

Benchmarks for Teaching Effectiveness Project

COHORT THREE: CALL FOR APPLICATIONS—DEADLINE DECEMBER 4, 2019

Overview

The KU Center for Teaching Excellence is offering one-year \$5,000 grants to academic departments to participate in the Benchmarks for Teaching Effectiveness Program. These grants are offered as a part of the multi-institutional [TEval](#) project, supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF; DUE-1726087) to foster improved methods of reviewing, documenting and evaluating faculty teaching practices at KU and at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. The [Benchmarks Framework](#) identifies seven dimensions of teaching practice that are designed to capture the teaching endeavor in its totality, including activities outside the classroom (e.g., identification of learning goals, assignment design, reviewing student work), and contributions to individual courses and the curriculum. Participants modify and adapt a rubric to guide the evaluation of teaching effectiveness (e.g., for promotion and tenure or progress toward tenure). It can also be used to foster teaching effectiveness as part of a peer review or teaching mentoring system. To date, nine KU departments in the Benchmarks Project have been working on creating a more nuanced process for evaluating teaching. Departments in Cohort 3 will join this effort, with opportunities to learn from work of the first two cohorts, and departments at our TEval partner institutions.

Why We Are Doing This

Universities like KU have traditionally relied on methods for evaluating teaching that prioritize a narrow dimension of teaching activity (the behavior of the instructor in the classroom) and a limited source of evidence (student ratings). When other sources of information—such as peer observations or course material surveys—are available, reviewers often struggle to integrate and make sense of it all. Moreover, many new faculty members wish they had a better sense of how their teaching will be evaluated and had opportunities to learn from feedback. Benchmarks for Teaching Effectiveness increases the visibility of all dimensions of teaching, clarifies faculty teaching expectations, enables quick identification of strengths and areas for improvement, and brings consistency across evaluations and time. For more information about the rationale, see this [report](#) from the Association of American Universities, which features KU's rubric.

What Will Participating Departments Do?

Departments should identify a project leader and a team of three or more faculty colleagues. With guidance from CTE and the cohort from year 1 & 2, department teams will:

1. Participate in a cross-departmental launch meeting in December 2019.
2. Identify a department representative who will be willing to attend and participate in cross-campus meeting February 23–25, 2020.
3. Adapt the rubric, identify materials that might be used in each category, and build consensus with department colleagues.
4. Use the modified rubric for some purpose, such as guiding a peer review or creating a mentoring system, or structuring reviews of teaching for promotion and tenure or progress-toward tenure.
5. Share results with department faculty after use on multiple cases; review and revise framework.
6. Participate in a cross-department working group of team leaders to share strategies, results, and lessons, and develop guidelines for departments and review committees.
7. Produce a brief report at the end of each semester, and present their work to other faculty at KU's annual Teaching Summit.

Examples of activities that could be supported with the funds include but are not limited to: department retreats, guest speakers or workshops related to teaching documentation, summer salary for project participants, and/or student employment (undergraduate or graduate) for project assistance.

Application Process

Submit a two- to three-page application that addresses these questions to Kaila Colyott (KColyott@KU.edu):

1. **Background.** Why do you want to participate in this project? What are the current methods for documenting and reviewing teaching in the department?
2. **Goals and Implementation.** What are your goals for this project? For what purpose do you anticipate implementing the Benchmarks for Teaching Effectiveness (e.g., P&T reviews, mentoring new faculty members)? How many faculty members do you anticipate reviewing in 2020 using the rubric?
3. **Faculty Participation.** Who is the project leader, and which other faculty members will be involved in the team? How might you go about sharing your work with other department colleagues?
4. **Other Efforts.** How would the project connect with prior or current department efforts to support effective teaching and learning?
5. **Prior CTE Funding.** Please include a summary of prior CTE funding: If a member of your team received a prior Course Transformation or Department Teaching Grant, please include a short summary of the project and results.
6. **Budget.** The application must include a general budget for the project.

Participant Information and Eligibility

We awarded grants to five departments in Year 1, four departments in Year 2 and anticipate adding two or three departments in Year 3. Academic departments or equivalent academic units on the Lawrence campus are eligible. An advisory board subcommittee will review applications and identify recipients. Project goals must be clearly defined and should promote cooperative, integrated participation among faculty members. Preference will be given to projects that will have broad engagement by department faculty and a high impact on the culture of teaching or teaching evaluation in a unit.

Find more information about what departments are in Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 and what they are doing with the rubric [here](#).

Timeline

Applications are due by 5 p.m. Dec. 4th (send to Kaila Colyott at KColyott@KU.edu). Project participants will be selected and informed mid-December. Selected departments in Year 3 will receive \$5,000 to support their work in the 2020 calendar year (January-December 2020). Recipients should plan to share their work at the KU Teaching Summit in August 2020. In June 2020 and January 2021, each department should submit reports on their progress to CTE.

Questions?

Contact CTE Director Andrea Greenhoot (agreenhoot@ku.edu or 864-4193) or Associate Director Doug Ward (dbward@ku.edu or 864-7637).



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