

SPARC NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2026

OFFICE: HOWARD HALL



GRANTS UPDATE

In 2025, the grant world has been fraught with uncertainty due to the numerous executive orders and governmental changes, but Drake continues to move forward as best as it possibly can with minimal disruption. The SPARC office continues to monitor the environment and adapts as needed.

Government Shutdown: The government shutdown has not caused any disruption to current funding. Projects continue to move forward, and invoices are paid for work completed. Central Iowa Head Start program is funded and will continue to provide services for families in the area. New submissions of grant applications also continue as scheduled. The impact is with grant applications in the review process. All grant reviews and new awards have ceased to occur. This will delay those decisions even after the government has reopened due to the backlog of grants in process.

Funding Opportunities: Federal, state and foundation funding continue to be available. Although some federal opportunities have been cancelled or discontinued, there are still plenty of opportunities which we will continue to apply for to support our projects and programs. We have also been more strategic in looking at foundational grants available.

If you have any questions, please reach out to the SPARC office.

WELCOME!

Welcome to SPARC's Newsletter! Our goal is to keep you up to date on SPARC events, the latest guideline changes, funding opportunities, and other important announcements. This will be sent out to the campus community as well as housed on the SPARC website, www.drake.edu/sparc



PROFILE FORM REMINDER:

The SPARC Office wants to learn more about the exciting research and creative work happening across campus! By filling out our short SPARC Profile Form, you'll help us better understand your research interests and areas of expertise, allowing us to more effectively connect you with targeted grant and funding opportunities.

It only takes a few minutes to complete! Click the link or scan the QR code below to get started:

[SPARC Profile Form](#)



Your input helps us support your success, thank you for partnering with SPARC to advance research and creative scholarship at Drake!

PROPOSAL ROUTING FORM REMINDER

As you prepare your next grant proposal, don't forget to complete the Proposal Routing Form! This important step ensures that your Dean, Chair, and/or Director are aware of your project plans and can provide the necessary approvals and support.

Completing the form also helps the SPARC Office track proposals, coordinate submissions, and offer additional assistance throughout the process.

Complete the form here: [Proposal Routing Form](#)

Thank you for helping us streamline proposal submissions and keep everyone in the loop as we continue supporting research and creative scholarship at Drake!

NIH POLICY UPDATE: OTHER SUPPORT TRAINING REQUIRED

NIH has issued NOT-OD-25-133, requiring training for faculty and Senior/Key Personnel on Other Support disclosures, effective October 1, 2025. This training is designed to help ensure compliance in reporting all active and pending research activities and affiliations.

Please use the following training PowerPoint to understand NIH's Other Support disclosure: [NIH Other Support Disclosure Training](#)

If you have any questions, please reach out to: preston.miller@drake.edu

BEST PRACTICES:

- Confirm the funding source before incurring expenses.
- Use economical travel options and preferred vendors.
- Submit itemized receipts for all expenses – this includes p-card purchases.
- Identify unallowable costs on documentation for grant funded trips.
- Submit reimbursement forms promptly.

FACULTY, WE NEED YOU!

The SPARC Office is inviting all faculty members to be featured on our SPARC'ing a Conversation podcast! This series highlights the exciting research and creative work happening across our campus and we want to showcase your ideas.

