The Alliance for African Partnership (AAP) will establish its African Futures Research Leadership Program in Fall 2019. The competitive postdoctoral program will target early career female researchers (ECR) from the eight AAP member institutions to be jointly supervised by faculty members from MSU and their home institution in research for impact, writing of scholarly and/or policy publications, dissemination of research results and grant proposals. Early career researchers will also participate in a structured academic advancement program while building bridges and lasting connections with MSU and across their cohort. They will also participate in the Future Africa Research Leadership Program at the University of Pretoria, which will provide them with training in the areas of thought leadership, team development, research development, engagement and collaboration, while also building south-south collaboration with other African researchers.

The main objective of the African Futures Research Leadership Program is to train a cadre of African researchers so they return to their home institutions and become scientific leaders in their community, help solve Africa’s challenges, and in turn become trainers of the next generation. It is expected that these researchers will sustain the partnership with MSU into the future as they continue their research careers.

The AAP Management Team seeks proposals from MSU faculty members to serve as mentors. Successful MSU faculty will mentor the researcher over a one-year period and will receive a small grant for the fellow’s research and professional development activities while at MSU as well as an exchange visit to the home country at the end of the program. The post-doctoral researcher will receive a salary, a return ticket to their home institution and funding to participate in a leadership program at the University of Pretoria.
AAP Priority Research Areas

Proposals must be submitted in at least one of the AAP’s priority research areas:
1. Agri-food systems
2. Water, energy and environment
3. Education
4. Youth empowerment
5. Culture
6. Nutrition and health

MSU Faculty Mentor Benefits

MSU Faculty Mentors will receive:

- An early career researcher for one year to conduct research, publish existing work, and write grant proposals.
- One week at the early career researcher’s home institution to continue research collaboration discussions with the African co-mentor at the end of the program.

ECR Benefits

- Professional development activities – these will center on working with the early career researcher as they join the university, to establish their professional trajectories, to build their research, writing, and publishing skills, and to support them to move through various stages of review, promotion, and growth.
- Leadership activities – these will center on first-hand exposure to academic administration to learn about operations, expectations, opportunities, and challenges related to administrative positions, as well as more general aspects of leadership; personal reflection on one’s characteristics and career goals to help determine whether an administrative or other type of leadership role is desired and
appropriate. Proposed activities should ultimately lead to potential long-term collaborations between MSU and the partner institution.

Eligibility

- MSU Faculty at the Associate or Full Professor Level who have had experience working in Africa are eligible to serve as a mentor.
  - Those that have never worked in Africa but would like to explore these partnerships should also consider applying.
- Early career researchers will be expected to come from one of the eight AAP African consortium members including Egerton University, Makerere University, University of Dar es Salaam, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Botswana, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, University Cheikh Anta Diop, and University of Arts and Humanities, Bamako.
- Faculty members may only submit one proposal to AAP for this round of funding.
- Proposed activities should be expected to begin August 31st 2019.

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria that will be used to evaluate the success of the proposal will include

- Demonstration of the potential for continued productive collaboration between MSU and AAP African member institutions around research for impact in the AAP research priority areas.
- The number and quality of research opportunities involving the early career scholar and mentors from MSU and partner institutions. This could include
  - Scholars’ Participation in research projects including methodology and techniques applied over the program period
Symposia or conferences held to disseminate work stemming from the partnership activities

Other measures of early career leadership as proposed by the implementing teams

Collaborative grant applications submitted and or awarded

Collaborative scholarly and policy relevant publications submitted or published

A follow up report including data on these criteria will be required three months after funds are utilized for travel.

Proposal Requirements

1. An up to date curriculum vitae (CV) of the mentor that provides a chronological review of their professional accomplishments including their research interest and expertise, mentorship experience (graduate students and postdoctoral fellows), and publications (10 pages).

2. A letter of interest that indicates their reasons for applying to the program and how their work is aligned to the goals and vision of the AAP including how they propose to add value to the research for impact area (1 page).

3. Proposals should be submitted on the application form provided and should not exceed 1 page:
   - Mentors should have a specific research project to engage the early career scholar. The proposal should provide a brief overview of the research, publication or grant proposal writing work that will be conducted and which of the priority areas of the AAP that will be addressed and the specific work activities that the early career researcher will be expected to perform.

4. Written endorsement from the applicants’ deans and department chairpersons demonstrating their support for the MSU faculty members’ participation in the African Futures Early Career Research Leadership program should also be provided.
Selection Criteria:

The selection of the winning faculty proposals will be based on merit of both the faculty mentor as well as the early career researcher and will be done in a two-stage process. Stage 1 involves an early career researcher firstly identifying and selecting a faculty mentor to work with from the list of proposals received in the program. In Stage 2, the team that shows the highest professional merit, scientific ability, and potential future career impact will be selected.

A selection committee will ensure the best match of outstanding candidates and MSU Faculty Mentor positions. Additional selection factors may include diversity in scientific research areas, gender of the mentor and geographic origin of the early career researcher.

Submitting a Proposal

The proposal should be submitted via the link on https://aap.isp.msu.edu/engagement/aap-african-futures-program/

Call for Faculty Mentors open: April 12th 2019

Call for Faculty Mentors close: April 26th 2019

Call for Applications from Early Career Researchers open: May 6th 2019

Application deadline: June 5th 2019

Final selection: June 12th 2019

Expected start date: August 29th 2019
Questions

Please contact Jose Jackson-Malete at jacks184@msu.edu or 517-884-8587 with any questions.