



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Third Round of Support 2010-2012

“ENGAGED LEARNING, CIVIC DEVELOPMENT AND STUDENT WELL-BEING”

Proposals are requested for projects during 2010-2012 that address one of the two following emphases: 1) Institutional efforts to examine, learn from and to make sustainable initiatives that foster the gains from the relationship between college students' civic development and their psychosocial well-being; and 2) institutional ability to demonstrate the evaluation and sustainability of initiatives that address the increasing opportunities for students to have transformative educational experiences and for institutions to transform priorities and practices so as to make such experiences both expected and provided. In this latter category we anticipate, but do not require, that the institution has already taken steps made possible by support from Bringing Theory to Practice and the Leadership Coalition grants.

Category I Mini-Grants and Student Programming Grants

Up to \$2,500. Matching support is not required. Multiple mini-grants from an institution for separate projects are permitted. Rolling applications and awards.

Category II Program or Research Initiative Grants

Up to \$10,000. Institutional matching support is expected. May be renewable. Proposals accepted on quarterly deadlines: March 1; June 1; September 1; December 1 of each year (2010 & 2011). Award announcements one month following each deadline.

Category III Demonstration Site Grants

Up to \$75,000 per year for two years, totaling \$150,000. Institutional matching support is required. May be renewable. Applications due January 15, 2010. Award announcement March 15, 2010.

Bringing Theory to Practice Project is an independent project in partnership with the Association for American Colleges and Universities, and funded by the Charles Engelhard Foundation. The Project explores and advocates the academic community's support of engaged learning and the relationship of such learning to student health and civic development.

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Contents

Section I: Background and Emphases for 2010-2012

Section II: Checklist for successful proposals

Section III: Categories of support

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SECTION I:

BACKGROUND

The Bringing Theory to Practice Project (BTtoP) is an independent project established in partnership with the Association for American Colleges and Universities, and funded by the Charles Engelhard Foundation with additional support from the Christian A. Johnson Endeavour Foundation and from other foundations, individuals and institutions.

Through its grants for research and program development, its national conferences, workshops, and publications (activities involving students, faculty, professional staff, and institutional leaders), the BTtoP Project promotes recognition of the several interdependent core purposes of liberal education and how achieving those purposes requires changes in educational expectations, delivery, and rewards.

More than 300 colleges and universities have been associated with BTtoP to date, over 100 of which have received grant support for programmatic or research work. Ten institutions have served as national Demonstration Sites.

BTtoP has championed the view that because the educational outcomes involved are inextricably linked, colleges and universities have a level of responsibility for providing opportunities that support the health, well-being, and civic development of the student “as a whole person”, and not perceive the academic enterprise as one that can be carried out independently of those several related outcomes. The preponderance of evidence from research and Demonstration Sites indicate that intensive and persisting forms of engaged learning positively affect the health and well-being, in addition to the civic development of students.

We recognize that there are various forms of engaged learning; that well-being, civic development, transformative educational experiences, and other key terms require local clarification; and that the relationships among engaged learning, mental health and well-being, and civic outcomes are neither linear nor directly causal.

Our emphasis on evaluation has stemmed from our desire to learn more about strategies that build upon emergent or established efforts and that can gather information to assess the nature and extent of the intellectual, emotional, behavioral, and civic outcomes of engaged learning.

A brief history of BTtoP, BTtoP research and strategies, and related work (publications, research reviews, announcements, reports, and related resources) are available on the BTtoP website, www.bringingtheorytopractice.org. Of particular use is the “BTtoP Synopsis: 2002-2010”. You will find there a discussion of transformative education and the use of an “arc of change” to characterize transformative change at our institutions.

Third Round of Support

Special Emphases for 2010-2012:

- (1) CIVIC DEVELOPMENT AND PSYCHOSOCIAL
WELL-BEING OF STUDENTS and
(2) SUSTAINING TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE**

For the period of 2010-2012, BTtoP seeks to focus support on (1) institutional projects related to the connections between civic development and student psychosocial well-being and (2) how institutions can plan to sustain the projects, priorities and changes that are demonstrably successful in making more likely that the student's educational experience is truly transformative.

Thus we seek specific proposals for work during the 2010-2012 grant period that will address either, or both, of these two topic areas:

Emphasis 1

The general purpose to be achieved by projects proposed under this emphasis will be to gain knowledge, relevant research, and the assessment and practical gains in understanding and supporting the constructive effects and affects of civic engagement (when clearly defined) and public work on the psychosocial well-being (when clearly defined) of college and university students.

What forms of civic engagement influence the social development and emotional and behavioral well-being of college students? What empirical evidence or scientific knowledge is available, and what might be learned from it?

