

Institute for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

2014 Nexen Scholars Program

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Mount Royal faculty members (full time & contract) are invited to submit research development proposals for participation in the 2014 Nexen Scholars Program. This program brings together selected faculty committed to working together to develop classroom-based inquiry projects designed to shed light on a significant aspect of student learning, share evidence and findings publicly in an effort to influence teaching in the field, and create a culture of teaching and learning inquiry at Mount Royal and beyond.

Faculty selected as Nexen Scholars will design and undertake an inquiry project in the **Fall 2014 and/or Winter 2015 semester** aimed at understanding or improving student learning. Note that in the past, this program has only supported projects where scholars were investigating a question related to student learning in their own class. This year, the Institute will also start accepting projects proposals that explore student learning in a collaborator's class or over multiple classes. In order for such projects to qualify, they must have direct implications for improving the scholar's teaching practice. If a scholar is proposing an investigation in multiple classes or a class which is not their own, the reason for not conducting the study in their own class must be clearly explained and the scholar must be collaborating with the course instructor(s). If you are uncertain whether or not your proposed project meets these criteria, please contact the Director to explore possibilities.

Faculty who are considering applying are encouraged, but not required, to attend either of the SoTL Exchange presentations being offered in October and November. Registration will be available through ADC shortly.

SoTL at MRU – What's Next?
Wed Oct 23, 12:00-1:00 in Y324
Presented by Janice Miller-Young

Developing a SoTL Question
Thurs Nov 21, 12:00-1:00 in Y324
Presented by Janice Miller-Young and former Nexen Scholars

Expectations

2014 Nexen Scholars will participate in on-site workshops and meetings from **January 2014 to April 2015** and an off-site residency in February 2014. The Nexen Scholars work as a community of practice and must commit to full participation in the program including being present and giving feedback to other scholars in the cohort. Each scholar will work on the development of a course-based research question, gather data of student learning during Fall 2014 or Winter 2015, begin the analysis and interpretation of that data by spring 2015, and make a good faith effort to disseminate results on campus and beyond. This also involves attending all of the following meetings and achieving the following milestones:

Dates

Introductory Meeting
Establishing community, Exploring questions
10:00 am – 2:00 pm, January 6, 2014
at Mount Royal University

January 1.5hr meeting TBA depending on Scholars' schedules

Off-Site Residency #1
Refining the Research Question, Exploring Methods and Methodologies
Wednesday February 19 through Friday February 21, 2014
in Kananaskis

March & April 1.5-hr meetings TBA depending on Scholars' schedules

Milestone: Deadlines for projects requiring data collection in Fall 2014
Research Proposals due April 30, 2014
Ethics applications submitted by mid-May, 2014

One-Day Residency #2
Checking in, Looking forward

Monday August 18, 2014
in Calgary

Oct 1.5-hr meeting TBA depending on Scholars' schedules

Milestone: Deadlines for projects requiring data collection in Winter 2015
Research proposals due Oct 31, 2014
Ethics applications submitted by mid-November, 2014

Dec & Jan 1.5-hr meeting TBA depending on Scholars' schedules

One-Day Residency #3
Preparing for Data Analysis
Tuesday February 17, 2015
in Calgary

Mar & Apr 1.5-hr meeting TBA depending on Scholars' schedules

Note that scholars who complete the program also have the ability to apply to attend an off-site **data analysis residency in May 2015** and/or a **writing residency in August**, if that fits their needs, and they may also apply for Going Public Awards for disseminating their work. Calls for applications as well as application criteria for these initiatives are posted separately.

Frequently Asked Questions

What kinds of research are supported? – Nexen Scholars design and conduct an inquiry project aimed at deepening understanding of an important student learning issue, with the aim to improve both student learning and teaching practice. The principles for good SoTL include being focused on student learning, grounded in context, methodologically sound, and appropriately public (Felton, 2013.) For some examples of the SoTL work that the Institute has supported, see the [Institute's website](#) and the ISoTL blog pages under [Nexen Scholars](#), [Going Public](#), and [Recognition](#).

What level of research experience is required? – As with all scholarship, experience and expertise with research are valuable but prior scholarship in teaching and learning inquiry is not a prerequisite. In fact, this program is designed to help faculty gain new expertise, making use of existing knowledge brought from the classroom and their own disciplinary or professional contexts.

What are the commitments? – Nexen Scholars are required to participate fully in all meetings, workshops, and residencies. All projects must have fully developed proposals and ethics review by the dates outlined above. Participating in the program is a serious commitment and a substantial amount of work, however it is also recognized that unanticipated circumstances may arise where the scholar is not able to meet a commitment, and in these cases may negotiate with the Director. However, in the event a solution cannot be found, scholars may be asked to leave the program.

What do Nexen Scholars receive? – a 14-month facilitated research development process; mentoring and assistance provided by experienced scholars and the Director of the Institute; collaboration with a larger community of scholars; a \$2000 research stipend (for books, software, travel, etc.), and; access to Going Public Awards and facilitated Data Analysis and Writing Residencies once certain milestones have been achieved.

Who should submit a proposal? – Any MRU faculty member, TS or TSS, full-time or contract.

What criteria will be used to assess proposals? – Proposals must demonstrate that the inquiry: is an example of scholarship of teaching and learning, focused on student learning; acknowledges and draws on existing literature; suggests suitable methodology and data collection methods; is feasible, with realistic and achievable objectives and dissemination strategies, and; is likely to make significant contributions to understanding and improving student learning in a course or courses. Priority will be given to proposals where the scholar (or collaborator) has taught the course(s) before, where the scholar is not engaged in or planning simultaneous doctoral research, and which include evidence of relevant literature review.

Application requirements

Proposals will consist of six MSWord documents or PDF files:

1. A cover letter including your name, email address, campus phone number, campus address, the number and title of the Fall 2014 or Winter 2015 course(s) in which your investigation will take place, the number of times you have taught that course, and description of previous research experience that has helped you prepare for systematic scholarly inquiry into student learning;
2. A sample syllabus for the course(s);

3. Your CV or resume (including whether you are engaged in or planning doctoral research);
4. A project statement indicating:
 - a. Your understanding of and experience with scholarship of teaching and learning;
 - b. Your student-learning-oriented research question, and the observations that led you to that question;
 - c. Your thoughts on the importance of that research question, and what answering that question will contribute to the improvement of student learning and to your teaching practice,
 - d. Your initial review of the literature;
 - e. Your initial thoughts about what methodology and methods of gathering and analyzing data might be appropriate for your question;
 - f. Your plans for where and how you will disseminate the findings from your research;
 - g. Any questions and concerns you have about the design or character of your project;
5. Letters of support from both your chair and your dean/associate dean/director commenting on how participation in the Nexen Scholars Program will benefit you and/or your department or faculty, as well as on the likelihood you will be teaching the proposed course in Fall 2014 or Winter 2015. If you are conducting your project in another instructor's course(s), the chair should also comment on how the impact on other instructors has been considered, and a letter of support from those instructors/collaborators is also required.

Proposals must be submitted electronically as separate attachments in a single email sent to sotlinstitute@mtroyal.ca, and received by the Institute for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning no later than midnight December 1, 2013.

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