Purpose
The purpose of this policy statement is to define the circumstances under which bridge funding may be provided to USF Morsani College of Medicine investigators. The purpose of this intramural fiscal support is to provide partial funding to keep a productive research laboratory operational for a limited period of time until a gap in funding can be corrected. More specifically, these funds are intended to enable the research to continue as the concerns expressed through the peer review process are addressed. The term “bridge” is meant to indicate that the investigator requires temporary funding for an ongoing research program that has been funded by extramural or intramural (such as startup) funds that have been exhausted. And, that aggressive efforts are underway to secure ongoing extramural funding.

Eligibility
Morsani College of Medicine full-time, tenured and tenure-earning faculty who have not received successful funding on a competitive grant application are eligible to apply for bridge funding. The Morsani College of Medicine will entertain two types of support for bridge funding.

Type I grant eligibility: Unsuccessful funding for a competitive grant application from the NIH, and for which a critique has been provided.

Type II grant eligibility: Unsuccessful funding for a competitive grant application from a nationally-recognized, not for profit, non-NIH sponsor, and for which a review has been provided.

Budget
1. Type I grant: Bridge funding for a maximum of $60,000 may be requested. An investigator may apply for up to $40,000 for the first 12 months of funding, during which time he/she is expected to submit a revised version of the grant. An additional $20,000 may be requested for a second year of bridge funding if necessary, but it is expected that either a second amended application be made (if allowed) or another NIH grant is submitted in year two.

2. Type II grant: Bridge funding for a maximum of $25,000 may be requested for a period of 12 months, during which time he/she is expected to submit a revised version of the grant.

3. Given the purpose of bridge funding, reasonable costs include technical assistance (graduate student stipend, post-docs, etc.), supplies, and animal costs. The budget should reflect the real operational needs of the laboratory to remain functional at a reduced level of activity until the gap in funding is corrected.
4. Faculty salary may be considered at the request of the Chair. Travel to scientific meetings or conferences is generally excluded, but may be considered under extraordinary circumstances.

Evaluation Criteria
1. The departmental chair must evaluate and approve any bridge funding request for scientific merit and budget considerations. Of note, the Department and the Office of Research (OR) will provide matching funds for bridge grants (i.e., a maximum of $30,000 from Department and $30,000 from the OR for a Type I grant).

2. The Vice Dean for Research will review the application for scientific merit and budget. At his/her discretion, a second reviewer may be utilized should it be necessary for scientific purposes or conflict of interest.

3. The total resources available to the investigator and length of prior funding for the project under consideration will also be taken into consideration.

Other
If extramural or intramural funding occurs after bridge funds have been awarded, the unused portion of those funds must be returned to the Morsani College of Medicine.

1. If attempts at funding are not successful, any unused portion of awarded bridge funds may be rolled over into the next fiscal year.

2. Funds will be transferred to the investigators account in two payments, upon receipt of a letter to the Vice Dean for Research, signed by both investigator and Chair, verifying that additional external funding has not yet been secured.

3. Awards will depend on the availability of funds and will be made at the discretion of the Vice Dean for Research.

Process
1. The request for bridge funding must come from the Department Chair. The Chair should be the first level of review in the process and not just a conveyor of the application for bridge funding. The letter requesting bridge funds from the Chair must describe the strengths and weaknesses of both the P.I. and the research project for which bridge funding is requested and a recommendation for action by the committee. The Chair will also evaluate the resources available to the investigator including other grant funding. Consideration of these other resources should be included in the evaluation of the budget request. Requests for a bridge grant that are deemed noncompetitive by the Chair may not be submitted directly by faculty to the OR for further consideration.

2. The Morsani College of Medicine OR will provide a 1:1 match for bridge grants (i.e., a maximal of $30,000 from the Department and $30,000 from the OR for a Type 1
grant). The budget must show the total expected expenditures (including the Departmental share) for the award period. In addition to the recommendation from the Chair, the application for bridge funding must include:

a. the P.I.'s curriculum vitae
b. a complete history of grant funding and pending applications
c. the external review/summary statement of the project and its rebuttal by the investigator
d. a one-page statement from the P.I. which includes a plan for achieving successful funding for the specific project for which bridge funding is requested
e. a budget
f. a summary of other funds that are available and that have or will be used to assist in the bridging process

No application will be reviewed without these documents.