

Call for Proposals:
Promoting Student Learning in Large Classes
Supported by the Bush Foundation
November 2004-December 2007

Introduction

Recently the Bush Foundation awarded the University of Minnesota system a three-year grant to enhance student learning through innovative teaching and technology strategies. Each of the campuses has selected a particular focus for its efforts. On the Twin Cities campus, the Center for Teaching and Learning Services and the Digital Media Center will work with faculty and instructional staff to improve student learning in large classes. Outcomes of this project will include:

- an increased understanding and application of principles of good practice for promoting student learning in large lectures.
- design and implementation of a UM-TC campus model that brings together working teams from various disciplines to address an institutional problem through a scholarly approach to teaching and learning.
- professional development of Twin Cities instructional leaders who use innovative teaching and technology strategies to address teaching and learning challenges associated with large classes.
- dissemination of findings about promoting student learning in large classes.

Eligibility

Faculty who teach undergraduates in a large (over 50 students) course at the 1000 and 3000-level are eligible to apply to participate in this project; this group includes assistant, associate, and full professors; teaching specialists and senior teaching specialists; and lecturers and senior lecturers. We are looking for instructors who will teach the same large 1000- or 3000-level course regularly over the next three years and who preferably have taught the course three times previously. The grant will focus on courses that are offered regularly and in multiple sections.

Description of Project

Twelve "Course Teams," each focusing on a particular course, will re-design a large class that is offered regularly on the Twin Cities Campus. Six of these course teams will focus on 1000-level courses, and six will focus on 3000-level courses. Course teams typically will be made up of three individuals:

- a faculty member or instructional P&A who will teach the course a minimum of three times between January 2005 and December 2007 and provide on-going leadership to the Course Team. This faculty member will receive a Professional Development allowance of \$2000 each year in return for participation in this project; these professional development funds may be used for conferences (registration, travel, and food), books, and software.
- a teaching P&A or graduate teaching assistant who will assist the faculty member or instructional P&A in teaching and re-designing the course. This individual will receive a Professional Development allowance of \$1000 for each semester associated with the project; these professional development funds may be used for conferences (registration, travel, and food), books, and software.
- an undergraduate who is a current or previous participant in the course and will contribute to the re-design of the course. In addition to providing a student perspective about learning in the course, this undergraduate will assist with gathering feedback from students participating in the course. This undergraduate will receive a salary of \$10.00/an hour for 10 hours per week for up to 15 weeks each semester associated with the project.

All twelve Course Teams will be involved in a collaborative research project during the nine-month academic year to determine the impact of innovative teaching and technology strategies on student learning in large classes. The courses targeted by the twelve Course Teams will represent a range of large class environments. All Course Teams in the research project will work over a period of three years to enhance student learning by (1) engaging students actively in the learning process and (2) encouraging students to be reflective and responsible learners; each Course Team will choose the particular strategies they want to

use to achieve these goals. Programming to support Course Teams in their course re-design will build on principles of scholarly teaching and promote a collaborative approach to addressing issues involved with teaching and learning in large classes.

The evaluation plan for the Twin Cities project will target two areas. First, we will evaluate the impact of Course Team efforts to promote student learning in large classes. We will do this by:

- comparing success rates (ABC) and non-success rates (DFNWI) of students in a re-designed course to other sections of the same course or similar U of M classes.
- measuring the effectiveness of particular innovative teaching strategies and technology enhancements on targeted learning outcomes for students in large classes.
- comparing responses to specific student evaluation questions in the re-designed course to other sections of the same course or similar U of M classes.
- surveying students about their experience/satisfaction/engagement in the re-designed course.

Second, we will survey faculty involved in this three-year project about its impact on furthering a scholarly and collaborative approach to addressing campus teaching and learning issues.

Support for Course Teams

Efforts of the six 1000-Level Course Teams and the six 3000-Level Course Teams will be supported by:

- a Teaching & Technology-Enhanced Learning Consultant.
- an Assessment & Evaluation Consultant.
- The Bush Grant Twin Cities Coordinating Group. This group consists of a Grant Project Manager, the Principal Investigators for the grant (Carol Carrier, Vice President of Human Resources; Linda Jorn, Director of the Digital Media Center; and Joyce Weinsheimer, Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning Services), the four CTLS and DMC consultants, and the two faculty who provide leadership to the 1000- and 3000-level Course Teams. The Coordinating Group will plan the monthly workshops and additional grant activities.
- Two External Evaluators who will contribute to the design and implementation of the project's evaluation plan.
- Undergraduate student assistants who can provide technical help for up to ten hours/week for 15 weeks per semester.

