

FY 2014-2015

GRINNELL COLLEGE INNOVATION FUND

Program and Application Details

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PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

The Innovation Fund will spur innovative ways of teaching and learning at the College by funding (1) one- to three-year, pilot projects that will investigate and implement ideas initiated by creative faculty, staff, and students; and (2) one-time planning projects by a faculty/staff member or student to investigate whether an idea is feasible. The Fund fosters an agile institution by promoting an environment that is conducive to experimentation and imagination.

This document describes the criteria and process by which proposals for funding will be evaluated and awarded. Note that there will only be one application cycle, with a firm deadline of Monday, September 22, 2014, 11:59 PM CST, for academic year 2014-2015.

This document may be updated or modified as circumstances warrant.

DEFINITIONS

“Applicant” is the individual faculty, staff, or student submitting an Innovation Fund proposal;

“Innovation Fund Committee” or “funding committee” is the committee that awards initial funding to pilot projects or one-time planning projects;

“Innovation Program Advisory Committee” or “advisory committee” is the committee that reviews the progress of pilot projects and determines, at the pilot project’s conclusion, whether such project should continue on a permanent basis;

“Pilot project” is a project that implements and puts into practice an innovative idea, which will be evaluated for success based on goals and measurements as determined by the project lead;

“Planning project” is an action that investigates or researches whether a certain innovative idea is feasible before actual implementation; and

“Project lead” is the individual student, faculty, or staff responsible for leading a pilot or planning project.

FUNDING INFORMATION

- Information in this section is meant as a guideline; there is flexibility in how funds are to be distributed.
- There are two types of funding available from the Innovation Fund: funds that are used to implement an innovative idea and funds that are used to investigate whether an innovative idea is feasible and worthy of implementation.
- Annually, up to \$450,000 will be available for pilot projects and up to \$50,000 for planning projects. The total amount available during any application cycle will vary depending on how much has already been allocated to previously awarded, multi-year projects.
- For pilot projects, the maximum award amount is a total of \$150,000 over a three-year period (\$50,000 maximum per year). Pilot projects awarded funding during the expedited process in 2012-2013 have the option to renew funding for an additional two years upon evaluation of the final report (total project length not to exceed three years of funding).
- For planning projects, the maximum award amount is \$10,000; one-time action, no longer than one year duration.
- Because the Innovation Fund is focused on teaching and learning, funding preference for faculty with projects focused on strategic planning goals and technology will be prioritized.
- The allocation of funds is dependent on the strength of proposals, and the number of awards is contingent on the submission of a sufficient number of meritorious proposals.

ELIGIBILITY

- Faculty, staff, and students may submit a proposal [online](#) (**submission should total no longer than two pages, single-spaced**). Note that the applicant must also be the project lead for a project, if funding is awarded. Therefore, for pilot projects, there is a strong preference for tenured or tenure-track faculty applicants and non-term staff applicants to ensure continuity of a project.
- More than one proposal may be submitted per individual, provided that each proposal is distinct. To promote creative thinking, no project is off limits; however, the project must have the potential for significant impact on teaching or learning and:
 - (1) Provide an innovative way to fulfill one or more parts of the College’s mission: “The College aims to graduate women and men who can think clearly, who can speak and write persuasively and even eloquently, who can evaluate critically both their own and others’ ideas, who can acquire new knowledge, and who are prepared in life and work to use their knowledge and their abilities to serve the common good.”
 - (2) Directly contribute to the success of one or more of the College’s six strategic goals: Teaching and Learning; Learning Spaces; Enrollment; Post-Graduation Success; Alumni Engagement; and Financial and Human Resource Management.
(<http://www.grinnell.edu/about/strategic-plan/directions>)

- While no departmental or office sign-off is needed to submit a proposal, applicants are encouraged to consult with colleagues for appropriate advice. If your proposal is accepted for further consideration, the funding committee will explore what implications your proposal may have on your department or office.

PILOT & PLANNING PROJECTS

Submissions:

All proposals must be submitted by Monday, September 22, 2014 via the [online form](#). This form must be time stamped by 11:59 PM CST.

