SPRING ARBOR
UNIVERSITY

Blended Learning Grants:
Support for Faculty Integration of Technology in Teaching

Deadline for submitting proposals to Academic Technology & Academic Affairs

Spring Arbor University (SAU) is pleased to announce the availability of the Blended Learning Grant program. All SAU full-time faculty are eligible to apply for funding. One or two grants will be funded for Fall 2010. Funding availability for proposals is described below.

PROGRAM GOALS - This initiative addresses three interrelated goals:

- To support faculty efforts to develop blended learning offerings which enhance learning opportunities for students.

- To provide a mechanism where learning course outcomes in a pilot blended course can be measured in contrast to a face to face course with identical course objectives.

- To begin the process of detailing effective blended course strategies that meet the aim of the SAU concept and provide a rich learning experience for SAU students.

BLENDED LEARNING DEFINED

Blended Learning is an approach to course design that merges both face-to-face (F2F) and online teaching strategies. The purpose of a blended learning classroom is to create an innovative and effective instructional system for delivering course content.

The goal of a blended approach is the integration of online and F2F instruction in a way that makes the most of the positive features of each delivery method. Online materials can provide students contact flexibility and create a more reflective asynchronous environment. Face to face courses allow for dialog between classmates, and facilitate a more spontaneous synchronous classroom community. A blended course should provide the best of a synchronous and asynchronous environment that encourages collaboration, autonomy and remains student focused.

Blended courses vary in how much time is given to the F2F mode vs. the online mode. Some instructors might choose to replace one F2F class each week with an online class. Some instructors might alternate between several weeks of F2F work followed by several weeks of online work so students can work independently on assignments. The best ratio and methodology of course design

should be made after careful consideration of course objectives, and the examination of the benefits of each instructional modality for reaching course outcomes.

BLENDED LEARNING DESIGN COMPONENTS

The successful blended course design will be multifaceted with an understanding that learning is a social activity. An activity based design that makes connections to a student's work or life outside the classroom would be beneficial. Learning by discovery with such items as case studies, debates, simulations, role playing, and games should be encouraged. Built-in self-assessments can be helpful to students as a formative measure for learning. Alternating between large group, small group and individual work can give students who perform better in a particular setting an opportunity to showcase their abilities. The effective use of F2F vs. asynchronous time will be a major factor in a successful blended design. The use of technologies such as Elluminate Live, wikis, blogs, video, podcasts, discussion board, Skype and other technology can enhance the learning experience.

Ultimately, there are many appropriate course designs. The description above is not intended to be a listing of required components. The successful proposal will have some of these design components with an effective measurement of student satisfaction and learning outcomes.

ELIGIBILITY:

All full-time SAU faculty are eligible to submit one grant application. There will be at least two successful applications chosen. More than two are possible based on the budget requested for each proposal. The grants will be evaluated by an independent third party in a blind process. Applications from a team of collaborating individuals are also invited; however, an individual cannot be named on more than one grant application. Further, proposals may not take longer than one year to become operational.

Innovative Teaching Grant Proposals

Please read carefully both the application information below and the Frequently Asked Questions found later in this document.

PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Grant proposals must describe projects that clearly go beyond the normal level of course preparation expected of all faculty and should describe the specific ways in which the project will enhance student learning. The proposal must have a measurement component which compares two identical courses taught in a traditional face to face format as compared to a blended learning format.

The maximum grant award will be $1,000 for single-course projects or $2,000 for collaborative teams.

Collaborative proposals must include a letter of support from the department chair(s) explaining how the project will benefit the department(s) or unit as a whole.

Proposals for activities, assistance, or equipment normally supported at the department or school level are not eligible for funding.

SELECTION CRITERIA: An independent committee who are not familiar with SAU faculty will carefully review all proposals based on the following five criteria:

- *Project impact*
  The potential to enhance student learning in ways that can be demonstrated with a measured assessment. Does the blended learning design meet the definition of blended learning and does it provide effective mechanisms to meet the course objectives?

- *Project uniqueness*
  The attempt to transform the teaching/learning enterprise by employing innovative teaching alternatives to traditional classroom instruction. Does the project produce a blended learning environment that provides some innovative way to effectively utilize both learning environments?

- *Project feasibility*
  The likelihood of completing the project on schedule and with the resources provided.

