



# Request for Proposals

## Designing Online Learning-Centered Environments

### **Background and Purpose**

Department and program faculty teams are invited to submit proposals for the development of online or blended learning courses through a special program administered by the Faculty Center for Professional Development and I&IT Learning. Designing Online Learning-Centered Environments (DOLCE), which is jointly sponsored by the Divisions of Academic Affairs and Instructional and Information Technology, will assist departments and programs in making high demand and/or high enrollment courses available for online or blended learning<sup>1</sup> delivery in a manner that retains high academic quality and efficient use of faculty time. Qualifying courses include, but are not limited to, courses currently offered to large enrollment sections or with multiple sections, high enrollment and/or regularly offered required courses, and “bottleneck” courses which impede student academic progress under their current scheduling sequence.

Proposals must identify a team of three or four faculty members who will be engaged in the proposed course design and development project. The intention of this program is to support the development of online and blended learning courses that will impact a large number of students. In addition to faculty, the course development teams include instructional designers and instructional technologists from I&IT and librarians to create an online or blended learning environment in which the course can be taught by an individual faculty member, by the members of the development team, or by other faculty from the department or program. As part of the online/blended learning course development, teams will be encouraged to consider innovative instructional models, such as the variety of models used by institutions participating in the *Program in Course Redesign*.<sup>2</sup>

### **Program Goals**

The overriding goal of this program is to create high quality, efficient, sustainable, and scalable online and blended learning courses that meet the university objectives for student success, learning-centeredness, and prioritization and recovery. The following DOLCE goals are intended to address these program and university objectives.

1. Students completing online and blended learning courses will attain stated learning outcomes to the same or greater degree than students completing on campus versions of the same courses.
2. The cost of delivering online and blended learning courses will be no greater than the cost of delivering on campus courses.

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<sup>1</sup> Blended learning (also referred to as “hybrid”) courses are courses taught partially online and partially face-to-face

<sup>2</sup> Coordinated by the National Center for Academic Transformation and funded by the Pew Foundation, [www.center.rpi.edu](http://www.center.rpi.edu)



3. Online and blended learning courses will be taught on a regular basis for multiple years by different faculty without substantial course redevelopment.
4. Online and blended learning courses will have a positive impact on students' academic progress.
5. Departments, colleges, and the university will increase the capacity to create and deliver high-quality online learning opportunities for our students.

Individual departments awarded grants under this program are expected to define their own goals to be added to these program goals.

### **Program Overview**

In their proposals departments and programs should identify the course (or course sequence) they wish to redesign for online or blended learning delivery. The proposal should describe the issues, concerns, and problems the department seeks to address this course redesign effort. The proposal should indicate how the students, the department, and the university would benefit from online or blended learning delivery of the course and identify the goals they hope to achieve through the redesigned course. The proposal should include a general description of how the team intends to evaluate the effectiveness of their initiative.

Departments are not expected to provide a complete plan for or model of their redeveloped course in the proposal. The first phase of the program will be a design phase during which the faculty team, with the support of an instructional design team will explore potential models and create a course development plan. In addition to an assigned instructional designer, faculty development teams will have the support of additional academic support staff from I&IT and the Library as they design and develop their courses. To assist in the design of the course with the appropriate and effective use of technology, an instructional designer from I&IT Learning will be assigned to the team. A content/teaching librarian will also join the team to assist the group in identifying and integrating electronic learning resources into the course materials and impart library research skills appropriate to the research assignments of the course. Instructional technologists with expertise in web design, learning management systems (and related technologies), multimedia development, and video production can be called upon to assist the team in developing the learning environment for the course as well as creation and integration of learning objects into this course environment.

We anticipate that teams will adopt a “modular” approach by developing learning objects that can be replaced as needed without significant course redesign and redevelopment. Moreover, it is hoped that some learning objects developed for online and blended learning courses will be useful in on-campus sections of the same course as well as refined for use in related courses.

### **Program Elements and Timetable**

Proposals are due by **March 23rd** for projects to begin during the Spring 2007 Quarter. The exact time table for development of each online or blended learning course will be developed



during the Course Design Phase of the project and presented in the development project plan due at the end of this phase. The dates provided in this timetable are targets that can be adjusted to meet the needs of particular projects.

## **Course Design Phase**

*Timeframe:* Spring Quarter 2007

*Activities:* Development team (faculty developers plus instructional designer and content librarian) will investigate models and settle upon a course structure – course contents, learning activities, and course environment elements including learner accessibility. This phase will begin with a course design retreat where the development team meets for an intensive “brainstorming” session augmented as needed by others, including the dean, chair, additional faculty, librarians, students majoring in the program, the Director of the Faculty Center for Professional Development, and additional staff from I&IT Learning.

*Outcome:* Complete course development project plan

*Compensation:* Each faculty member of the development team will receive a maximum stipend of \$1,000 for participation in the Course Design phase. Active and full participation is required to receive the full stipend. All awards will be disbursed following the Course Development phase.

