Nexus Online Learning Grant
Application and Instructions
For summer 2018 or 2018-19 academic year

The following are guidelines for grant funding for projects that will begin July 1, 2018 and conclude on or before June 30, 2019. There is one competition for Nexus Online Learning grants each year.

Deadlines

- The Director of the Center for Teaching Innovation and Nexus Learning, Jeffrey Ashley, and the Nexus Learning Advocates (Anne Bower from CSHLA, Chris Pastore from KDEC, and Dave Kratzer from CABE) are available to assist with ideas for proposals, approaches for experimental design, assessment methodologies, or any other aspect of developing and writing a Nexus Online Learning Grant proposal.
- Applications are due February 2, 2018.
- Notifications sent on March 9, 2018.
- Grant funds initially available after July 1, 2018.
- The grant project can be undertaken at any time in the funding year.
  - Grant funds must be used by May 31, 2019, with all requests for reimbursement processed by June 30, 2019.
- Final report due on Monday, August 31, 2019.

Introduction and Background

Thomas Jefferson University – East Falls has earmarked funds for two Nexus Online-Learning Grants to support innovation and experimentation in teaching and learning in potential and existing online courses and programs.

Our goals for Nexus Learning is that it optimizes opportunities for students to actively participate in their learning, apply knowledge and skills, collaborate with others, and connect their learning experiences to the real world and to their future professions. Nexus Learning prizes imagination and supports reflection on learning experiences to build on past experiences and to create connections to the future. It is marked by integration of knowledge across disciplines, as well as within and outside of the classroom. Learning environments and learning activities support a culture of innovation, exploration, synthesis and discovery. Although Nexus Learning experiences may vary in some respects from discipline to discipline, common qualities include the engaged and active participation of the learner, collaboration among students and across disciplines, and connections to the real world and professional practice, informed by the study of liberal arts and sciences.

Nexus Online Learning Grants support the strategic plan mandate to create a new student learning experience for the University and provide faculty and staff with an opportunity to re-design courses, develop new innovative courses and curricula, explore new areas of applied research on pedagogy, and advance the core tenets of Nexus Learning (active, collaborative, real-world learning, infused with the knowledge and skills learned from the liberal arts) with a focus on online learning.

The general parameters for Nexus Learning are summarized this way. Nexus Online Learning is:
Priorities for Nexus Online Learning Grants

Priority lies with those proposals that will:

- Examine and explore methods of utilizing online technologies to achieve Nexus Learning educational outcomes.
- Exploration, development and/or assessment of Virtual and/or Augmented Reality (VR/AR) approaches to teaching and learning.
- Develop modules to support Nexus Learning pedagogies or skills that are the most challenged by, or most enhanced by, online education delivery (e.g., collaborative learning, team based learning, problem based learning, etc).
- Research, integrate, and disseminate best practices in teaching online that specifically relate to studio and laboratory experiences, and/or other highly interactive teaching methods.
- Research, integrate, and disseminate best practices in online education assessment.
- Research methods to identify Open Electronic Resources (OER)* and integrate materials into a face-to-face, hybrid, or online course.

*Open Educational Resources (OER) are high-quality, openly licensed, online educational materials that offer an extraordinary opportunity for people everywhere to share, use, and reuse knowledge. They also demonstrate great potential as a mechanism for instructional innovation as networks of teachers and learners share best practices.

Please consult the Center for Teaching Innovation and Nexus Learning Director, Jeffrey Ashley, for further suggestions and support with the grant proposal process.

Who May Apply?

We strongly encourage applications from faculty in all Colleges (full-time and part-time), as well as academic administrators and professional staff who believe they can make significant contributions to the Nexus Learning initiative. Each project must have one full-time faculty member on the project.

Applications will only be accepted from Jefferson – East Falls faculty/staff for the Nexus Online Learning Grant.

1. Faculty applicants
   - Full-time (tenured, tenure-track, teaching and renewable contract); adjunct faculty; and faculty program directors may apply for these grants.

2. Staff applicants:
• Professional staff applicants must partner with a faculty member on a project in order to be eligible to receive funding. Professional staff may not receive stipends, but may receive professional development funds.
• Administrators with instructional assignments may also apply for these grants, but may not receive stipends.