- *Applicant(s) qualifications*
  A demonstrated commitment to teaching improvements and-enhanced teaching. Other qualifications can include documented record of excellence in teaching the course for which funds have been sought.

- *Project evaluation plan*
  The proposal must include a substantial plan to assess the project's effect on teaching and learning. It must have a measurement structure that includes both a blended course and equivalent face to face course.

Remember: The clarity and completeness of your proposal will have a significant impact on the reviewers' ability to assess project potential.

PROCEDURE

A. Submit 2 copies of the application to the Office of Academic Technology (Randy Meredith, ST22).

B. Deadline: August 1, before the start of the Fall 2010 semester.

C. Awards will be announced at the annual all-university kick-off event in late August.

Project applications should contain three items as described below

1. Application Cover Sheet,
2. Brief narrative description, and
3. Letter of support from department chairperson(s)

I. APPLICATION COVER SHEET

☐ Include the words BLENDED LEARNING GRANT

☐ All name applicant names

☐ Department(s)

☐ Academic rank(s)

☐ Mail station(s)

☐ Phone & fax (if available)

☐ Each applicant's email address

☐ Project title

☐ Project abstract (a clear 100-150 word description).

II. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION PAGE

Include a brief narrative description of the project (maximum length is five single-spaced pages) addressing each of the following eight questions:

1. (a) What course will this project benefit?
   (b) How often do you teach this course, and how many students annually enroll in your sections? Please attach the syllabus from the last time you taught this class.

2. What specific delivery adaptations or pedagogic based instructional innovations would you employ to enable you to make in this course into a blended one?

3. Will this project produce any delivery mechanism that can be shared with other instructors? If yes, please describe what and how.

4. What specific types of (a) pedagogic or instructional design assistance, (b) computer training, (c) technical assistance, and/or (d) non-technical support will you need to complete the proposed project?

5. What is the project time line?

6. How will you assess the impact of this project? Please explain steps you will take to determine the results of the project in terms of (a) enhanced student learning and (b) your own ongoing teaching improvement.

7. What prior evidence of your demonstrated commitment to creative teaching pedagogies or technology-enhanced teaching can you provide?

III. LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM YOUR DEPARTMENT CHAIR

While all proposals are required to have a letter of support from the department chair, letters of support for proposals over $1,000 should explain how the proposal will benefit the department or unit.

DEADLINES: Deans are asked to review proposals and, if desired, suggest a ranking of the proposals. Each Dean's office should forward proposals to the Department of Academic Technology by August 1, before the start of the Fall semester

Awards will be announced at the annual all-university kick-off event in late August.

PROJECT COMPLETION AND RESULTS:

Funded projects must be completed by the end of the proposed semester, or by the end of the academic year. A final project report, describing in detail project activities and accomplishments, should be completed and submitted to the Department of Academic Technology by this date.

Participants will also be asked to share their projects with colleagues during at least one special faculty event (e.g., by presenting a "session/demonstration" in a special OAT forum, faculty meeting, Community of Learners, Faculty Research Roundtable, etc.). A summary of the project will also be featured in the OAT Newsletter, and also on the OAT Web site.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

To help faculty prepare the highest quality and most competitive proposals possible, the following **Frequently Asked Questions** have been developed:

Q1. Are the grants only for projects involving blended learning?
Yes. These grants are intended to encourage innovative applications of delivery mechanisms to enhance student learning through a blended learning design.

Q2. Can a grant be requested to create a new course?
These funds cannot be requested to support activities that are considered part of a faculty member's annual teaching or research assignment or which are normally funded by a department or college. The purpose of this grant is to redesign an existing course in a blended learning format, so it can be measured using the control of an existing course. The measurement will contain comparisons of student satisfaction and outcomes attained.

Q3. What does the committee look for when reading proposals?
In addition to strict adherence to the guidelines, the evaluators expect well conceived and carefully written proposals. With respect to the assessment, items should be written with both a student satisfaction component and a learning outcomes component. Applicants should pay careful attention to the selection criteria to ensure that proposals persuasively address selection criteria, including the plan to evaluate the project's impact.

Q4. What if a project requires more than the maximum funding available to complete?
Funding requests are limited to $1,000 for single-course projects or $2,000 for collaborations at the department or program level. If your proposed project requires greater funding, you must describe where the additional funding will come from and provide with your proposal definite confirmation that these additional funds are available.