Expectations for Course Teams

Course Teams will be expected to:

1. Meet with all other Course Teams as a multidisciplinary group on a monthly basis throughout the nine-month academic year to:
 - reflect on experiences with large classes and share observations with peers;
 - inform their thinking about teaching and learning in large classes by reviewing literature, learning about instructional technology, and considering options for course re-design;
 - determine how to use the classroom as a laboratory to explore how to enhance student learning in large classes;
 - update colleagues on project efforts to promote student learning through innovative teaching and technology strategies.
2. Meet individually with consultants on a regular basis to focus on project-specific issues. Together the Course Team and consultants will shape goals for re-designing the course, formulate a strategic plan to achieve the goals, and determine how to assess the impact of the project on student learning.
3. Conduct on-going assessment of student learning through classroom assessment techniques (CATS) to learn more about who the students in the large class are, what these students know and understand, and what teaching strategies are having a positive impact on their learning.

4. Use common measures to evaluate in each particular large class environment the effectiveness of the strategies used to engage students actively in the learning process and encourage them to be reflective and responsible learners.
5. Contribute to data collection requested by the External Evaluators and the Bush Grant Twin Cities Coordinating Group.
6. Devote a minimum of 15 hours a month to this course re-design project throughout the nine-month academic year.

Application Guidelines

Application packets should include:

1. Completed application form (see below).
2. Letter of support from department chair.
3. Spring 2005 schedule that lists your teaching and standard meeting commitments. (We will use this information to set up monthly plenary meetings for all Course Teams.)
4. Curriculum vitae for leader of Course Team.

Send all application materials by **noon on Friday, January 7, 2005**, to:

The Center for Teaching and Learning Services
Attn: Bush Grant Twin Cities Coordinating Group
315 Science Classroom Building
222 Pleasant St. SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Selection Criteria

Preference will be given to Course Teams who: (1) propose to work with large 1000- and 3000-level courses that are taught regularly in multiple sections; (2) are convinced there is a need for change; and (3) are interested in taking a scholarly and collaborative approach to improving student learning through innovative teaching and technology strategies.

Questions?

For more information about the Bush grant initiative, visit the CTLS web site at <http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/innovative/index.html>

If you have questions about this project, plan to attend an Information Session:

Wednesday, Dec. 15
10-11 a.m.
315 Science Classroom Bldg. (CTLS office)
EAST BANK

Thursday, Dec. 16
1-2 p.m.
365 Borlaug Hall
ST. PAUL

Promoting Student Learning in Large Classes

**Application to Participate in the
Twin Cities Bush Grant Project
January 2005-December 2007**

Name and Title:

Department and College:

Campus Address:

Email Address:

1. Describe the course you would like to re-design.

Include course number and title, information about how often the course is offered and enrollment data for the course. If possible, include information about the success rates (ABC) and non-success rates (DFNWI) of students in this course.

2. Describe your experience with this course.

How many times have you taught this course? When will you teach it again? How does this course fit into the larger departmental curriculum? What makes it difficult for students to succeed in this course? What helps students learn? Why do you want to target this course for improvement?

3. Describe a particular barrier to student learning in this course and how you have addressed it in the past.

4. If your Course Team is selected to begin working on this project in February, who will be on the team? What particular strengths will each team member bring to the project?

Notes: (1) We expect the faculty member or instructional P&A who begins the project in February to provide leadership to the Course Team throughout the three-year project. We realize that teaching assistants and undergraduates associated with the project may change on an annual basis. (2) If a Course Team intends to include more than one faculty member or instructional P&A, one teaching P&A or teaching assistant, and one undergraduate in the project, then the application should include a description of what additional resources the college or department will provide to cover additional costs.

5. What else would you like the Bush Grant Twin Cities Coordinating Group to know about your ability to meet the selection criteria (see previous page) for participating in this project?