

## **Application Guidelines for Mini-Grant Proposals**

Center for Research on Teaching Excellence

(revised: 3/30/2012)

### **Eligibility**

All UC Merced faculty including lecturers may apply for individual or collaborative mini-grant awards. Preference will be given to junior faculty on tenure-track appointments and full-time lecturers with two years or more of continuous employment at our campus. Part-time faculty or lecturers, and graduate teaching or research assistants will not qualify for individual mini-grant awards, but they can participate as members of collaborative proposals when that proposal is submitted by a qualifying faculty member or full-time lecturer.

### **Amount and Type of Awards**

Individual mini-grants will have a single author who conducts the proposed study. Collaborative grants will have two or more participants who share responsibilities for the research project.

Mini-grant funding will not exceed \$5,000 for individual awards and \$10,000 for collaborative awards. Proposals must include an itemized budget with a brief rationale for expenditures.

### **Purpose of Research**

All proposals should address some aspect of teaching UC Merced students and gathering evidence of their learning whether these activities take place on campus at or at a high school, museum, community college, arts council, theater, etc., that has close educational ties with our campus. Successful proposals will examine specific evidence of effective teaching or some other educational experience that promotes student learning. Thus, mini-grant projects can encompass a wide range of options, including innovative course design at our campus or experiential “authentic” learning off campus.

Regardless of the context for student learning, mini-grant proposals must include a substantive provision for looking carefully at one or more learning outcomes. That evidence of learning can be exhibited in various forms of student work: individual or group projects, oral presentations or written texts, focus-group reports, artistic and creative activities, traditional or electronic portfolios, results of field work or laboratory experiments, and anything else that shows formative learning (i.e., stages of development) and not just summative achievement (e.g., a final grade for a course).

We encourage authors of mini-grant proposals to consult with staff in the Center for Research on Teaching Excellence (CRTE) to discuss project ideas that effectively address student-learning outcomes. The Center staff will also work with mini-grant recipients to provide assistance with analysis and interpretation of evidence.

### **Proposal Format**

Proposals should be approximately two to three pages (about 500-750 words), with about two pages of narrative and one page for the budget and any citations. The best proposals will explain anticipated improvement in teaching, its expected efficacy in terms of current scholarship on learning, and appropriate plans for assessing student achievement of learning outcomes. The budget should include specific information about proposed expenditures. Any citations should be in an established scholarly format.

### **Review of Mini-Grant Proposals**

All proposals will be reviewed initially by Center staff to insure that the project is focused on teaching and learning. A staff member will also be assigned to provide dedicated support for each mini-grant project if it is funded.

After the initial screening of mini-grant proposals by Center staff, the CRTE Advisory Committee will make final decisions about funding of proposals. That faculty committee includes members from each School who, for the duration of their committee service, will be ineligible for CRTE grant support themselves.

### **Duration of Mini-Grant Project**

A typical research project will be conducted for six months to one year; projects extending beyond one year will require strong justification. All project responsibilities must be completed within 18 months of an initial award.

### **Post-Grant Report**

When the research project is completed, the grant author or authors will have six months to submit a summary report to the Director of the Center for Research on Teaching Excellence. That summary will present research findings and results, with suggestions for future projects that might logically follow the one just concluded. The author(s) of a summary report should also anticipate giving a short (10-15 minute) public presentation of results at a Center forum.

There is no length requirement or specified format for the written report or public presentation, but the author(s) should anticipate addressing a general audience of faculty with disparate academic training and research expertise. Evidence of post-grant reporting will be forwarded to the dean of the appropriate UC Merced school and will be included in the employment record.

### **Timeline for Mini-Grant Submission**

Review of submissions will begin on March 30 for Fall semester awards and October 1 for Spring semester awards. Early submission will improve chances of funding. Please email submissions as .doc or .pdf attachments to [crte@ucmerced.edu](mailto:crte@ucmerced.edu).