

2014-15 TransCanada Collaborative SoTL Inquiry Grants

The Institute for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at MRU is pleased to sponsor a call for applications for the 2014-2015 TransCanada Collaborative SoTL Inquiry Grants. These grants are designated for collaborative teaching and learning inquiry projects which go beyond an inquiry about teaching and learning in a single class. Note that while the Nexen Scholars Program is designed to support scholars in developing a project, the TransCanada grants require a complete research proposal including literature review, research question, methodology, data collection, and dissemination plans. (If your proposed work does not align well with this structure, please include a clear statement of theory and methods that are aligned with the proposed project.)

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning is inclusive and unified by its potential to have impact in the classroom and to deepen our understanding of student learning, but diverse in discipline, theory, methodology, and method. Eligible projects must propose systematic, evidence-based study of teaching and learning and must be:

- focused on student learning in higher education,
- situated in the existing literature,
- grounded in a teaching-learning context,
- methodologically sound, and
- publicly disseminated.

Some examples of collaborative inquiries include, but are not limited to, inquiries about teaching and learning that:

- will be investigated in multiple courses and/or sections in a department or program (for example, studying student learning over a series of courses)
- will be investigated in courses from different programs and faculties (for example, studying students' writing skills development in courses from a variety of disciplines)
- will be investigated in courses from multiple contexts (for example, studying the effect of a certain pedagogy at institutions with varying class sizes)
- have a student as a co-investigator (a senior student collaborating to design/conduct a study in a lower-level class)
- require the expertise of a variety of co-investigators due to the size and scope of the project (for example, a technical writing expert collaborating to study student report writing skills in a science lab)

Collaborative SoTL projects are expected to be in the range of \$5,000-\$10,000 for a single year. The annual budget for these grants is \$30,000 so one or two grants will be awarded per funding cycle. Multi-year projects will be conditionally approved, subject to completed reporting and adequate progress. For multi-institutional projects, a MRU faculty member must be the principal investigator on the project. *Note that additional support for smaller SoTL inquiry projects is available through the Nexen Scholars Program (through the Institute for SoTL) and through the Internal Research Grant Fund.*

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Project proposals will be evaluated based on 3 main criteria: quality of the project; likelihood of impact beyond the research group; and expertise of the research group, as demonstrated by the submitted application and CVs.

Project Quality (60% of overall evaluation):

- explicit focus on teaching and learning in post-secondary education,
- clear goals and rationale supported by literature review,
- quality and appropriateness of the methodology,
- suitability of proposed strategies and timelines,
- appropriateness and justification of proposed budget.

Likelihood of impact (30% of overall evaluation):

- potential for impact on teaching and learning,
- potential to contribute to existing literature,
- training, mentoring, and dissemination opportunities provided to students,
- dissemination plan, including venues for appropriate dissemination within and beyond Mount Royal.

Expertise (10% of overall evaluation):

- quality and significance of previous and current scholarship activity within the research group, particularly related to teaching and learning,
- suitability of the research team including evidence of methodological expertise and capability to undertake the project.

All proposals will be required to be rated “acceptable” by the Institute’s Scholarship Review Committee on each of the 3 main criteria, in order to be funded. If more applications are received than can be fully accommodated, then applications may be ranked according to the weighting scheme above and/or partial funding may be awarded. If you are uncertain whether or not your proposed project meets the criteria, please contact the Director to explore possibilities.

Funding and Eligible expenses

The maximum allowable budget for each grant depends on the size of the project (number of co-investigators, number of classes being investigated, number of years of study, etc.). Multi-year projects can be supported but in these cases, proposed budgets must be broken down by fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). Multi-year projects include not only studies where data is collected over multiple years, but also studies where so much data is collected in one year that another year would be required to complete the data analysis and/or disseminate findings. All proposed budgets must fall within the following constraints:

- research expenses to a maximum of \$2,000 per section/course/context under investigation, per year
 - acceptable expenses for the conduct of the research (data collection and analysis) include undergraduate student research assistant compensation, transcription, photocopying, etc. as well as travel between institutions for multi-institutional collaborations
 - note that research expenses do NOT include the purchase or development of teaching resources or equipment e.g. classroom technology, which must be secured elsewhere
- dissemination expenses to a maximum of \$2,000 per investigator, per year
 - collaborative dissemination plans with the entire research team, including undergraduate student RAs, present are strongly encouraged
- total budget no more than \$10,000 per year.

If applications exceed the budgeted amount for any given year or if the proposed budget is not adequately justified, partial funding may be awarded.

Note that while ethics clearance is not required before an application is approved, funds cannot be released until clearance has been given by the Mount Royal University Human Research Ethics Board. For multi-institutional studies, the PI is responsible to ensure that appropriate ethical clearance is also attained at all applicable institutions.

Applications

To apply for TransCanada Collaborative SoTL Inquiry Grant, Principal Investigators must use the Office of Research Services web-based application (see research.mtroyal.ca/for-researchers/get-funding/funding-and-forms/), which requires the completion of a Research Tracking Form, descriptions of the project, co-investigator team and dissemination plan, and the uploading of a complete research proposal addressing the following:

Project proposal

The proposal should include literature review, context and objectives of the project, methodology including data sources and proposed data analysis, and budget justification. It should be written to fully address the evaluation criteria, above.

Budget

Please provide an itemized, complete budget by fiscal year, including personnel costs, transcription expenses, photocopying, travel, conference attendance etc.

Item	Details	Total
		\$
		\$
		\$
Total		\$

Letter(s) of Support

If you will be collecting data in the class of an instructor who is not a co-investigator, please explain why they are not a co-investigator and provide a letter of support from the instructor.

Applications are due **March 31** and **Oct 31** each year and will be reviewed by the Institute's Scholarship Review Committee. Applicants will be notified of the committee's decision approximately 2 weeks after the deadline, and funding will be available immediately or as soon as appropriate evidence of ethics clearance is provided.

Reporting

All successful grant applicants will be required to disseminate their findings at least once in an on-campus forum such as a departmental colloquium or an Institute-organized presentation. Also, successful applicants will be required to report to the Institute on their projects, in a format of their choosing (for example, a paper, presentation, or poster), and notify the Institute yearly of all dissemination activities. A final report will be required of all projects at the end of the proposed research timeline. For multi-year projects, a brief report will be required every May 15, with description of progress made in data collection, analysis, etc. and any changes to the proposed research or budget. Research budgets for multi-year projects will be transferred on a yearly basis so a yearly report also serves as a funding request for the following year. Faculty will not be considered for subsequent research grants unless their reporting obligations with the Institute and the Office of Research Services are up to date.

For additional information please contact the Institute for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning through Anne Johnston at ajohnston@mtroyal.ca.

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