Strategies for Writing an Effective Teaching and Learning Grant

June 26, 2025

Land Acknowledgement

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.
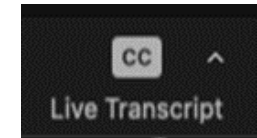
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Access Check

Is there anything about the virtual space that we can address before we begin?

Are there any other access needs that might affect your participation in today's session?
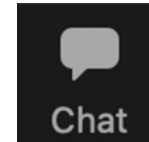
Let us know if you are having any audio issues

Turn on live transcript if you would like closed captioning

Type questions and comments into the chat or raise your hand

1. Welcome and Introductions.

Agenda

1. Why teaching grants?
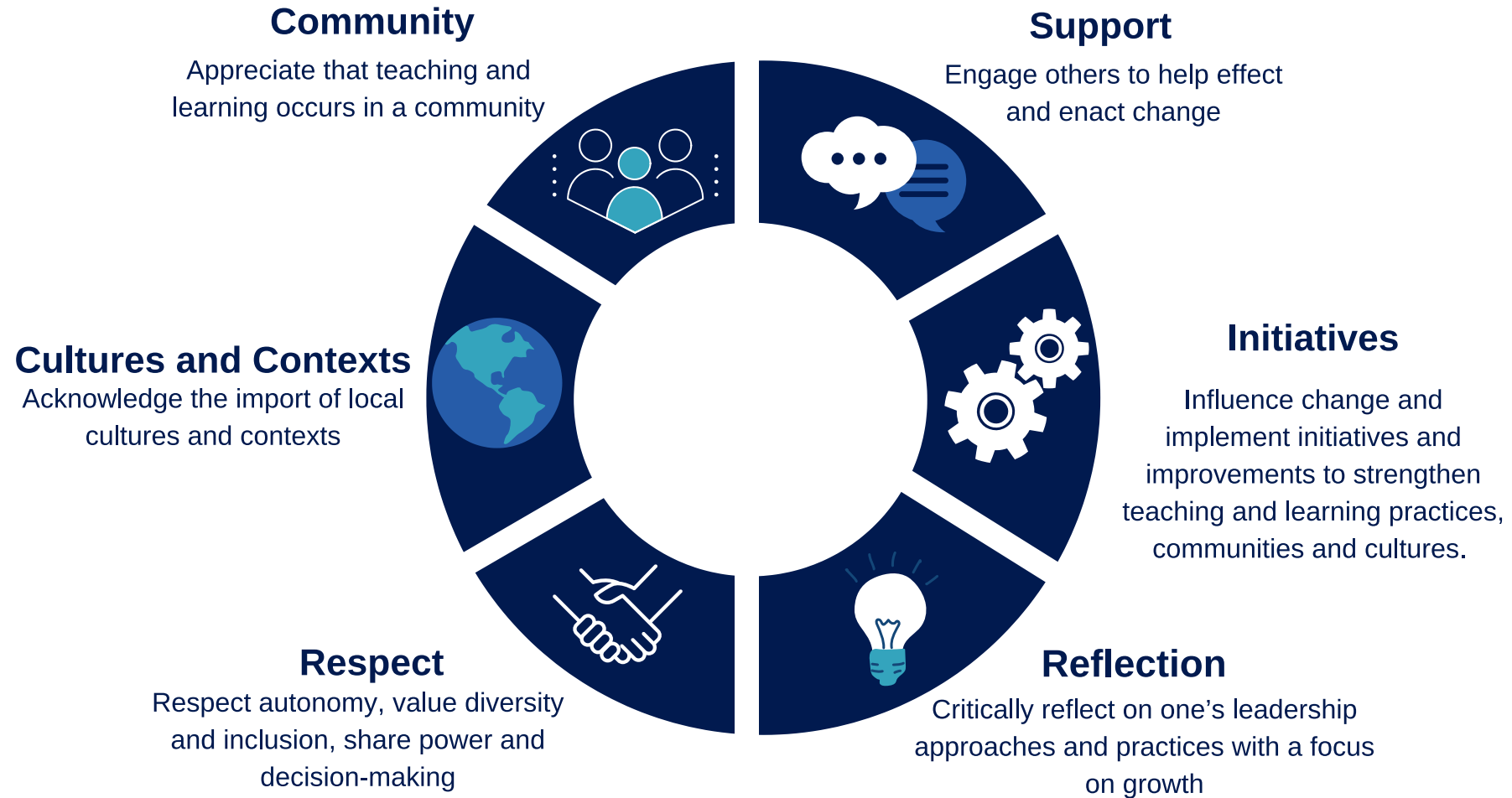
2. Considerations for developing your grant application

3. Faculty roundtable

4. Overview of institutional teaching and learning grants.

5. Summary + Questions

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2. Why teaching grants?

Educational Leadership

Community

Appreciate that teaching and learning occurs in a community

Support

Engage others to help effect and enact change

Initiatives

Influence change and implement initiatives and improvements to strengthen teaching and learning practices, communities and cultures.

Cultures and Contexts

Acknowledge the import of local cultures and contexts