We understand "civic development" to be a process in which students participate in public work, such as (but not restricted to) issue advocacy, social and political action, or community (local to international) organizing. (We do not consider volunteerism, alternative spring break activities, or study abroad, *by themselves*, as sufficient to encourage civic development; however, they could be meaningfully linked to multiple service-learning pedagogies and/or community-based research.)

We do understand "engaged learning" to be a process in which students are active participants in learning rather than passive recipients of information. It often includes service-learning, community-based research, interdisciplinary and integrative student-involved pedagogies, that create opportunities for learning beyond lectures and seminars.

Psychosocial well-being refers, at a minimum, to the presence of characteristics that typify aspects of positive mental health, such as a sense of direction, personal growth and fulfillment, social development, empathy, perspective-taking, and psychological flourishing.

Brief examples of such work include:

- Faculty members collaborate with local residents in a long-term emphasis on engaging students in neighborhood action and community planning projects, combine this with reflection seminars, and assess academic outcomes and social development effects.

- Counseling center staff members provide students with group counseling, place them in civic projects in which they carry significant participatory, if not leadership, responsibilities, and assess the effects on self-reported mental health and choices of behavior.
- A first-year program requires students who share common housing to enroll in a living and learning credit-bearing course emphasizing civic engagement, including responsibility for organizing civic action, as well as research activities identified by local communities. The effects are followed in the same population of students over several years.
- Faculty members infuse content on civic engagement into courses in disciplines like anthropology, biology, psychology, and philosophy, and examine (using the evaluative materials developed by BTtoP and others) to assess impact on student well-being, behaviors, and commitment to intensive learning.
- Student teams engage in civic diversity projects, write about their experiences in required English composition and rhetoric courses, and present their findings in all-campus Town Meetings. They participate in a mixed method evaluation that includes pre- and post-test assessments and focus groups throughout their college experience.

We reiterate that projects should emphasize evaluation and sustainability of outcomes associated with the changes that will reinforce and continue the gains and learnings experienced. Such initiatives are inclusive of programs related to civic engagement, engaged learning, student psychosocial development or similar projects that advance overall objectives.

Emphasis 2

The general purpose to be achieved by projects proposed under this emphasis will be to address the evaluation and sustainability of outcomes associated with transformative institutional change on campuses, usually but not necessarily, through initiatives developed with the support of BTtoP or Leadership Coalition grants. Such initiatives may be inclusive of programs related to civic engagement, engaged learning, student psychosocial development, *but not necessarily*. The proposed initiative under this category should focus on sustaining demonstrably effective means of encouraging, expecting, and providing transformative educational experiences for students.

Brief examples of such work include:

- At a large public university, faculty members adopt a curricular requirement that all first-year students enroll in one of a set of interdisciplinary-based engaged-learning seminars, most of which require the student to be involved in related, out of classroom, learning projects. Intensive evaluation is built into the project, examining multiple outcomes and comparing those to longitudinal data maintained by the university's institutional research office.
- At a small liberal arts college, the provost appoints a task force to formulate a comprehensive strategy for the consideration of reward structures, promotional criteria and other professional development features for faculty and staff which are designed to honor the commitments and progressive work when it is dedicated to the full range of educational outcomes. The strategy proposed is to be under consideration by the faculty, the administration, and the Board of Trustees.
- An "intergroup dialogues" program identifies several "transformational experience" courses which emphasize preparing students for active participation in a diverse democracy and in creating learning contexts and using pedagogies that require their active involvement. Student evaluations and focus groups assess effects on social development and civic competencies.

- A university establishes a center for civic engagement that integrates learning and development objectives by using both classroom and non-classroom curricular and co-curricular activities on campus and with the community.
- A college dedicates an entire segment of the Development and Advancement Office to design, and to lead operationally, the obtaining of support from initiatives that gain resources dedicated to educational experiences that are directed to the whole student and to the full range of outcomes that educational experiences are shown to achieve. One successful plan uses the entire apparatus of the “Parents’ Fund” to achieve this objective, having recognized that parents are among the earliest supporters of the institution’s commitment to the importance of directing resources and opportunities that address the “whole student”.

Successful proposals at the mini-grant level may address *either* emphasis (1) *or* (2) above, in addition to other program or research projects directly related to the objectives of BTtoP. Program or Research Initiative and Demonstration Site proposals may be under either emphasis, but are limited to the 2010-2012 grant period for implementation. Proposals for program or research initiatives can address *either* emphasis (1) *or* (2). Demonstration Site proposals may focus on either emphasis (1) *or* (2); however, additional consideration will be given to those proposals that successfully incorporate and address the goals of *both* emphases.

