Opportunities for Faculty:
Summer Grants, Strand Courses, Western Reads Director, FIG Clusters and More!

This issue of Praxis describes grant and employment opportunities to help faculty strengthen courses and improve student achievement, particularly in the first year. These and other faculty-development opportunities are funded by cost-saving and rebasing efforts within the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education.

The Center for Instructional Innovation & Assessment (CIIA) announces the availability of a limited number of summer grants for Western faculty who wish to use online tools such as online tutorials, simulations, and other strategic uses of the web to enhance their existing courses. Roger Anderson, Chair of the ACC, and the VPUE seek proposals for the development and piloting of GUR strands: two-three existing GUR courses that can be linked and taught in successive quarters. A new director is needed for the Western Reads program, a campus-wide reading program designed to promote intellectual engagement, a sense of community, and conversation among incoming freshmen. The VPUE also invites faculty to seek funding and support for faculty-development events and programs of their own design. And finally, the VPUE is inviting departments and faculty to propose new Freshmen Interest Group (FIGs) clusters.

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Events

Gender in a Changing World: Through Nature via Nurture to a Humane Appreciation of Gender Diversity (Part 1 of 2)
Thursday, January 26
2:30-3:30 PM
Humanities 106
~
Webinar: Re-Centering Teaching: 20+ Techniques for Promoting Active Learning
Friday, January 27
10-11:30 AM
Viking Union 462B
Register in advance at: webinar training link.
~
Gender in a Changing World: Through Nature via Nurture to a Humane Appreciation of Gender Diversity (Part 2 of 2)
Thursday, February 2
2:30-3:30 PM
Humanities 106
~
Teaching in the Round: Chalkboards, Whiteboards, Smartboards
Thursday, February 9
Noon-1:00
Miller Hall 038
Faculty Development Summer Grant

The Center for Instructional Innovation & Assessment announces the availability of a limited number of summer grants for Western faculty who wish to use online tools such as online tutorials, simulations, and other strategic uses of the web to enhance their existing courses. Six awards of $4,000 are available for work to be done during Summer Quarter, 2012.

A recent U.S. Department of Education meta-analysis found that courses which blend online tutorials and support with traditional face-to-face instruction yield higher student achievement than stand alone face-to-face courses.

This program will acquaint faculty with models, open-source resources, and ideas for web-based course enhancements. Moreover, the CIIA will provide assistance and support for making the enhancements.

In order to participate, faculty must be available to attend all five days of on-campus faculty development sessions during the week of June 11-15, 2012. Faculty complete the rest of the course development activities during the summer of 2012. Support will be provided by both CIIA and ATUS staff.

Especially encouraged are enhancements to gateway courses that might be made available department-wide. Departmental teams may apply to create such enhancements. For instance, faculty teams might create online tutorials for concepts, skills, or content students typically struggle with in a gateway course, making the tutorial available to all instructors.

Priority will be given to proposals that focus on large (75 students or more) courses and/or gateway courses with high failure rates or difficult material.

Timeline
- Application deadline is March 16, 2012.
- Applications will be reviewed by the CIIA Faculty Advisory Board in April and awardees will be notified via email by May 1.
- Faculty must be available to attend all five on-campus development sessions during the week of June 11-15, 2012.

Application Checklist
- Fill out the application, available in docx, rtf, and pdf formats at: summer grant application.
- Print the completed application.
- Obtain required signatures.
- Attach course syllabus.
- Send by March 16th to: Justina Brown, Mail Stop 9095.

Restrictions
- Faculty must be available to attend 5-day on-campus workshop.
- Faculty can teach up to 5 summer credits and still participate.
- Faculty cannot also receive a summer teaching grant.
- Faculty may receive this award and a summer research grant, if not teaching.
- Priority would go to people without a summer grant in a tie breaker.

Questions about this program? Contact:

Justina Brown, CIIA
Email: Justina.Brown@wwu.edu
College Hall 301 • 360-650-7210

More information on this program and application materials can be found at:
pandora.cii.wwu.edu/cii/award/
Call for GUR Strands Proposals

Roger Anderson, Chair of the ACC, and Steve VanderStaay, VPUE, seek proposals for the development and piloting of GUR strands: 2-3 existing GUR courses that can be linked and taught in successive quarters so that skills and content knowledge build throughout the year. Strands fit the definition of a freshman learning community, which the AACU recommends as a widely tested and “high impact” educational practice. To learn more, go to: Strands.

The purpose of the strands is two-fold. First, strands provide a recommended year-long schedule of three classes which enhance and deepen student achievement of the GUR competencies within Western’s liberal arts core curriculum. Second, strands improve the freshmen experience through the coordination of curricula and the creation of a year-long cohort.