Respect

Respect autonomy, value diversity and inclusion, share power and decision-making

Reflection

Critically reflect on one's leadership approaches and practices with a focus on growth

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Educational Leadership

Teaching and learning grants are an opportunity to further develop your **educational leadership** through:

- Developing a **new teaching approach** or improving an existing teaching practice.

- Developing **resources to help other colleagues** learn how they might implement similar initiatives in their academic unit.

- **Sharing learning outcomes** with the teaching and learning community (e.g., T&L Symposium, Discovery Series).

- Collaborating with faculty, staff, students, provides **opportunities for mentorship, growth and interdisciplinary frameworks.**
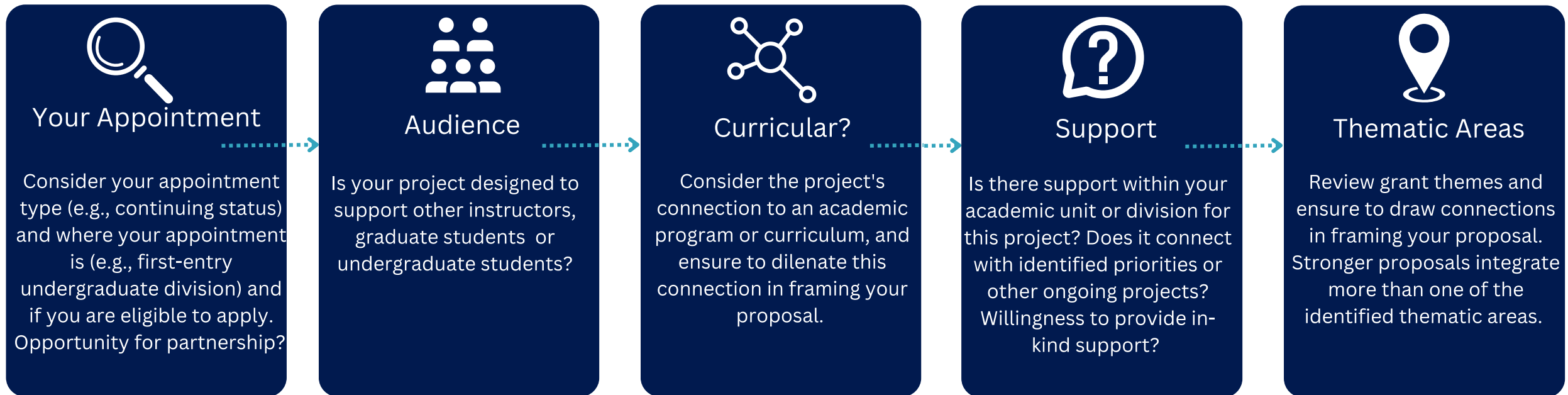
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3. Considerations in developing your application for a teaching and learning grant.

Need: what is your project?

- What have you experienced in your teaching practices?

- What have you observed in your students?

- What interests you in the teaching and learning space?

- Are there opportunities for improving the student experience at the course-, program-, unit- or division-level?

