University of Calgary Teaching Scholars Program Pilot:

Enhancing educational leadership at the University of Calgary

Introduction

Eyes High created a strong vision for enriching the quality and breadth of student learning experiences, and the *Integrated Framework for Teaching and Learning* established clear directions for establishing a sustained culture for teaching and learning at the University of Calgary. This framework recognized the inherently complex and integrated nature of post-secondary education, and challenged the academic community to strengthen our academic programs, enhance our teaching practices, and enrich the quality of student learning through a systematic, specialized and sustained approach to support and development.

Supporting research-informed, research-active approaches to engagement and inquiry across multiple institutional levels was emphasized throughout the Framework's priorities. One of the actions highlighted in the Framework and the Academic Plan was to establish a *Teaching and Learning Professor Program* in each faculty and school, thus creating a strong professional learning community of peers. Recent research has highlighted the importance of creating and linking distributed working groups and networks of practice that initiate change and foster sustained cultures of teaching and learning (Mårtensson, Roxå, & Stensaker, 2014; Roxå & Mårtensson, 2009; Roxå, Mårtensson, & Alveteg, 2011; Williams et al., 2013). Through these small working groups, networks of trust and dialogue are formed, where new ideas, initiatives and practices are inspired and created (Roxå et al., 2011).

Teaching Scholars programs (sometimes also referred to as Teaching Fellowship programs) present a sustainable model for establishing a community of peers that helps to advance educational leadership across the institution by strengthening teaching and learning capacity within and across disciplines. Teaching Scholars programs provide academic staff with the time and resources necessary to pursue a meaningful, relevant, and research-informed initiative that is designed to have broad disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary impact beyond the scope of a course or an individual instructor. Although the purpose of Teaching Scholars programs vary based on institutional context, these programs have been shown to enhance the teaching practices of individuals and groups of educators; enable the development of strategic and innovative teaching and learning initiatives; develop educational leaders that are prepared to foster and guide change; and, create collaborative communities of inquiry and practice (Gruppen et al., 2006; Keppell, O'Dwyer, Lyon, & Childs, 2010; Searle, Hatem, Perkowski, & Wilkerson, 2006)

University of Calgary Teaching Scholars Program Pilot Details

The University of Calgary Teaching Scholars program pilot will provide support for faculty to enhance their educational leadership by pursuing an initiative that addresses a specific teaching and learning opportunity of shared interest within and/or amongst faculties. The Teaching Scholars Program fosters the development of integrated networks of educational leadership, scholarship, and practice to enable academic staff to develop specific initiatives that enrich the quality of teaching and learning at the University of Calgary.

The Teaching Scholars program will:

- build teaching and learning capacity within and across disciplines;
- establish and connect small working groups and networks of practice;

- contribute to inquiry, excellence, and innovation in teaching and learning;
- enhance student learning experiences; and,
- strengthen educational leadership across the institution.

The Teaching Scholars program provides recipients with up to $40,000 over 3 years, to support the development, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination of the outcomes of a disciplinary or interdisciplinary teaching and learning initiative that is intended to have impact within and/or across faculties (i.e. beyond the scope of an individual course). The results of each Teaching Scholars' initiative must be disseminated to the broader benefit of the academic community. Example initiatives may focus on, but are not limited to: developing, implementing, and evaluating discipline-specific or interdisciplinary teaching and learning approaches; integrating learning technologies to enrich student learning experiences; enhancing student engagement in large classes; developing, implementing and evaluating capstone learning experiences; and, developing, implementing, and evaluating community-based and experiential learning opportunities. Although the specific allocation of funds will vary based on the needs of each Scholars' initiatives and faculty, the funds may be used to support the purchase of release-time, to fund undergraduate/graduate research assistantships, to acquire associated project resources, and, to fund expenses associated with disseminating project findings (e.g. conference travel, hospitality).

The Teaching Scholars Program pilot is intended to support teaching and learning initiatives that address a topic of shared interest that builds teaching and learning capacity within/or across faculties at the University of Calgary. Therefore, each recipient must be willing to share the outcomes of their Scholars' initiative with the broader community through their faculty and the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning. The Teaching Scholars will be supported through an on-going community of practice facilitated through the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning. They are also required to strengthen and build networks and connections within the broader academic community such that others may contribute to, share in, and learn from their initiative.

Recipients will be appointed as a University of Calgary Teaching Scholar and will be invited to participate as an on-going member of the University of Calgary Teaching Scholars Advisory Committee. All recipients will receive a framed award, recognizing their educational leadership contributions and dedication to enriching the quality of teaching and learning at the University of Calgary.

Eligibility

The University of Calgary Teaching Scholars Program pilot is available to tenured and tenure-track academic staff, with continuing appointments. Each faculty member may receive Teaching Scholars' funding one time during their academic career. Funding will not be awarded for initiatives that fall within the normal scope of a faculty member's required teaching responsibilities. Co-applicants may apply for shared funding. As per the Teaching Scholars Program pilot guidelines, the maximum award for collaborative initiatives will be $40,000. A total of up to 10 Teaching Scholars will be appointed during this pilot program.