Policies and Guidelines for Applications

1. Faculty may receive one University grant, e.g. Nexus Learning Grant; Nexus Online Learning Grant; Research/Scholarship Course Releases; and Research, Scholarship and Practice-based Grant, per academic year.
2. Faculty who applied for and/or received Nexus Learning grants may apply again.
3. Nexus Online Learning Grant project proposals must explicitly involve some or all of the elements of Nexus Online Learning as outlined in the introduction above.
4. A maximum of $3,000 will be awarded to each Nexus Online Learning grant, regardless of the number of faculty participating in the grant.
5. Nexus Online Learning grant funds may be used to support any of the following non-salary expenses:
   • Supplies to support the proposed project (e.g., project-related software, educational materials, etc.) The grant may not be used to purchase computer hardware.
   • Small equipment and other reasonable expenses to support the project.
   • Conference or research travel connected to the grant project.
   • Student workers in summer and during the AY (FICA is paid on wages in summer)
6. Summer stipends may not exceed $2,000.
   • The Nexus Online Learning Grant budget must support the employer-paid benefits.
7. Faculty course releases (up to 3 credits) must be approved; see approval process below. If a course release is desired, the amount of project support funds will be limited to $1,000 and cannot include a stipend or professional fund. Faculty may also apply for one course release with no funding for expenses.
8. Grant funds must be spent by May 31, 2018. All requests for reimbursement must be processed by June 30, 2018. In the event that the faculty member is unable to complete the project or leaves the University, the unexpended funds will revert to the University.
9. If a summer stipend is paid to a full-time faculty member, that faculty member must return to the University as full-time faculty member in the subsequent fall semester.
10. Adjunct faculty members are eligible for the Nexus Learning and Nexus Online Learning Grant programs. The maximum summer stipend, $2,000, is considered to be 2 credits of teaching for the purposes of calculating work load. Grant awards with summer stipends will become part of an adjunct faculty member’s workload during the summer term. Policies for part-time faculty still apply. The Jefferson – East Falls Provost’s Office will work with the MAOs to administer this assignment.
Procedures for Applications

1. Individuals must apply for the grants using the appropriate form and budget template.

2. Submissions for projects are due on February 2, 2018.

3. For summer 2018 and 2018-2019 Academic Year projects, the grant funding begins July 1, 2018 and ends on May 31, 2019.

4. Each proposal must have two approvals:
   1) The approval of the applicant’s program director or coordinator.
   2) The approval of the next level leader in the faculty member’s academic unit. The following leaders in each unit can approve proposals:
      • C-ABE – Executive Dean
      • C-SHLA – Academic Dean for Liberal Arts & Sciences, Associate Dean for General Studies, or Health Professions Council Chair
      • C-DEC – SBA Academic Dean or SDE Academic Dean
      • S-CPS – Academic Dean

   The approval process is especially important in the case of a potential course release.

   To facilitate electronic submission of grant applications, approvers must submit a statement of support via EchoSign. Applications will not be considered until both statements of approval have been received. E-forms may be found at:
   [http://www.philau.edu/provost/Grants/NexusOnlineLearning.html](http://www.philau.edu/provost/Grants/NexusOnlineLearning.html)

5. Applications should be emailed in Microsoft Word format by midnight on February 2, 2018 to Patricia Brennan in the Jefferson – East Falls Provost’s Office: brennanp@philau.edu.
Evaluation Process

The faculty members of the University Academic Resources Committee evaluate the applications and recommends proposals to the Office of the Provost and the Director of the Center for Teaching Innovation and Nexus Learning. The Office of the Provost, in consultation with the Vice President of Innovation, DR Widder, will make the final decision on grants, and may go back to the applicants to work on revised proposals or other funding options. Grantees will be notified on March 10, 2018.

Application

Proposals should adhere exactly to the following directions and have all the following components.

Section 1 should not exceed 200 words, excluding title and author(s). Sections 2 through 7 combined should not exceed a total of 1000 words.

