

## **Closing Equity Gaps through Teaching Excellence Grant Application**

### **PURPOSE:**

This three year, \$5 million grant initiative is aimed at closing equity gaps through teaching excellence and building inclusive classroom environments. Grant dollars should be part of a larger institutional effort for transformational change aimed at closing equity gaps. This grant initiative provides an opportunity for colleges to apply for dollars to provide professional development and implement strategies, particularly those that are data-driven, evidence-based, culturally relevant, and aimed at transforming the classroom environment to be more inclusive and conducive to student success.

### **BACKGROUND:**

In October 2018, the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE) set student success and equity as Colorado Community College System (CCCS) priorities. Based on these priorities, the State Board also approved new and revised Key Performance Metrics to measure student success and equity. Utilizing a variety of data sets at the system level, System staff identified persistent equity gaps in student outcomes, particularly by racial and ethnic demographics. Colleges who had a focus on teaching excellence with an equity and inclusive lens had seen equity gaps in student outcomes start to close. As such the focus of the grant will be teaching excellence aimed at closing equity gaps in student outcomes.

Some colleges have spent dollars and time on initiatives like the Center for Urban Education, culturally responsive pedagogy, inclusive excellence, and more. However, many colleges do not have the resources to implement such initiatives and even those with the resources, have not been able to bring these initiatives to scale at their colleges. Consequently, significant variance in equity in student outcomes exist between colleges and disciplines. Students should have the opportunity to benefit from successful teaching and learning initiatives regardless of geography and college resources.

These dollars are to be used to help bring data-driven, evidence-based, and culturally relevant practices to scale at a college or set of colleges. For example, the focus could be on inclusive excellence, culturally responsive pedagogy, reflective practice, action research, or other approaches supported by the literature which are aimed at improving student success and closing equity gaps, particularly across racial and ethnic demographics. This approach recognizes that working to achieve equity in student outcomes is an organizational change process, and the approach must fit within the unique organizational culture of our institutions. However, the approaches must be those that are focused on equity in student outcomes. A core group of faculty may be chosen to research, receive training, and subsequently train colleagues at their own and other colleges. These individuals would be called "Teaching Excellence Fellows." This "train the trainer" approach is grounded in research and is proven in making large scale initiatives sustainable even in environments with limited resources.

Colleges that will be engaging in culturally responsive pedagogy for the first time should consider contracting content experts both locally and nationally to support their innovation efforts. Colleges may also apply for smaller grants to pilot an innovative pedagogical approach to close equity gaps, but must include a timeline and plan to scale that approach if successful.

## **DEFINITIONS:**

- I. **Diversity:** Individual differences (e.g., personality, learning styles, and life experiences) and group/social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, and ability as well as cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations) (Association of American Colleges and Universities).
- II. **Inclusion:** The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity—in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect—in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions (Association of American Colleges and Universities).
- III. **Equity:** The creation of opportunities for historically underrepresented populations to have equal access to and participate in educational programs that are capable of closing the achievement gaps in student success and completion (Association of American Colleges and Universities).
- IV. **Equity-mindedness:** A demonstrated awareness of and willingness to address equity issues among institutional leaders, faculty, and staff (Center for Urban Education, University of Southern California).

## **TIMELINE:**

- I. **Week of March 8, 2021** – Email to colleges about the grant being reopened and the application process/timelines
- II. **April 2, 2021** – Teaching Excellence Symposium (make announcement of grant application)
- III. **April 5, 2021** – Grant application period opens. Communicate to colleges with the grant application materials.
- IV. **Week of April 12, 2021** – First webinar to answer questions about the grant
- V. **Week of August 30, 2021** – Second webinar to answer questions about the grant
- VI. **September 17, 2021** – Grant application period closes
- VII. **September 20-October 1, 2021** – Application screening by review committee
- VIII. **Week of October 4, 2021** – Review committee meets to rank and decide on applications to fund
- IX. **Week of October 11, 2021** – Notifications to applicants about their application
- X. **Late October/Early November 2021** – Funds available to awardees