All proposals must include the following components:

Project Area. While realizing the list below is broad and may overlap, indicate the one area that is most appropriate for your proposed project. Please note that all project areas must relate to teaching and learning.

1. Experiential/Applied Learning, Curricular
2. Experiential/Applied Learning, Co-curricular
3. Career Development/Post Graduate Success
4. Residence Life
5. Access/Retention
6. Learning Space
7. Technology
8. Interdisciplinary
9. Curricular Innovation
10. Diversity
11. Global
12. Alumni Engagement
13. Advising/Mentoring

Short Title. In a few words, provide a title for your project.

Abstract. In two or three sentences, provide a summary statement of your project, an estimate of the total amount of funding you are seeking, and the project timeline, if appropriate (for pilot projects, e.g., one, two, or three years).

Strategic Goals. Which of the College's six strategic goals apply to your project? Explain how your project relates to these goals. All projects must address teaching and learning.

Project Description. What is the project? The significance and potential impact of the project; and the institutional support, equipment and other physical resources needed for your project to succeed.

Learning Objectives & Measureable Outcomes. Identify your project's learning objectives and measureable outcomes.

Innovativeness. What makes the project innovative? What are the risks and challenges, and how may they be addressed in the project?

Project Lead Qualifications. Why the individual who is submitting the project is suitable to implement the project. If applicable, succession plans if, for example, the project lead is proposing a two-year project but will be graduating at the end of one year.

Suitability for Innovation Fund. Why is the proposal uniquely suited to the stated goal of the Innovation Fund rather than other funding sources? **Note that the Innovation Fund is not the place to seek alternative funding for projects or ideas, such as an expansion of an existing program, that should instead go through the normal budgeting process in your department or office.**

Budget Breakdown & Total. Provide the total amount you are seeking per year, and a list of budget items and their estimated costs, if known. If costs are unknown, list the cost as “unknown” (e.g., course release – unknown).

By early December, 2014, the funding committee will notify the President of its recommendation in grouping project applications into four categories: (i) highest fundable projects; (ii) fundable, low priority projects; (iii) conversion to a planning project, for pilot projects that require additional planning; and (iv) projects that will not be funded. The funding committee is encouraged to elaborate on the strengths and weaknesses of the projects, identify ways a proposal could be strengthened, and propose other recommendations to the president, including, but not limited to, modifying the length of proposals or limiting funds requested.

Funded projects will be announced via an all-campus email by Friday, December 19, 2014.

From the time of an application’s submittal to the announcement of awards, the funding committee may reach out to applicants to obtain additional information as needed.

An applicant shall provide additional information as requested by the funding committee, including but not limited to a detailed budget proposal, specific goals, and ways to measure, quantitatively or qualitatively, a project’s success or failure. An applicant’s department/office and other affected departments/offices may be asked to comment on a proposal that is in the final stage of evaluation by the committee.

Proposal Review:

There is a two-phase review. For the first phase, members will evaluate all submissions according to the criteria below and ask questions of the project leads. All questions and answers will then be forwarded to the entire committee and projects preliminarily scored by each member. The compiled, preliminary scores will then be forwarded to the committee for the second phase, which includes the discussion of proposals and decision on final recommendations.

Criteria

Overall Impact. An assessment of the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on teaching and learning that will change the way things are done at the College, in consideration of the following criteria. A proposal does not need to be strong in all categories to be judged likely to have major overall impact.

Significance. Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the classroom or workplace? If the aims of the project are achieved, how will knowledge, capability, and/or mental well-being be improved? How will successful completion of the aims change the concepts, methods, technologies, or services provided by the College?

Project Lead. Is the project lead well suited to the project? Do they have appropriate experience and training?

Innovation. Does the proposal challenge and seek to shift current research, teaching, or learning paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions? Are the concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions novel in a narrow or broad sense? Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?

Approach. Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the project? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented? If the project is in the early stages of development, will the strategy establish feasibility and will particularly risky aspects be managed?

Assessment. How will the success of the project be assessed? What are the challenges to assessing the project?

