Aspire Learning & Teaching Fund: 2017-18 Call for Proposals

The Provost of The University of British Columbia Okanagan Campus, in collaboration with the Deans' Council, invites proposals to the 2017-18 Aspire Learning & Teaching (ALT) Fund. Now in its second year, the ALT Fund supports curriculum change, innovative teaching practices and learning environment enhancement as envisioned in Aspire. The fund will enable faculty members to make strategic changes within existing, or implement new, undergraduate and graduate academic programs that are more flexible, interdisciplinary, experiential and/or collaborative. The main goal of the ALT Fund is to transform student learning at UBC Okanagan.

A range of projects will be considered, from innovations at the course level that address a critical program need through to targeted support for development of new flexible learning programs and/or interdisciplinary degree pathways. We are seeking to identify and fund projects that are strategic, innovative and feasible.

A maximum of $50,000 is available per project; projects may be up to three years in length. It is anticipated that the awards will be a mix of small and large projects.

Priority Focus Areas, 2017-18[1]

We particularly welcome proposals in one or more of the following priority focus areas:

- Enhance experiential learning opportunities.
- Increase flexibility by developing or redesigning a strategic course or full program for distributed delivery across multiple sites (e.g., bridge UBC Okanagan and UBC Vancouver). Course-based examples may include distributed flipped classrooms, reduced classroom time or fully online courses.
- Create mechanisms for students to develop, enhance and document their knowledge, skills and competencies in the context of their academic program.
- Utilize flexible learning techniques to modularize existing programs and/or to create new program structures (e.g., new minors).
- Develop open educational resources that are intended to be used in multiple courses within a program or across several programs.

Application Process

The proposal process comprises two submission stages:

- An initial letter of intent (LOI) must be submitted online by **3:00 PM, June 20, 2016[2] (extended deadline)**. Late applications will not be accepted. The Deans' Council will review the LOIs and issue invitations to those selected to submit full proposals.
- Full proposals must be submitted online by **3:00 PM, October 31, 2016[3] (extended deadline)**. Late applications will not be accepted.
- An adjudication committee will review the proposals and make recommendations to the Provost. The Provost may consult with the Deans' Council prior to making a decision on which proposals will be funded.

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[1] *Note Priority Areas date updated (same areas as 2016-17). Visit http://altfund.ok.ubc.ca for more information*
[2] *Deadline extended from May 31, 2016 to June 20, 2016 on May 2, 2016*
[3] *Deadline extended from September 30, 2016 to October 31, 2016 on July 20, 2016*

Guidelines

Eligibility

- The Lead Applicant must be a full time, continuing faculty member of the University of British Columbia Okanagan.
- The proposal must have the support of all Deans and Department/Unit Heads associated with the project applicants.
- Projects for which the primary purpose is program evaluation are ineligible.
- Projects for which the primary purpose is research are ineligible.
- Teaching and learning materials created through the ALT Fund must be made available for re-use within UBC. Awardees will be encouraged to license any learning materials developed under an appropriate Creative Commons License and to share the materials more widely through UBC's digital sharing channels (e.g., UBC Wiki, cIRCle, UBC's YouTube Channel).
- A final report, for public dissemination, is expected of all projects. Multi-year projects are required to submit an interim report each year.

Criteria

- The project represents a strategic innovation at the academic program level in alignment with the Aspire Vision. Preference will be given to those projects that are consistent with the 2017-18[2] Priority Focus Areas.
- The project uses new, novel or significantly improved educational strategies, pedagogical approaches, techniques or tools that show strong potential to produce a demonstrable gain in student outcomes or the student experience at the level of the academic program.
- The proposal clearly articulates how the project results in sustainable (beyond the fund period) benefits to a significant number of students.
- The proposal provides a clear rationale, methodology, objectives and work plan.
- The project is feasible; the objectives are achievable within the proposed timeline and budget.
- The project uses outcomes-based criteria to determine success; the criteria and the methods by which data are to be collected are clearly outlined in the proposal's evaluation plan.
- The proposal clearly identifies how the project will contribute to innovation in learning and teaching more broadly at UBC Okanagan.
- The proposed budget is appropriate, with a clear justification of associated costs. The project has additional sources of funding or resources.

Budget considerations

- The ALT Fund may not be used for conference registrations, travel or other types of dissemination costs.
- Any funds requested for teaching buyouts must be matched by the Faculty or Department. The maximum amount of funding available to any project from the ALT Fund is 50% of one teaching buyout for each year of the project. Ensure that a letter of support is provided from the Department Head or Director for course buyouts, including a compelling rationale for why release time is necessary and recommended.[4]
- Equipment and infrastructure costs are in eligible for funding, though they may be allocated as in-kind expenses.
- Funds cannot be used to purchase external consulting or other types of services where the expertise is available within UBC at a reasonable cost and in a timely manner.
- The applicant or applicants should consult with any and all central service or operational units that are expected to contribute to the project.
- Potentially significant investments in infrastructure or services should be highlighted in the Letter of Intent. Letters of support for such investments should accompany a full proposal.
- Any unspent funds will revert to the Provost Office after the project ends.

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[4] Clarified considerations for buyout eligibility.