Request for Proposals

Student Competencies and Online Learning
URL for this RFP: http://bit.ly/unconlineventure

Deadline: Midnight, May 31, 2015
Range of awarded project support: $15,000 to $25,000

Introduction
The University of North Carolina General Administration Office of Learning Technology & Innovation invites proposals to develop and promote online programs that enhance student competencies—especially critical thinking and written communication—and other competencies crucial to post-graduation success, career mobility, and civic engagement. We seek to fund innovative ideas that help refine and expand ongoing efforts toward student degree attainment. The intent of this RFP is to support and bring to light promising program development work that could be scaled up or duplicated.

RFP Scope
The competency-based scope of this RFP is intended for projects that address the growing demand for flexibly-delivered online courses and programs, employer-sponsored programs, module or certificate programs, internship readiness programs, and other educational models that personalize learning and meet students’ educational and professional goals. These projects will complement and support the University’s strategic plan (Our Time, Our Future) to increase degree attainment and support academic quality, and will provide on-going opportunity for campus development and implementation of e-learning and distance education programming.

Who May Apply for Funds
With the prior approval of campus chief academic officers, faculty and staff from academic and student support departments may apply for funds. Applications should be accompanied by letters of support from relevant administrators.
Timeline
Request for Proposals distributed: May 8
Questions due: May 15, midnight
Proposal due date: May 31, midnight
Notification of Semi-Finalists: June 15
Phone interviews for Semi-Finalists (if necessary): June 15-30
Winners announced: June 30, 2015
Award letters distributed to Campus: August 1, 2015

Questions
Please address questions by email to Dr. Michelle Solér, Director of Competency Based Assessment and Education, mlsoler@northcarolina.edu.

Proposal Requirements
Proposals should include a narrative section that clearly explains the project goals, audience, metrics of success, deliverables, and plans for sustainability.

Other required documentation includes:
● Pro forma budget (showing institutional support).
● Letters of intended partner support (if applicable)
● Timeline
● CVs for project leads (limited to 3 pages each)
● Bios of project participants
● Letter(s) of support from relevant administrators
● Clear statement of competencies to be addressed
● An evaluation plan that addresses how the team will monitor and evaluate the process and outcomes of the project.

Guidelines for Proposal Submission
Proposal should be no more than six pages of narrative plus one page for budget details and justification. Supporting appendices and CVs not included in six pages. Include the name, title, and contact information for the primary applicant(s). This individual will be responsible for reporting on project progress and maintaining communication with UNC-GA staff regarding the project. Faculty and staff involved in accepted proposals will be expected to participate in up to three meetings to share project strategies and progress with fellow awardees and UNC-GA staff.

Provide signoff and endorsement from the department chair, lead academic dean and chief academic officer or chancellor, depending on campus procedures. (This item will not be counted toward the page maximums stated earlier.)
Multiple proposals from a single campus are permitted; these do not need to be ranked.


**Budget**

Provide a detailed timeline for project implementation, assuming funds are available starting October 1, 2015 and will be available through May 30, 2016. Include a brief narrative justification relating the requested amount to the proposed activities across major cost categories (e.g., salary & fringe, materials and supplies, travel, and other costs). Indirect costs are not allowed. The budget should include funds to allow travel to the GA office in Chapel Hill for one meeting. Clearly indicate the amount requested from GA via this RFP and indicate the amount provided via institutional/campus resources. It is anticipated that awards will range from $15,000 to $25,000 depending on the number of sections, faculty members, departments, and/or institutions involved.

**Selection Criteria**

Funded proposals will depend on the amounts requested and intended institutional support. Special consideration will be given to proposals with evidence of cross-departmental or system-wide collaboration, evidence of demand, and opportunity to replicate. Some criteria that the review committee will use are:

- What is the assessment and reporting mechanism that will be used to monitor progress and communicate outcomes?
- Are competencies specifically mapped to project goals?
- Are the project’s goals, tactics and outcomes clearly stated?
- What are the plans to disseminate project results?
- To what extent could the project benefit students at scale?
- How original is the idea?
- Is the idea sustainable beyond the life of this investment?
- What does the project require to be successful?
- Is the project idea based on strong quantitative or qualitative data to demonstrate a need?
- Does the idea have clearly defined and measurable objectives and outcomes?
- Will the project involve collaboration among two or more campuses?
- Will the project involve collaboration among two or more campus units or departments?
- What experience do the proposal participants bring to the project?
- How does the project involve community partners?

**Current challenges include but are not limited to:**

1. Many of the education master’s programs across the University are losing enrollments; online enrollments have been hit particularly hard. What would your proposal do to address this challenge?
2. The State of North Carolina needs motivated, flexible thinkers and problem solvers who can transfer skills across employment sectors. Academic programs that focus on developing 21st century skills that transfer across sectors have been identified nationwide, and are strong drivers for program improvement. What would your proposal do to improve student success opportunities upon graduation?

Opportunities for funding might include but are not limited to:

1. Strategically create opportunities within an online degree or an online completion-degree program to design and deliver content focused toward developing student competencies required in a professional work environment including but not limited to critical thinking and written communication.

2. Convert a high demand, large enrollment online course into a MOOC. Include plans for marketing, enrollment, and registration management, as well as any opportunities for proctored exams.

3. Develop and implement a marketing strategy for online programs addressing student desires for shorter time to degree and job readiness skills, seeking to fill enrollment gaps for specific degrees at your institution, or capturing target audience demographic and psychographic information.

4. Partner with an online degree program currently offered at your institution, and/or an area employer, to design and launch an internship-readiness program (at least partially) delivered online that addresses the specific competencies sought by North Carolina employers in recent college graduates: motivation, leadership, collaboration and teamwork, professionalism, digital literacy, intercultural competency, ethical decision making, persuasive communication, and grit.