Call for Research Proposals

Blockchain Initiative at Texas McCombs

November 2019

The Blockchain Initiative at Texas McCombs invites faculty and graduate students from the entire UT-Austin campus to submit grant proposals for academic research projects in the subject areas of blockchain and distributed systems, crypto-currency and digital payments, and cryptography as it relates to the above topics.

The initiative will award the grants to support faculty and graduate student research projects that require substantive funding but cannot be funded through other sources (e.g., ADF or other discretionary funds) to make significant advancements in our understanding of distributed ledger technology. Criteria for awarding research grants include the novelty and likely academic impact of the proposed research, and its potential to significantly enhance the research reputation of the faculty and the university in the subject areas detailed above. Preference will be given to proposals for which the investigator has obtained matching funds from other sources and to projects that entail collaboration among multiple faculty members across colleges. For software and database purchase requests, priority will be given to software/databases that other faculty colleagues and students might also find useful.

To apply for a research grant, please submit a maximum three-page proposal along with your current vita to the Blockchain Initiative at Texas McCombs via email at blockchain@mccombs.utexas.edu. The deadline to apply for this round of funding is December 8, 2019. The proposal should emphasize the project’s relevance and importance, and how it benefits the university. Specifically, it should include the following items:

1. Title of project, name of principal investigator(s), and project duration;
2. Motivation and description of the research project, including why it is novel and important;
3. Anticipated outcomes (deliverables) and impact;

4. For database purchase requests: list other faculty members or students who could benefit from this acquisition;

5. Alternative sources of funding explored, availability of matching funds, and why discretionary funds (e.g., ADF, endowment, departmental funds) cannot be used;

6. Budget, with justification.

The Faculty Advisory Board of the initiative will evaluate the proposals and decide which proposals to fund and how much. We expect to announce the awards by the end of January 2020. Please send an email to blockchain@mccombs.utexas.edu if you have questions about the call for proposals.

Notes:

(i) The funding is made available through a generous gift made by Ripple Labs Inc. Students and faculty members receiving funding from the initiative shall hold the title of "Ripple Graduate Fellow" and "Ripple Fellow", respectively, during the funding period, and acknowledge the grant from the Blockchain Initiative at Texas McCombs in their research papers.

(ii) The awarded students and faculty need to commit to provide a short progress report of the funded project one year after the funding has been disbursed.

(iii) The grants are meant to support research projects whose principal investigator is a UT-Austin faculty member, or graduate student.

(iv) Faculty members are strongly encouraged to concurrently explore other internal and external funding sources such as ADF and endowment funds, Research grants and Special Research grants awarded by the university, and so on.

(v) Research funding requests must be limited to funds needed to conduct the research, and for which other sources of funds are not available. Funds cannot be used to cover faculty salaries.

(vi) Funds cannot cover the funding needs of research centers.

(vii) For software or database purchase requests, the investigator must first consult the library (http://guides.lib.utexas.edu/BRC) to check if the software or data is already available or other data sources or systems can meet the needs, and to obtain a cost estimate for academic purchase. Investigators must agree to share the software and databases with other faculty and students in the university.