

UMassAmherst

To: UMass Department Chairs/Heads and Deans

From: Gabriela Weaver, Special Assistant to the Provost for Educational Initiatives and Martha Stassen, Associate Provost, Assessment and Educational Effectiveness and Director of the Office of Academic Planning and Assessment

Re: **Piloting New Approach to Evaluation of Teaching – Now Accepting Applications from Departments**

Date: September 27, 2018

The Office of the Provost welcomes applications from department chairs and heads to join the second cohort of departments to pilot a new approach to evaluation of teaching, for which UMass has received funding from the National Science Foundation.

A committee of UMass faculty has generated a model for multi-frame evaluation of teaching based on research and on approaches used at other institutions. (This was shared with the campus as the *Recommendations for Changes to the Evaluation of Teaching at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Fall 2017*, and relevant portions are included with this RFP.) It is hoped that this new approach to teaching evaluation can be useful to departments for formative feedback to faculty as well as for use in annual reviews and P&T decisions. The approach is intended to provide a more complete representation of the different aspects of “teaching” that faculty are engaged in, beyond time in the classroom.

Application & Selection Criteria

We are soliciting applications **from UMass academic departments**

- Applications are **due on November 1, 2018**.
- Any department at UMass Amherst that has tenure-track faculty may apply.
- A committee consisting of faculty and prior recipients of this grant, as well as Gabriela Weaver and Martha Stassen, will review applications and select departments to participate in a two-year, guided, pilot effort. Up to 4 departments will be selected from this round of applications.
- Departments will be **notified by November 16, 2018**, of the decision regarding their application.

Pilot Project Components

As part of the pilot work, departments would:

- Have two people meet with the Teaching Evaluation grant team by February 8, 2019. One of the people will be the Chair/Head of the department, and the other will be any faculty member of the department and selected by the department.
- Send up to two members of the department to attend the annual Knowledge Exchange meeting (held jointly with three other public research universities involved in this work). For this year, the meeting dates are expected to be Feb 24-26, 2019. (Travel costs will be covered by our NSF grant.)
- Arrange for a meeting of all the faculty in the department with members of the Teaching Evaluation grant team, to take place before the end of March 2019.
- During Spring and/or Summer, 2019, the department will work on determining the criteria and weighting factors for the multi-frame evaluation rubric, and they will determine what type of data they will include for each teaching dimension (see attachment). The department is expected to do this via a process that includes input from all of its faculty (tenured, tenure-track and non-tenure-track).
- Begin using the new approach to use these starting in Fall 2019.

- During the pilot phase, this approach to evaluation can be used for cases involving promotion and/or tenure ONLY if the individual being evaluated agrees voluntarily to be evaluated in this manner. The new rubric could be implemented for mentoring purposes as part of the pilot effort.
- After one academic year of working with the rubric, the department will revise and refine the rubric again, as deemed necessary by the department in consultation with the Teaching Evaluation grant team and then determine an implementation plan for multi-frame teaching evaluation for future years.
- The department will allow the Teaching Evaluation grant team to conduct assessment of the pilot work through interviews and/or surveys with faculty of the department.
- A finalized rubric and short report about implementation work during the pilot as well as plans for future implementation will be submitted to the Teaching Evaluation grant team by the end of the Fall 2020 semester.

For their participation in the pilot work, departments will receive:

- \$5000 during the first calendar year to assist with the work related to the pilot. Any expenses related to supporting the work of the department toward the tasks listed above are allowed, as long as they are allowed by UMass regulations.
- Based on review and approval by the Teaching Evaluation grant team, the department will receive an additional \$3000 during the second calendar year, to assist with work related to the pilot.
- Expenses paid for up to 2 members of the department to attend the Knowledge Exchange meeting for two years of the project.
- Ongoing support from and access to consultation with members of the Teaching Evaluation grant team, including Gabriela Weaver and/or Martha Stassen during the piloting period.

Application Process

Go to the online form at <https://tinyurl.com/UMassTEproject> to submit your application. The form must be complete and submitted no later than **November 1, 2018**. The following are the questions that you will find on the online form:

- Name of the department.
- Name and contact information for the department Chair/Head.
- Name and contact information for a second faculty member who will serve as a second lead within the department for this pilot project. Also list the title and/or departmental role for this person.
- The following three questions form the body of your application. In the online form, you will have up to 500 words to answer each one.
 1. Why do you believe that your department is *ready* to participate in the pilot of a new approach to teaching evaluation? Provide information regarding collaborative processes that take place, or have taken place, within the department regarding decision making. Also give information about any work or conversations that have taken place within this department about teaching evaluation.
 2. Describe the processes that your department will use to engage all of the department's faculty in building shared agreement about, shaping and using the new teaching evaluation approach, including how that was done in shaping this proposal.
 3. How would your department hope to integrate a new process for teaching evaluation, based on the attached multi-dimensional rubric, into annual faculty reviews and the P&T process?
- A timeline of what you plan to accomplish each semester of the project, over two calendar years.

Questions

If you have any questions, please contact Gabriela Weaver at 545-0629, gweaver@umass.edu, or Martha Stassen at 545-5146, mstassen@acad.umass.edu.