Alignment: what grant is your project eligible for?

Your Appointment

Consider your appointment type (e.g., continuing status) and where your appointment is (e.g., first-entry undergraduate division) and if you are eligible to apply. Opportunity for partnership?

Audience

Is your project designed to support other instructors, graduate students or undergraduate students?

Curricular?

Consider the project's connection to an academic program or curriculum, and ensure to dilenate this connection in framing your proposal.

Support

Is there support within your academic unit or division for this project? Does it connect with identified priorities or other ongoing projects? Willingness to provide in-kind support?

Thematic Areas

Review grant themes and ensure to draw connections in framing your proposal. Stronger proposals integrate more than one of the identified thematic areas.

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Alignment: what grant meets your project needs?

Time: most valuable resource most grants support is time. Grants can not be used for faculty salary. Consider how they can be used to manage your time effectively while supporting the project?
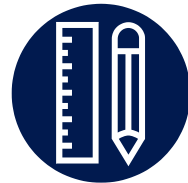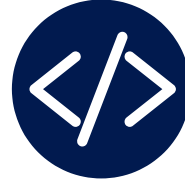
Project Management: consider if hiring support to manage the project, track its multiple moving parts (and people), will help project progression.

Equipment: is it a specialized piece of equipment or is there something comparable and available at U of T? Clear justification.

Teaching / Research Support: consider the work / responsibilities involved with a position to determine if it should be classified as a Research Assistant, Teaching Assistant or other role.

Resource Development: what are the resources being developed by your project, and what are the supports surrounding those resources (how will they be shared with instructors, introduced to students).

Student Feedback / User Experience: as part of your project will you need to collect and consider student feedback, and find ways to thoughtfully address it?

Programming Support: are there technical skills that you require support with (e.g., coding, development of eModules)?

SoTL: while a research component to a project may be appropriate, the sole purpose of a project should not be the production and dissemination of new research.
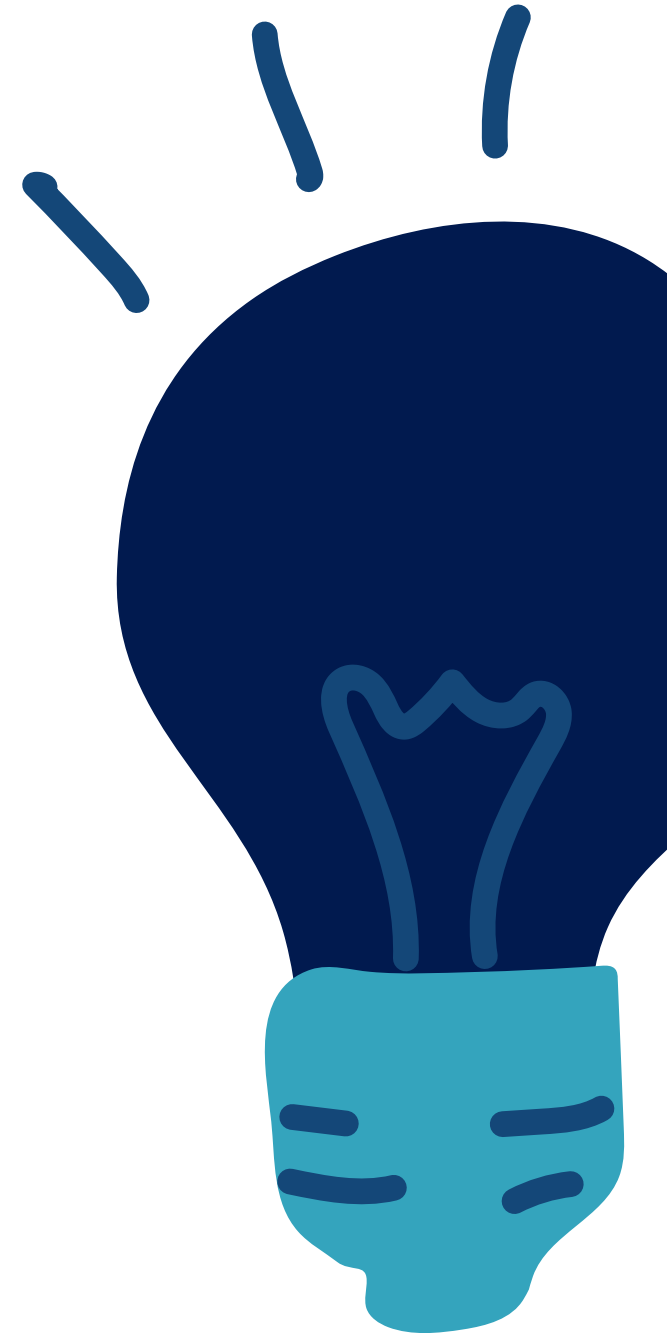
Relationships: consultations and conversations

