

If you were going to try one new thing in your teaching, what would it be?

This question is at the heart of the Reinert Center's *Try It!* Summer Mini-Grant Program. If you're looking for a way to reenergize your teaching, reinvigorate an existing course, revitalize student engagement in a class, or just try something you've been reading about, this small grant opportunity might be just the thing for you.

Large-scale transformation can be a daunting prospect, and a complete course redesign isn't always feasible. That's why the Reinert Center offers modest summer grants to fund small-scale pedagogical projects that can have an immediate impact on student learning and engagement.

SLU faculty who are scheduled to teach during in the 2016-2017 academic year are invited to apply. Grants of up to \$1,000 are available for summer 2016 and can be applied to a range of materials, technologies, and development opportunities that support student learning and engagement. Grant recipients will work closely with a member of the Reinert Center to determine effective ways to incorporate one new strategy or tool into their teaching and will share what they learn from their experiment with the broader SLU community.

At this time, we are accepting proposals for Summer 2016 Mini-Grants. Interested faculty should read the Program Details below carefully before preparing their proposals. A complete [2016 Mini-Grant Proposal Form](#), along with a signed [Department Chair Approval Form](#), must be submitted to Mary Cook at mcook25@slu.edu no later than 5 p.m. (CT) on Monday, May 16, 2016 to be considered.

Program Details

Purpose

The purpose of the *Try It!* Summer Mini-Grants is to spur thoughtful and engaged experimentation with *one new pedagogical strategy or tool*. In supporting these experiments, the Reinert Center aims to support faculty members' development as teacher-scholars by promoting innovative thinking about and approaches to teaching, learning, and student engagement.

Eligibility

Awards are available to SLU faculty who hold teaching appointments in any department of the University and who will be continuing in their faculty positions for the 2016-2017 academic year. Faculty who were previously awarded a *Try It!* Summer Mini-Grant may apply; however, priority consideration will be given to those who have not previously received the award.

Although most proposals are submitted by individuals, inter- or intra-disciplinary projects involving two or more faculty members also are encouraged. In such cases, supporting materials should include a statement specifying whether the applicants are requesting one grant split between them or multiple parallel grants. In either case, joint proposals will be judged by the same criteria as individual ones.

Note: Faculty in the School of Medicine who do not teach formal classroom-based courses are eligible to submit a proposal as long as they propose to try one new teaching strategy within a defined educational experience, occurring over a defined period of time and with a defined cohort of learners (e.g., a clinical rotation).

Grant Period

The grant award period is summer 2016, with the new teaching strategy or tool being implemented in a class taught in late-summer or fall 2016 and/or spring 2017. Grant expenses must be paid and any purchases received by the Reinert Center no later than June 30, 2016 (the end of the fiscal year). Consultations with Reinert Center staff may continue throughout the summer and into the 2016-2017 academic year as needed.

Expectations

Successful recipients will be expected to: **1)** spend awarded funds as proposed through the Reinert Center; **2)** collaborate with Center staff to determine effective, evidence-based strategies for incorporating and assessing the effects of trying their new tool or strategy; **3)** measure the effects of the experiment in some way; **4)** submit a brief report of work done at the end of the summer and at the end of the teaching semester(s); and **5)** share the broad lessons they learn with the broader community. (The latter may be accomplished in a variety of ways, including but not limited to: submitting an article for publication, presenting at a disciplinary or pedagogical conference or at a Reinert Center event, contributing to the Center's blog and/or web resources, etc.) Please note: faculty who wish to make student data public as part of this dissemination may need to obtain IRB approval.

Eligible Projects / Expenses

Try It! funds may be used to fund professional development and/or to purchase equipment or materials that enhance teaching effectiveness and student engagement **and for experiences/items that would not otherwise be funded or provided by the faculty member's home department.** All funds must be spent in the current fiscal year.

Examples of past grant-funded expenses include:

- Tables that can be reconfigured and used to create more flexible classroom seating and to study the effects of classroom seating on student collaboration and learning
- Writeable tablets, used with screencasting software to create supplemental instructional videos (e.g., for mathematical problem solving) and with financial calculators and other tools to solve financial equations, involve students actively in class, and project written actions onto the whiteboard.
- Scratch-off Immediate Assessment and Feedback cards for real-time assessment of learning.
- Anatomy simulation models to supplement labor and delivery training for medical residents
- Audio-visual equipment and software used to support "flipped" classroom experiments (e.g., webcams, microphones, other digital voice/video recording devices, writable tablets to capture worked problems on the screen, etc.)
- Several iPad minis with specialized apps used to observe physical movements and to calculate angles of motion
- Computer equipment to support service-learning experiences in which students digitized archival materials and created printed banners for use by local community partner organizations.

Other possibilities may include:

- Webinar or conference attendance (such as for a disciplinary teaching conference, the Intergroup Dialogue summer institute, etc.) to support faculty development related to a discipline-specific or other instructional innovation to be adopted in 2016-2017 (must be completed no later than June 30, 2016)
- Books and/or journal subscriptions related to particular pedagogical innovations (either within or across disciplines), such as books that would not otherwise be purchased by the recipient's department.

- Hardware or software to support innovations aimed at making learning materials more accessible and inclusive (e.g., speech recognition / captioning software).
- Membership fees for a pedagogical professional organization / consortium focused on particular teaching, learning, and assessment strategies (either within or across disciplines) to be integrated into one's course. (The focus must be on and must be something other than the regular membership dues for one's disciplinary professional organization.)
- Upgraded subscriptions to otherwise-free cloud-based tools and storage platforms, such as Google Drive, Wikispaces, Wordpress, Blogger, etc.
- Materials and/or equipment that supports the development of cases, scenarios, and/or simulations for authentic learning and assessment.
- Audio-visual or other technology/production equipment to be used by SLU students as part of a course (e.g., portable media kits for student interviews or multi-media production).

Grant funds **may not be used for**: stipends or other payment to people (e.g., students, faculty, staff, external consultants, etc.) or for expenses related to travel that will occur after June 30, 2016. Funds are not available to support future maintenance costs associated with regular wear-and-tear for grant-purchased items.

Please Note: Any technology or equipment purchased is owned by Saint Louis University and must be returned to the Reinert Center in the event that the grant recipient leaves the University.

Selection Criteria

The most competitive proposals will be those that articulate a single pedagogical innovation ("try one new thing") and clear rationale for "trying it"; that demonstrate a clear need for the proposed grant-funded activities / items (i.e., funded materials are not available through existing campus resources or through regular professional and/or course development funds in the home department); and that seek to advance learner-centered instructional methods grounded in evidence-based research. In reviewing proposals, we will expect to see:

- Clear, detailed description of "one new thing" the applicant will try;
- Thorough articulation of the goals motivating the experiment/innovation (including a description of how that "one new thing" is expected to improve one's existing practice);
- Clear articulation of the rationale for proposed, grant-funded items or activities;
- Consideration of how the applicant might measure or assess the effects of the proposed experiment / innovation;
- Awareness of any training and/or support needs and where the recipient will obtain this support; and
- Detailed budget for the project's expenses.

Proposal Guidelines

To be considered for a 2016 *Try It!* Summer Mini-Grant, all proposals must:

- Answer completely all questions on the [2016 Mini-Grant Proposal Form](#).
- Be accompanied by a signed [Department Chair Approval Form](#).
- Be submitted to Mary Cook at mcook25@slu.edu no later than 5 p.m. on Monday, May 16, 2016.

Note: If you wish to schedule a consultation with Reinert Center staff before submitting your proposal, or if you have questions about the proposal process, please contact Mary Cook.