

Innovations in Pedagogy I: Blended Learning Technology Grants @ Augustana

The Office of Academic Affairs is pleased to announce the opportunity to apply for Blended Learning Technology Grants (10-15 total grants) to support the creation or redesign of an individual course or a sequence of courses that will be delivered primarily during the 2013-14 or 2014-15 academic years. These grants are an extension of an earlier blended learning grants program funded through Academic Affairs and managed by the Augustana Center for Teaching and Learning (ACTL). All full-time and adjunct faculty are eligible to apply for funding.

For the purposes of this request for proposals (RFP), blended learning is defined as a curricular design that integrates online educational mechanisms with face-to-face activities in a planned, pedagogically valuable manner. Successful blended learning curricular design is achieved when:

- Online learning technologies are integrated into a course or set of courses and employed as a primary means of achieving a subset of student learning outcomes appropriate to the selected online learning technologies and the course or set of courses,
- Face-to-face activities are designed and implemented to 1) facilitate the successful use of the chosen online learning technologies and 2) focus faculty work on meeting the subset of student learning outcomes that are best achieved through face-to-face interaction.
- The overall amount of faculty work required to deliver the course or set of courses and meet the identified student learning outcomes is not significantly more than the amount of faculty work required to deliver a similar course or set of courses through a non-blended format.
- In comparison to previous iterations of a similar course or sets of courses delivered through a non-blended format, the degree to which students achieve the intended learning outcomes of the course or set of courses is maintained or improved.

(This conception of blended learning is derived from Picciano, Anthony G., and Charles D. Dziuban, eds., *Blended Learning: Research Perspectives*. Needham, MA: Sloan Consortium, 2007.)

These grants will provide awarded applicants:

- Support to investigate, identify, and incorporate online learning technologies into existing courses and/or to develop new, blended learning curricular experiences for students
- Support to identify and construct mechanisms to assess the relative effectiveness and efficiency of blended learning curricular designs in achieving student learning outcomes

Finally, the goal of these grants is to generate evidence from our students and our campus to determine whether or not and to what degree might blended and online learning mechanisms improve the quality of the education we provide while maintaining our commitment to our institutional mission as a residential liberal arts college.

Applicants can apply for one of three grant awards. Awards can be paid as stipends and/or can be used for professional development activities related to the grant.

- **A \$1500 Course Adaptation Award**
 - This grant is designed for faculty who are already demonstrably comfortable with some level of online learning technology and would like to significantly revise an existing course to meet the definition of a successful blended learning curricular design outlined above.

- **A \$4500 Course Creation Award (or a course release)**
 - This grant is designed for 1) faculty who are already demonstrably comfortable with some level of online learning technology and would like to create a new course that meets the definition of the blended learning curricular design outlined above, or 2) faculty who have not previously used online learning technologies and would like to substantially revise an existing course or create a new course that meets the definition of a successful blended learning curricular design outlined above.

- **A \$1000 Course Sequence Collaboration Award**
 - This grant is designed for any group of faculty teaching a sequence of courses who 1) have also each applied individually to revise/redesign or create a single blended learning course, and 2) the group of courses proposed function together as a sequence of courses that already exists in the Augustana catalogue. This grant would be awarded to the group of applicants and be distributed among them as they so choose. (Since learning communities currently count as a single course, this award would not apply to learning communities.)

An independent committee of faculty and administrators who have not submitted applications for these grants will evaluate all grant proposals. The strongest proposals will explicitly address how the applicants will endeavor to meet each of the criteria for a successful blended learning curricular design outlined above. Applications should also include at least a basic description of the technological resource requirements necessary to fully incorporate the proposed blended learning design. Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult with ITS during the course of developing their proposal in order to better understand the current range of available resources and whether or not their proposal might require technology resources beyond those already provided by the College.

While applications will generally be considered under the grant category to which they have been submitted, the committee can consider the possibility of awarding the alternate grant based upon 1) the degree of revision/redesign or course creation proposed, and 2) the extent to which the applicant's proposal reflects a departure from their previous approach to course design and delivery. For all approved applications, half of the funding will be awarded at the time of selection while the other half will be awarded upon completion of the course delivery and submission of the project summary and assessment.

Grants proposals are due to the Office of Academic Affairs **by Monday, November 12th, 2012**. Decisions will be announced by December 14th, 2012. The proposed blended learning courses are expected to run during the 2013-14 or 2014-15 academic years.

Proposal Guidelines

All proposals should include:

1. A narrative description that answers the following questions:

- Which course will benefit from this project? When will the blended learning course be offered, and which students will be its target constituency? Please include how often you plan to teach the course, and if applicable, enrollments from the past two years' offerings, and the syllabus from the last time you taught the course.
- Which specific blended learning innovation(s) will you employ in this course?
- How will blended learning enhance student learning in the course? In what ways does the educational objectives of this course make it particularly conducive to blended/online learning?
- How have you employed creative teaching pedagogies and/or technology-enhanced teaching in the past (please include any relevant URLs, Moodle sites, or other online locations)?
- What kinds of equipment, instructional design assistance, computer training, technical assistance, and/or other resources will you require in order to complete this project?
- What challenges do you foresee that might inhibit the redesign or creation of this course or sequence of courses or the delivery of this course or sequence of courses?
- Above and beyond the previous definition of a successful blended learning curricular design, how would describe a successful outcome of the project you are proposing? How will you assess the impact of this project on student learning and faculty work load (i.e., what is your evaluation plan)?

2. A timetable for planning, implementation, and assessment.

3. A current CV

Project Completion

Funded projects must be completed by the end of the Summer of the 2014-15 academic year with a final project summary detailing activities and assessment submitted to the Academic Affairs office by August 31, 2015. Funded participants will be asked to share their results with colleagues during one or more public forums (Faculty Retreat, Faculty Newsletter, Teaching Circle, Friday Conversation, etc.).

Listed below are several resources that provide more information and insights on blended learning:

Power point presentation from Bryn Mawr College about their experience with a blended learning pilot program: <http://nextgenlearning.blogs.brynmawr.edu/files/2012/01/May2012.pdf>

A research paper on one institution's experience transitioning an undergraduate course to a blended format: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/EJ918216.pdf>

A podcast reviewing a meta-analysis from the Dept of Ed. on the effects of blended or online learning: <http://www.educause.edu/blogs/gbayne/eli-2011-podcast-blended-learning-designs-learning-science-perspective>

An article from Inside HigherEd that provides "some observations by an archetypal Old Prof who wonders as he wanders through the new terrain of distance learning."
<http://www.insidehighered.com/views/2012/07/10/professors-shouldnt-be-afraid-online-learning-essay>

An article from New York Times that opines on the drawbacks of online learning: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/20/opinion/the-trouble-with-online-education.html>

Information on how to think about building a blended learning course -

From the University of Central Florida, this site is a virtual do-it-yourself warehouse for building a blended learning course: <http://blended.online.ucf.edu/>

Also from the University of Central Florida site, this site cuts the chase for the whole process of building a successful blended course: <http://blended.online.ucf.edu/blendkit-course-diy-project-tasks/>

Everything you could want and more from EDUCAUSE, a non-profit organization dedicated to maximizing technology in learning: <http://www.educause.edu/library/blended-learning#jqtab-0>

Another great site from the University of Maryland: <http://otal.umd.edu/instructional-resources>