

Provost's Initiative on Grand-Challenge Courses

Application Procedures for 2012 Courses

- PURPOSE:** Many of the grand challenges in our time require an enlightened and multidisciplinary approach both to examine root causes and their interdependencies and to evaluate potential strategies for addressing or curtailing the problem. Grand-challenge courses can consider any major complex issue facing contemporary culture/society, ranging from global climate change and sustainable development in the developing world to bioethics and contending views of modernity. This Provost's initiative encourages and facilitates the creation of these new team-taught, multidisciplinary undergraduate courses. Target enrollment for each course is 150–250, with the expectation that many will be first-year students.
- ELIGIBILITY:** All full-time T&R and SPF faculty are eligible to apply for funding. Proposals must involve two to four faculty members representing a complement of disciplinary perspectives from at least two colleges/schools.
- ALLOWABLE EXPENSES:** Generally speaking, faculty whose proposals are selected will be expected to offer their grand-challenge course three times over the next few years. (An exception would be if student enrollment is poor or if the course is unsuccessful in achieving the stated goals, in which case the participating faculty and the Provost's Office may decide the course shouldn't be offered again.)
- During the first three semesters the course is offered, it will receive funding from the Provost's Office to help the faculty execute their vision for their course. Possible uses of these funds include hiring graduate students to serve as TAs, purchasing supplies and materials, and securing appropriate administrative support.
- Every time the course is offered, each faculty member who is fully engaged in teaching it will receive credit equivalent to having taught an individual three-credit course. In cases where a department is pressed to cover the teaching that otherwise would have been provided by a participating faculty member, the Provost's Office will furnish the department with funds to secure an appropriate replacement for the first three times the course is taught.

DEADLINE: Applications are due in the Provost's Office, 300 Main Building, no later than:

- 5:00 p.m. on Friday, August 19, 2011, for courses proposed to be taught in the Spring 2012 semester, or
- 5:00 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 13, 2012 for courses proposed to be taught in the Fall 2012 semester.

The submitted proposal must have already received approval (as indicated by a signature) from the department chair and dean associated with each participating faculty member.

PROCEDURES: Interested faculty should submit a brief (no more than three single-spaced pages) proposal that includes the following information:

- Title of course
- Names of involved faculty and their department/college/school affiliations
- Description of course and elaboration of why this particular Grand Challenge requires a multidisciplinary approach
- Learning goals for students in the course
- Discussion of likely student interest in the topic
- Description of course requirements and prerequisites (if any)
- Description of duties and classroom responsibilities of involved faculty
- Curricular requirements that the course may be able to fulfill
- Budget that includes rationale for each category of funds requested (please note if supplemental funds will be provided by department, college/school, or other sources)

Each proposed course must be reviewed by the appropriate curriculum committees in the relevant departments, colleges, and/or schools. Faculty are responsible for seeking the required course approval and providing documentation of the committees' decisions. Proposals for funding through this initiative can be submitted prior to action by the curriculum committees, but any potential funding will be conditional on the course receiving formal approval within at least one of the participating colleges or schools.

APPROVAL
PROCESS:

A proposal will be evaluated based in large part on whether the course it describes is:

- Organized around a major problem/issue facing society/culture
- Aligned with the distinctive mission of Notre Dame to encourage students to explore how Catholic intellectual and/or social traditions might be brought to bear on the problem

- Accessible to non-majors yet substantive and rigorous in its approach
- Structured to illustrate a variety of disciplinary perspectives and to promote critical analysis and debate around competing priorities/perspectives
- Designed to strengthen students' ability to make claims and present evidence to defend arguments
- Designed so as to fulfill a University Core Curriculum Requirement
- Positioned primarily to serve first-year undergraduate students
- Likely to attract and serve large enrollments (150–250)
- Taught by a complementary set of committed faculty representing at least two colleges/schools

Please be aware that the grand-challenge initiative will not fund the development of courses in which faculty make isolated contributions, such as a class composed largely of “guest lectures” or one where faculty from different colleges/schools make sequential appearances (e.g., three faculty each individually teach a five-week segment.) Grand Challenge courses should give students the opportunity to see firsthand how scholars from different disciplines engage one another on topics of mutual interest.

REPORTING

REQUIREMENTS: After the third time the course is offered, participating faculty must submit to the Provost's Office a brief evaluation of the course that includes (but need not be limited to):

- Enrollment, specifying each student's year and college or school
- Assessment of the extent to which the learning goals were met
- CIF ratings of teaching effectiveness
- Any plans for revising the course in future years

Assuming the course is successful in achieving its stated goals and draws adequate enrollment, faculty will be encouraged to continue offering it to the extent the participating colleges/schools agree to support it.