



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

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OFFICE OF THE SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND PROVOST

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 7, 2011

TO: Deans

FROM: Nariman Farvardin 
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

SUBJECT: Request for Proposals to Develop Innovative Blended Learning Courses

Based on the recommendations of the Blended Learning Committee, I am inviting the University Community to submit proposals for *innovative approaches for blended courses that significantly enhance students' learning*. A small set of promising proposals will be selected for funding at the level of \$25,000 - \$100,000.

A blended (also referred to as a hybrid) course requires a combination of both face-to-face and online interactions, and involves a rich, collaborative environment embedded within a learning space, containing a variety of information sources and tools such as simulations, interaction mechanisms, and visualization capabilities.

The full report of the Blended Learning Committee, which includes a list of example courses and related tools, is available on the Provost's website at:

http://www.provost.umd.edu/announcements/Blended_Learning_Report_Final.pdf

Courses with a history of high enrollment and those identified as unusually challenging for the students and instructors will have higher priority for funding. Exceptionally strong proposals for courses with smaller enrollment may also be selected for funding. In this category, priority will be given to proposals that use blended strategies to promote especially innovative ways of using technology, such as simulations and visualizations of complex systems.

It is expected that this campus initiative will be the first step toward establishing a constantly growing core group of faculty, called *Blended Learning Fellows*, who will serve as a resource and a catalyst for technology-based educational innovations on campus. A close working relationship between the Blended Learning Fellows, the Office of Information Technology (OIT), and the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) should help the University to move toward a position of national leadership in educational technologies.

Two-phase Proposal Submission Process

- **Pre-proposal Phase.** Faculty are invited to submit pre-proposals by **April 1, 2011**, which should provide the following information: (i) brief course description and enrollment details for the past two years; (ii) needs and anticipated learning goals; (iii) possible blended learning approach describing how students will dramatically benefit from a blended approach; and (iv) an assessment strategy that clearly evaluates the desired outcomes. The pre-proposal should be no longer than **three (3)** pages. Selection of pre-proposals will be completed by **April 18, 2011**. Prior to the submission date, OIT will provide face-to-face and online informational sessions about the use of technologies in blended courses. Authors of pre-proposals not selected to proceed to the next phase will be invited to participate in a boot camp on blended learning hosted by the CTE and OIT. There will be financial incentives to help in creating a core faculty group with significant expertise in blended learning.
- **Proposal Phase.** Up to ten (10) selected pre-proposals will be invited to submit full proposals that will be due by **June 15, 2011**, and should not exceed **six (6)** pages. The proposal should include the information required for the pre-proposals (items (i)-(iv) described above), with more detailed description of: (a) the blended learning approach; (b) e-learning tools to be used; (c) assessment plan and anticipated outcomes; (d) how technology will be integrated to meet the course learning outcomes; (e) an implementation plan with a timeline for development in the Fall 2011 semester with clear benchmarks; (e) personnel information detailing each proposer's prior academic, pedagogical, and technical (e-tools) experience; and (f) an itemized and justified budget.

Letters of endorsement from the department chair and dean are also required for full proposals. The letters must provide evidence of how the department will support the implementation of the proposal if funded.

Successful proposals will be announced by **July 1, 2011**. An OIT instructional designer will be assigned to each successful proposal to work closely with the faculty leader on an implementation plan for Spring 2012. The selected fellows will be required to be members of a campus blended learning community, which will begin with a full-day retreat in August 2011, and will continue with regular meetings through the Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 semesters.

Proposal Selection Criteria

- **Innovation and Impact:** Will the proposed blended learning strategies be effective in disseminating information, and in educating and engaging students? Will the use of selected e-tools be innovative, original, and creative? Will students' learning be enhanced significantly?
- **Goals and Outcomes:** What instructional or community building goals are being addressed?
- **Plan and Feasibility:** How will factors such as scale, content, resources, pedagogy, course type, audience, and implementation be addressed?

- **Transferability:** How will the proposed blended learning strategies serve as a model for other sections of the same course and for other courses? How can the proposed blended course be modified or scaled up to impact other departments or colleges?
- **Assessment:** How will the effectiveness of the proposed blended course be assessed in both a formative and summative manner?
- **Budget:** Are the budget items, and the level of funding requested appropriate?
- **Personnel:** Does the lead instructor/team have enough academic, pedagogic, and technical expertise to lead the implementation of the proposal?

Key dates

- 3-page pre-proposal due **April 1, 2011**.
- Successful pre-proposals announced by **April 18, 2011**.
- 6-page proposal invited by **June 15, 2011**.
- Successful proposals announced by **July 1, 2011**.

Pre-proposals and proposals should be sent to:

Professor Elizabeth Beise
Associate Provost for Academic Planning and Programs
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