

Call for Collaborative Proposals

April 8, 2010

Aligning student learning outcomes with IT workplace expectations

Purpose

Advance IT Minnesota (hereinafter “Center”) seeks to improve alignment of what students learn in IT-related degree programs with the emerging expectations and needs of Minnesota employers through innovations in the way that learning objectives and outcomes are determined, achieved and assessed.

Eligibility

All MnSCU IT-related degree programs, associate through master’s level, are invited to submit proposals. Examples of eligible programs include those in computer science, computer information systems, application development, programming, networking, information assurance, management of information systems, database and web development, and other IT-related disciplines.

Participation in funded projects also requires that programs become affiliated with the Center as “participating members” through a simple agreement form that outlines benefits and expectations.

Proposal Criteria

Content Areas

The 2010 priority theme continues the Center’s historical work in **information assurance**, a broad competency set that spans all IT disciplines and is constantly evolving in response to the nature of threats and changes in technology. Proposals may also address other sought-after competencies that span disciplines, for example mobile devices, “green IT”, or non-technical skills within an IT context.

Threshold Requirements

1. Projects must have impact beyond a single program or institution, as evidenced by participation from at least three institutions, or by demonstrating that the project will solicit input from and disseminate results to an entire category of programs within the system.
2. Project participants agree to share lessons learned and deliverables with MnSCU colleagues via Advance IT Minnesota and other channels as appropriate.

Proposals are evaluated by the **Advance IT Strategic Leadership Board**, comprised of IT industry representatives, MnSCU faculty, center staff and students, according to the following criteria.

Criteria	Points
1. The extent to which this project addresses a current documented deficiency or emerging competency in the designated field or broader IT workplace	25
2. The feasibility of the project / likelihood of achieving the intended outcomes	25
3. Extent to which the project engages faculty and/or students with industry partners in planning and/or implementation	15
4. Overall contribution to enhancing the employability of students (value to students)	15
5. Scale of impact in relation to invested funds	10
6. Project or outcome sustainability over time without additional Center investment	10
	100

FY 2011 Program Dimensions

- Approximately \$240,000 will be available to fund projects; possibly more or less depending on quality of project proposals and level of funding available to the Center
- Proposals will be considered in the general range of \$5000 to \$50,000; larger requests will be considered if impact is deemed to be commensurate with investment. The Board will prioritize all requests relative to one another to create a total balanced “package” of funding for FY11.
- Submission are due by noon on Wednesday, May 26
- Allocation awards will be made by Friday, June 18
- Funds are paid out based on project milestones or final deliverables, depending on scope of the initiative
- Project progress reports are due on December 15, 2011. Projects are expected to be completed by April 1, 2012 unless the scope of the project specifies a longer time line.

Proposal Format

Proposal template will be provided with final release of terms on April 8, 2010 with four-page maximum length plus appendices if needed.

Project Solicitation Examples

The following project concepts represent ideas that are aligned with intent of the RFP, but are not meant to narrowly define the scope of what is possible.

Shared Course Development

Every IT discipline includes courses with common learning outcomes across institutions that must be regularly updated in response to research findings, industry practice, and academic changes. Faculty collaboration on course development and “maintenance” could yield several benefits for all stakeholders including improved quality, lower costs, reallocation of time to other efforts, more consistency for transferability, and enhanced alignment with standards. What courses could benefit from this approach and how might we collaborate on course development, design, and evolution while preserving academic values?

Student Experiential Learning

What employers seem to value most is successful experience, yet how do entry-level career students gain experience without a job in the field? Internships are the traditional choice, but the frequency of interning has declined for a variety of reasons. In what other ways could we help students gain applied experience in a business, nonprofit, or community setting?

Innovative Assessment

In what ways could we work together to improve assessment of learning outcomes? The National Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition provides students with a challenging opportunity to test their skills and knowledge and faculty with a formative assessment of curriculum and methods. In what other ways could be provide opportunities for formative or summative assessment that students, faculty and employers might also find of value?