Colleagues

Discuss your project with colleagues. Has anyone in your academic unit done a similar project? Had a successful application to the grant you're interested in? Is anyone else in your academic unit interested in similar questions (ie potential collaborator)?

Environmental Scan

Conduct an environmental scan to better understand the work that is already being done in your project area at U of T or other institutions. Are there existing models you might build on? Consider also existing literature that will help inform project directions.

T&L Community

Connect with your teaching and learning community. Attending workshops, conferences or a community of practice session will help create a well-informed context for your project.

Division

Connect with leadership in your division to understand support for the project, understand other local projects you might connect with as well as in-kind supports.

Local Offices

Local and shared service offices might be able to provide support for your project and share their expertise. For example, offices that support educational technology, experiential learning, equity and inclusion, community partnerships, Indigenous knowledge and partnerships.

Institutional Support

Connect with staff who support these teaching and learning grants. They may be able to share insights into questions / queries / concerns the committee will raise in reviewing your proposal.

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Writing: what is your project?

- Clearly share what is your project, and what are **the project goals**.

- Indicate the ways in which your project **satisfies a need within teaching and learning** (e.g., based on your experiences, observations or gaps in the literature).

- Describe how the project goals **meet the parameters of the teaching and learning grant**. Also consider how it might intersect with goals within your academic unit, division and / or institution-wide.

- Articulate the **impact of the grant** and the significance of this idea.

- Name any **collaborators** you will work with on this project.

- Share if there are opportunities for employment / experiences for our **students to support the development of the project**.

Writing: Sustainability and Feasibility

Sustainability

Address how your project will continue beyond the funding term. If you have had discussions with your academic unit or division, include details about their continued commitment to your project.

Feasibility

1 Consider alignment between the size of the grant (Seed / Impact) and project deliverables.

2 Outline how your project is realistic within the proposed timelines and budget.

3 Establish clear boundaries for what is included within the scope of your project.

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Writing and Assessment: how will you assess project outcomes?

- Demonstrate a well-defined relationship between project goals, activities and assessment tools / approaches.

- Focus your assessment on activities that allow you to observe or measure change, which has an impact both on setting measurable goals and developing a measurable assessment plan.

- Consider long-term objectives: might you seek future funding? Important to gather data to establish a proof of concept and strengthen argument for continued funding.

- Align the planned assessment with the level of the grant. Are there ways to repurpose data that you have already collected and have access to?

- NB: While a research component to a project may be appropriate, the sole purpose of a proposal should not be the production and dissemination of new research.

Writing: Budget

As part of the grant writing process, you will be asked to include:

- Budget justification: share the rationale behind anticipated project costs
- Excel spreadsheet: a detailed accounting of expected expenses and other funding sources (e.g., matching funding sources, in-kind supports)

Grant Boundaries: what is within the framework for the specific grant, and what is eligible for funding from your project.

Existing Resources: does your project leverage existing resources with your academic unit or division (e.g., match funding, in-kind supports).

Standard Costs: are there common or standard costs or hiring rates for teaching related supports in your unit (e.g., RA, educational developer)? Consult with your academic unit / division early to understand these rates and HR processes that may be involved.

Review and Submit

- If letters of support are required from your academic unit or division, ensure you're connecting early enough to have these letters prepared.