SECTION II:

CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESSFUL PROPOSALS

- I. Does the proposed project address one or both of the stated emphases for 2010-2012?
- II. Does the project intend to build institutional commitment and capacity to continue what is successful? Does the proposed project affect the general population? Does it develop models with potential for adaptation?
- III. Does the project promote the integration of the cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and civic development of the student “as a whole person”?
- IV. Does the project have a qualified person and core group with potential to represent key campus constituencies, formulate strategy, and provide leadership over the long haul?
- V. Does the project have potential to increase student and faculty involvement in crafting a campus culture for learning, including integration of resources from beyond the classroom?
- VI. Does the project promise to evaluate and disseminate findings to individuals and institutions in a systematic fashion, including addressing such concerns as self-identification bias and bias implicit in studies that examine only small numbers of participants or only one approach?
- VII. Does the project enable the institution to take emergent or existing work to the next level, or support entirely new initiatives that reflect recognition of what has been learned by applicants on their own campus and elsewhere?
- VIII. Does the project demonstrate strong institutional commitment by senior leadership that usually includes the president and vice presidents for academic affairs and student affairs, in addition to faculty and students?
- IX. Does the institution, whether large or small, have the capacity for evaluation, including the ability to gather empirical data, assess outcomes, and answer specific evaluative questions?
- X. Does the institution have a project team that represents relevant campus constituencies and does it consider the ways it can strengthen the implementation and sustainability of the initiative?

SECTION III:

CATEGORIES OF SUPPORT

CATEGORY ONE:

MINI-GRANTS AND STUDENT PROGRAMMING GRANTS

Mini-Grants

Mini-grants up to \$2,500 are available to institutions initiating, or extending, conversations on their campus that lead to the planning, implementation, or assessment of program or research projects directly related to the objectives of BTtoP and to either of the emphases for the 2010-2012 period.

Mini-grants are available for use during the period 2010-2012. Multiple mini-grant proposals from an institution for separate projects are permitted.

Proposals should include an indication of how this modest investment could influence initiatives on the campus.

Student Programming Grants

Student programming grants are available under the Mini-grant category. These grants are available to student-led organizations or initiatives to develop programs for and by students that are consistent with the objectives of BTtoP.

While applications for mini-grants or student programming grants may emphasize any of the three major elements of BTtoP – “engaged learning,” “student health and well-being,” and “civic development”, priority will be given to those that attempt to integrate all three elements.

Proposal Submission:

Proposals are accepted and grants awarded on a rolling basis (unless otherwise noted on the BTtoP website). No specific application or form of narrative is required; however, the proposal should not exceed 5 pages.

Please submit in both hard copy and electronically to:

Jennifer O'Brien
Bringing Theory to Practice Project
C/o Association of American Colleges and Universities
1818 R St., NW
Washington, DC 20009
Obrien@aacu.org

For questions, contact Jennifer O'Brien by email or phone: (202)884-0815.

CATEGORY TWO: PROGRAM OR RESEARCH INITIATIVE GRANTS

Program or Research Initiative grants up to \$10,000 are available to institutions proposing to establish or extend a program or research initiative that complements the purposes of BTtoP.

Proposals are invited from current grant recipients that want to take the next steps, as well as from institutions that are new to the BTtoP Project. Grants may be renewable.

Proposals for these grants must emphasize one of the two themes of the 2010-2012 grant period, or their conjunction.

Proposals must include a clear statement of purpose, information on specific activities and key project participants, timeline for implementation, evaluation plan, and budget including matching support. Each grant requires matching support (minimum of 1 to 1) from the institution, part of which might be in-kind.

Successful proposals will include a clear assessment strategy, and will be carefully designed so that longitudinal data can be assessed to identify direct or indirect effects on both the student participants and also the campus-at-large.

Proposals for program or research initiative grants will be considered on quarterly deadlines. Initial proposals should not exceed 5 pages of text (plus minimal support materials), after which applicants might be asked for additional information. Applicants should expect to receive a decision approximately one month following submission of the proposal.

Quarterly Deadlines:

For each of the two funding years, 2010 & 2011:

Application deadline:	Announcement of Award:
March 1	April 1
June 1	July 1
September 1	October 1
December 1	Jan 15

Proposal Submission:

Please submit, in accordance with one of the deadlines, in both hard copy and electronically to:

Jennifer O'Brien
Bringing Theory to Practice Project
C/o Association of American Colleges and Universities
1818 R St., NW
Washington, DC 20009
Obrien@aacu.org

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CATEGORY THREE: DEMONSTRATION SITE GRANTS

Proposals are invited for projects that address either of the two purposes of the 2010-2012 grant period. However, while not a necessary condition for awards, in making final judgments of funding for Demonstration Sites, priority will be given to those proposals that successfully incorporate and address the goals of *both purposes*.

Demonstration Sites serve as a unique model for work consistent with BTtoP objectives. Each institution plans, implements, and evaluates its project, participates in cross-site meetings with other institutions, exchanges information and ideas, and builds mutual support as part of an overall learning community.

