FREQUENTLY-ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)
Georgia College STEM Mini-Grant Program

PROPOSAL-WRITING LOGISTICS

Q: Whom can I ask for help if I have an idea for a project?
Please feel free to contact any member of the STEM Leadership Team for questions about STEM Mini-Grants projects at STEM@gcsu.edu: Ryan Brown or Charles Martin will respond.

Q: What does "*Teaching Innovations*" mean?
A: "Teaching Innovations" encompasses a broad variety of approaches to teaching based on best practices for improving student learning. The mini-grant program focuses on student learning in introductory STEM courses. Examples include teaching and learning strategies (e.g. POGIL http://www.pogil.org, project/problem-based learning http://www.pbl.org, collaborative learning, etc.), assessment (e.g. Angelo & Cross, 1993), implementation of cutting-edge laboratory techniques, the redesign of a portion of your course, adaptation of research in development of a new course, etc. In addition, our own Center for Engaged Learning (CEL) and Innovative Course-building Group (http://icbg.wordpress.org) offer resources in teaching and learning. See also seminal work in STEM scholarship of teaching and learning at http://www.pkal.org/keywords/Pedagogies.cfm.

Q: What is a "*Professional Learning Community*"?
A: For the STEM mini-grant program, a professional learning community (PLC) is a collaborative effort among higher education faculty members and K-12 teachers to address an identified area of interest or need. Although the roles of higher education members of the PLC may vary, their participation is ongoing, and they meet regularly with the learning community, actively participating in the PLC's work. It is important to note that in a PLC, the higher education faculty members do not simply deliver professional development or conduct workshops. Rather, they are partners with the K-12 teachers in the identification of the PLC's goals and work with the teachers, all parties contributing to achieving the group's goals. See

Q: Can I apply for another grant if I have already received a grant?
A. Yes; however, funding is not guaranteed, even though you were a previous recipient.

Q: Can I continue into a new funding year with my previously-funded project if I apply for a new grant?
A: Yes; however, funding is not guaranteed, even though you were a previous recipient.

Q: Who decides what projects get funded?
A: All proposals are reviewed by a panel of your peers at GC and recommendations for funding are made to the STEM Leadership Team. The panel is represented by faculty from different STEM and education disciplines.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Q: What information should be in my abstract?
A: The abstract is a summary of the proposed work and should briefly describe the purpose of the project, the overall objective, and anticipated results. This description should be brief (250 words max) should go into detail only to the level of identifying the general work of the project. The abstract is intended to be a self-contained document, i.e. it should carry the general description of your project to the reader in a single paragraph. No references or sources should be included in the abstract.

Q: What is a *Needs Statement*?
A: The Needs Statement identifies the need to be addressed. It frames the entire proposal as it describes the critical set of conditions affecting certain people or things in a specific place at a specific time. A needs statement should be compelling and should use quantitative measures to illustrate the situation that your proposed work will change or attempt to modify.

Q: What is the difference between *goals* and *objectives*?
A: The **goal(s)** for your grant indicates to the reviewer what you want to see accomplished or changed during the grant cycle. Goals can be short, medium or long-term. However, the specific goals identified must be achievable, to some degree, during the grant cycle. Goals are broad while objectives are detailed. Some writers use the ***SMART*** approach when crafting an objective: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant (or realistic), and **T**imely (time-specific). The **objective** measures what you will implement and will tell you whether or not you have or are on your way to achieving your goal(s). If this measurable objective is not attained, then the project investigator will have information to inform what changes need to be implemented in order to continue progress toward achieving the stated goal.

Q: What is meant by *broader impacts*?
A: Broader impacts identify outcomes including specific changes in disposition, behaviors, knowledge, skills, status, or level of function expected to result from the project activities. These should be expressed as short-term and long-term impacts. Short-term impacts are measurable throughout the grant cycle.

SPENDING MONEY

Q: What is the maximum budget for the grant?
A: Requests for funding can be made for up to $7,000 per grant cycle.

Q: How do I go about making purchases?
A: All purchasing initiates at the Science Education Center. Supplies and materials must be submitted via a *Purchase & Check Request Form.* This form is located at **Campus Links** at the Unify web site (http://www2.gcsu.edu/policies/overall/forms.htm). This form must be completed at least 4 weeks prior to the date that the materials and supplies are needed as orders need to be approved, ordered, and shipped to ensure a timely arrival. Please include item number(s), full item description, quantity, current price, all vendor information (name, address, phone and fax number, web address, if applicable), and delivery location. Email your completed form(s) to stem@gcsu.edu.

Q: How do I pay stipends?
A: Submitting stipends as payment for the services of your STEM project requires one of three documents.
Online forms can be found at http://www2.gcsu.edu/policies/overall/forms.htm.
For GC Employees:

- **stipends issued to full-time GC faculty:** stipends will be issued using only the ***Contract Addendum Form***
- **stipends issued to part-time GC employees**: stipends will be issued using the ***Extra Compensation Form***
- **stipends issued to GC student workers**: stipends will be issued using the ***Personnel Action Form***

For non-GC Employees:

- Stipends for non-GC employees will typically require an ***Independent Contractor Form***. Exceptions apply.

Need help? Contact stem@gcsu.edu for assistance in completing the necessary paperwork and for help regarding stipends.

Q: How do I get paid?
A: It is important to note that by state law, stipends can be dispersed only after work has been completed. GC employees will have stipends included in their regular monthly or bi-weekly paychecks. Non-GC employees will have a paper check mailed to the address indicated on their Independent Contractor form.

Q: What is the maximum that I can pay myself or others through my grant?
A: $2,000 is the maximum stipend to any individual.

Q: When can I begin spending my funds?
A: The fiscal year for a STEM grant begins on July 1 and ends on June 30 of the following year. Funds must be spent within that timeframe. All expenditure requests must be completed by a specified cut-off date, typically in early May.

DISSEMINATION

Q: What is the STEM Symposium?
A: The GC STEM Symposium provides a forum for mini-grant recipients to share experiences, present findings, and to stimulate dialogue and ideas around STEM education. This annual event brings together K-20 practitioners in STEM fields and other disciplines. For examples of presentations, visit http://stem.gcsu.edu.

Q: Do I have to make a presentation during the STEM Symposium?
A: All projects must be represented via presentation at the symposium either by the project/principal investigator (PI) or co-PI.

Q: I would like to acknowledge my STEM Mini-Grant in a presentation/paper. What information do I use?
A: Please acknowledge as follows: …*with support from the Georgia College STEM Initiative, funded by the University System of Georgia*

For more information on the STEM Initiative at GC, visit *http://stem.gcsu.edu*.