Support

Faculty participants will receive a one-time $1,000 summer stipend for curriculum development and a $1,000 honorarium after the strand is taught.

An Example of a Current GUR Strand: Major Cultural Traditions

HNRS 103, 104 & 105 connect two humanities courses on the Western tradition with a concluding ACGM course (105) that emphasizes the history, literature and culture of groups outside North America.

Fall: Honors 103
Winter: Honors 104
Spring: Honors 105

Because writing and communication are emphasized in each of these courses, they collectively meet the CCOM requirement. i.e. Humanities, Humanities, ACGM, CCOM.

An Example of a Possible GUR Strand: The Idea of America

Fall: Political Science 250 (The American Political System)
Winter: History 104 (American History)
Spring: History 105 (American History)

Requirements

- Strands need to include GUR courses from at least two of the following areas: Humanities, sciences, social sciences. Strands can also include ACGM, BCGM, and CCOM courses.
- Strand curricula needs to be sufficiently coordinated to permit skills and content knowledge to build throughout the year.
- Student achievement in the strands must be assessed in relation to the GUR competencies.
- Strands must have a title.
- Strands help fulfill Western’s first-year mission.
- Funded strands will be piloted in the 2012-13 academic year.

Application Process

Applications will be available from the VPUE’s office beginning February 6th.

Applications will be reviewed and ranked by an ad hoc faculty committee of ACC and CUE members beginning March 5th.

An information meeting on the Strand concept will be held February 7th, at 4:00 PM, in Old Main 465. Interested faculty are encouraged to attend, or to request more information from Steve VanderStaay, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education or Roger Anderson, Chair of ACC.

Western’s First-Year Mission

The first year at Western is a time of significant intellectual and personal development in which students actively engage in rigorous coursework. The entire Western community—faculty, staff and students—is committed to helping students...
- understand the moral, civic, and personal purposes of their liberal arts education;
- negotiate successfully the academic and personal opportunities and challenges of their first year; and
- connect to Western faculty and the larger campus community.
Academic Program Director: Western Reads

ABOUT WESTERN READS

Western Reads is a campus-wide reading program designed to promote intellectual engagement, a sense of community and conversation among incoming freshmen. Freshmen receive the Western Reads book at Summerstart and are invited to read it in anticipation of their studies at Western. Western Reads offers students the opportunity to engage in formal and informal conversation about each year’s book choice through a range of activities and events. Western Reads serves the University’s first-year mission.

ABOUT THE POSITION

The Academic Program Director of Western Reads collaborates with faculty, staff, and students to fulfill the program’s mission. The Director provides leadership in planning, carrying out, and assessing the program. Specific responsibilities of the Academic Program Director include the following:

- Developing and leading the Western Reads Book Selection Committee by including relevant students, staff and faculty, and facilitating consensus of all major stakeholders in the book selection process.
- Working with the A.S. Bookstore to obtain the selected book at a reasonable price.
- Advocating for and facilitating departmental use of the book in freshmen and GUR courses.
- Developing promotional materials related to Western Reads, such as a bookmark, poster, book insert copy, and P.R. announcements.
- Representing the program in all summer training programs when requested, such as those for student leaders, Summerstart advisors, FIG instructors, and new faculty orientation.
- Working with New Student Services to coordinate the author’s visit to campus.
- Developing one program per term featuring the book of the year, such as a panel presentation, discussion or other event on the book topic.
- Assessing the program and making recommendations for its improvement.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Faculty status and a record of successful teaching.
- Demonstrated excellence in written and oral communication.
- Ability to effectively run meetings and build consensus among participants.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- A record of participation in collaborative, interdisciplinary efforts.
- Strong rapport with faculty across the university.

APPOINTMENT AND SALARY

The Academic Program Director is a renewable, two-year appointment available to Western faculty beginning April, 2012. The position reports to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education with secondary reporting to the Office of the Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services. The Director will receive 1 course release and a quarterly stipend. The Director may receive compensation in lieu of the course release. Compensation follows all guidelines for Academic Program Directors in the CBA.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES

Application is by a cover letter addressing your experience related to the position responsibilities and to the required and preferred qualifications. Please include contact information for three references and a resume or CV.

Review of applications will begin March 5th and conclude by March 23rd.

Faculty interested in the position are encouraged to acquaint themselves with the Western Reads website: http://www.westernreads.wwu.edu/about.shtml.

Faculty may address questions about the position to Steven.VanderStaay@wwu.edu

NOTE: WWU is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, committed to assembling a diverse, broadly trained faculty and staff. Women, minorities, persons with disabilities, Vietnam-era and disabled veterans are encouraged to apply. All new employees must comply with the immunization policy and show employment eligibility verification as required by the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Service before beginning work at WWU. A thorough background check will be conducted on all new hires. For disability accommodation, call (360) 650-3774.
Faculty and Departments Invited to Propose New FIG Clusters for Fall 2012.

