

SPARK Awards

In addition to the individual awards, this year the NEGEA will offer funds to support innovations through SPARK Awards. This new opportunity is open to scholars across the region. Applications due April 1, 2026. Details below.

DEADLINE: April 1, 2026

AWARD DESCRIPTION

SPARK awards are designed to serve as catalysts for innovation in medical education. An innovation can be the introduction or development of a new method, process, approach, or technological application that provides a solution to a problem in medical education.

To recognize faculty members in NEGEA-affiliated schools who have developed an innovative approach to medical education, the NEGEA will provide awards of \$1,500 to each recognized outstanding innovation in medical education. NOTE: This is an award rather than a grant and, as such, the winners have the discretion on how the funds are applied.

ELIGIBILITY

Any faculty member in an NEGEA-affiliated school may submit a proposal. Faculty members may submit only one project and may not be an author, PI, or co-PI on any other project currently receiving NEGEA funding.

SUBMISSION DETAILS

Submissions must be received by **April 1, 2026** via email as a single PDF document. Please direct questions and send submissions to Rebecca Blanchard (NEGEA past chair) at rblanchard2@kumc.edu with the subject line “[LastName] NEGEA SPARK Award”.

COVER PAGE

Cover page must include:

- Name of applicant(s) and institution(s)
- Contact information for project leader (mailing address, telephone, email)
- Title of innovation project
- Brief description (50 words or less)
- Institutional officer or other administrator to whom payment will be made (name, title, address, phone, and e-mail)

SUBMISSION DESCRIPTION

Submissions should follow the following outline and be **no longer than 3 pages (single-spaced)**:

- Statement of the problem or reason for innovation
- Brief review of the pertinent literature underlying the innovation
- Description of the innovation including details of the process or program and timeline for implementation
- Evaluation design
- Outcomes (how did you know the intended outcomes were achieved?)
- Lessons learned (based on the results, would you change the innovation in the future?)
- References: no more than 5 (not included in the 3-page limit)

LETTER OF SUPPORT

At least one letter of support is required from key participants (faculty, administrators, dean, chair, etc.) sharing their reactions to the innovation and its positive impact on the institution, learners, or faculty. Letters of support should accompany the submission as a single PDF and are not included in the 3-page limit.

REVIEW PROCESS

- Submissions must be received by **April 1, 2026**, to be considered for this year's award.
- A committee consisting of current NEGEA steering committee members reviews all submissions.
- Review committee members are not eligible for this award.

REVIEW CRITERIA

Each submission will be judged on the following criteria:

- Importance of problem(s) addressed with the innovation
- Clarity of goals and objectives
- Originality of innovation, obstacles overcome
- Application of supporting literature/evidence
- Outcomes and lessons learned
- Potential to have an impact on medical education and serve as a model for other institutions

PROJECT DISSEMINATION

- If this innovation is presented at other conferences or published, an acknowledgment of the NEGEA SPARK Award must be included.