- With collaborators, review the project plan, feedback and sign-off on your application.

- Connect with colleagues to review your proposal.
  - Does your application address the grant criteria?
  - Does your application provide enough information for folks outside your area of work?

- Make sure you submit by the deadline.

4. Faculty Roundtable

Faculty Roundtable

- **Naomi Levy-Strumpf**, Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, Human Biology Program, Faculty of Arts & Science, LEAF Impact Grant, "Interdisciplinary Curriculum Design: Designing Hybrid Modules to Bridge Biotechnology and Computer Science".

- **David Montemurro**, Associate Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, APUF, "Access Pathways for Black and Indigenous Educators in Teacher Education (Pathways)."

- **Ai Taniguchi**, Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, Department of Language Studies, University of Toronto Mississauga, ISEF Seed Grant, "Language, Identity, Multiculturalism and Global Empowerment (L'IMAGE)".

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5. An overview of institutional teaching and learning grants

Institutional Teaching & Learning Grants Deadlines

Learning & Education Advancement Fund (LEAF)

Fall Cycle (Impact and Seed Grants):

- Expression of Interest: September 17, 2025

- Full Application: November 25, 2025

Winter Cycle (Seed Grants):

- Expression of Interest: February 23, 2026

- Full Application: April 28, 2026

LEAF Application Workshop: July 30, 2025

Graduate Education Innovation Fund (GEIF)

Fall Cycle: November 6, 2025

Winter Cycle: April 2, 2026

International Student Experience Fund (ISEF)

Seed Grants: accepted on a rolling basis

Impact Grants:
    Letter of Intent: November 11, 2025
    Full Application: January 20, 2026

Access Programs University Fund

Call for Proposals: March 31, 2026

Proposal Consultation / Meeting Deadline: March 31- April 28, 2026

Application Deadline: May 26, 2026

Notification of Decisions: July-August, 2026

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Learning & Education Advancement Fund

LEAF: Goals

LEAF provides students with greater exposure to impactful teaching practices that accomplish at <u>least one</u> of the following:

- Support and enhance the transfer of knowledge through active learning opportunities, both within and beyond traditional educational settings.

- Provide students with a robust and clear understanding of their learning progress, particularly through the enhancement of assessment practices and transparency regarding learning outcomes.

- Equip students with the skills necessary to become successful independent learners.

- Support the University's global mission in order to enhance the learning experience for all undergraduate students.

- Encourage collaborations among instructors and staff across academic disciplines, units and divisions with the purpose of creating exceptional learning experiences for undergraduate students.

- Support the creation or renewal of academic program curriculum.

Photo Credit: Arts & Science Communications.
Sidney Smith Hall, July 25, 2018.

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LEAF: Priority Areas

Student Success
Developing or enhancing student learning experiences in academic courses and programs to support students succeeding academically in their courses.

Experiential Learning
Developing, redesigning, expanding or incorporating new experiential learning opportunities in academic courses or programs.

Technology in the Classroom
Developing, expanding and implementing new technologies or technology-enhanced solutions in academic courses or programs.

Equitable and Inclusive Teaching
Advancing equity and inclusion in academic courses or programs.

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LEAF: Streams

LEAF Impact Grants

- Designed to support large-scale projects with the potential to significantly enhance core elements of undergraduate education within or across academic units and divisions at the University.

- $10,001 to $100,000 per year for up to 3 years

LEAF Seed Grants

- Intended to encourage experimentation at the local level, either within a course or a set of courses, as a means of fostering small-scale innovations or pilots with the potential for future scalability.

