



**LARAMIE COUNTY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

INNOVATION FUNDS

FY 2014-2015

PROGRAM AND APPLICATION MANUAL

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PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

The Laramie County Community College (hereinafter “LCCC” or “the College”) Innovation Fund Program is designed to encourage innovative approaches to helping the College better meet its mission. The program accomplishes this by funding (1) pilot projects that will investigate and implement ideas initiated by creative faculty, staff, and students; and (2) one-time planning projects by a faculty/staff member or student to investigate whether an idea is relevant and feasible. The program fosters an entrepreneurial culture by promoting an environment that is conducive to experimentation and imagination.

This manual describes the criteria and process by which proposals for funding will be evaluated and awarded.

There is one round of funding. Proposals are due no later than August 25, 2014. Proposals will be emailed to Jennifer Thompson at jthompso@lccc.wy.edu in the Institutional Effectiveness Office.

DEFINITIONS

- A. **Applicant** - the individual faculty, staff, or student submitting an Innovation Fund proposal.
- B. **Pilot Project** - a project that implements and puts into practice an innovative idea, which will be evaluated for success based on goals and measurements as determined by the project lead.
- C. **Planning Project** - a project that investigates or researches whether a certain innovative idea is feasible before actual implementation.

FUNDING INFORMATION

Innovation funds are essentially one-time-only (OTO) funds to be allocated and expended within a single fiscal year. There are two types of funding opportunities available:

1. Funds that are used to implement an innovative idea; and
2. Funds that are used to investigate whether an innovative idea is feasible and worthy of implementation.

For fiscal year 2014-2105 (FY15), at least \$200,000 will be available for innovation funds projects. The distribution of funds will take into account the numbers of pilot and planning project proposals and attempts will be made to ensure both types receive some portion of the funding.

Pilot projects are limited to one-year duration with the option to renew funding for an additional two years upon evaluation of the project’s final report. Planning projects are funded for one-time action and shall not span longer than one year.

The allocation of funds is dependent on the strength of proposals, and the number of awards is contingent on the submission of a sufficient number of meritorious proposals. All funds available may not be allocated if there are insufficient meritorious proposals.

ELIGIBILITY

All LCCC faculty, staff, and students are eligible to submit a proposal. Please note the applicant submitting a proposal shall serve as the project lead if funding is awarded. Therefore, while all faculty, staff, and students including part-time are eligible, there is a strong preference for full-time (benefited) faculty and staff to serve as the applicant to ensure continuity of a project. Team applications are encouraged; however a single project

lead must be identified for communication and accountability purposes. More than one proposal may be submitted per individual provided each proposal is distinctly different.

To promote creative thinking, no project is off limits; however, the project must have the potential for significantly impacting the ability of the College to meet its mission and motivate student completion by addressing one or more of the following areas:

1. **Instructional Effectiveness** – improvement in the way the College pursues rigorous, but relevant, educational activities that are delivered in such a manner that students successfully achieve the identified learning outcomes of the course, program, and College.
2. **Completion, and Success After** – efforts to ensure students are successful in completing their educational goal, primarily degrees and certificates, as well as success after they leave LCCC, whether that is transfer and success at another institution or placement and success in the workforce.
3. **Student Support** – improvement in the delivery and overall efficacy of support services for students intended to help them persist towards completion and succeed academically.
4. **LCCC Strategic Plan** – direct contributions to the success of one or more of the College's strategic plan goals and objectives.
5. **Program Start-Up** – testing the feasibility of a new course, program or service, and/or to provide the resources needed for the operational start-up of new courses, programs or services.
6. **Organizational Effectiveness** – improvement in the overall effectiveness or efficiency of the College in its operations and major functions.

While no division or department sign-off is needed to submit a proposal, applicants are encouraged to consult with their divisional/departmental leadership for advice and awareness. In reviewing proposals accepted for consideration, reviewers will consider implications the proposal may have on the respective department, division, or school.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Submissions:

Proposals seeking an expedited response for funding must be emailed to Jennifer Thompson in the Institutional Effectiveness Office by Monday, August 25, 2014. Proposals will only be funded for a period of one year with the option to apply for additional funding in subsequent years (total project length not to exceed three years of funding).

While no minimum or maximum proposal length is expected, proposals that are succinct, yet comprehensive are greatly appreciated. All proposals must include the following components:

A. *Project Area*

Please indicate the one area that is most appropriate for your proposed project.

1. Instructional Effectiveness
2. Completion, and Success After
3. Student Support
4. LCCC Strategic Plan
5. Program Start-Up
6. Organizational Effectiveness

B. *Executive Summary*

In one page or less, provide an executive summary of your project including the title of the project, over-arching goal(s), an estimate of the total amount of funding you are seeking, and the project

timeline (one, two, or three years). Note that all projects are funded for one year, although pilot projects may seek two subsequent years of funding. Therefore, noting if you anticipate multi-year projects in your proposal is helpful.

C. *Project Description*

Provide a brief description of the project to include the primary reason for pursuing it (e.g., problem, opportunity, etc.), institutional background on how the project idea was identified and vetted, and other relevant information. The project description should provide reviewers with a better idea of the what and why behind the proposal. If the project/plan requires buy-in by faculty or staff, explain the method for inclusion. Additionally, if the project encourages interdisciplinary or cross-divisional collaboration, please add description. It is highly encouraged that references to research, literature, or other evidence supporting the project be included.

