



Initiative for Teaching and Learning Excellence

Year 3: 2006-07

The Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln announces Year 3 of the Initiative for Teaching and Learning Excellence. This Initiative continues the deep commitment of the University to teaching excellence and student learning by making significant investments in undergraduate education. This academic year, the Initiative for Teaching and Learning Excellence will distribute \$100,000 for outcomes-based undergraduate program assessment projects that use direct measures of student learning to guide decisions about improving curriculum and pedagogy. All funds awarded must be expended by May 2008.

The goal of the Initiative this year is to enable undergraduate programs to develop and implement a complete and continuous cycle of improvement that:

- Identifies what each program expects students to learn (outcomes);
- Develops appropriate assessment measures for determining whether students are or are not achieving the outcomes;
- Conducts those assessments;
- Uses the evidence gathered to improve instruction or curriculum;
- Confirms the effectiveness of the implemented program improvements.

Proposals that also accomplish any of the following are especially welcome:

- Foster new collaborations between faculty and enable them to share ideas and materials so that projects build on, connect to, and enhance the work of others;
- Align department/program learning outcomes with UNL's Core Values;
- Draw on embedded or existing measures of learning to assess a program's success in helping students achieve outcomes;
- Make assessment of student learning a regular part of the program's administrative rhythms and faculty discussions;
- Incorporate assessment evidence and analysis into broader planning and review processes (e.g. curricular decisions, strategic planning, accreditation and academic program reviews).

Recipients will be expected to share their work in a campus presentation/demonstration by December 2008.

To Apply

Proposals must be submitted electronically to the dean of the originating college by October 27, 2006. Please direct specific inquiries about proposed projects to Dave Wilson, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (472-3751 or teaching@unl.edu).

Each proposal must include:

- The standard coversheet (see attached)
- A 2-page proposal including:
 - A brief statement of need describing where you are programmatically in the cycle of assessment and improvement. Are you seeking to start, expand, or improve your assessment processes (or some combination of these)? What do you know already about your students' learning, and how do you know it?
 - A description of the project, its relationship to the goals articulated for the Initiative, and its relationship to the unit's 2006 strategic plan. In addition articulate the project's scope and impact, and how it will advance the department's ability to improve student learning. Describe the process for identifying student learning outcomes, developing and conducting the assessment(s), and how you will systematically "close the loop" to implement teaching or curriculum changes that are indicated by your findings. How will the achievements of the project be sustained by the department/program beyond the initial funding provided by the grant? (Other questions to consider: Are appropriate stakeholders represented? Are those who will implement the changes in the classroom or the curriculum part of the project? Are there feedback loops through the appropriate administrative processes in the program—curriculum committees, directors of undergraduate study, course coordinators—so that data can be turned into action?)
 - A timetable for identifying student learning outcomes, developing and conducting the assessment(s), implementing changes in response to those data, and confirming the effectiveness of implemented changes. Identify persons responsible for each stage.
 - A detailed budget.

Proposals will be reviewed at three levels:

- the dean of the college from which the proposal originates
- an advisory committee with representation from the Teaching Council, the Academy of Distinguished Teachers, Association of Students of the University of Nebraska, the Academic Planning Committee, the Academic Senate, and Undergraduate Studies
- the Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Reviews by deans will be based on the fit between the project and the college's strategic plans/priorities.

Reviews at later levels will be based on the following criteria:

- **Project Goals and Objectives:** Does the project address the goals articulated for the Initiative? Is the project's relationship to the unit's strategic plan clear? Does it help the college advance its assessment agenda?
- **Project Plan:** Are plans and procedures for achieving project goals well developed, innovative, worthwhile, and realistic? Are the project activities clearly related to the project goals and the five steps in the improvement cycle? Is the project timeline feasible and realistic?
- **Project Impact:** Will successful completion of the project have an impact on UNL undergraduate education, both now and in the future? Are there commitments from those who can turn data into action? Can the project be sustained beyond the initial funding?
- **Budget:** Is the requested budget appropriate, feasible, and well defined?

Final selections will be made by the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

Send completed proposals electronically (in MS Word, pdf, or html format) by October 27, 2006, to your dean.

For assistance putting together a proposal, please attend the September 29th (10:30-noon) presentation at the Nebraska Union by Dr. Virginia S. Lee and review a new Assessment Guidebook at http://www.unl.edu/ous/faculty_resources/assessment/guidebook.shtml.





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2006-07 proposal coversheet

Project Coordinator:

Unit:

Phone:

Email:

Campus Address:

Other Members	Unit	Email

Title of Proposed Project

Inclusive Dates of Project

Amount Requested

Signature of Project Coordinator (and date)

Signature of Chair/Head/Director (and date)

Signatures of Co-applicants (if applicable):

E-mail your proposal by 5:00 pm on October 27, 2006, to your college dean. Scan and e-mail this signed coversheet at the same time—or hand-deliver it by 5:00 pm on October 27, 2006.