



TO: Dr. Kailee Brickner-McDonald, Director, Leadership Learning Community
Dr. Jason Garvey, Faculty Associate, Leadership Learning Community

FROM: Brian Reed, Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning

RE: Engaged Practices Innovation (EPI) grant proposal: *Learning Communities Faculty Associates Institute*

DATE: November 8, 2017

CC: David Rosowsky, Provost and Senior Vice President
Rafael Rodriguez, Director, Residential Life

On behalf of the Engaged Practices Innovation (EPI) Grant Selection Committee, I am pleased to inform you that your proposal was approved for funding in full (10,364), conditional on a few clarifications. Please respond by November 15, 2017 to acknowledge your acceptance of the award under the terms described at the end of this memo.

Description

The proposal (revised and resubmitted from Spring 2017) is for a Faculty Associates Institute to train faculty who will work with first-year students in the newly developed residential learning communities (LCs). The underlying premise is that getting students engaged with faculty early-on in learning communities will foster their success and retention. There is good evidence that such mentoring is effective, especially with students from historically underrepresented and marginalized populations. Learning communities have been identified as a high impact practice by the American Association of Colleges and Universities, and the incorporation of 'faculty associates' should make the LCs even more effective. Eighteen faculty from across the academic disciplines will be recruited and, after training, will be placed within one of six themed LCs. Training in engaged teaching/learning practices within the context of an LC will occur in the two-day Faculty Associates Institute at the end of the academic year. There were letters of support from Residential Life and The Center for Academic Success.

Analysis

It was the Selection Committee's assessment that this revised proposal addressed well the major criticisms from the Spring 2017 review. The current proposal is well conceived, well designed, well grounded in the literature. It is feasible and has potential for significant impact on student success and retention. The budget is reasonable and there is a robust cost share from Residential Life.

Clarifications

Although the proposal was judged to be meritorious and fundamentally sound, explanations or clarifications are needed in a few areas. We ask the PIs to address the following items before moving forward with the project:

- 1) Appendix C: Define what constitutes a "program" in the context of Faculty Associates' responsibilities
- 2) Explain how proposed programs will be reviewed and approved (i.e. quality control).
- 3) Describe processes for holding the faculty associates accountable in carrying out their projects.
 - Suggestion: Have the faculty associates sign at the outset an MOU that lists the expectations re: processes and outcomes (the CTL can provide examples). You could then have the Faculty Associates submit their plans or "syllabi" for discussion (Fall meeting?) on how they are incorporating engaged teaching/learning practices into their program. Discussions at the Spring meeting might include follow-up on faculty associates' experiences and lessons learned.



- 4) Clarify how the amount of the faculty associate stipends (\$1K) was determined. The CBA rate for work done while “off-contract” during summer months is \$250/day. Therefore, at face value, it seems the stipend for the 2-day Institute should be \$500 for each faculty associate. Is the intent to provide an additional \$500 as an implementation grant?
- 5) Explain how the Institute will be sustained in future years after the term of the grant has expired. Although some trained Faculty Associates may continue in future years, it seems likely there will be some turn-over. The new Faculty Associates will need training/indoctrination. How will this be managed?
- 6) We applaud the intention to track longitudinally LC students’ academic performance. This can be one component of the assessment of long-term impact. However, it seems likely that such analyses of institutional data will require assistance from the Office of Institutional Research. Please consult with Alex Yin, Director of the Office of Institutional Research to ensure support as needed for the assessment plan.

You can provide the requested clarifications in a memo to Brian Reed.

As specified in the Request for Proposals, the budget for your grant will be administered through the PI’s administrative unit, Residential Life. The funds will be transferred on or before December 1, 2017. All funds must be spent within twelve months of that date (December 1, 2018). Please have your budget manager send the appropriate chartstring number to Kerry Castano Kerry.castano@uvm.edu.

A full report on the outcomes of your project will be due no later than June 1, 2019. The report may be no longer than 1,500 words (12 point font, double spaced), excluding cover page, and appended materials. The report must include:

- A review of the goals of the project
- A description of the outcomes
- An assessment of the impact of the project
- The current status of the project and future plans

Again, thank you for your high quality proposal and congratulations on the award. We are excited about the potential impact of your project on students, faculty and the community.