Recent Demonstration Site recipients have been Barnard College, California State University- Chico, Dickinson College, Emory University, Georgetown University, Montclair State University, Morgan State University, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, St. Lawrence University, and Syracuse University.

Demonstration Site grants will be awarded for amounts up to \$75,000 per year for each of two years, totaling \$150,000. Current Demonstration Site grant recipients may apply for two-year extensions or for partial support for a shorter time. New Demonstration Sites may apply for two years of support.

Application Guidelines

Applicants for Demonstration Site grants by present recipients, or by institutions new to BTtoP, should each use the following format: (*please note there is no specific application to fill out; however, the following should serve as a general guide for any Demonstration Site proposal)

- Project name or title
- Contact person, including mailing address, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address
- Purpose statement of what will be accomplished as a result of the project (one sentence)
- Project overview (50 word maximum)
- Project goal or impact to be achieved
- Project objectives or key factors necessary for success
- Rationale for why the project is important at this time
- Project activities that will be performed in order to accomplish the objectives
- Anticipated outcomes that will result from the project
- Information about the institution's track record in the project area, and why it should be considered a demonstration institution
- Information about the institution's plans for project evaluation
- Information about the institution's plans for sustaining the project after the funding period
- Implementation timetable
- Names and qualifications of the persons who will have responsibility for the project and who are members of the campus "team" leading and guiding the project
- Total dollar amount requested
- Estimated project line-item budget, including amounts available and needed (two-page maximum)
- Budget narrative
- Letters of support

- Relevant additional information may be included, but please do not send IRS statements, annual reports, news articles or publications.

Institutional Commitment

Demonstration Site institutions will be expected to have the commitment by the president, and vice presidents for academic affairs and student affairs; the institutional commitment will include cash and in-kind matching, sustainability plans, evaluation personnel, and campus stakeholder participation in the planning and implementation of the Demonstration Site. We cannot overemphasize the importance of senior leadership support in Demonstration Site selection and institutional sustainability. Letters of support, demonstrating such institutional commitment, are essential.

Evaluation

Evaluation is instrumental to the Demonstration Site program. We expect that scientific research and empirical evidence through quantitative and qualitative data will contribute to the knowledge base, and to practices in both areas of emphasis for 2010-2012.

Evaluation will operate at the institutional and cross-site levels. At the institutional level, an evaluator will be a team member who will gather empirical data, assess actual outcomes, and answer specific evaluative questions in each college or university. At the cross-site level, an evaluator will assess the work of each institution and of the overall program.

Evaluation will include information about the project's objectives, activities and outcomes, individual and institutional outcomes, facilitating and limiting factors, and cross-site themes and lessons learned from institutional practice. Each institution will address specific evaluative questions such as:

- Does civic engagement influence the social development and well-being of college students and, if so, in what ways?
- What empirical evidence or scientific knowledge is available, and what might be learned from it?
- What evidence is there that the project has directly or indirectly affected the campus culture?
- What evidence is there that campus systems of support make the gains and changes in priorities sustainable? Are the gains in how this is achieved transferable to other institutions?
- How has the project affected both curricular and co-curricular activities on the campus and their integration?

Proposals should demonstrate the capability to carry out national protocols for evaluation of both qualitative and quantitative data collection and assessment by identifying, at minimum:

1. A project evaluator, including relevant qualifications
2. Additional support for evaluation, i.e. a graduate student or other personnel that will assist with data collection and analysis, expected uses of resources and/or staff in an Institutional Research Office.

Each institution is expected to formulate clear definitions and evaluative criteria for assessment and to communicate plans and progress with the national evaluator. If funded, each institution will be expected to provide interim and final reports.

Budget

Each budget must include both the amount requested and other sources of institutional support. This support must include a total cash and in-kind matching amount that is equal to the funds requested, of which a significant amount should be cash matching.

The Project will not fund endowment or separate budget line items labeled as “indirect” or “overhead” costs.

The budget narrative should describe and justify the proposed expenditures by category and subcategory, and include information on the relationship of budgeted costs to project activities. A budget narrative is expected.

Demonstration Site Proposal Deadline

Eight (8) hard paper copies of a demonstration site proposal should be sent to:

Jennifer O’Brien
Bringing Theory to Practice
c/o Association of American Colleges and Universities
1818 R Street NW
Washington, DC 20009-1604
Obrien@aacu.org

The proposal should not exceed 15 pages. Please do not send plastic bound or expensive covered documents. In addition to paper copies, please also send a copy electronically to Jennifer O’Brien.

**All applications for Demonstration Site grants are due by January 15, 2010.
Decisions will be announced by March 15, 2010; grant funds will be available after July 1, 2010.**

For questions about the RFP or about any of the categories of support, please contact Jennifer O’Brien, Project Coordinator, at obrien@aacu.org or (202)884-0815.