



CAL POLY

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October 14, 2025

To: Mechanical Engineering Department Faculty

From: Eric Espinoza-Wade, Director of the Donald E. Bently Center for Engineering Innovation

CC: Amy Fleischer, Dean of the College of Engineering
Bridget Benson, Associate Dean of Scholarship and Assessment, College of Engineering

RE: **Request for Proposals for the Donald E. Bently Center for Engineering Innovation**

The **Donald E. Bently Center for Engineering Innovation** is now accepting proposals for release time for summer 2025 through spring 2026. Please submit your proposal electronically as a PDF file via email to erwade@calpoly.edu by **5:00 PM (PST) Friday, January 31, 2025**.

Availability of release time is additionally contingent upon the teaching needs of the department as determined by the Department Chairperson, and with approval of the Dean.

Consideration of proposals will depend on the degree to which each proposal meets the purpose and mission of the endowment. The Bently Endowment Agreement states that its purpose is to promote innovation within the discipline, provide support to pursue applied research, expand the curriculum, and bring vision and breadth to engineering instruction. The Bently Mission Statement of 2017 interprets this as advancement of research, education, and the practice of mechanical engineering with innovation as the guiding principle, with special consideration for rotor dynamics. The Proposal Review Committee will use the following areas of consideration in evaluating proposals.

Mission: The mission areas include Innovation and the two mutually exclusive areas of Curriculum Expansion or Applied ME Research.

- **Innovation** – the proposed work has the potential to make innovative and valuable contributions to the body of knowledge of science and engineering in a significant topic that has broad impact to society. The proposal describes the state of the art and how the proposed work is innovative.
- **Curriculum Expansion/Instruction Breadth** – the proposed work has the potential to expand the curriculum; bring vision and depth to engineering instruction; make valuable advances in the understanding, delivery, and content of the education for Mechanical Engineering students at Cal Poly and beyond.
- **Applied ME Research** – the proposed work aims at solving important, practical real-world problems, advancing the tools, methods, technologies, etc. relevant to the practice of Mechanical Engineering such as Thermal Sciences or Mechanics and Design.
- **Rotor Dynamics** – the proposed work has some connection to the study and development of

rotating machines and/or machine condition monitoring, which was the industry Don Bently pioneered and supported at Cal Poly.

In addition to the mission areas, the review committee will also consider the following factors:

Student Impact: The proposal describes a significant impact on students at Cal Poly and beyond. This can be in the form of involving students directly in the work or an activity that will impact students through their exposure to the outcomes of the proposed work in their education at Cal Poly and beyond.

Leverage: The proposal describes how support from the Bently Center has the potential to make additional future work possible and return a value to the university that is of long lasting value and larger than the original cost of the WTU award.

Proposed Deliverables: The proposal lists specific, realistic outcomes (other than student impact), consistent with the size of the award, that will be achieved at the end of the period of support. The review committee will compare the proposed deliverables to the outcomes listed in the final report to judge the success of the project for consideration of past performance in future proposals by the same proposer.

Past Performance or Faculty Level of Experience: For individuals that have received Bently Center awards in the past, the past final reports document that the PI was successful in meeting the deliverables listed in the proposal and submitted a high quality final report on time. If the proposer has no previous Bently awards, then their level of experience on the faculty will be considered in this category.

Proposal Quality and Collaboration: The proposal is clear, specific, well communicated and addresses the categories listed in this document. Proposals that include meaningful collaboration with colleagues in the department or the College will be evaluated favorably in this category. Proposers should specifically describe the collaboration and the role of each collaborator in carrying out the proposed work.

Proposal Weighting Rubric

Mission	Weight
Innovation	20
Curriculum Expansion/Instruction Breadth or Applied ME Research	15
Rotor Dynamics	5
Other Considerations	
Student Impact	15
Leverage	5
Proposed Deliverables	10
Past Performance/Faculty Experience	20
Proposal Quality	10
Total Score	100

Funded proposals and project reports from previous years are available for your review at:
<https://me.calpoly.edu/bently-center/>

Submission Instructions

1. Prepare the following four documents:

- (a) **Narrative:** Proposals are limited to five pages; do not include progress reports or other material that exceed this page limit. The proposal should include only original work; please do not include writing from another proposal unless it is the proposer's original work.
- (b) **CV:** Submit a current CV as a separate document (not included in the five-page proposal page count).
- (c) **Current/Pending Support:** Please include a one-page document that lists any current or pending awards that include support for any release time or summer salary and list all support. A suggested format is:

Grant or proposal title and funding source	Duration or amount of support	Period of support
Title: XXX XYZ Funding Corp.	1 month summer salary 8 WTUs release time for AY 2024-25 \$1,000 stipend for summer 2024	9/2024 – 8/2026

If no current or pending support exists, please state so.

- (d) **Past Performance:** To address Past Performance, provide a one-page summary (not counted as part of the five-page proposal) of your most recent Bently support that lists the dates for the period of support, the specific aims of the previous project, and the progress made toward their achievement. If you have not had prior Bently support, simply state that is the case.
2. Combine the above four documents into a single PDF file and send it to erwade@calpoly.edu. Please name your combined PDF file: `surname_BentlyReq2024.pdf` (replacing 'surname' with your surname). The deadline is 5:00 PM Friday, January 31, 2025.
 3. Proposals should state the scope of the project and contain sufficient material to evaluate the feasibility and benefit of the work relative to the ranking criteria listed above.
 4. Each proposal must include a short title that is descriptive of the proposed work. If more than one project is being proposed, please describe each in a separate section within the five-page limit.
 5. Please indicate the number and timing of WTUs requested. List the number of WTUs requested for each term using a table. Copy this table (here) into your proposal, and complete it, specifying the number of requested WTUs for each term in the next year. Enter "0" for quarters where you are requesting no support. Proposals requesting up to 15 WTUs per year of release time will be considered. All requests for release time should be based on a full-time load of 15 WTUs (this includes proposals for summer). Faculty with approved appointments of 12 WTUs or greater may use the title "Donald E. Bently Professor" during the corresponding academic year.
 6. An applicant should submit only one proposal. If that proposal includes distinct projects, the applicant is strongly encouraged to suggest distinct WTU requests for each project in the table above and provide a brief explanation for the distribution throughout the year.
 7. Successful proposers will be expected to submit a status report within one month after the final date of release time and to acknowledge the support of the center in all publications. Also, successful proposers may be asked to give a short presentation to the ME Department.

If you have any questions about this process, please contact:
erwade@calpoly.edu