Teagle Foundation Initiative for Graduate Student Teaching in the Arts & Sciences: Request for Proposals from Individual Campuses

The Teagle Foundation invites proposals for projects to revise, scale up, and institutionalize pilot programs through which graduate students in the arts and sciences prepare for teaching careers, with continued emphasis on helping graduate students engage—and use in their own teaching—new and emerging practices and research that can help bring undergraduate learning to the highest possible level. The Foundation is prepared to fund 6-8 projects at this time. The maximum award is $125,000 over 24-36 months, with approximately 90% of funds allocated to on-campus work and the remaining 10% to be used for robust dissemination of results.

Background and context for this RFP: Two years ago, as part of its ongoing effort to bring undergraduate student learning to the highest possible level, the Teagle Foundation turned its attention to a key factor in achieving that outcome: the preparation of graduate students for teaching careers. A recently concluded pilot initiative—through which individual institutions developed and tested programs that allowed graduate students to examine research on learning, consider methods to gather and use evidence to improve teaching and learning, and explore the changing patterns of undergraduate education—has demonstrated the promise of such approaches. Pilot programs were largely able to achieve the goals of the initiative, which were to:

- Facilitate graduate students’ engagement with—and education in—the knowledge that is being generated about how undergraduate students learn (in fields such as cognitive psychology, neuroscience, and in the literature of assessment of student learning) and on subjects relevant to the overall project of undergraduate education (liberal education, general education, disciplines and majors).
- Help them develop genuinely collegial “communities of practice” (these might include graduate student peers, as well as faculty and administrative colleagues / mentors) focused on developing strategies for applying this knowledge to their teaching, with the aim of improving undergraduate student learning.
- Give them a chance to put theory into practice, “translating” their learning in the above fields into their classroom teaching.
- Encourage awareness of the strengths and limits of systematic assessment of student learning in undergraduate education, and how to use appropriate forms of evidence not only to know how their students are doing, but to make decisions about how to teach their classes most effectively.

Additionally, when taken together, the initial programs demonstrated an awareness of the complex issues and commitments that will not only shape faculty teaching in the coming years, but also define faculty professional identity in the 21st century. A meeting that convened those involved in the pilot programs, along with other academic leaders who are invested in graduate education, also made clear the value of framing this work in the larger context of what it means to be a professional academic in the 21st century. The current initiative builds on all of this previous work.

Program Design and Goals: This initiative invites institutions to build significantly on their pilot projects to prepare graduate students for teaching careers, aiming to create a program of acknowledged authority and standing for graduate education at your institution and beyond.
Specific goals for this program—and criteria by which proposals will be judged—are that the programs should:

1. Refine/revise program content on the basis of lessons learned during the first iteration of the program, and with an eye to the expanded goals of this iteration of the program. Taking up what it means to be a professional academic in the 21st century—both in terms of identity and competencies—is encouraged as a guiding framework.

2. Expand the reach and size of the program, with attention to the number of students it reaches, as well as the range of departments, divisions and schools it engages from across the institution. Examples of ways the reach of the program might be expanded include (but are not limited to):
   - Faculty from a division or departmental grouping (humanities, for example, or social sciences, or modern languages) collaborate to develop programming that is specific to the disciplines involved and—through the division or departments—made available to, (or even required for) all graduate students in those fields.
   - Teaching and learning centers work with departments to develop discipline-specific programming and make that programming available to (or even required for) all students in those departments.
   - The teaching and learning center on campus develops a program model that can be exported across departmental, disciplinary, or divisional boundaries—perhaps supplemented with discipline-specific modules—and offers this enhanced programming to a significantly higher number of graduate students than in the past.
   - The teaching and learning center works with a number of departments as part of a commitment to developing cross-disciplinary programming and offers that programming to a significantly higher number of graduate students than in the past.

3. Develop a strategy for sustaining the program so that it will continue to be offered in some form beyond the life of the grant. The ways in which programs are sustained will almost certainly vary by institution: some institutions may offer a course for credit within individual departments (rather than relying on stipends as an incentive for participation), for example, while others may rely on the graduate school and campus teaching and learning centers to provide range and continuity for the program on a more formalized basis.

4. Actively disseminate the work of the program, with an eye not only to informing colleagues at other institutions about it, but to encouraging those at other institutions to undertake similar efforts on their own campuses. The work of dissemination could take many forms, including—but not limited to—running a conference for colleagues at other institutions; running workshops for colleagues at other institutions; presenting at conferences; publishing results of the work.

For the above purposes, the Teagle Foundation invites selected institutions to apply for grants of up to $125,000, to be used over 24-36 months. Roughly 90% of these funds may be used to develop and run programs on the grantee’s home campus. Remaining funds are to be used for robust dissemination of the program as described above.

**Leadership:** As was true for the pilot projects, successful proposals will be very explicit about the leadership of the project. Experience has taught us that projects succeed when senior academic leaders
make clear their support for the work, when departments and their faculty are supportive and involved as well, and when a highly respected and deeply committed individual takes on the leadership of the project.

**Application Process:** The Foundation is open to considering two cycles of applications, with funding decisions to be made at its February 2012 and May 2012 Board meetings.

- For consideration in February 2012, we ask that you have a preliminary conversation about your project with the Foundation’s program staff by Friday, November 4. Please contact Jennifer Dale (jdale@teagle.org) to arrange the conversation.

  Full proposals are due by Friday, December 16, 2011.

- For consideration in May 2012, we ask that you have a preliminary conversation about your project with the Foundation’s program staff by Friday, February 24, 2012. Again, please contact Jennifer Dale (jdale@teagle.org) to arrange the conversation.

  Full proposals are due by Friday, April 6, 2012.

**Full proposals** must include:

- A 5-7 page narrative proposal that outlines the project as specifically as possible and includes discussion of: background and context for the project, including discussion of its relationship to the pilot project; purpose and goals; a work plan, timeline, and plans for sustainability; and criteria for judging its success.

- A one-paragraph abstract of the project, suitable for posting on the web.

- The contact information and c.v. of the person in charge of the project.

- A letter of endorsement from a senior academic officer, ideally the Dean of the Graduate School.

- A 1-2 page budget, based on July 1 – June 30 operating years. The maximum grant is $125,000, payable over 24-36 months, and funds may be used for all direct, but no indirect, costs of the program. Appropriate expenses include stipends for the projects leader(s) and participants, travel and meeting expenses, meals for working dinners or similar occasions, reasonable honoraria or fees for visiting experts or consultants, office and research materials and assistance, costs incurred in the work of disseminating project results (conference travel, cost of mounting a conference, publication costs, etc.) and the costs of support staff.

  Please show cost-sharing where possible. Institutional cost sharing should both for indirect costs and for those direct costs borne by the university.

An electronic copy of the final proposal (as a single PDF if possible) should be sent to proposals@teaglefoundation.org. In addition, one hard copy of the final proposal should be sent to:

The Teagle Foundation
570 Lexington Avenue, 38th floor
New York, NY 10022