## **E-Learning Teaching Academy**

*Timeframe:* June 11 – July 27 2007 (no meeting the week of July 2)

*Activities:* Six-week blended learning course on teaching and learning online. Participants will learn strategies for effective, efficient, and learner accessible online instruction. The focus will be on pedagogy and not on development of course materials. The Academy will be attended by all faculty development teams.

*Outcome:* Faculty are prepared for instruction in an e-learning environment.

*Compensation:* Each faculty member of the development team will receive a maximum stipend of \$1,000 for participation in the eLearning Academy. Active and full participation is required to receive the full stipend. All awards will be disbursed following the Course Development phase.



## **Course Development**

*Timeframe:* Summer Quarter 2007

*Activities:* Development team identifies and creates the course materials – learning objects, assessments, rubrics, readings, study guides, teaching guides, etc. and course learning environment. Faculty teams will be supported in the production of accessible digital content for learners, including those with disabilities. Additional support staff – instructional technologists and librarians – will be added to the team as needed.

*Outcome:* Completed course ready for piloting.

*Compensation:* Each faculty member of the development team will receive a maximum stipend of \$2,000 for participation in the Course Development phase. Active and full participation is required to receive the full stipend. All awards will be disbursed following the Course Development phase.

## **Course Beta-Testing (Piloting)**

*Timeframe:* Fall Quarter 2007

*Activities:* A faculty member from the development team will teach the course. Student learning outcomes are assessed to measure attainment of DOLCE program goals.

*Outcome:* Course is piloted and assessment data are collected.

*Compensation:* One course release given to one instructor of record for the redesigned course.

## **Assessment and Dissemination**

*Timeframe:* Winter Quarter 2008 – Spring Quarter 2008

*Activities:* Course is evaluated against original goals. Development faculty will present results to their departments and colleges and at an all-university conference on e-learning to be held in April or May 2008.

*Outcome:* Courses are evaluated. Course improvements and refinements are outlined. Data are collected for overall program evaluation.

## **Proposal Contents**

Proposals should contain the following:

- a. Course (or course sequence) proposed for development.
- b. Development faculty (3-4).
- c. Issues, problems, and concerns the department or program would like to address by offering the course in online or blended learning mode.
- d. Goals the department would like to achieve by offering the course in online or blended learning format.
- e. Statement of the measures to be used by the team to measure attainment of course goals.
- f. Additional faculty who may be involved in the project, e.g., faculty invited to the design meeting, additional instructors, additional members of the assessment team, etc.
- g. Additional courses that may benefit from materials developed for this course.
- h. Letter of support from the department chair and/or program director describing the commitment that the program, department, and/or college is making to the project, including commitment to teach the course on an ongoing basis.
- i. Letter of support from the dean.

## **Submission and Review Process**

Applications are due in electronic form to the Faculty Center for Professional Development (Building 1, Room 227 no later than 5:00 PM no later than **Friday, March 23, 2007**. The selection committee will review the proposals and make a recommendation for awards to the Provost and Vice President for Instructional and Information Technology. Awards will be announced on **March 30, 2007**. Up to four awards will be granted.

Informational sessions will be held on **Monday, February 26, 12:00-1:00 PM** and **Tuesday, February 27, 12:00-1:00 PM** in the Faculty Center Conference Room, Building 1, Room 228.

## **Reuse of Course Materials**

In order to meet the requirement that the courses developed under this program can be sustained over a period of time, it is expected that the materials developed within this program will be available for use by the university for a period of not less than five years.

## **Funding and Resources**

Faculty team members will receive a maximum stipend of \$4,000 for participation in the DOLCE program. Appropriation is as follows: course design: \$1000, eLearning Academy: \$1000, and course development: \$2000. Full and active participation in each phase of the DOLCE program is required to receive the maximum stipend. The instructor of record will receive one course release for teaching the course for the first time it is offered.



## **Selection Criteria**

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- a. Potential for impact on large numbers of students.
- b. Level of commitment and number of faculty involved as developers, instructors, and other roles.
- c. Sustainability over time.
- d. Clear statement of issues, problems, and concerns and likelihood of solving the problems through online or blended learning delivery.
- e. Appropriateness and likely attainability of stated goals.
- f. Clear statement of measures of success.
- g. Likelihood for reuse of learning objects and course materials.
- h. Likelihood of significant positive impact on the programs, on other courses, and importance of online and blended learning course development to department and college goals.

## **Important Dates**

February 26 and 27, 2007	Information sessions
March 23, 2007	RFP Due
March 30, 2007	Announcement of selected faculty teams

## **Selection Committee**

Chair of the Teaching, Learning, and Technology Committee  
Director of Faculty Center for Professional Development  
Director of I&IT Learning  
One additional representative from Teaching, Learning, and Technology Committee  
One representative from the Senate Committee on Technology  
One representative from the Faculty Development Advisory Committee  
Two representatives from previous DOLCE faculty teams

## **For Further Information**

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