing us to leverage funds designated for a specific purpose.

- **Submit a joint proposal for a year-long Bass Connections project and a Summer 2019 Story+ or Data+ project:** Story+ and Data+ are summer research programs affiliated with Bass Connections. To reduce the number of proposals faculty are required to complete, you may now propose either a Story+ or Data+ project linked to a year-long Bass Connections project through this RFP. You should be prepared to articulate how you will connect the summer research experience with the year-long project. At the same time, please note that funding decisions will continue to be made by each program individually, so it is possible that your proposal may be accepted for only Story+/Data+ or only Bass Connections. Please contact us if you have questions or want to discuss how other faculty have linked these experiences in the past.

- **Biodiversity Conservation:** Through a gift to the Nicholas School of the Environment and Bass Connections, funds are available to support projects related to biodiversity conservation: projects that aim at stopping degradation of the planet’s natural environment, the species it harbors and the services it provides to people. These projects must include at least one NSOE faculty, postdoc or graduate student on the proposal. For more information, contact Dean Urban. Faculty who wish to propose projects under this opportunity should apply through the Energy & Environment theme, and check the Biodiversity Conservation option.

- **Energy Access:** Funds are available to support projects that explore efforts to provide access to reliable and modern energy in the developing world. For more information, contact Jonathan Phillips, Director of the Energy Access Project at the Nicholas Institute. Faculty who wish to propose projects under this opportunity should apply through the Energy & Environment theme, and check the Energy Access option.

- **Ethics:** For projects proposed through Bass Connections Open, funds are available to support projects that address ethical and normative issues broadly-conceived, with a preference for projects that overlap with core Kenan program areas. If you are interested in discussing ideas for potential projects, please contact Suzanne Shanahan, Director of the Kenan Institute. Faculty who wish to propose projects under this rubric should apply through Bass Connections Open and check the Ethics option.

- **Arts:** Funds are available to support projects that complement hands-on artistic creation in any medium with research related to aesthetic, cultural, historical or theoretical dimensions that inform the work. The project should culminate in a public exhibition, screening, reading or performance. The project team may have dedicated space in the Rubenstein Arts Center if appropriate. If you are interested in discussing ideas for potential projects, please contact Scott Lindroth, Vice Provost for the Arts. Faculty who wish to propose projects under this rubric should apply through any theme or Bass Connections Open and check the Arts option.

- **Humanities:** Funds are available to support humanities-inspired projects (e.g., projects that engage critically or creatively with languages, literature, culture, history, philosophy, religion, the arts
and/or other related domains). Applicants from any field are encouraged to propose such projects. If you are interested in discussing ideas for potential projects, please contact Christina Chia, Associate Director of the Franklin Humanities Institute. Faculty who wish to propose projects under this rubric should apply through any theme or Bass Connections Open and check the Humanities option.

PROPOSAL ELEMENTS
All proposals must be submitted through the online proposal form, but you may preview this form or prepare your responses using the following Word template. Main proposal elements include:

1. **Basic information**: Project name, theme selection, primary point of contact
2. **Project description**: What are the background context and goals for the proposed project?
3. **Team composition**: Team leaders, contributors, ideal composition of the student team, external partners
4. **Project details**: Travel, summer opportunities
5. **Project approach**: Plans for how the team will work collaboratively, opportunities for students, timelines and milestones
6. **Budget estimate**

PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA
Each theme manages the selection process for projects proposed to their theme. Proposals are sent out to faculty for review and are generally assessed on the following dimensions.

1. **Vertical integration**: Fosters collaboration across educational levels (e.g., undergraduate and graduate students), with clearly differentiated leadership roles for graduate students
2. **Interdisciplinarity**: Fosters collaboration across disciplines
3. **External salience**: Addresses an issue of societal importance, ideally by including external partners and/or external engagement as key features of the proposed research (not relevant for “Fundamental Research” proposals)
4. **Teamwork**: Describes a clear plan for team-based research
5. **Clarity of purpose**: Articulates clear goals (which can still be exploratory in nature) and conveys the potential for the project to lead to later endeavors (whether in the form or additional research, education, or engagement)
6. **Theme alignment**: Aligns with the Bass Connections theme to which it has been proposed (unless submitted to Bass Connections Open)

BUDGET GUIDELINES
Budgets typically range from $5,000 to $25,000. Generally speaking, projects that involve summer funding for student work, graduate student support for project management roles, international travel and/or special research materials/equipment tend toward the higher range.

The project proposal includes a budget template with common expenses but you may also add additional expenses. Budgets cannot include support for faculty time.
We strongly encourage proposals that leverage additional funds. Please describe such matching funds (both awarded and under consideration) so that we understand the comprehensive outlay for the project. Please also note that themes may choose to provide only partial funding in some circumstances.

**Plan to budget for student support?** Please note that during the academic year, students participating in Bass Connections should receive course credit in lieu of a stipend. Exceptions include advanced graduate students and/or students serving in a differentiated role that requires additional responsibilities (e.g., project managers). If you plan to budget for student support, the following resources may be useful:

- [Hourly rates and work limitations for all students](#) (click on “Duke Employers” – and note that while this information is on the financial aid site, hourly rates pertain to all student employees)

- [PhD student positions and rates](#)

**PROJECT SELECTION TIMING**

- Proposals will be accepted between September 4 and November 5, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.
- Proposals will be reviewed and refined as needed, and selections will be made by December 14.
- Students will be recruited for selected teams in January and February 2019, with student selections made by team leaders by the end of March 2019.
- Projects may begin as early as Summer 2019 and must begin by no later than Fall 2019.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

- See our [FAQs](#)
- Review [sample proposals](#)
- Browse [faculty perspectives](#) on their experience leading a Bass Connections project
- Look at the range of [project teams funded for 2018-2019](#)
- View [examples of publications](#) resulting from Bass Connections projects
- Read the [Bass Connections 2017-2018 Annual Report](#)

For questions, to discuss potential project ideas, or to identify possible faculty collaborators contact:

Laura Howes, Director, Bass Connections
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(919) 684-9021
For questions specific to a theme:

**Brain & Society**
Tyler Lee, Duke Institute for Brain Sciences
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**Education & Human Development**
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**Energy & Environment**
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**Global Health**
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**Information, Society & Culture**
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