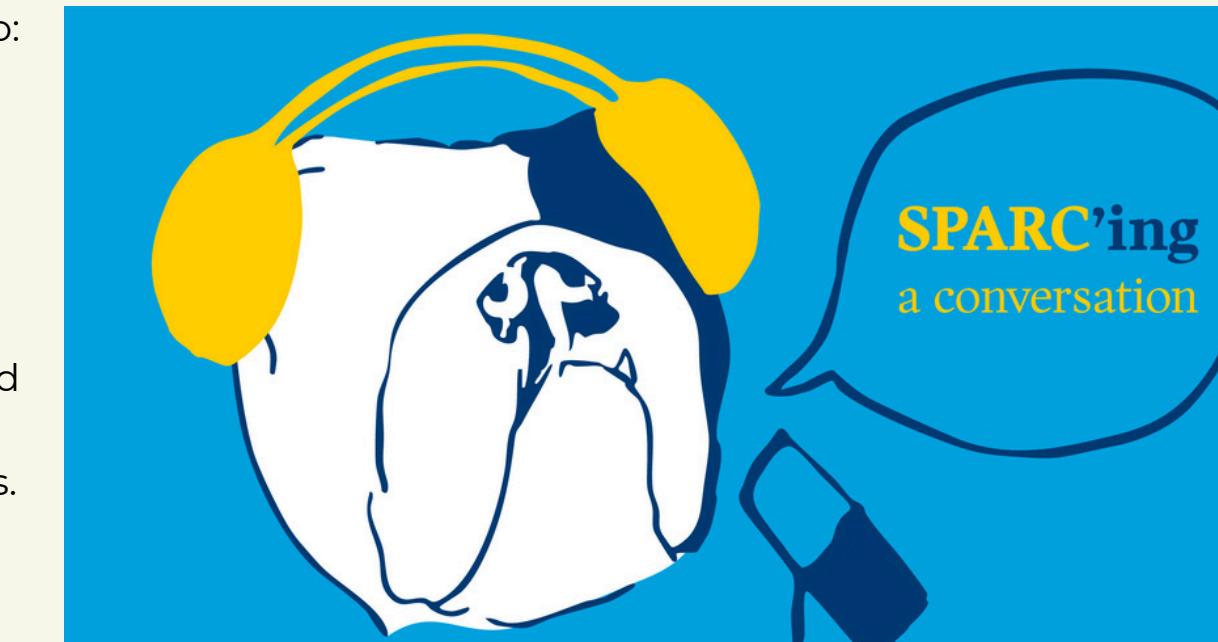
Whether you're exploring new research areas, leading innovative projects, or engaging in community partnerships, this is a great opportunity to share your story in a relaxed, conversational setting.

Interested in joining us? Reach out to preston.miller@drake.edu to get something scheduled and help us spark more conversations about the incredible work happening at Drake!

SPARC'ING A CONVERSATION:

Have you listened to the grants-based podcast, SPARC'ing a Conversation? Senior Grants Specialist, Preston Miller interviews Drake faculty about their projects and grant experience. Find the recordings here.

<https://www.drake.edu/sparc/sparcingaconversation/>



DRAKE UNIVERSITY - GRANT FUNDED TRAVEL

When travel expenses are grant funded, adherence to Drake's Travel Expense Policy is still required ensuring that all travel costs are reasonable, necessary, and properly documented. Faculty, staff, and students are expected to use preferred vendors, submit original receipts, and separate personal from business expenses.

ALCOHOL & UNALLOWABLE COSTS:

While modest alcohol purchases may be reimbursable under university policy, alcohol is unallowable on all grant awards. Any such expenses must be excluded or charged to non-grant sources. Individual grant contracts may have additional travel related requirements. If in doubt, please contact our office prior to making travel arrangements with any questions. You can send Suzanne or Jessica an email at Suzanne.stewart@drake.edu or Jessica.ginder@drake.edu.

I-RAISE INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY NOW OPEN!

Encourage your students to apply for the I-RAISE Research Administration Internship, a paid multi-term experience that includes a summer residency at Iowa State University plus Fall and Spring placements here at Drake. This program offers hands-on training in research administration, proposal development, and compliance. This is ideal for students interested in building professional skills in a rapidly growing field. Faculty support is key, so please share this opportunity with promising students who may thrive in this career pathway.

For details, visit:

-  [Drake University Travel Expense Policy](#)
-  [Travel Policy & Forms, Accounting and Procurement Office](#)
-  [Additional Travel Forms, Accounting and Procurement Office](#)

FROM THE INTERN DESK

As a graduate student whose life is rooted in the health field, I've been truly honored to explore such a diverse career path. Through the I-RAISE program and the SPARC department, I've gained valuable skills in grant searching, proposal development process, and budgeting. This exposure has broadened my perspective and added a meaningful skill set that I believe will serve me well in my future career.

Dorcas Egya-Mensah
CPHS, P2

I'm a graduate student, and my attachment at the SPARC office through the NSF-funded I-RAISE program has been a truly valuable experience. I gained insight into the full grants process and appreciated supporting Principal Investigators in finding funding opportunities.

This experience has boosted my confidence and excitement for the future, and I know the skills I've gained will strongly shape my path as I pursue my doctoral degree.

Diana Otido