

# Teaching Innovation Grants

**Call for Proposals and Program Guidelines 2020**

## Overview and Program Description

The Morgan Teaching and Learning Center, the Educational Development Council (EDC), and the Academic Technology Center (ATC) aim to enrich learning experiences for WPI students and foster a climate of teaching innovation by supporting faculty to seed bold new initiatives in undergraduate and graduate education. A total of **$75,000** in funds from the Morgan endowment, Information Technology division, and the Educational Development Council is available for distribution. The proposal deadline is February 15, 2020 and awards will be announced in D-term.

Proposals in any area are welcome. Possible topics include but are not limited to: development and assessment of global and intercultural competency; issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the curriculum and teaching practices; ethics across the curriculum; significant redesign of courses for active learning classrooms; interdisciplinary initiatives; innovative graduate education; and leveraging new technologies for pedagogical purposes.

Two types of grants are available: **Faculty Learning Community (FLC) grants** and **Independent Project (IP) grants**. See sections III and IV for details about each type. Proposals, whether for a FLC or IP grant, will merit funding only if they go beyond normal expectations for renewal and improvement of curricula and pedagogical strategies.

## Eligibility

All tenured and tenure-track faculty and full-time non-tenure track faculty are eligible to apply for Teaching Innovation Grants. Full-time professional staff with significant educational roles are eligible for FLCs and may be part of an Independent Project group if the group also includes one or more full-time faculty members. Part-time adjunct faculty are also eligible for both types of grants, but full-time faculty will be given priority. The PI of Independent Projects must be a full-time faculty member. There are no restrictions or limits on the number of proposals that an individual may submit.

## Faculty Learning Community Grants

A Faculty Learning Community (FLC) is a group of faculty (or a mix of faculty and staff) from multiple disciplines engaging in collegial inquiry, action, and collective learning around a central theme. (More information about FLCs can be found [here](http://www.units.miamioh.edu/flc/whatis.php).) **This year, we are soliciting applications from self-identified groups (4-6 people) working around a common theme (see section IIIA)**. Preference will be given to teams that include members across disciplines. FLCs are facilitated by a faculty or staff member with experience or interest in the FLC theme. The facilitator should be clearly identified in the proposal.

### Potential Themes

### FLC themes emerge from collective faculty interests. FLC themes from recent years are listed below.

* ***Reflections, Connections, and ePortfolios.*** Investigating how WPI’s new ePortfolio platform can be used to enhance integrative learning and reflective practice, helping students make intentional choices and connect and transfer their learning across contexts.

### *Project-Based Courses.* Transforming current courses, at the undergraduate or graduate level, to include a significant component of project-based learning.

### *Global and Intercultural Competency.* Experimenting with ways of developing and assessing students’ global or intercultural competency and incorporating issues of diversity, inclusion, and equity more explicitly across the curriculum.

* ***Visual Communication.*** Developing and testing teaching and learning resources in courses or projects to help students, instructors, and advisors across disciplines to critically view, use, and produce visual content such as images, illustrations, models, graphs and charts, and other data visualizations.
* ***Open Educational Resources.*** Identifying or developing OERs and evaluating their use in courses or projects to enhance or replace existing resources.

### Commitment, Expectations, and Funding of FLC Members

An FLC requires a one year commitment, from May 15, 2020 to May 15, 2021. Each FLC member will be expected to:

* prepare for, attend, and actively participate in monthly meetings beginning in May 2020 (those at off-campus project centers will be asked to participate virtually)
* conduct a project that is aligned with the FLC theme and assess or evaluate the outcomes
* submit a summary of the outcomes of their FLC project by June 1, 2021
* share their work with a larger audience, by giving a presentation on their work, by providing resource materials on the topic of the FLC for the larger teaching community, by publishing the findings of their work, or through some other means

Each faculty member in a FLC will receive a fixed stipend of $3,000 in two stages. Facilitators will receive an addition $1000. The first half will be awarded at the end of August 2020 and the remainder will be awarded at the end of May 2021 when the collective work of the FLC is complete. Funds will be awarded as faculty compensation, in a lump-sum payment such that benefits will not be charged. In special circumstances, some of the award funds may be directed to equipment or specific professional development activities necessary for the project.

Exempt professional staff with 12 month appointments may not receive additional compensation. Staff who wish to be part of an FLC should discuss with their supervisor how their work activities will be adjusted during the grant period. Up to $2,000 will be available for staff members to utilize toward publications, a conference, workshop, or other type of professional development experience that will enable or enrich their project. General transfer of funds to Professional Development Accounts is not allowed for either faculty or staff members of FLCs.

Additional funds may be made available to facilitate the work of the FLC. Requests and justifications must be included in the application.

**The stipend for FLC grants means that each awardee should undertake significant course redesign, resource development and testing, or assessment/research projects.**

### Commitment, Expectations, and Funding of FLC Facilitators

The facilitator’s general responsibilities are to foster a collegial environment among the FLC participants and support them in achieving their individual and collective goals. Faculty who will be in residence at off-campus project centers are not eligible to apply. Specific responsibilities include:

* Scheduling monthly, 2-hour meetings (from May through April)
* Arranging meeting space and catering with the assistance of the Academic Events Planner
* Selecting some common reading for the group at the start of the FLC
* Setting the agenda for each meeting with input from the group
* Facilitating discussion and dialogue that helps each person refine their ideas using constructive feedback during the planning and implementation stages
* Conducting some informal formative evaluation partway through the year about how the FLC is going
* Arranging for resource sharing through a Canvas site or other mechanism
* Encouraging internal and external dissemination of the group’s work

###  Application Process for Faculty Learning Communities:

* 1. **Application:** Applications to FLCs are due by February 15. The application form (linked on the [Morgan Center website](https://www.wpi.edu/academics/faculty/morgan-teaching-learning-center/funding/teaching-innovation-grants)) requests a 1-2 page narrative response to three questions. As the FLC requires a significant commitment of time, applicants must also submit a brief letter of support from their department head or supervisor.