- $5,000 to $10,000 per year for up to 3 years

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LEAF SEED GRANT

OVERVIEW

Title: Mapping the development of core ecology and evolution concepts through undergraduate courses

Leads: Jill Wheeler and John Stinchcombe

Academic Unit / Division: Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, Arts & Science

SUMMARY

Project Goals: a curricular mapping project designed to better understand the organization and development of core concepts through the EEB program, the relationship between courses, the logical sequence of concepts. This project will:

- Developing and sharing a curriculum map to understand how concepts develop throughout each EEB course (what concepts are taught, and at what level they are taught)
- Analyze the diversity of researchers highlighted in EEB courses

LEAF IMPACT GRANT

OVERVIEW

Title: FLIP (Failure: Learning in Progress): A resiliency-learning project for teaching students how to embrace, learn and bounce-back from failure

Leads: Fiona Rawle, Nicole Laliberte, Mairi Cowan, Ken Derry and Jackie Goodman

Academic Units(s): Biology, Geography and Programs in the Environment, Historical Studies, Religion, Centre for Student Engagement, University of Toronto Mississauga

SUMMARY

Project Goals: develop curricular and pedagogical tools and policy guides to help students learn from and embrace failure, learn from failure and bounce back from failure in order to overcome learning challenges. Share project materials on open-access platform with students, instructors and staff.

- "Failing forward" activities: adapted to year of study, size of course and introduced to students at various points during the course.
- Teaching guides: help instructors understand how to approach these failing activities and counter stigma associated with failure

28

LEAF: Eligibility

Applicants

- Proposals will be accepted from U of T faculty, staff and librarians with continuing appointments in the first-entry undergraduate divisions (FAS, UTM, UTSC, FASE, Music, KPE, and FALD)

- To strengthen the connection to the curriculum of academic courses and programs, staff applicants must include a faculty co-lead in their application.

- Faculty, staff and librarians with continuing appointments in other divisions may submit a proposal so long as the primary beneficiaries of the project are first-entry undergraduate students.

Projects

- Pedagogical or curricular innovation

- Co-curricular projects need a direct link to curricular components (e.g., course, program requirement)

- Can involve some component of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) but cannot exclusively be a SoTL research project

LEAF: Process

Expression of Interest
Complete and submit the online expression of interest by the deadline.

1

Consultation
You will be invited for a consultation with members of the OVPIUE to discuss your expression of interest.

2

Your Divisional Office
Based on your consultation, the OVPIUE will share your expression of interest and invite feedback from your divisional office.

3

Full Application
Select applicants will be provided feedback and invited to submit a full application package.

4

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Graduate Education & Innovation Fund

GEIF: Goals

GEIF is intended to advance excellence in graduate education through greater exposure to innovative education practices:

New fund to support advances in the graduate education

- Within and across programs and curricula

- Both the classroom and field settings

- Student-faculty member mentorship relationship

Photo Credit: Johnny Guatto.
Myhal Centre, September 21, 2021.

GEIF: Priorities

Thematic Areas (must address one)

o professional development

o experiential learning

o interdisciplinary learning

o Indigenous ways of knowing and other diverse cultural perspectives; decolonization, anti-oppression and anti-racism pedagogies

o global perspectives

o effective mentorship; and public scholarship

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GEIF: Applications

Streams

- One program stream

- One-step application process

- Grants: up to $5,000 for one year
  - Matching funds from unit encouraged (not required)
  - 10 grants available per year

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OVERVIEW

Title: Developing land-based Indigenous health graduate courses

Lead(s): Angela Mashford-Pringle

Academic Units(s): Dalla Lana School of Public Health

GEIF

SUMMARY

Project Goals: develop land-based Indigenous health graduate courses for the Master's in Public Health-Indigenous Health program. Redesign a number of the program's core courses to integrate Indigenous land-based learning (e.g., Indigenous food systems, traditional ecological knowledge), trauma-informed communication and relationship building with Indigenous community organizations.

GEIF: Eligibility

Applications

- Proposals will be accepted from faculty in continuing-stream appointments including tenure-track or teaching stream faculty.

- Typically, applicants will hold Graduate Faculty Membership with SGS.

- Collaborators can include librarians, graduate students, post-doctoral fellows etc., as appropriate to the project.

