Request for Online Teaching and Learning Proposals

The Office of the Provost is requesting proposals for 2016-2017 for a new round of development of online and blended learning projects. With support from the Chief Information Officer and through the Online Teaching and Learning Initiative (OTL) this program has provided seed funding for proposals that support one or more of the strategic goals of the University: 1) attracting and retaining enrollments, 2) developing and extending access to new academic programs, 3) promoting community and learner engagement, and 4) attracting new resources. Proposals are sought from academic departments, programs, and colleges that strategically address specific curricular, enrollment, institutional, and disciplinary needs.

General Information

Proposals for the development of individual fully-online and blended courses to be offered during the academic year (Fall or Spring terms) will be funded in tiers with amounts set at $1500-$4000. Fully online individual course proposals should also integrate with and apply to complete online credentials such as the BS in Information Technology or other existing or proposed online degree or certificate programs.

Proposals to develop projects that result in multiple, related online courses that extend the reach of an academic program are eligible for higher amounts (up to $15,000). For example a proposal to put the core courses of an academic program or major online would qualify for this level of support. Such proposals should also articulate in-kind contributions from faculty/staff in the department or academic unit of origin.

NEW: Blended Learning: This RFP will also support efforts intended to enhance engagement with campus-based undergraduate and graduate students through uses of blended learning (please see details below.) These faculty projects will receive fast track review, support from ITS and ITLAL and are eligible for $1500 stipends upon successful completion of the course redevelopment.

Deadline for proposals:

NEW: Blended Learning Proposals: December 1, 2015 funding available Spring, 2016.

Online Course and Program Proposals March 1, 2016; funding available after July 1, 2016

Instructions for submitting a proposal: Proposals require the endorsement of the Dean of the College/School from which it originates. They should be transmitted with endorsement through the Dean electronically to the Office of the Provost (smahan@albany.edu).

Requirements: Maximum 5 page application including which of the four goals the proposal supports (see below), a brief rationale for the strategy, and a budget indicating how funds will be used. Project leads for funded proposals will be responsible to document project progress and final outcomes with a final written report delivered either at an OTL Steering Committee meeting and/or a faculty development workshop. NOTE: Blended Learning Proposals do not require a budget and are limited to 2 pages indicating the course title, topic, and initial thoughts on the potential advantages of blended learning for the course or academic program. Successfully applicants will also receive support for understanding effective blended models and methods.

Additional Information

Proposals for new online courses by faculty who have never developed or taught online will be eligible for the base amount and will be supported by ITS Faculty Technology Resources (FTR) for developing fluency and innovation with Blackboard and online pedagogical approaches. More sophisticated online course development will be eligible for higher levels of funding and may be used as exemplars for advanced course design demonstration or workshops (with permission of the instructor). Courses supported for development in previous
rounds of OTL funding – or those previously offered online during summer or winter -- must clearly demonstrate the new or additional benefit of investment addressing the specific criteria below to be eligible for support.

Criteria for selection: Proposals will be reviewed by members of the OTL Steering Committee Working Groups as to whether the proposal reflects one of the four priorities, meaningfully extends the reach of an academic program, and is feasible given the resources and time allocated. For fully online courses/programs, evidence such as estimates of new enrollments made possible by the project will assist with assessing the merit of the proposal.

Priorities
Proposals should reflect one of the following four priority areas for advancing the University.

Student Engagement through Blended Learning
This round of funding will support efforts intended to promote better engagement with our campus students through uses of blended learning. Proposals in this area will emphasize course re-designs that replace some classroom seat-time with active and interactive online learning activities. To be funded these projects will also be expected to result in better use of existing classrooms space. Faculty seeking to redevelop courses for blended learning will be eligible for a $1500 stipend, and will be provided with support from ITLAL and ITS to better understanding and implement effective blended learning models, and to coordinate effective classroom use. Successful proposals in this area will help deepen learner engagement, promote more efficient use of physical infrastructure (e.g. classroom sharing), improve learning and/or promote retention of students. This is a fast track area and proposals for Blended Learning projects are due December 1, 2015.

Attracting and Retaining New Enrollments
This RFP also supports projects which have as a goal to develop online courses, programs, or supports that result in new enrollments, especially innovative efforts to better serve out-of-state and international students, enhance diversity, or attract qualified students who otherwise would not attend the University. Possible approaches include the development of online learning opportunities that prepare international or underrepresented populations of students for physical attendance at the University before they arrive or provide options for blending distance education with on-campus learning for international or out-of-state students. Successful proposals will articulate a promising approach that utilizes online and distance learning for reaching new student populations and thus advancing this strategic goal of the University.

Expanding Academic Offerings
Proposals that seek to develop online programs that provide expanded access to either existing or new academic offerings will also be supported through this RFP. Examples include the development of online courses that satisfy general education requirements and that are offered during the academic year and thus support the larger strategic goal of making undergraduate education more accessible for students with work or family commitments or who live at a distance from campus. This proposal also solicits more ambitious proposals that seek to develop several related online courses (such as core courses) or entire degree programs to be offered online. Incorporating strategies that are likely to also attract out-of-state and international students will make all such proposals more competitive but are not required. Proposals that use online and blended learning to expand degree-granting and research programs to meet demands in high-growth, high-needs areas, such as engineering, big data analytics, and allied health sciences are particularly relevant.

Attracting New Resources
Proposals for seed funding to develop applications that compete for external resources to support either online course/program development and/or funded research related to online teaching and learning will also be supported through this RFP. Small grants will be made that support convening faculty and/or staff necessary to develop a proposal to, for example, the SUNY High Needs program, the National Science Foundation, The Institute for Education Science or a private philanthropic agency. Funds will be dispersed after the proposal is developed and submitted to the external organization. Proposals that are submitted to an external funding agency that do not win support from that agency may be considered for partial support internally, either for resubmittal elsewhere or to pilot efforts outlined in the application.