



CONNECTIONS CAFÉ

PROCESS & IDEAL CONDITIONS OVERVIEW

Connections Café: A fun two-hour event designed to bring researchers together from across disciplines to meet, find research intersections and build new relationships. This event is for groups who need devoted time and space for building relationships and connections across disciplines, colleges or units.

Inspiration Studio: A fast-paced four-to-eight-hour event for cross-disciplinary researchers to develop new ideas, identify emerging challenges and form interdisciplinary research teams. This event is for groups seeking to identify promising lines of inquiry, grand challenges that participating researchers are well-situated to tackle. Our team will facilitate team formation, idea development and identification of potential partners. Follow-up support may include assistance in identifying funding opportunities and planning next steps.

Proposal Acceleration Lab

The Proposal Acceleration Lab (PAL) is an intensive one-to-two-day workshop designed to help researchers ideate around a specific funding opportunity. This event is for groups who have already identified a specific funding opportunity and want our team to facilitate an event focused on idea development, idea refinement and framework development. The PAL can also assist teams in identifying partners and creating workable timelines and achievable goals with support from the Strategic Proposal Development Service (SPDS) team as appropriate.

Connections Café Process Overview

Ideal conditions for a Connections Café

1. The event is a collaborative effort between RII and an academic unit/center/research team.
2. The goal of the event is to foster new connections and collaborations among participating researchers.
3. Attendees cross traditional institutional silos (disciplinary, departmental, experience, role, etc.)
4. The event is requested *at least* 4 weeks before the event date.

Benefits of participation

1. Facilitation assistance frees researchers to fully participate in event activities.
2. Participant make new connections with other researchers.
3. Participants will meet the RII PD team and learn about how we can continue to support their research endeavors.
4. Assistance with next steps such as planning follow-up meetings, identifying funding opportunities, support for research collaborations that may emerge.

Your responsibilities as a faculty sponsor

- Collaborate with our team to tailor the event agenda based on your goals.
- Identify participants.
- Personally encourage attendance.
- Identify and reserve a room (we can assist with this).
 - Ideally the room would be large enough for whole group ideation and small group work but not so large that it feels too cold and institutional.
 - If possible, we prefer rooms where the tables and chairs move easily.
 - We like to have access to technology for sharing slides and – when possible – white boards for taking notes on the fly.

- Provide refreshments, if appropriate.

Potential roles involved

- **Event Sponsor** - The faculty or staff member who requests the event.
- **Participants** - Researchers from a variety of disciplines (including those not typically considered for the research focus of the event).
- **Facilitators** - Run the process (RII PD team + departmental experts).
- **Research Development** - Research personnel from relevant colleges may participate fully or sit in on conversations so they can get to know researchers better and learn about their aspirations.

A typical process

1. The event sponsor requests a Collaboration Café using our form.
2. Our team will contact the event sponsor to discuss details (date, goals, type of event, RII team availability).
3. Once a date is determined, our team will create a draft event agenda and invitation while the sponsor recruits participants including potential PIs and champions if they are not already identified.
4. The faculty champions and event sponsor review and finalize the agenda with our team.
5. Invitations and calendar appointment are sent by the faculty sponsor.
6. The event sponsor follows-up with personal encouragement to attend.
7. On the day of the event, our team facilitates the agenda.