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International Student Experience Fund

ISEF: Goal

The goal of the International
Student Experience Fund (ISEF) is to foster
a supportive environment on the University of
Toronto's campuses by funding initiatives that
enhance the experience of the university's
international students, in alignment with The
International Strategic Plan.
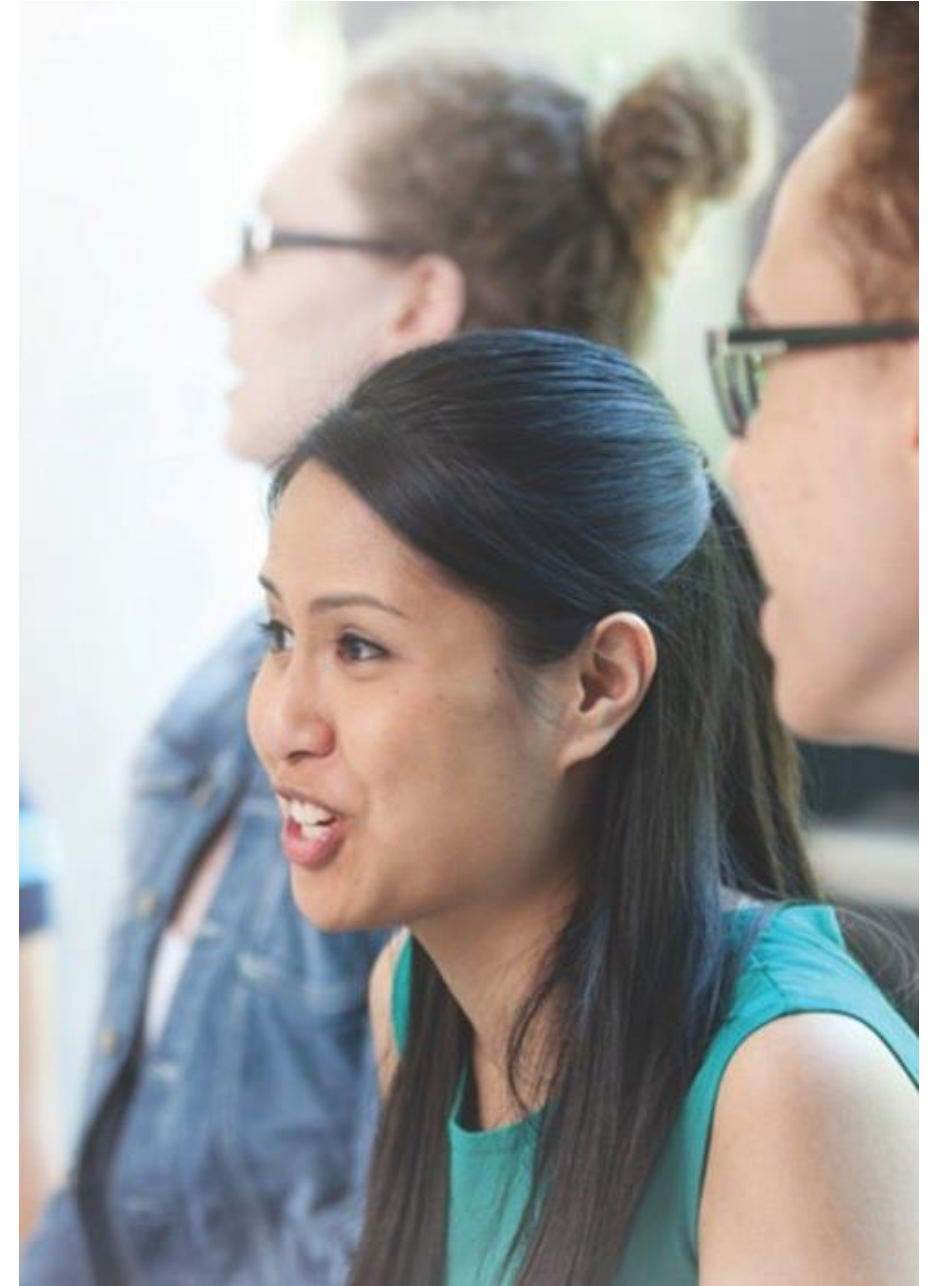
Sample Projects

Early Oral Communication Support for International Students
Dr. Jane Freeman, GCAC

✓ Provide robust oral communication support to incoming international students (students who learned English as a subsequent language) within the first few months of their arrival at U of T.

