

Strategic Instructional Innovations Program

2015 Call for Proposals

College of Engineering
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
January 26, 2015

Executive Summary

The College of Engineering solicits proposals for the Strategic Instructional Innovations Program (SIIP). SIIP competitively awards education-innovation grants to faculty teams using a model similar to research-grant funding. The motivating vision for education innovation is to *teach like we do research*, meaning that teaching can and should involve collaboration, creativity, excitement, measurement, perseverance, and continual improvement, as do high-quality research programs at Illinois. Now in its third year, SIIP has achieved marked success by bringing aspects of Illinois' outstanding research culture to teaching, including an engaged community, collaborative projects, faculty-led innovation, rigorous evaluation, and a scholarly approach to pedagogical methods.

SIIP 2015-2016

This year's solicitation seeks strategic and innovative ideas for improving undergraduate education. Projects may focus on a single course, group of courses, or other educational experiences; cross-departmental and multi-disciplinary efforts are encouraged. Examples of possible project ideas include: implementing project-based learning, embedding computation and data analysis within existing learning experiences, supporting the success of women and international students, integrating online and on-campus learning experiences, and innovations in infrastructure and technology.

SIIP team structure: The goal of SIIP is sustainable change that extends beyond the enthusiasm of a single faculty member or a change in teaching assignments. For this reason, successful projects will involve at least three faculty members, at least two of whom must be tenure-track. The participation of teaching-focused specialized faculty and students is encouraged.

SIIP administrative structure:

1. Team members of each awarded project will be required to meet weekly as a community of practice. Faculty and staff from AE3 will attend these meetings to provide just-in-time advice and to facilitate the acquisition of evaluation data.
2. Each project will undergo a review twice a year.
3. Renewed funding will be contingent upon acceptable performance during the reviews.
4. When/where relevant, AE3 will help interested faculty teams identify opportunities to obtain external funding to supplement and extend SIIP funding, thereby multiplying the college's investment.

Award process:

1. Project identification: By March 9, 2015 departments will submit preliminary proposals and form a faculty team to initiate reforms. Department heads and potential PIs are encouraged to consult with AE3 staff, current SIIP teams, and others for ideas and direction. Proposals should describe, in approximately two pages, the problem, the proposed solution, and the potential impact of the innovation.
2. Pre-proposal process: Faculty teams will meet regularly with faculty and staff from AE3, for up to six weeks, to craft their preliminary proposals into high-quality full proposals that are likely to be funded. This work will include performing a needs assessment, identifying appropriate evidence-based pedagogies or interventions, and developing an evaluation plan. The goal is to refine the preliminary proposals such that potential pitfalls in implementation can be avoided.
3. Final proposal submission: Full proposals must be submitted by May 15 under the signature of the department head, who will confirm support for the work, and departmental willingness to sustain successful improvements beyond the term of the project. Proposals should consist of a project narrative (at most 10 pages), list of references, CVs of all participating faculty, and a 1-year budget plan. Please indicate what form(s) of financial and in-kind support the department will provide for the proposed project. Such support is not required, but may strengthen the proposal. Examples of previous support include faculty teaching release time, additional TA support, and equipment and space resources.
4. Proposal evaluation: Proposals will be evaluated based on their scholarly rigor as well as the team's demonstrated commitment to creating a community of practice to implement and sustain efforts.

Please address questions and proposal submissions to Laura Hahn, Director, AE3 (Lhahn@illinois.edu).