## Independent Project Grants

This grant mechanism is intended for applicants, either individuals or small groups, whose project does not fit with a FLC theme and for those who cannot or do not wish to commit to the scope or regular interaction of a FLC. In general, these grants aim to promote innovative, evidence-based pedagogy and curricula that enhance student learning, provide seed money for pilot projects that will strengthen proposals for external funding, support evaluation of ongoing or proposed innovations aimed at publication, and support professional development or external partnerships related to teaching and learning. In addition, grants may assist faculty in designing their instructional approaches using technology to achieve enhanced learning, take advantage of efficiencies that can be realized through the use of emerging technologies for teaching, and evaluate the impact of new instructional approaches.

This program does *not* fund routine updating or renewal of courses, curricula, or teaching methods.

### Funding Levels, Allowable Costs, and Instructions for Budget Justification

Applicants propose their own budget. Grants have usually ranged from $3,000 to $10,000 in recent years. Evidence of cost-sharing from the program or department, or from other sources, often strengthens a proposal but is not essential. Following are instructions about allowable costs and budget justification:

***Faculty compensation.*** Faculty compensation is appropriate only for those who have less than 12 month appointments and for activity that extends beyond normal expectations for teaching renewal and improvement; applicants are advised to address this latter point in their budget justification. Faculty compensation may be used either for summer support or academic year release time (pending approval of department head). Compensation is granted as lump-sum payment rather than as summer salary, such that benefits will not be charged.

Exempt professional staff with 12 month appointments may not receive additional compensation. Staff who wish to participate in a grant-supported project should discuss with their supervisor how their work activities will be adjusted during the grant period.

***Student wages.*** Applicants are encouraged to hire undergraduate or graduate students for project activities whenever appropriate. The budget justification must describe the student(s)’ responsibilities, specify the hourly wage, and estimate the number of hours. Student tuition cannot be supported by this grant program.

***Fees for an assessment or evaluation consultant.*** Working with an evaluation consultant is encouraged, as early as the proposal development stage. The quality of evaluation plans is considered during review. To inquire about the availability of our new in-house evaluator or to ask further questions, please contact the Morgan Center’s Research and Evaluation Associate, Kimberly LeChasseur, by completing [this form](https://survey.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0U4DZIPZZZN5TQV).

***Supplies, software, and equipment.*** Software or equipment necessary for enabling a pedagogical experiment that will be assessed is suitable for funding. *This grants program does not provide funding for software and equipment for routine education of WPI students or to bolster relatively new interdisciplinary programs, since that type of support normally should come from department capital or IT budgets.*

***Travel and professional development related to the project.*** General transfer of funds to Professional Development Accounts, for either professional staff or faculty, is not allowed, but specific professional development activity will be supported. Explain how a specific conference, workshop, or other type of professional development experience will enable or enrich the proposed work, and estimate expenses including registration, travel, lodging, and food.

***Other types of costs may well be appropriate to a particular project.*** Please consult with Jill Rulfs if you have questions.

### Application Procedures

Proposals must contain the following:

### Cover Page and Budget with Justification (see [Morgan Center website](https://www.wpi.edu/academics/faculty/morgan-teaching-learning-center/funding/teaching-innovation-grants))

* 1. **Project Description:** This narrative should not exceed three single-spaced typewritten pages with 11 point or larger font. Use of headings is recommended. The narrative should discuss:
		1. ***Need for the project:*** scope of the problem or opportunity to be addressed, relevant background (e.g., current literature, current practices and resources);
		2. ***Approach:*** project objectives, methods or procedures to be used, a plan for assessing and evaluating project results, innovative elements;
		3. ***Outcomes:*** anticipated impacts on WPI students and the institution; further directions that the project might take; a plan for dissemination and/or future funding.
		4. ***Project timeline***

The proposal deadline is February 15, 2020. Proposals should be sent as an email attachment to morgan-center@wpi.edu and should consist of a single pdf document (title page with signatures, budget with justification, and project description).

The review committee will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria: 1) educational soundness of the approach (including plans for assessment or evaluation) and likelihood of success; 2) potential scope of impact; 3) presence of innovative and distinctive elements; and 4) cost effectiveness. Applicants will be notified in D term whether or not their proposal has been accepted.

### Reporting Requirements and Grant Conditions

Grantees are responsible for consulting with WPI’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) to determine if the project involves human subjects and constitutes exempt or non-exempt activity.

The PI is responsible for budget oversight and must approve any disbursement of funds. All funds unexpended by the deadline reporting date will be returned to the EDC or IT Division for redistribution the following year. Extensions must be requested in writing.

At the conclusion of the funded project, the PI must submit a brief written report that documents the outcomes of the project.

## Contacts

Prospective applicants are invited to contact any faculty member of the EDC (Marja Bakermans, Nikhil Karanjgaokar, Jill Rulfs, Jeanine Dudle) or the ATC (Kate Beverage, Mary Beth Harrity) with questions prior to submission. With sufficient advance notice, Jill Rulfs (jrulfs@wpi.edu) and Kate Beverage (kwrigley@wpi.edu) may be able to provide feedback on proposal drafts. To inquire about the availability of our in-house evaluator, please contact the Morgan Center’s Research and Evaluation Associate, Kimberly LeChasseur, by completing [this form](https://survey.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0U4DZIPZZZN5TQV).