INSTITUTE FOR Business & Social Impact

The Berkeley MFE
Master of Financial Engineering

Call for Faculty and Student Research Proposals
Blockchain Initiative
Institute for Business & Social Impact & Masters in Financial Engineering

Proposal Submission Deadline: November 30th, 2018

Proposal Submission: Please submit all requested information and supporting documents through this google form.

Call for Proposals: Berkeley Haas has been awarded a multi-year, multi-million-dollar grant from Ripple, a growing company in the emerging blockchain industry, to support research, courses and student activities in blockchain, cryptocurrency and digital payments. The grant will be housed in the Institute for Business and Social Impact (IBSI) working in collaboration with the Masters of Financial Engineering (MFE) program at Berkeley-Haas. The grant will fund faculty and student research and related events across the Berkeley campus, including Engineering, the Law School, School of Information, and other colleges or programs.

This year IBSI will award grants for academic research and supporting activities in the following areas:

a. Blockchain and distributed systems.
b. Cryptocurrency and digital payments.
c. Cryptography, particularly as it relates to the above topics.
d. Related subject areas such as blockchain for economic development and global financial inclusion will also be considered.

- **Funding is available for faculty** to support their research, teaching, curriculum development, case studies, cross-departmental collaboration, thought leadership and other research activities in the above subject areas.
- **Funding is available for student research projects** in the above subject areas with the support of a faculty member (either ladder or professional).

IBSI is requesting proposals in the following categories:

1. Bringing a distinguished speaker to campus (travel & lodging: $1,500 maximum for domestic speakers and $2,500 for international speakers).
2. Organizing conferences and meetings ($7,500 maximum).
3. Undergraduate student research ($3,000 maximum)
4. Graduate student research ($5,000 maximum).
5. Faculty research ($15,000 maximum. Exceptions may be made for faculty research projects at a more advanced stage of development $25,000 maximum).

Illustrative Research Topics:
Proposals are welcomed on topics that include, but are not limited to:

Technical

- Given XRP's consensus mechanism, what are the most efficient ways to scale the ledger?
- Are tokens isolated from fiat? Is there an incentive structure for cryptocurrencies that accounts for the fact that tokens aren't isolated from one another?
- Evaluate the incentives in emerging blockchain networks (proof-of-work, Byzantine fault tolerant (XRP), etc.) on a variety of factors including: network diversity and participation, security, consolidation of decision making, etc.

Business or legal opps/smart contracts

- Blockchain use to verify and protect medical records
- Identity protection and verification, protect against voter fraud, provide immediate verifiable results
- Implications for automating contractual relationships across a value chain

Regulatory issues

- What is the overall regulatory landscape within the digital asset space and what is their impact on local/global perception of these new technologies?
- What are the potential downstream impact (on banking, exchanges, payment companies, etc.) of different regulatory stances of major economies (India, Japan, Brazil, US, etc.)?

Under exceptional circumstances, IBSI will fund research beyond the maximum levels noted above. If you'd like to be considered for additional funding, please indicate the amount requested.

A review panel will evaluate the proposals and award decisions will be made by **December 21st, 2018.**

Funded projects may begin between **Jan 1** and **June 30, 2019.** Student research projects must be completed within **one year** of their start date.

A one-page report of how funds were used will be required within one year of start date.

Please contact IBSI@haas.berkeley.edu including Blockchain Initiative in the subject line with any questions.