## **CRITERIA:**

- I. Faculty are essential in creating systemic, transformational change that is required to improve student success and close equity gaps. Therefore, the application must demonstrate how faculty buy-in was secured, how faculty will be involved should grant dollars be awarded, and how faculty will institutionalize these new transformational skills going forward after the grant ends.
- II. Proposals must include a work plan with explicit strategies and actions for culturally relevant activities and pedagogical approaches that target closing a specified equity gap(s) among student racial and/or ethnic groups.
- III. Colleges funded through this grant program will be required to collect student feedback, gather student success data that shows the impact on equity in student outcomes, and present results at the Summer Intensive Teaching and Learning Institute. The first Summer Intensive Teaching and Learning Institute is expected to be in summer 2022.
- IV. Colleges funded through this grant program will be required to submit a final report of the grant program to the CCCS System Office when the grant dollars are expended.

- V. There will only be one application accepted per college, though that application may include multiple components. Applications must be approved by college administration before submission.
- VI. Cross-college and/or cross-disciplinary grant applications will be accepted and considered. Support from each college administration is required.
- VII. Grant ranges vary depending on the scope of the grant.
  - a. Single college department – up to \$50,000
  - b. Multiple departments and/or college-wide – up to \$100,000
  - c. Multi-college and/or discipline-wide – up to \$200,000

#### **GRANT APPLICATION:**

- I. **Program Name.** What is the name of your grant program?
- II. **Program Leads.** Who will be the key leads for this grant program? Provide full names and titles. Designate a Point of Contact.
- III. **College(s).** What college(s) is sponsoring this grant program?
- IV. **Program Description.** Describe your proposed program and how it focuses on inclusive excellence, culturally responsive pedagogy, reflective practice, action research, or other approaches supported by the literature which are aimed at improving student success and closing equity gaps, particularly across racial and ethnic demographics. What are the key strategies that you will undertake to advance your work? Who will be the key players and partners?
- V. **Supporting Data.** Provide supporting data that led you to pursue this program. Include trend equity gap data from the last 3-5 years and how this grant will explicitly target closing those equity gaps.
- VI. **Success.** Define what success is for this grant program, specifically including the anticipated impact on closing equity gaps.
- VII. **Scaling.** Describe how you will scale and institutionalize this work if the grant program is successful. How does this grant fit into your college(s) long-term goals?
- VIII. **Creating Buy-in.** Detail how faculty and instructors were involved in the development of this grant program. How was buy-in secured for this grant, both inside the institution and external to the institution (if you have external partners)?
- IX. **Reporting.** Describe how you will report and share any successes, failures, and other details with colleagues inside and outside your college(s). All grant recipients will be required to share their results at the Summer Intensive Teaching and Learning Institute and complete a final report of the grant program when the grant dollars are expended.
- X. **Budget.** Provide a budget narrative with a detailed breakdown of how you propose to use the funding. Indirect costs will not be allowed for this grant. Include a line item to attend the Summer Intensive Teaching and Learning Institute. In addition, address the following questions:
  - a. What is your sustainability plan when the grant dollars run out?
  - b. What do you plan to do if you don't get the full amount?
  - c. What's the lowest amount of money you could receive and still be effective?
  - d. What in-kind support is your college contributing to this program?

- XI. Timeline and Implementation Plan.** Please attach a detailed timeline that outlines the key activities of your grant, key implementers, stakeholders, timing, outcomes associated with each activity, and expected completion of these outcomes.
- XII. Assessment.** Detail your assessment plan that highlights the overall success and impact of program implementation. Assessment should review how implementation correlates to college and inclusive excellence goals, and measure the results of program implementation.

**TO APPLY:**

Please submit your full application via [this online form](#) by 5pm on Friday, September 17, 2021. Application attachments should also be sent to Stacie Amaya ([stacie.amaya@cccs.edu](mailto:stacie.amaya@cccs.edu)) by 5pm on Friday, September 17, 2021. Please add in the subject line: "2021 Closing Equity Gaps through Teaching Excellence Grant." Unfortunately, late applications will not be accepted. Questions should be directed to Landon Pirius ([landon.pirius@cccs.edu](mailto:landon.pirius@cccs.edu)).