FIG clusters link three courses—two GURs and an integrative 2-credit seminar—that freshmen take as a fall cohort. As part of the evolution of the program, departments can now propose clusters of their own.

Example: The Department of Journalism designed a FIG, “The Business of Journalism,” that linked their “Introduction to Mass Media” course to an Economics 101 course and a 2-credit FIG seminar on the role and influence of advertising, and money in general, in journalism. Journalism designed the seminar curricula and selected the instructor, whose salary was paid by the FIG program.

The VPUE is willing to consider other iterations of the cluster idea, such as a link between one GUR and a seminar, as long as the first-year mission is served. The VPUE is especially interested in clusters that serve “real” interest groups, such as freshmen interested in medicine, law enforcement, climate science, public service, robotics, international relations, etc.

How the Program Works

Participating departments withhold 25 seats in GURs linked to a FIG. The VPUE advertises the clusters to enrolled freshmen via mailings and Summerstart presentations. Freshmen simultaneously register for all courses in the FIG cluster through an electronic early-registration process.

FIG GUR faculty visit the seminar twice, share their syllabus with the seminar instructor, and coordinate with the seminar instructor regarding curricula. FIG seminars include academic content pertinent to the cluster theme and require a concluding paper, project or presentation. Department Chairs may select the seminar instructor. GUR faculty receive an honorarium of $750-$1,000 for their participation. NTT and TT faculty may participate.

The FIGs Program Concept

As part of the first-year experience, the FIG Program intends to:

- provide a small group experience to help integration into university life,
- provide the opportunity for more interaction with instructors,
- initiate the concepts of college-level academics via a rigorous scholastic curriculum, and
- help students recognize and take advantage of the roles that various campus resources play in their academic lives.

More Information on FIGs can be found at:

FIGs Program Link

Faculty and departments interested in proposing FIG clusters are welcome to contact Steve VanderStaay at x3004 or Steven.VanderStaay@wwu.edu

Procedures for Applying for Faculty Development Support through the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education

At Western, teaching support services and workshops are regularly offered by the Center for Instructional Innovation and Assessment (CIIA), Writing Instruction Support, the Writing Center, and the Center for Service-Learning. In addition, faculty are invited to seek funding and support for faculty-development events and programs of their own design. Support includes logistical assistance with meeting arrangements, announcements, posters, etc. The typical funding limit is $5,000 for a program or project involving many faculty.

Procedures

- Application is by a letter of proposal outlining the purposes of the event or program, the faculty served, expected results and a proposed budget.
Applications may be submitted at any time.
Applications are submitted to Steve VanderStaay and reviewed by the Faculty Advisory Board of the CIIA.
Projects must be assessed for their impact upon instruction.

**Examples of Funded Projects**

**The Faculty GUR Group** was funded to establish a year-long sequence of workshops designed to improve instruction in the GURs. Faculty present lessons from their GURs and discuss the content and instructional methods in monthly presentations attended by all participants. The CIIA schedules, communicates and advertises the events. Faculty participants receive a modest honorarium upon completion of the program; the program coordinators receive a stipend of $1,000 for directing the year-long project. This project is ongoing.

Results: Past participants reported that the project improved their teaching, inspired and sustained their efforts to teach quality GUR courses, increased their understanding of student experience in the GUR program, and enhanced their appreciation of the value of a strong liberal arts core experience.

**Computer Science Faculty** were funded to attend a week-long “Best Instructional Practices” workshop for infusing high-impact strategies into their curricula and teaching.

Results: Faculty reported that they were inspired and reinvigorated in their teaching. Each participant piloted new instructional strategies in their classes, assessing the results.

**Notes**

- Interested faculty are welcome to discuss their idea with the VPUE.
- The VPUE can fund teaching-related materials. For instance, faculty occasionally ask about support for a teaching-related faculty book club, wherein we would purchase books faculty selected for discussion. Such a project would be eligible for funding.
- Funding for faculty-initiatives to improve upper-division instruction is limited. Most VPUE funding must be directed to projects that impact GUR instruction. Projects that impact teaching at all levels are eligible.
- Departmental projects, such as the Computer Science project described above, are typically co-funded by the college or department.
- Single faculty projects are not eligible for VPUE funding through this program. However, Deans or Chairs may request that the VPUE match their support for a teaching-related faculty development initiative, such as a teaching-related workshop.
- Available funding varies from year to year, depending upon the costs of other teaching-related events.