L'IMAGE PROJECT
LANGUAGE, IDENTITY, MULTICULTURALISM, AND GLOBAL EMPOWERMENT

IEC International Education Centre

We're Looking for International Students
Willing to Document their Arrival in Canada

Learn more at uoft.me/First48Hours

STUDENT LIFE

INNOVATION HUB

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ISEF: Priorities

Thematic Areas – Proposals should address one or more of the following:

• Programs, Services, and Policies

• Changing Mindset – Building Inclusive Community and Fostering Belonging

• Interactional Diversity

• Listening to and Encouraging the Voices of International Students

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ISEF: Streams

ISEF Impact Grants

- $15,000 to $75,000 per year for up to 2 years

- NB: Letter of intent due **Tuesday November 11, 2025**; Impact Grant proposals for ISEF Impact Grants will be accepted by **invitation-only** following approved letters of intent submitted.

ISEF Seed Grants

- $5,000 to $15,000 per year for up to 2 years

- Applications accepted on a rolling basis

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ISEF: Eligibility

Applicants

- Limited to U of T faculty and staff with continuing appointments

Projects

- Align with ISEF goals and priorities.

- Include collaboration with other divisions/faculties.

- Engage each of the U of T's student, faculty, and staff communities, even if only in an advisory capacity.

- Demonstrate transferability, sustainability, and feasibility.

- Primarily benefit international students studying at U of T.

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Access Programs University Fund

APUF: Introduction

Access Programs are initiatives that provide students from traditionally underrepresented groups with supports, pathways, structured programs, and/or opportunities to continue learning at the post-secondary level.

APUF funds new and enhanced programs, including:

- student outreach

- transition to university programs

- bridging and access programs for adults with diverse education histories and who may not meet traditional admission requirements

- programs in professional faculties to expose youths from underrepresented communities to the various career paths in all fields

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APUF: Goals

Eligible initiatives will satisfy the following goals:

Primary Goal

- Demonstrate impact on **achieving the university's goals** as well as **impact within the community** by:
  - increasing the reach of an existing, program or project
  - replicating, expanding, or adapting a project with a track record of success
  - building a new access program

Secondary Goal

- Create greater **collaboration and impact across access initiatives**

- Include **U of T student/student organization involvement–** these applications will be given priority

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APUF: Application

Eligibility

- Submissions will be accepted from University of Toronto faculty and staff with continuing appointments.
  - Can apply for **up to $100,000 per year** for one to two years

- Primary beneficiary of the proposal must be domestic or permanent resident status learners from Ontario who are underrepresented at universities

Process

- Proposals are **accepted by invitation only** based on a proposal consultation with ASPO

- ❑ **Proposal Consultation Period:** around March-April

- ❑ **Application Deadline:** around mid-May
  - ✓ Online Application Form
  - ✓ Project Budget
  - ✓ Signed letter of support(s) from the sponsoring academic division/unit

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APUF: Project Example

Discovery

"Our mission is to bridge the gap between high school and university education, addressing the challenges students face during this transition." - Discovery

- Learners spend three full days on-campus in U of T's undergraduate lab spaces in physics, biology and chemistry

- After learning lab protocols, students tackle engineering problems, develop proposals and conduct experiments (e.g., designing a lower limb prosthetic)

- The program is offered through a collaboration between graduate students, faculty, and high school educators.

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APUF: Learn More

APUF Website

Lists APUF resources, including the application guide.

https://www.aspo.utoronto.ca/apuf-home/

Access Programs Database

Lists access programs across the tri-campus, including APUF-funded ones.

https://www.aspo.utoronto.ca/access-programs/

"As technology advances and as we make gains in research and teaching excellence, are we also closing long-standing gaps in access or are we widening the gulf? Are there more benefits for everyone as a result of our efforts, or are we continuing to perpetuate the status quo?"

- Leanne Perry, Curriculum Project Coordinator, PharmPath

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6. Summary + Questions.