

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Setting the Pace for E-Learning Success at NEIU (SPELS @ NEIU)

Increasing access to higher education, promoting excellence and building community are core components of the NEIU Mission Statement. A recent campus-wide survey of NEIU students revealed that availability of courses and resources at times convenient to students was a major concern. Establishing a high quality E-Learning program at NEIU is one strategy to address the needs of non-traditional, working and commuting students for whom a flexible learning environment would facilitate retention and graduation. The new campus-wide administrative system (NEIUport and NEIUworks) and its integration with the Blackboard system will allow NEIU to provide a higher level of online resources to faculty and students.

The purpose for this Setting the Pace for E-Learning Success (SPELS) Request for Proposals is to establish a small cadre of NEIU faculty that will set the pace for the future of E-Learning at NEIU. Those chosen to participate in SPELS will receive compensation, course development assistance, recognition by the University, and the option to receive assistance in scholarly activities.

PROGRAM

The initial cadre of faculty selected for SPELS will form a collegial community of practice. The Learning Technologies Group at the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) will work individually and collectively with SPELS faculty to:

- share current research & best practices and examples of exemplary e-Learning courses
- provide course development and multimedia assistance
- provide individualized and customized intermediate and advanced Blackboard training
- provide customized Blackboard support for SPELS faculty and their students
- facilitate the exchange of information within the cadre

In order to lessen the impact on busy faculty schedules, most of the interaction among the SPELS cadre members will be virtual in nature.

The program's primary outcome will be the development of an interactive online course by each of the members of SPELS cadre. The course should be ready to be delivered via Blackboard by summer or fall 2007. A campus-wide recognition ceremony for the SPELS faculty--including an exemplary course showcase--will be held during fall semester, 2007.

SPELS participants will agree to the following:

- Participate in the sharing/exchange of ideas and strategies with the other SPELS faculty and the CTL.
- Create an online course that would be ready to be offered via Blackboard by summer of fall 2007.
- Be willing to share/demonstrate parts of the course to other NEIU faculty.

ELIGIBILITY

This RFP is open to all Northeastern Illinois University faculty across all departments and disciplines. Applications must be approved by the applicant's Department Chair.

BENEFITS

Those selected to participate as SPELS faculty will receive:

- Compensation in the form of 3.0 credit units (CUs), in accordance with the NEIU/UPI 2004-08 Collective Bargaining Agreement for development of the completed project.
- Online course/materials development assistance from the CTL Learning Technologies Design Team.
- Exposure to best practices, quality standards and exemplary online courses offered nationwide.
- Individualized intermediate and advanced Blackboard training.
- University recognition in NEIU publications, Exemplary Course Showcase and the NEIU website.
- Customized Blackboard support from the CTL. *Although the CTL has provided services exclusively for faculty, students enrolled in SPELS courses will also receive customized Blackboard support from the CTL.*
- Assistance, if desired, with vita-enhancing activities, such as journal articles and conference presentations (see the Scholarship of E-Teaching & Learning program below).

SUBMISSION

To be considered for selection as SPELS faculty:

- Download the SPELS @ NEIU application at www.neiu.edu/~ctl/elearning/.
- Obtain approval from your Department Chair to offer the online course.
- Send the completed application as an attached file to d-frese@neiu.edu. Please put "SPELS Application" as the subject of the message.

OPTIONAL SCHOLARSHIP OF E-TEACHING & LEARNING PROGRAM

Recognizing that the time commitment involved in developing a quality online course can affect time spent in the pursuit of other scholarly activities, the CTL Learning Technologies Group is initiating an optional program for SPELS faculty who are interested in receiving assistance in integrating their online development/teaching activities with scholarly activities, such as conducting research, publishing articles and presenting at conferences. In this way, SPELS faculty can divide the work necessary to engage in activities that enhance both teaching and scholarship. SPELS faculty are not obligated to participate in this program.

The CTL will assist SPELS faculty in the following areas:

- Identifying areas of research involving e-Learning in their course or discipline.
- Assisting in the conducting of research.
- Identifying professional conferences relevant to the research.
- Collaboration on a proposal and paper/presentation for delivery at a professional conference.
- Collaboration on an article for publication in a scholarly or professional journal.