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Del. colleges busy bidding for share of stimulus

Proposals include research, buildings, lab equipment

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Delaware's public colleges are jockeying for a share of millions in federal stimulus dollars, funds they want to use for training, research, equipment and building projects.

The University of Delaware, Delaware State University and Delaware Technical & Community College all received stimulus money to backfill some of their state appropriation cuts. But administrators also are competing with colleges across the country and other groups for stimulus-funded programs administered by federal agencies.

UD has submitted about 150 requests totaling just over \$200 million for faculty research efforts, building projects and equipment. So far, \$35 million has been awarded but "we've probably got 100 requests still pending," said Mark Barteau, senior vice provost for research and a member of the school's Stimulus Working Group.

The group, which includes representatives from the university's research, budgeting and government relations arms, created a Web site to post notices about stimulus funding opportunities for the faculty and staff and to chart the number of proposals and awards. They've also been meeting regularly to work on UD's bid for funds to pay for "big ticket" projects, including buildings and high tech lab instruments.

"A lot of that is limited submission, which means the university may be allowed to submit one to three proposals depending on the program," Barteau said. "What this group has been trying to do is to coordinate our response. We've been talking to the deans and chairs about their priorities and assembling the groups to make decisions about which ones we would pursue and what are we doing that fits."

To get funding for building projects, UD has to invest in preliminary architectural plans that must be submitted along with the school's proposal. The projects UD is hoping to fund include a new undergraduate science building, expansion of the Delaware Biotechnology Institute, and renovation and expansion of the campus animal care facility, Barteau said.

"These funds are for very specific purposes. This is not money we could spend some other way," he said.

A similar process is going on at Delaware Tech. The school already has received funding for job training and summer employment programs for young people and is expecting to receive an \$800,000 grant that would go toward building a green technology and training lab called the Energy House on the Owens campus in Georgetown.

Officials also are working on proposals to apply for stimulus grants from the federal Economic Development Administration to build green technology labs for the Stanton-Wilmington campuses and on the Terry campus in Dover. The labs would house programs to teach students to install solar panels and maintain wind turbines. Outfitting one campus with the right technology would cost about \$500,000; some individual pieces of equipment can cost as much as \$50,000, said Stephanie Smith,

Delaware Tech's vice president for academic affairs.

"It's also for fields like automotive technology, where we want to be able to provide training for our students on hybrid vehicles," Smith said. "To do that, we need to expand our automotive training area to have additional bays and to have these hybrid vehicles and equipment. Just to expand the building and add six bays with six lifts is \$300,000."

Delaware Tech officials are preparing a proposal to the National Science Foundation that would fund a project to connect all four campuses with fiber optics as well as connect to some area high schools, allowing their students to take college courses via videoconferencing, Smith said. Administrators also are working on proposals for funds to upgrade science labs, and equipment to add a program in health information technology and provide more high-tech training for nursing and allied health majors.

Administrators have been trying to obtain state funding for new buildings, including a health science facility on the Stanton campus, for years.

Each federal stimulus grant comes with specific criteria and officials haven't yet identified a match for one of the school's programs, Vice President for Finance Jerry McNesby said.

DSU works on plan

DSU officials also are applying for stimulus funds but Amir Mohammadi, the school's vice president for finance and administration, could not offer any specific details, including which projects school officials hope to fund, until DSU's board of trustees reviews the plan within the next several weeks.

"We're looking at the scope of the criteria and the specifics of this funding and we are establishing the needs that we have and we are progressing in meeting those criteria and competing for those fundings," Mohammadi said.