Award Requirements

- Completion of a meaningful and relevant initiative of shared disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary interest, with clearly defined outcomes, that is designed to build teaching and learning capacity and enhance student learning experiences within and/or amongst faculties at the University of Calgary (developing, implementing, and evaluating discipline-specific or interdisciplinary teaching and learning approaches; integrating learning technologies to enrich student learning experiences; enhancing student engagement in large classes; developing, implementing, and evaluating capstone learning experiences;

and, developing, implementing, and evaluating community-based and experiential learning opportunities)

- Participation in an interdisciplinary community of practice with Teaching Scholars from across the University of Calgary (hosted through the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning)
- Development and implementation of initiatives that enable and engage colleagues and build networks of practice across the broader academic community.
- Completion of a mid-term and final report outlining their progress and findings.

Submission Requirements

1. A Statement of Interest
   - Educational philosophy statement
   - Overview of interests in participating in the Teaching Scholars program pilot and the importance of the proposed initiative. This overview should include an outline of what difference you hope the initiative will make to teaching and student learning within and/or amongst disciplines, as well as to your own development as teacher and an educational leader.
2. A 7-10 page outline of the proposed teaching and learning project (excluding references), including:
   - Initiative Description and Rationale
     - Importance and relevance of the initiative to your faculty, discipline and the broader academic community
     - Overview of how the initiative will strengthen teaching approaches and enhance student learning experiences within and/or amongst disciplines
     - Existing gaps, challenges and specific questions to be addressed
     - Links to current and relevant literature
     - Alignment with the University of Calgary's strategic directions and priorities related to teaching and learning
     - Specific goals and intended outcomes to be achieved
   - Methods and Timelines (1 page)
     - Methods or actions to be implemented to achieve goals and outcomes of the initiative
     - Milestones and timelines associated with this initiative
     - Overview of on-going viability of initiative beyond the funding period
   - Budget (1 page)
     - Itemized budget outlining all associated expenses
     - Justification and rationale for all budget items. Items may include funding of release-time, undergraduate/graduate research assistantships, associated project resources, and expenses related to disseminating the findings (e.g. conference travel, hospitality). Due to the intended scope of the proposed Teaching Scholars initiatives, all relevant budget expenses must be reviewed and supported by the Faculty's Dean (or designate).
     - (Optional) Outline of additional or in-kind funding to be provided by the Faculty to support the development and implementation of the teaching and learning initiative.
   - Assessment and Evaluation Plan
     - Overview of assessment methods that will be used to evaluate the initiative's success and outcomes, including its impact on teaching and student learning.
   - Engagement Plan
     - Overview of how the initiative will:

- support a community and culture for teaching and learning
- build networks of practice that engage and enable members of the broader academic community
- contribute to strengthening teaching and learning capacity
    - o Dissemination Plan
        - ▪ Overview of how the results of the initiative will be disseminated at the University of Calgary and to the broader academic community. This may include presentations, workshops, and participation in internal and/or external conferences.
3. Letter of recommendation and support from Chair or Director, and Dean
    - o Overview of applicant's suitability for the program, including their educational leadership potential and ability to actively contribute to the enhancement of teaching and learning within the department, unit or faculty
        - ▪ Overview of support for the proposed initiative, including how it will help meet the needs of the discipline, department, unit or faculty and how it will be sustained when the Teaching Scholars funding has ended.
    - o Overview of support for the applicant to complete the initiative and participate as a University of Calgary Teaching Scholar. If funding will be used to support release time, this must include details of how release funds will be used to support the applicant's participation in the program.

Selection Process

All applications will be peer-reviewed through a two-stage process. First draft submissions will be peer-reviewed by three academic staff members (at least one of whom will be familiar with the applicant's disciplinary context, and one of whom will be from the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning). Applicants will have an opportunity to respond to and address any comments made through the first peer-review process through a revised final submission. Final submissions will be reviewed by a committee chaired by the Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning) or designate, consisting of an undergraduate and graduate student representative, two faculty members, and a representative from the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning. All reviews will conducted based on the following criteria:

- The application clearly indicates the importance and relevance of the initiative, including how it will improve teaching and student learning within and across faculties/disciplines.
- The application is grounded in scholarly literature.
- The application describes how the initiative aligns with institutional and faculty priorities related to teaching and learning.
- The application clearly outlines the goals, intended outcomes to be achieved, and the methods and actions used to achieve these goals.
- The milestones and timelines presented in the application are detailed, achievable and realistic given the scope of the initiative.
- The application outlines the on-going viability of the initiative beyond the funding period.
- The application includes an itemized budget that outlines and justifies all requested and in-kind expenses.
- The application includes a detailed assessment plan to evaluate the initiative's success, including its impact on teaching and student learning.

- The application includes a detailed engagement plan that demonstrates and outlines how the initiative will create connections and networks of practice to enable and engage the broader academic community.
- The application includes a detailed plan to disseminate findings of the initiative to the University of Calgary and broader academic community.
- The application provides evidence and support for the applicant's ability to complete the initiative successfully within the specified timeline.
- The application highlights the applicant's educational leadership potential, as well as their interest, enthusiasm, and passion for teaching and learning.

References

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