Request for Proposals
Hybrid Learning and the Residential Liberal Arts Experience

Context: What Is To Be Done?

Higher education is in an era of significant turbulence and change, driven by a variety of factors including diminishing affordability, questions about outcomes, and deteriorating public confidence. Complicating the picture are challenges that have come with major and rapid changes in information technology. Liberal arts colleges are in an especially difficult position, given the costs associated with their intensive face-to-face model of instruction and the limits their size puts on what any single institution can teach.

This Hybrid Learning initiative continues and extends Teagle’s focus on improving teaching and learning in the liberal arts by concentrating on ways in which online resources can enhance teaching and learning in residential liberal arts settings. How can the traditional strengths of residential-based liberal arts institutions be complemented by technology to expand institutional capacity while maintaining or improving the quality of student learning? Surely a role exists for a core residential experience, but today’s realities suggest that greater use can be made of hybrid learning at these institutions.

If thoughtfully deployed, technology offers the potential to engage students in deep learning while improving financial sustainability in higher education. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) were for a time heralded in recent years as the major game-changer in higher education, but enthusiasm for them has been waning. The most significant advance in incorporating technology in the classroom likely resides in hybrid or blended learning approaches that combine online and traditional in-person instruction. Hybrid learning enables faculty and students to use their in-class and out-of-class time more productively, enhancing teaching and learning,; it enables institutions to collaborate effectively and share resources, lowering the costs of instructional delivery over the long term.

Purpose

This grant program aims to:

- Identify and support models that integrate online education into the residential liberal arts experience in ways that speak to both the quality of student learning and questions of institutional capacity.
- Encourage the formation of communities of practice from multiple institutions.
- Create a knowledge base of concepts and strategies related to hybrid learning in liberal arts institutions that can be shared with others.

Projects funded through this grant initiative will collectively provide insight into a host of issues related to hybrid learning, including: the varying disciplinary contexts for hybrid learning approaches; the factors that encourage adoption of effective hybrid learning approaches within and across institutions; how hybrid learning leverages strengths associated with institutional consortia; the professional development needs for faculty, administrators, and information technology staff to effectively participate in hybrid learning efforts; and the costs involved, both start-up and continuing.
Criteria for Project Proposals:

The Teagle Foundation will invite selected institutions, organizations, or consortia to apply for grants that address the question: How can institutions productively work together to integrate forms of online education into residential liberal arts settings that maintain or enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning and strengthen institutional capacity in ways that are sustainable?

Grants of varying amounts, ranging from $200,000-$300,000 over a 24-36 month period will be made for each funded project participating in this initiative. The size of the grant will be based on the number of institutions involved and the scope of the project; larger awards may be considered in exceptional circumstances. Smaller awards of up to $25,000 will be considered to support planning grants to assist in the development of emerging projects.

- **Attention to student engagement in learning**
  Research consistently tells us that active learning produces the deepest and most lasting student learning. This grant program seeks to combine the “high impact” practices characteristic of residential liberal arts education with forms of online instruction that maximize student engagement.

- **Centrality of faculty**
  The Teagle Foundation approaches the challenges of improving teaching and learning with the conviction that the faculty must lead the way. In hybrid learning models, faculty expertise remains central to the work: they still design courses and curricula, lead discussions, provide feedback, and interact face-to-face with students. Inevitably, a robust hybrid learning initiative requires the support of senior leadership and others on campus, but faculty members, in collaboration with instructional technologists, ensure that the model is thoughtfully designed and well delivered. Faculty members also monitor the impact of the content and pedagogy of this approach on student learning.

- **Collaboration and learning across multiple institutions**
  The Teagle Foundation will explore how institutions can work together to address issues of institutional capacity in an era where it is increasingly clear that not every institution can offer everything, but also at a time when bringing learning to the highest level possible remains paramount. Funded projects participating in this initiative, as seen in the Foundation’s work more generally, can span multiple institutions, including those with differing missions. Typically, Teagle grants involve institutions working together, either through existing consortia or through *ad hoc* collaboratives.

- **Assessment**
  Not all innovations work, or work equally well. Thus, the Foundation expects institutions to develop an assessment plan and to use what they learn from their assessment efforts for improvement. Funded projects will be expected to articulate metrics for success related to student learning and engagement and institutional capacity-building. As with our other grant initiatives, the Teagle Foundation may wish to collaborate with institutions in an external evaluation to assess the short- and longer-term outcomes of funded projects, including follow-up studies several years after the conclusion of the funded projects.

- **Dissemination efforts**
  Active dissemination efforts will be important to spread the knowledge and practices developed by
grantees to higher education stakeholders. Dissemination might take the form of action-oriented tool-kits or other publications; open instructional materials; webinars; websites and blogs; and conference presentations and workshops.

Submission Process

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

Concept paper

Interested institutions, organizations, or consortia 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 institutions or consortia will then be invited to submit the full proposal, as outlined below.

Full proposals

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.