Learning Commons Faculty Fellows

2019-2020 Call for Proposals

The Learning Commons provides centralized academic support for University of Cincinnati students. We bring together faculty, best-practices in teaching and learning, and hundreds of outstanding peer educators to create flexible academic success programming.

Each year more than 6,000 students take advantage of Learning Commons programs to build confidence, integrate on campus, and master challenging course content. You can learn more about our programs on our website at uc.edu/learningcommons.

This year, we are seeking faculty collaborators with the expertise, interest, and experience to further bolster UC’s investment in student success. We are inviting research proposals that can merge academic inquiry and program assessment, especially around the following interest areas:

1. Improving at-risk student models beyond standard achievement or demographic markers
2. Identifying attrition pathways, especially for early and mid-collegiate students
3. Developing improved program evaluation or outreach strategies for academic support programs, especially for targeted student groups
4. Creating evidence-based recommendations for improved practice for student supports offered via the Learning Commons

Proposals can be wide-ranging, but must include the following:

1. A 1- to 3-page project summary with the following information:
   a. Up to three overarching research questions regarding student success at UC
      i. Questions must incorporate data from the Learning Commons and/or seek to support or improve the operation of the Learning Commons
   b. A brief rationale for the importance/priority of the proposed questions, especially as they pertain to the broader fields of learning support and student success in higher education
   c. A proposed methodology, including what data may be necessary
      i. This can be revised upon subsequent consultation with Learning Commons staff
   d. A brief paragraph on faculty expertise or experience relevant to the proposed project
2. Updated CVs for all research team members
3. A 1-page estimated project timeline identifying key steps, outcomes, and any supports required at each stage of the project
4. A one-page budget outlining project expenses up to $30,000 annually, for between one and three years.
   a. Project progress will be reviewed annually each Spring Semester with leadership within Undergraduate Studies.
   b. Projects maintaining satisfactory progress will be funded annually for up to three years, with the opportunity to update original budget proposals
   c. Funding can be used for teaching releases, graduate student support (stipend only), and up to 3,000 annually in operational/technical supplies. Direct payment to faculty or graduate assistants are not permitted.
d. Course releases can be applied across multiple faculty on the application team, or one faculty member, but the application should make clear how all team members will be able to contribute.

e. Faculty course releases must be approved by appropriate departmental or school leadership.

Projects should NOT propose the creation of a new intervention during the first year, although changes to interventions may be implemented in subsequent years based on year-one findings. Funding will not be used for intervention staff; any additional peer educator staff identified for expansion based on findings will be funded by the Learning Commons.

Selected faculty fellow projects will be evaluated on the following metrics:

1. Feasibility: are the research questions answerable using “real-world” data available to administrators in higher education settings? Are any proposals for additional data collection minimal and not detrimental to student participation in support programs?
2. Priority: are the research questions of a high priority to the institution and the Learning Commons? Will they impact the programming for large numbers of students or impact supports for very challenging courses?
3. Originality: do proposals offer the ability to think about questions of persistence and attrition from a novel or sophisticated perspective? This may include interdisciplinary teams, sophisticated analytic models, or other approaches that make a given project unique to UC/the proposing faculty team.

The Deadline for Submission is May 10th, with respondents notified by May 31st.

Once selected, faculty fellows and research teams will meet with Learning Commons staff during late summer or early fall of 2019 to identify next steps and fine-tune research questions. Faculty fellows are responsible for submitting all IRB/research required documentation, but the Learning Commons will manage institutional mandates around data privacy to provide de-identified datasets to researchers.

Any subsequent meetings, observations, focus groups, etc. can be coordinated with the aid of Learning Commons staff, as appropriate based on IRB protocol determinations and project goals.

To learn more about opportunities, Learning Commons programs and priorities, and ask questions about your potential proposal, please join us for an Open Question session on April 11th from 11:30-1pm located in Langsam 480C (in CET&L).

Attending is not required to submit a proposal. To attend, please RSVP using the following form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfYA3gVdRO6nf3Ukh4h5jCDgJ9giLaVD5etWF2kkTRCZWNt4g/viewform?usp=sf_link