Alignment with Strategic Plan Priorities. How does the project align with the mission and/or one or more of the strategic foci of the college: Teaching and Learning, Learning Spaces, Enrollment, Post-Graduation Success, Alumni Engagement, Financial and Human Resource Management?

Award Administration:

One- to two-page progress reports for funded awards are due at the end of the fall and spring semesters starting with the semester after funded projects were announced.

The first progress report should include a an explanation of which of the six strategic directions are most applicable to the project:

Strategy 1: Enrollment

Strategy 2: Teaching and Learning

Strategy 3: The Grinnell Learning Place

Strategy 4: Post-Graduate Success

Strategy 5: Alumni Engagement

Strategy 6: Human and Financial Resource Management

(<http://www.grinnell.edu/about/strategic-plan/directions>)

At the very least, a project should address Strategy 2, Teaching and Learning, since that was a requirement of the Innovation Fund.

For all progress reports, the following should be included:

- (1) Assessing project to date: list the project's learning objectives, and address how these objectives have or have not been met. Describe measureable outcomes and results from the project to date.

- (2) If knowledgeable, approximately how much of the awarded budget has been spent?
- (3) Is the project lead seeking to institutionalize the project (e.g., incorporated in the College's normal operating budget)? Alternatively, will the lead be seeking additional funds from the next Innovation Fund cycle to continue the project?

To close out the award, a comprehensive, final report – including knowledge acquired; successes, failures, and other measurements as determined by the project lead; and conclusion statement, including potential next steps, if any – is required in place of a progress report during the last semester of funding. This final report can be submitted at the end of the summer, if the last semester of funding occurs in the spring semester.

Progress and final reports are submitted to the advisory committee for feedback and evaluation of whether a project should be institutionalized. For projects seeking institutionalization, most will be determined at the project's conclusion. In extraordinary circumstances, a decision on whether a project should be institutionalized may be made earlier. The advisory committee will make a recommendation to the President for a final decision.

Planning projects, by definition, and some pilot projects, would likely not be ready for institutionalization. The final report, in these cases, could be reviewed by the funding committee to evaluate further funding support if additional support is sought.

INNOVATION FUND COMMITTEE

Selection and Composition:

- The funding committee is comprised of no more than nine members as appointed by the president, including an appointed chairperson.
- Interest in member positions may be solicited by announcing the opportunity in any public communication or availing itself of any other process (e.g., FOC survey, faculty or staff meetings, Laurel Leaf).
- Though not exclusively, members for the funding committee may be drawn from the following: student, faculty, staff, alumni, and trustee. Other unaffiliated members will also be considered.
- For the first year (2012-2013), members will have staggered one-, two-, or three-year terms. Subsequent appointed members shall serve two- or three-year terms, except for student members, who shall serve one-year terms only.

Responsibilities:

- Using the procedure outlined in this document, evaluate and award funding to projects that most exemplify the criteria and goals of the Innovation Fund.
- Consult with other relevant persons, including faculty or staff members, to seek expertise or assistance as needed.
- Meet or teleconference to discuss and select proposals.
- Ask relevant follow-up questions of the applicant.
- Recuse him/herself from discussion and voting where conflicts of interest arise regarding a particular proposal.

Procedure:

- Proposals will be distributed to committee members for review.
- While consensus is preferred, funding decisions for pilot projects shall be by majority; if a tie breaker is needed, the President gets an additional vote.
- To avoid loss of consideration of very high risk/high positive impact potential, each member of the committee will be given the opportunity to champion a particular planning proposal.
- Decisions can be made via email or teleconference or other means besides in person.
- The chair will distribute agendas prior to every meeting and minutes will be recorded and distributed to all committee members post-meeting.

INNOVATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- The selection, composition, and procedure of the advisory committee will be evaluated at a later date depending on the type of pilot projects awarded.
- The advisory committee's main responsibility is to evaluate whether a concluded pilot project should be institutionalized.
- The advisory committee can provide feedback to leads on their progress and final reports.
- Note: Overlap between advisory committee members and funding committee members should be limited.