



Office of Research

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Propel AI: Request for Applications (2024-2025)

Announcement release date: Tuesday, June 4, 2024

Application due date: Monday, July 1, 2024

Purpose: Building on the robust foundation of our existing Propel program, the Office of the Vice President for Research is proud to unveil a new initiative called Propel AI. This new Propel program is designed to enrich and extend the skills of our academic community by integrating artificial intelligence (AI) across USC's comprehensive research domains.

Through a series of meticulously curated one-day workshops held on Fridays throughout the 2024-2025 academic year, Propel AI will grow faculty **competence** in cutting-edge AI technologies and the rapidly changing landscape of AI research. The programming is designed to incubate brand new research initiatives in AI, fostering **creativity** in the ways faculty engage AI in their scholarship. Through Propel AI activities, the program will enhance **connectivity**, encouraging radical interdisciplinarity and novel collaborative partnerships.

Eligibility: Any USC faculty member that meets the criteria below may apply. To be considered for Propel AI, faculty members must:

- Be employed at USC Columbia, the USC schools of medicine in Columbia or Greenville, a four-year USC comprehensive institution or a USC Palmetto College campus.
- Hold a faculty or research faculty position; all faculty ranks are eligible to participate in Propel AI.
- Demonstrate a proven record of or abiding interest in interdisciplinarity, as demonstrated through past projects, collaborations, publications, etc.
- Clearly describe their expectations for the program. (No prior knowledge of AI is required, but applicants should be able to articulate their intentions and goals.)
- Define at least two specific goals for their work in the program.
- Not be a participant in the 2024-2025 Propel Research Mentorship [program](#).

Propel AI Participation Requirements: All selected Propel AI scholars must commit to completing the following program requirements:

1. Actively participate in six in-person sessions on Fridays from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. between September and May (in-person attendance is required for all sessions).
2. Arrive at all invited speaker sessions with prepared questions and ideas.
3. Participate in assigned peer group activities (scholar peer groups will consist of two to four interdisciplinary faculty).
4. Define and achieve two to three goals by participating in the program. AI scholars are encouraged to think outside the box to develop diverse and innovative goals.

- a. Innovative Propel AI goals could include the following example deliverables or others of a similar scale: a new research draft proposal, an interdisciplinary AI pitch, an AI podcast, an interdisciplinary AI expo or symposium, a novel collaboration between two or more scholars using AI, hosting an AI hackathon/case competition, etc.
5. Complete before and after self-reflection surveys.
6. Complete small projects, trainings, or workshops between sessions as appropriate for their AI interests and goals (e.g. library-sponsored online trainings on particular tools).
7. Be willing to inventory their skills and competencies as part of a new “AI Community of Scholars” that will be made available to USC faculty and students.

Application Details: Faculty may apply for Propel AI through our REDCap application form: https://redcap.link/Propel_AI. The application questions are listed below for planning. To ensure a smooth application process, applicants are encouraged to draft their responses before entering them into the REDCap form. **Applicants will not be able to edit form responses after submitting them via REDCap.**

Application Questions

1. Last Name
2. First Name
3. USC Campus
4. Department
5. College
6. Faculty Rank
7. USC Email Address
8. Phone Number
9. Briefly describe your research program, with a focus here on the aspect of your current work in which you would like to grow your engagement with AI. (200 word limit)
10. While no previous AI knowledge is required to participate in Propel AI, please describe your experience with AI in the research domain to date. (200 word limit)
11. Please articulate 2-3 concrete goals you hope to achieve directly through participation in Propel AI. These goals should be challenging yet feasible, and should be tied to measurable research outcomes.

For More Information: Please contact Elizabeth Renedo at Renedoe@mailbox.sc.edu.