

THE TEAGLE FOUNDATION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

TEAGLE PLANNING GRANTS IN ASSESSMENT

The Teagle Foundation believes that the skillful use of systematic assessment can significantly increase student engagement and learning in the liberal arts and sciences. Earlier grants described on our website, www.teaglefoundation.org, have shown the advantages of carefully planned, faculty led collaborations among small groups of institutions that are prepared to share ideas, expertise and data. The Foundation expects to make up to 15 planning grants of \$25,000 each in this area. All grantees will be invited to submit follow-up proposals for implementation grants of up to \$300,000 over three years. We anticipate funding 5-6 of these, but hope that all planning grant recipients will continue their assessment work beyond the initial grant period, whether with our funding or funding from other sources.

BACKGROUND

The Teagle Foundation's primary goal is to increase undergraduate engagement and learning in the liberal arts and sciences. The Foundation's web site, www.teaglefoundation.org, sets forth the Foundation's philosophy and approach, and describes its two principal grant programs, "Outcomes and Assessment" and "Fresh Thinking." In each area, we work primarily by encouraging collaborations among colleges and universities and other organizations in higher education that share our goal of strengthening liberal education. In pursuing that goal, the Foundation places special emphasis on "ground up" assessment, that is, systematic, faculty led efforts to use appropriate means of assessment to enhance student engagement and learning.

STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

Goal of the planning grants:

1. To encourage institutions to explore together the potential of appropriate forms of systematic assessment.
2. To develop closer links among institutions of higher education and their faculties, especially among liberal arts colleges.
3. To prepare plans for longer range collaborations in assessment, suitable for funding by the Teagle Foundation or other sources (FIPSE, NSF etc.).

Eligibility: These grants are intended primarily for institutions focused on undergraduate education in the liberal arts and sciences. We are also willing to explore projects in assessment with major research universities. Such projects will not compete with these planning grants.

Colleges and universities that are not already part of a Teagle funded project in assessment are eligible to apply. Institutions that are currently part of or applying for a Teagle "Fresh Thinking" Working Group grant may apply for one of these planning grants.

All applicant institutions must be accredited, four year institutions, and able to demonstrate a strong commitment to the liberal arts and sciences at the undergraduate level.

The Foundation has found that relatively small ad hoc collaboratives, focused on one or two issues of concern on each participating campus, are most effective. While electronic contact is often of great value, frequent face to face meetings are, we find, indispensable. Thus, in general, it is helpful if the campuses are within driving distance of one another. The minimum size for such collaboratives is two, the maximum four.

A college or university may serve as the lead institution on only one planning grant, and while we do not categorically rule out the possibility of one institution participating in more than one collaborative, we strongly urge colleges to commit themselves to joining only one Teagle ad hoc collaborative in assessment. A letter of endorsement from the president or senior academic officer of the lead institution should be included in the final application.

Areas of Inquiry: Instruments such as the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) make it possible to assess undergraduate learning throughout a campus, and provide a basis for confidential cross campus comparisons. These and other means of assessment may provide a basis for a broad inquiry into educational goals and achievement. While that is an appropriate area for one of these planning grants, we are also prepared to consider more focused inquiries, for example into a specific problem or opportunity of interest to faculty on each of the applying campuses. Since several areas of undergraduate learning, such as overseas study and writing programs are already being explored by Teagle funded collaboratives or working groups, we are reluctant to fund new projects in these areas at this point. (See <http://www.teaglefoundation.org/grantmaking/grantees.aspx> for descriptions of funded projects.)

Means: The Foundation is open to a wide range of program designs, provided they use systematic assessment to increase undergraduates' engagement and learning in the liberal arts and sciences. We do not insist on purely quantitative means of assessment, but expect that assessment will be systematic, rigorous, appropriate to clearly stated educational goals, and allow for cross campus comparisons. We are very interested in the value added by undergraduate education and expect that topic to figure in the analysis and discussions during the planning year.

Since many well crafted means of assessment (NSSE, CLA, etc.) have already been developed, often involving great professional expertise and large expenditures, we believe that adapting these instruments to the needs of campuses is more likely to be productive than trying to develop totally new means of assessment. Since the Foundation has funded—under the auspices of another RFP—projects designed to respond to special cases where new means of assessment need to be developed, responses to this RFP should not depend on the development of new instruments of assessment.

Resources: The Foundation's website provides help for individuals and institutions interested in assessment. Other resources are available through The Association of American Colleges and Universities (<http://www.aacu.org/>) and the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College (<http://www.liberalarts.wabash.edu>). Leaders of already funded Teagle ad hoc collaboratives, listed on our website, are often willing to provide informal advice and guidance.

Meeting of grant recipients: Shortly after the grants are awarded the Teagle Foundation will convene—at its expense—the leaders of these planning grant projects as a way of encouraging the exchange of ideas, exploring broad issues of liberal education, and discussing the practicalities of running such a project.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The final proposal should be e-mailed to proposals@teaglefoundation.org. In addition, a hard copy original plus two copies should be sent to the address given at the end of this RFP.

Proposals must include:

- A 3-4 page narrative stating the areas and means of assessment to be explored, the work plan, the project's importance to institutions involved, its potential implications for liberal education, and—very important—the criteria that will be used for judging its success.
- A cover letter which includes:
 - The title of the project.
 - A one-page abstract of the project, suitable for posting on the Foundation's website.
 - The expected start and completion dates for the project.
 - The requested amount, the funds contributed by collaborating institutions (if applicable), and the total cost of the project.
 - The contact information of the person in charge of the project.
- The c.v. of the person providing leadership for the project at the lead institution (preferably no more than 5 pages). This should be a faculty member or appropriate academic administrator, not someone in the development office.
- A list of the participating institutions, with the names and titles of the principal participants from each institution.
- A timeline including expected completion date. Projects should not exceed 12 months in length. (June 1 2007 –June 30th 2008 are the extreme dates.)
- A letter of endorsement from the President or chief academic officer of the lead institution.
- A brief budget as described below.

Budget: We expect to make planning grants of \$25,000 payable over 12 months. The grant will be paid in one installment.

The budget should be based on July 1 – June 30 operating years. A one page sheet should suffice.

The grant may be used for all direct, but no indirect, costs. Appropriate expenses include expenses of using assessment instruments, travel and meeting expenses, office and research materials and assistance, meals for working dinners or similar occasions, reasonable honoraria or fees for visiting experts or consultants etc. A modest charge may be included for release time of the person or persons in charge of the project and for support staff.

Institutional cost sharing should be shown whenever possible.

REPORTS

- Narrative and financial reports will be due at the conclusion of the project.

TIMELINE

March 30, 2007: Proposals due.

Late May 2007: Teagle Board action; award letters sent to successful applicants.

September 30, 2008: Final narrative and financial reports due.

For those wishing to apply for the full three-year, implementation grants:

December 2007: A detailed RFP will be sent to all participating institutions.

March 28, 2008: Proposals due.

Late May 2008: Teagle Board action for three-year grants; award letters sent to successful applicants.

WHERE TO SEND PROPOSALS

The final proposal should be e-mailed to proposals@teaglefoundation.org, while hard copies should be submitted in hard copy to:

The Teagle Foundation
10 Rockefeller Plaza, Room 920
New York, NY 10020-1903