

**April 2014**

### **Policy on Unsolicited Research Proposals**

An unsolicited proposal is a proposal submitted to PCI which is not in response to a PCI Request for Proposals (RFPs) or a PCI Research Program (e.g. Jenny Fellowships). An unsolicited proposal might be an original idea from a researcher, a request for matching funds for a new or existing project or a request for additional work to supplement a completed PCI project.

The Institute will consider unsolicited proposals which have a direct bearing on the Precast /Prestressed industry. However, PCI does not encourage unsolicited proposals, there is no formal call for them and they will have the lowest priority for funding.

#### **Procedure:**

- 1) On receipt of an unsolicited proposal, the PCI Research Director shall review the proposal. The Director shall have the right to reject the proposal if the proposal is clearly not related to precast, has only a marginal precast component, addresses items already funded by PCI or is from a researcher/institution that is delinquent or has a record of serious delinquency with previous PCI projects.
- 2) Proposals not initially rejected by the Research Director shall be reviewed by the R&D Council Chair and Vice Chair. The Chair and Vice Chair will review the proposals considering the Council's research priorities. The Chair, Vice Chair and Research Director shall then vote to either forward the proposals to the Council or reject the proposal. Should the Chair or Vice Chair have to recuse for any reason, a substitute person shall be selected from the Research and Development Council membership by the Research Director and remaining Chair or Vice Chair.
- 3) Proposals Submitted in Response to a Request from an Advisory Committee
  - a. At or near the end of a funded project or fellowship, the Advisory Committee may determine that additional work, beyond the original scope, is desirable. In such cases, the Advisory Committee may request the researcher(s) to submit a proposal for additional work. The PCI Research Director shall be notified of this request before any proposal is submitted and the Council Chair and Vice Chair shall be notified.
  - b. The proposal will be considered as an unsolicited proposal with the exception that these proposals shall be considered before any other proposals. All unsolicited proposals resulting from requests from Advisory Committees will be grouped so that the Council can prioritize them. Any proposals acceptable to the Council shall be given priority for funding.
- 4) The Research Director shall hold all proposals which are to be forwarded to the Council. Approximately 6 weeks before a Council Meeting, the Director shall post all held proposals.
- 5) At the next Council Meeting, the Council shall review all proposals and hold a final vote to fund or not fund each proposal. The proposals shall be considered as a group to allow the Council to prioritize them. The Council may make funding contingent on successfully obtaining funds from other sources and/or making changes to the proposal recommended by the Council. The Council shall form an advisory committee for each funded proposal.
- 6) The Director shall notify all submitters of the resolution of their funding request along with any feedback.



- 7) There may be occasions where an unsolicited proposal is submitted and a timely response is needed, especially if it is a matching funds request for a research grant submission. Such requests must be submitted to PCI at least 14 calendar days before any commitment is due. If the Research Director, Council Chair and Vice Chair, by majority, determine the request is worth funding, it shall be forwarded to the Council for a vote. The vote may be electronic, by virtual meeting or at a regular Council meeting as appropriate.

**Confidentiality:**

Members of the Council shall treat all unsolicited proposals as confidential. If a proposer submits an original idea which is rejected and the Council decides, within a 2 year period, to fund this idea the Council shall give the original researcher the right of first refusal. However, the Council may request a new proposal and budget or modifications to the existing proposal and budget. If the researcher elects not to submit, the Council shall consider the issue of intellectual property before deciding to move forward with funding another researcher.

**Format:**

All unsolicited proposals must be submitted in this format:

- 1) Cover page containing project name, complete contact information for all PIs with institutions and the date
- 2) Abstract describing the project
- 3) Statement of value to PCI and the precast industry. If the request is for matching funds, this statement must describe why matching funds are needed. If the request is for a supplement to an existing project, the value added to PCI must be described.
- 4) Description of the project. If the project is a supplement to larger project, there shall be a detailed description of the main project and a description of the value added to PCI for the supplement. If the request is for matching funds, the main project shall be described in detail and the case for matching funds shall be made. This section shall include all applicable references. Limit descriptions to three pages.
- 5) Detailed budget with proposed payment schedule. (note – PCI limits university overhead to 15%)
- 6) Qualifications of the research team.
- 7) Appended letters of support from industry members. Such letters must address the value of the project and not simply support the research team.