Request for Proposals: Innovative Educational Initiatives (IEI)
Juniata College 2014-15

Summary: This is an announcement of the availability of $20,000 for the second year of IEI grants, with an upper limit of $10,000 for each grant. IEI grants are open to any faculty member or group of faculty at Juniata College, and are for the purpose of furthering educational development. The proposal deadline for the 2014-15 academic year is December 15 (see details below). Interested faculty are encouraged to apply under the guidelines outlined below. The projected period of activity for this year's grants is May 1, 2015 to August 31, 2016, or as specified in the proposal.

Overview: Almost any thoughtful student, when asked about the purpose of a college education, will say something like "It is to provide me with the intellectual tools I will need in order to succeed after my graduation." The Juniata College mission statement adds a societal aspect: "Juniata's mission is to provide an engaging personalized educational experience empowering our students to develop the skills, knowledge and values that lead to a fulfilling life of service and ethical leadership in the global community." The purpose of IEI grants is to help support these goals.

The fundamental assumption of IEI funding is that educational needs in all areas, including General Education, change with time in order to adjust to changing student and societal needs. This in turn requires an evolution in teaching material and practices. The result is pressure on teachers to update their teaching during the course of their careers. However, financial support for such updating is, at best, sporadic with respect to both timing and area or discipline. In addition, the financing sources tend to be strictly focused, and perhaps overly prescriptive. In contrast, IEI funding is directly aimed at improving student outcomes, *without* restriction as to either area or approach. Funding is directed toward experienced teachers who are already knowledgeable, but wish to update or improve student outcomes and how those outcomes address expected individual student or societal needs after graduation.

In some ways, the interested instructor is being encouraged to envision a sort of "crystal ball" for foreseeing student futures, and to act accordingly. The IEI committee wants to reward faculty improvement ideas that exhibit 1) bold imagination, 2) careful assessment of a field, often as influenced by juried publications, and 3), realistic approaches in the attempt to improve student outcomes. In other words: **Try us, we are listening.**

Details:

1. You are encouraged to submit, based on your ideas, a *pre-proposal* for rapid initial screening on the part of the IEI Committee. Pre-proposals are due by October 15. The Committee will in turn respond no later than November 1.
2. Final proposals must be submitted by December 15
3. Both proposals and pre-proposals should be submitted to the Office of the Provost, which will pass them along promptly to the Committee.

4. Pre-proposals are best limited to two pages. Try to keep full proposals no longer than 10–15 pages. The Committee will appreciate clarity and conciseness. Note that Committee members should not be expected to be conversant in disciplinary jargon!

5. Announcement of awards will be on or before February 1, 2015. As indicated above the grant period will be May 1, 2015 through August 31, 2016 or as specified in the proposal.

6. Proposals may come either from groups of faculty or from individual faculty members. Moreover, individual faculty members (or groups) may submit multiple proposals.

Proposal Components:

1. **Current State of the Discipline or Area, and the Undergraduate Teaching of it:** This introductory section should provide readers (who may not be experts) with an assessment of current student outcomes in a course or series of courses. This should then be contrasted with anticipated student needs upon graduation.   There are several possibilities here. First, the discipline covered by the course has perhaps changed in a way such that new material needs to be included. This may be a consequence of recent developments in the reviewed or other professional literature. Second, methods and techniques may have changed in important ways. For an example, many disciplines have recently been deeply impacted by computers and resulting software.   In any event, the purpose of this introductory section is to show how student outcomes from the course(s) in question can be significantly improved.

2. **Proposed Changes to Teaching at Juniata in the Area of Interest, and Your Assessment of the Likely Impact of these Changes:** This section should expand on exactly what changes you are proposing, and how you anticipate they will affect student potential, capability, or outlook from a personal and/or societal point of view. Changes here could involve, for example, new instrumentation, new concepts, or new approaches. Alternatively, they might entail novel examination of particular periods in history, specific philosophical theories, etc. In either case you will want to carefully assess anticipated changes in student outcomes arising from the proposed curricular changes. We of course expect your assessment to be very positive; why else would you bother to write?! A crucial factor will be the extent to which you convince the Proposal Review Committee of how your proposed changes will directly benefit the student upon graduation and/or the society in which he/she will be immersed.

3. **Implementation:** Present your plan for introducing students to the proposed new material, tool, or toolset identified in 2. The plan might well involve your writing appropriate text materials, but it could also deal with creation of exercises, laboratory work, videos, software, online components, and/or other educational media. This section should make it clear exactly what educational changes are to be implemented as a result of your analysis in 1 and 2, and the sense in which these implementations would be innovative. In most cases the implementation section is best be broken down into itemized components and associated time frames, assessments, and associated itemized budget.

4. **Plan for Final Assessment**: This section should present plans for assessing the effectiveness of the implementation in terms of improving student outcomes, viewed either from the point of view of an individual graduate or of the society in which the graduate is immersed. There is, of

course, a wide variety of techniques and intellectual tools that, as IEI outcomes, could make a student a better employee.   However, Liberal Arts learning is not limited to this; some student outcomes are designed to benefit society as a whole. This section should speak to either the anticipated personal or societal benefits, as appropriate. Presentation of a SOTL seminar, Bookend Seminar, or published paper of the resulting assessment is encouraged.

5. **Budget**: The grant will supply funds as determined by your budget up to the stated $10,000 maximum. Budgeted items could include, for example, summer hours to be worked, essential supplies and equipment, and attendance at relevant professional meetings. A good approach for the proposal would be to break the budget down into itemized implementation components, time line, and cost.

Evaluation: The Committee will evaluate final proposals based on the degree to which they speak to the five components above.   The Committee presently consists of retired (or partially retired) faculty chosen, by the donor. Current Committee members are Betty Ann Cherry, Jim Lakso, Bill Russey, Paul Schettler, and Bob Wagoner. Evaluation will be directed toward how well the proposal meets the objectives of IEI grants, as expanded above. However, the committee will also assess the reasonableness of the costs of the various components as budgeted.

Final Report: A final report for the IEI grant is due by August 31, 2016 or as specified in the proposal. It should include a summary of the projects implemented, including a summary of their assessment, with emphasis on student (or societal) outcomes.