

Request for Proposals: Learning Communities on Teaching & Mentoring

Sponsored by: Cornell University Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CU-CIRTL) and the Cornell University Graduate School

Open to: Departments, Directors of Graduate Studies (DGSs), Graduate Field Assistants (GFAs), Graduate Students, Postdocs, Research Associates, Visiting Scholars, etc. at Cornell.

Due Date: Monday, August 10th, 5pm

CU-CIRTL is soliciting small grant proposals to form learning communities (LCs) of graduate students, postdocs, research associates, visiting scholars, and other early career academics at Cornell University. Learning communities bring together groups of people for shared learning, discovery, and generation of knowledge. To achieve common learning goals, a learning community nurtures functional relationships among its members.

Learning communities should be centered around one or more of the CU-CIRTL core ideas:

1. **Evidence-based Teaching Practices (Teaching as Research)** - The deliberate, systematic, and reflective use of research methods to develop and implement teaching practices that advance the learning experiences and outcomes of both students and teachers.
2. **Inclusive Teaching and Learning (Learning through Diversity)** - Capitalizing on the rich array of experiences, backgrounds, and skills among students, faculty, and staff to enhance the learning of all.
3. **Effective and Inclusive Mentoring** - Effective mentoring supports students at different career stages towards their goals and is focused on cultivating open and respectful research groups that fully engage scholars of all backgrounds.

Some potential learning community topics are:

- A book club centered around the book *Getting What You Came For: The Smart Student's Guide to Earning an M.A. or a Ph.D.* by Robert Peters (ISBN: 978-0374524777)
- A learning community of graduate students and/or postdocs who are developing Teaching Philosophy Statements or other documents for the academic job search
- A learning community focused on acquiring the skills necessary for the transition from being a TA to becoming a faculty member or instructor or record
- A learning community convening weekly over a month for group viewings and discussions of CIRTLCast webinars around a theme
- A journal club centered around peer reviewed articles on teaching innovations
- A journal club centered around articles about retention of diverse students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) higher education

Applications can be submitted at:

https://cornell.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_c08SmWhCuqikzgf

For questions, contact Colleen McLinn, CU-CIRTL Director

cu-cirtl@cornell.edu | 607-255-2030 | 325 Caldwell Hall

www.gradschool.cornell.edu/cu-cirtl

Topics are not restricted to these areas; you are invited to come up with your own ideas. Learning communities centered around the Fall 2015 CIRTL massive open online course, *An Introduction to Evidence-Based Undergraduate STEM Teaching*, are being solicited in a separate announcement with a later due date.

Eligibility:

Proposals may be submitted by individuals or small groups and will be selected through a competitive application process. Both discipline-specific and interdisciplinary learning communities are welcome, and we hope to fund an equal number of graduate student-focused and postdoc-focused learning communities, or ones that include both groups.

Benefits:

In addition to the prestige of being awarded a competitive small grant and serving as a learning community leader, awardees will have access to a budget of \$500 which can be used for room rentals, refreshments, books, speaker fees, photocopying costs, etc.

Learning community leaders will receive mentoring on how to structure an effective session and guidance on leading an engaging discussion appropriate to their stage of experience. As facilitating a learning community is intended to be a professional development opportunity for the leaders themselves, proposals from relatively inexperienced leaders with a sincere interest in developing their communication and leadership skills are welcome.

Requirements:

Awardees will receive mentoring from CU-CIRTL. They will be required to participate in:

- An intake meeting with the CU-CIRTL Program Director to discuss and develop details of the learning community before launch (August-September 2015)
- 1-2 meetings with other awardees to share lessons learned
- A debriefing meeting with all awardees at the end of the grant period

In addition, awardees will be required to submit:

- A one-page description of how mid-course feedback is being collected from learning community participants, and details of changes being made in response
- A brief summary of learning community outcomes and an image for the website

Number of Awards:

We anticipate awarding up to 6 grants of up to \$500 each, which will be disbursed by August 31st, 2015. Additional \$500 grants may be awarded in the 2015-2016 academic year on a rolling deadline. A second year of funding may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Grants will be awarded and funds disbursed in August 2015. Expenditure of all year 1 funds should be completed by August 31, 2016.

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