



INSPIRATION STUDIO

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.

Inspiration Studio Process Overview

Ideal conditions for an Inspiration Studio

1. The event is a collaborative effort between RII and an academic unit/center/research team.
2. There is a clear goal or focus for the event such as identifying emerging research opportunities, solving a specific problem or grand challenge, or planning a long-term approach to for an aspirational grant opportunity.
3. There is a core team of collaborators who are committed to the goal.
4. A faculty champion (ADR, center director, experienced PI, etc.) is involved.
5. The event is requested at least 6 weeks before the event date.

Benefits of participation

1. Facilitation assistance frees researchers to fully participate in idea formation and refinement.
2. Activities are tailored to event goals and may include activities such as: landscape mapping, ideation, nominal group decision-making, team formation, SWOT analysis, etc.
3. Support developing project framework and plan for moving the project forward.
4. Assistance with next steps such as planning follow-up meetings, identifying and engaging potential partners, and identifying aligned funding opportunities.

Your responsibilities as a faculty sponsor

- Collaborate with our team to tailor the event agenda based on your goals.
- Identify participants and recruit faculty champions.
- Personally contact participants (you or a faculty champion) and encourage engagement.
- 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.
- **Faculty Champion** – Someone who is a campus leader in a research discipline or space related to the event goals. A champion might be an experienced PI, Associate Dean for Research, academic administrator, or center director, etc.
- **Participants** – Researchers from a variety of disciplines (including those not typically considered for the research focus of the event).
- **Mentors** – Discipline experts or grants experts who listen at tables and help folks in the room make connections, highlight good ideas, etc.
- **Facilitators** – Run the process (RII PD team + departmental experts).
- **Stakeholders** – Folks from the community or industry who are close to the issue that is a focus of the ideas lab.
- **Research Development** – Research professionals who can help identify potential future funding opportunities and potential partners or assist with next steps.
- **Research Analytics** – Funding history of the opportunity, participant selection, identification of faculty/disciplinary mentors.

A typical process

1. A research team, faculty leader, or academic administrator requests an Inspiration Studio using our form.
2. Our team will contact the event sponsor to discuss details (date, duration, goals, type of event, RII team availability).
3. Once an event date and duration is agreed on, 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. Participants are asked to fill out a researcher profile specifically designed for the event.
7. The faculty sponsor follows-up with personal encouragement to attend.
8. On the day(s) of the event, our team facilitates the agenda with assistance from the faculty sponsor and other champions.
9. After the event, our team will send out notes, photos, and guidance for next steps.