Graduate Student Teaching in the Arts & Sciences
Request for Proposals

The Teagle Foundation invites proposals to develop programs that focus on the preparation of graduate students in the arts and sciences for their careers as college teachers. The emphasis is on helping graduate students engage—and use in their own teaching—emerging practices and research that can help bring undergraduate learning to the highest possible level.

Grants of varying amounts, ranging from $150,000-$300,000 over a 24-36 month period, will be made for each project. The size of the grant will be based on the number of institutions and organizations involved as well the scope of the project. Smaller awards of up to $25,000 will be considered to support planning grants to assist in the development of an emerging project.

Background and Context for This RFP

As part of its ongoing efforts 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 as future faculty members to teach effectively in a wide variety of higher education settings. Since 2010, the Foundation has funded projects, primarily at research universities, that foster collegial “communities of practice” for both faculty and graduate students around teaching and learning; enable graduate students to examine research on learning and apply it as instructors; and establish institutional plans for sustainability of these programs.

The early cohorts of grantees funded through this initiative were brought together to share their experiences at the 2014 “Community of Scholars, Community of Teachers” convening hosted by the Foundation. Across the initiative, funded projects have been successful in engaging graduate students in the research and literature around teaching and learning. A wide range of activities have been explored, with some participants applying theory to practice through team-teaching with tenured faculty members. Graduate student participants expressed greater confidence in their teaching proficiency and preparation for the job market. Still, opportunities to apply their knowledge to classroom practice remain limited and sustained engagement by faculty remains a challenge. Although progress is evident, the convening highlighted the need to continue and expand this initiative. Deeply rooted change throughout the system of preparation for future faculty members requires a balance of attempting a variety of interventions, providing for curricular adjustments, and allowing time for institutional culture change to take hold.

Early cohorts of Teagle grantees in this initiative have primarily been research universities where many future faculty members receive their training. As these institution-based efforts proceed, the Foundation has a keen interest in innovative graduate preparation programs developed by or in partnership with disciplinary associations to foster broad-based change across multiple institutions. We see the benefits of faculty and graduate students working together to improve pedagogical approaches uniquely suited to their specific disciplines, which can be shared across different institutions. We believe such an approach has strong potential for adoption, impact, and sustainability.

Goals

We invite proposals from institutions as well as disciplinary associations to:

1. Create and/or refine programs for graduate students aimed at evidence-informed teaching principles and practices as well as disciplinary-specific approaches;
2. Develop collegial “communities of practice” centered on teaching and learning among graduate students and faculty;
3. Encourage active collaboration between academic departments and centers of teaching and learning;
4. Disseminate models for change in graduate student preparation as future faculty members; and
5. Develop a plan for sustaining and institutionalizing graduate student preparation for teaching in the arts and sciences beyond the life of the grant.

Prospective projects at nascent stages of development may benefit from the pursuit of a planning grant prior to seeking implementation level funding. Planning grants of up to $25,000 traditionally span six to twelve months and are applied toward establishing a work plan which will thoroughly address the aforementioned goals.

Criteria for Project Proposals

- **Creation of communities of practice**

The proposed program should develop between graduate students and faculty genuinely collegial “communities of practice,” encouraging partnerships beyond that of a traditional “teaching assistant” relationship. A distinguishing feature of currently funded programs is that they provide for consistent quality time for graduate students and faculty to discuss teaching and learning, providing a necessary complement to the usual practice in graduate education of focusing almost exclusively on research and scholarship. Such communities of practice also bring together graduate student peers, as well as administrative colleagues/mentors. Programs may include academic departments developing collaborative relationships with centers of teaching and learning and/or partnerships between disciplinary associations and universities.

- **Focused attention on fostering undergraduate student learning**

Successful programs will facilitate graduate student engagement with—and education in—the knowledge that is being generated (in fields such as cognitive psychology, neuroscience, and in the literature of assessment of student learning) about how undergraduate students learn and how to apply these findings in actual practice (e.g., the employment of high-impact practices) within areas relevant to both general education and the graduate students’ academic disciplines. Programs should direct attention to the strengths and limitations of systematic assessment of undergraduate student learning and how to use appropriate forms of evidence to inform teaching most effectively.

- **Application of theory to teaching practice**

Through this RFP, graduate students must have an opportunity to put theory into practice, “translating” their learning through their teaching practice into their classrooms. Ideally, they will have opportunities for co-teaching as well as independent teaching opportunities. Upon completion of proposed programs, graduate students should be able to produce a portfolio of their teaching-related products (e.g. statement of teaching philosophy, course syllabi, sample assessment strategy, outline or text version of a lecture).

- **Assessment**

Successful proposals will include clearly articulated goals and appropriate means of assessment. They will seek to evaluate effects on graduate student teaching and undergraduate learning. With this grant, as with others, the Teagle Foundation may wish to collaborate with participating institutions in a follow-up
study three to five years after the conclusion of the grant period in order to assess the longer-term outcomes of the funded project.

- **Dissemination efforts**

The project should include active dissemination of the program to inspire colleagues within the institution and at other campuses to undertake similar efforts. Grantees should serve as ambassadors within their campus communities, departments, and disciplinary associations for innovation in graduate student preparation. Specific forms of dissemination may include—but not be limited to—running workshops, making presentations at disciplinary conferences, and publishing results of the work.

- **Sustainability**

Proposals should develop a strategy for sustaining the program so that it will continue to be offered in an effective form beyond the life of the grant. The ways in which this will take shape will undoubtedly vary by institution. For example, some institutions may offer required courses for credit within individual departments (rather than relying on stipends as an incentive for participation). 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.

**Submission Process**

*Invited proposals will be accepted on a rolling basis following the two-stage process outlined below.*

**Concept paper**

Interested institutions, organizations, consortia, or disciplinary associations may submit a 1-3 page concept paper after conferring with program staff on whether their proposed project meets the general criteria for this initiative. After review of the concept papers, a limited number of applicants will then be invited to submit a full proposal, as outlined below.

**Full proposal**

Proposals should include the following components:

- A 5-10 page narrative that outlines the project as specifically as possible and includes a discussion of: background and context for the project, purpose and goals, plans for future sustainability, criteria (both short- and long-term) for judging the project's success, and a dissemination plan.
- 1-2 page work plan and timeline.
- 1-2 page budget, based on July 1-June 30 operating years, and an accompanying budget narrative. Appropriate expenses include stipends for project leader(s), 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, and the costs of support staff. The Foundation does not cover indirect costs/overhead. Please show cost-sharing where possible. Cost-sharing should be for those direct costs borne by the institutions.
- A one-paragraph abstract of the project, suitable for posting on the web.
- The contact information and CV of the person(s) in charge of the project.
- Letters of support from the presidents or provosts of institutions involved in the project.
All final submissions should be submitted electronically as a single PDF to proposals@teaglefoundation.org.

FOUNDATION CONTACTS: Please feel free to contact Loni Bordoloi (bordoloi@teagle.org) or Desiree Vazquez Barlatt (desireev@teaglefoundation.org) if you have questions about this initiative.