1/ Project Title
   Author(s)
   Abstract (maximum 200 words)
   (20 points)
   • Purpose
   • Rationale
   • Goal(s)
   • Project Implementation and Project Deliverables

2/ Explanation of How the Project Advances Nexus Online Learning (10 points)
   Identify the particular priorities this project addresses and discuss how this project advances Nexus Online Learning as outlined in the introduction material. Include relevant conceptual/theoretical framework and related course work, research and/or literature, if available. Be specific about how your project will expand our definition and understanding of our goals for student learning on campus. Ask Jeffrey Ashley, Director of the Center for Teaching Innovation and Nexus Learning, for more information on Nexus Learning if you need clarification of the parameters.

3/ Literature Review (10 points)
   Address relevant conceptual and theoretical framework of your project, as well as related course work, research and/or literature. In this section you are demonstrating your knowledge of the topic. Make use of the Center for Teaching Innovation and Nexus Learning or the Nexus Learning Advocates for direction on your literature search if desired.

4/ Specific Project Goals and Learning Outcomes (10 points)
   Please address/list the primary goals and objectives of the project and the intended learning outcomes (for you as a researcher, not student learning outcomes). This can be in bullet points and should include how you plan to execute the project.

5/ Description of Activities and Timeframe (10 points)
Please describe specific project activities and your schedule/timeline. This can be bullet points and/or in the form of a table.

6/ Project Assessment (20 points)
Please indicate how you will assess your project to determine if your goals and intended results for the project were met. Identify specific activities or measures you will use to document your assessment and your conclusions. Remember, the goals are about your Nexus Online Learning goals not the particular student performance goals or student achievement alone.

Identify specific activities or measures you will use to collect evidence of learning (that is measures of success for your project, and again, go beyond particular student learning goals to look at the project goals). The focus is on pedagogy and what you learned about teaching. The focus is not upon what specific groups of students may have learned during your project, unless it relates to your overall pedagogical goals.

You are encouraged to get advice on project assessment strategies from your Assessment Advocate (Raju Parakkal for CSHLA, Dana Scott for KDEC in Fall 2016, Lisa Philips for CABE), Dana Scott (Faculty Director of Student Learning Outcomes in Spring 2017) and/or Jeffrey Ashley (Director of the Center for Teaching Innovation and Nexus Learning).

7/ Documentation and Dissemination (10 points)
Describe how the project outcomes will be documented and shared with the University community, with particular consideration of how those outcomes might be used as a model to advance Nexus Learning by others. Preference will be given to projects with dissemination plans for both inside and outside the University. Potential papers, articles, presentations at conferences, and workshops held on campus or at conferences from this research should be stated in this part of the proposal.

8/ Project Personnel (required)
Describe the people involved in the project and their intended contributions. If the project involves several faculty members and student life professionals, list who they are and how they will divide and share responsibilities.

9/ Budget Narrative and Worksheet (10 points)
Applicants must use the attached budget template to input their grant expenditures. The worksheet should be followed by a short budget narrative. The narrative should include a justification of the need for each requested faculty stipend as well as other budgetary line items. Any requested course release also should be explained in this section.

Grant funds must be spent by May 31, 2018. All requests for reimbursement must be processed by June 30, 2018. In the event that the faculty member is unable to complete the project or leaves the University, the unexpended funds will revert to the University.

10/Attachments (required)
Include all final reports from previously-awarded Nexus grants or explain why no final report was submitted.

Total Points for Committee Scoring Rubric = 100
Project Reports

Final reports are due on August 31, 2018.

Each grant recipient must document their project and will be invited to present their work to, or conduct a workshop for, the University community. Further dissemination plans will be regarded with favor by the reviewing committee. Such dissemination might include presentations at conferences, papers or articles for journals and other means of sharing your results and recommendations.

Grant recipients must also file their assessment results and project documentation in a form that can be published on the Center for Teaching Innovation and Nexus Learning website. The exact format of this report is left to the grant recipients with the guideline that the audience is both the university community and the public although a suggested template will be sent to you from the Center for Teaching Innovation and Nexus Learning. For example, the documentation could take the form of a paper, a report, or an interactive model. We encourage documentation to include visual media such as photography or video.