D. *Goals, Objectives, Outcomes and Their Evaluation*

Identify the project's goals, objectives associated with those goals, as well as the projected/anticipated outcomes. In this section, also include the evaluation/assessment process for the project. How will you tell if the project has been successful or identify areas for project improvement? Will you use both formative and summative evaluation? Will you conduct and provide qualitative and quantitative analysis of outcomes? Etc. The project's evaluation plan will be used, in part, to develop information used in the required follow-up reports for award winners.

E. *Project Budget*

Include a project budget that details proposed expenditures. It is highly recommended that you consult the office of the Vice President of Administration and Finance to delineate expenditures by expense categories currently used in College budgeting. It is also highly recommended that applicants include some analysis of return on investment to the College in this section. No specific methodology for calculating this is required.

F. *Project Timeline*

Applicants should provide an estimated timeline for the implementation of the project. This will aid the reviewers in assessing the feasibility of a project's implementation within the funding cycle, as well as to assess the points in which progress can be evaluated and reported.

G. *Project Team*

Provide a list of the project team members. Proposals that include collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches are highly encouraged. In this section, simply provide the names of the project lead, and any other primary team members as well as a brief (one paragraph) summary of their qualifications to helping the project succeed.

H. *Supplemental Materials*

The section is used only if there are materials offered in addition to the succinct narrative in the preceding sections, e.g., manufacturer description of a proposed purchase item or excerpts of a referenced article.

PROPOSAL REVIEW

There are two phases of review—the first by President's Cabinet and the second by College Council. During the first phase President's Cabinet will review the project applications for completeness and initial appropriateness and decide which project applications will move forward to College Council for the second phase review. During the second phase College Council will review the project applications brought forward from President's Cabinet and score the submissions according to the criteria below.

Criteria

A. *Overall Impact*

An assessment of the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, positive influence on the way things are done at the College, in consideration of the following criteria. A proposal does not need to be strong in all categories to be judged likely to have major overall impact.

B. *Significance*

Does the project address a significant problem or allow the opportunity to capitalize on a significant opportunity to improve the ability for the College to meet its mission or help students complete? Will successful achievement of the goals of the project change the culture, methods, technologies, programs or services provided by the College?

C. *Innovation*

Does the proposal challenge and seek to shift teaching, service, or operational paradigms by utilizing known or emerging high impact practices, methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions? Are these novel in a narrow or broad sense? Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?

D. *Approach*

Are the overall strategy, approach to implementation, and goals well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the project? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented? If a planning project, will the strategy being planned establish feasibility and will particularly risky aspects be managed?

E. *Evaluation*

How will the success of the project be evaluated or assessed? What are the challenges to assessing the project? Is the evaluation plan reasonable and feasible?

F. *Alignment with Institutional Goals/Priorities*

How does the project align with the mission and/or one or more of the strategic goals or priorities of the College? Does the project address other goals, such as those identified by the community, state, region or nation?

G. *Project Team*

Is the project leader well-suited to the project and do they have a record of producing positive results? Do they have appropriate experience and training? Is there a team involved? If so, does it include people who have the capability and position within the institution to make the project a success? Does the project encourage interdisciplinary or cross-divisional collaboration?

COLLEGE COUNCIL REVIEW

Using the procedure outlined in this document, College Council members will evaluate and recommend projects for funding to the President that most exemplify the criteria set forth in this document. During the review process, members of College Council will consult with other relevant persons, including faculty and/or staff members, to seek expertise or assistance as needed. While consensus is preferred, funding decisions for projects shall be by majority; if a tie breaker is needed, the President shall provide the tie-breaking vote. Decisions can be made via email or teleconference or other means if timing requires.

Members of College Council will be given the opportunity and are encouraged to champion a particular proposal. However, members of College Council will recuse themselves from discussion and voting where conflicts of interest arise regarding a particular proposal.

Recommendations for funding will be made to the President by Friday, September 5, 2014. Recommendations will be grouped into three categories: 1) projects that are fundable and have the highest probability of success and positive contribution to LCCC; 2) projects that are fundable but have a lesser probability of success and/or positive impact on the College; and 3) projects that should not be funded because of the lack of feasibility, appropriateness, or anticipated positive impact on the College.

Awards will be announced after review and action by the President's Cabinet by Friday, September 12, 2014.

From the time of an application's submittal to the announcement of awards, applicants may be asked to provide additional information as needed.

AWARD ADMINISTRATION

Successful applications will have innovation funds appropriated to the most appropriate budget area under the direction or connection to the project lead's normal position at the College. Exact determination of where the funds will be budgeted and expenses charged to/tracked will be made after the announcement of awards, but before implementation begins.

Award project leaders are to submit four evaluation reports: 1) a project start-up report on October 31 that describes initial preparations and/or structures and responds to requests for more follow-up information by the College Council; 2) two progress reports due on December 31 and June 30 respectively; and 3) a final summary report due September 30.

The comprehensive, final summary report – including successes, failures, and other measurements as determined by the project lead – are required for closeout of an award. The final report is submitted to the President's Office for evaluation by the President's Cabinet and to College Council for consideration of whether a project should be institutionalized. While the status of most projects will be determined at the project's conclusion, in extraordinary circumstances, a decision on whether a project should be institutionalized may be made earlier. The College Council will make a recommendation to the President for a final decision.