Kirkwood Community College
Innovation Fund
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Introduction

The Kirkwood Community College Innovation Fund enhances Kirkwood’s strategic plan by encouraging innovation. The Innovation Fund is designed to encourage and fund creativity, ingenuity, and new ideas that have potential to benefit at least one component of Kirkwood’s Learner Success Blueprint, including learner success, student experience, employee development, community impact, or operational excellence.

Financial support is offered in two ways; (1) funding one to three-year pilot projects that investigate and implement ideas initiated by faculty or staff; and (2) funding one-time planning projects for faculty or staff members to investigate whether an idea is feasible.

The annual fund allotment is $400,000 and can be divided between multiple proposals or given to one proposal. Unused funds from any fiscal year will be rolled into the fund for subsequent fiscal years. Cabinet has final authority to decide how the funds will be allocated.

Definitions

**Applicant** is the individual faculty or staff member submitting an Innovation Fund proposal.

**Project Lead** is the individual faculty or staff member responsible for leading a pilot or planning project. The preference is to have the applicant and the project lead be the same person.

A **Pilot Project** investigates and puts into practice an innovative idea, which will be evaluated for success based on learning outcomes and measurable outcomes established in the proposal. A pilot project can be funded over a one to three-year period.

A **Planning Project** investigates or researches whether a certain innovative idea is feasible before actual implementation. A planning project is funded on a one-time basis.

The **Innovation Fund Steering Committee** includes representatives from Institutional Effectiveness, Faculty (KFA), Academic Affairs, Continuing Education/Training Services, Student Services, and Human Resources. The committee has the responsibility to apply the Innovation Fund Rubric and establish a cut score based on the rubric and number of submissions and funds available with recommended proposals then delivered to Cabinet for its final decision regarding funding.

**Institutional Effectiveness** has the responsibility to work with the applicant or project lead to assist with the submission process and to provide data needed to support the proposal.

**The President and Cabinet** have the role to evaluate the submissions which have passed the Steering Committee’s criteria for approval or denial of funding and amount of funding awarded.
**Positive Impact** is an innovation that enhances or benefits students, employees, community partners, or enhances operational excellence and is aligned with the mission, vision, and values of the College.

**Innovative** refers to a fresh, new, creative approach in terms of materials, process, or activities that adds value to or enhances one or more of the components of the Learner Success Framework.

**Funding Information**

The annual Innovation Fund available is $400,000.00. The final fund allocation will be determined by the Cabinet. Cabinet can allocate all the funds, or a portion of the funds, to one or more proposals. Pilot proposals approved in the past that exhibit successful outcomes and that need further funding will be reviewed first for allocation dollars and the remaining dollars will be allocated to new proposals that are approved for funding by Cabinet.

**Eligibility**

Any faculty and staff member may submit a proposal. More than one proposal may be submitted per individual, provided that each proposal is distinct. To promote creative thinking no proposal is off limits. However, a proposal must have the potential for a positive impact on at least one area of the Learners Success Framework; learner success, student experience, employee development, community impact, and operational excellence. The proposals must all provide an innovative way to fulfill one or more parts of the College's mission:

"Kirkwood Community College identifies community needs; provides accessible, quality education and training; and promotes opportunities for lifelong learning."

Applicants will be required to consult with their department leadership team and with colleagues around the college to understand the college-wide impact of the proposal and to understand the collaboration that may be needed to implement the project. The Institutional Effectiveness team can help communicate the proposal with department leadership. They can also help identify other departments affected and help with communication. If your proposal is accepted for further consideration by Cabinet, the funding committee will require evidence that the project implications where explored.

**Proposal Submission**

All proposals must be submitted by March 6, 2020 at 11:59 PM CT using the “Apply Now” button on the main Innovation Fund webpage.
All sections of the application form must be completed, including the budget spreadsheet. The budget spreadsheet should include any expenses for the project and reflect the total commitment of dollars throughout the entire project. The committee is aware that resource time may be a barrier. To ensure that resource time is not a barrier the committee and the submitter will review and budget funds for any personnel resources needed.

Proposal Scoring Rubric

The following criteria are components of the rubric used to score each proposal. For the proposal to be recommended for Cabinet review, a minimum cut score, determined annually based on number of submissions and dollars available, must be met or surpassed.

- Innovative
- Proposal quality
- Stated objectives
- Alignment with Mission, Vision and institutional-level KPIs
- Stakeholders and level of collaboration identified
- Support of the Learner Success Framework identified
- Detailed action plan
- Developed budget and timeline
- Potential for growth and scalability
- Sustainability
- Assessment plan identified including measureable outcomes
- Process for dissemination of results identified

Innovation Fund Steering Committee

The cross-departmental Innovation Fund Steering Committee’s responsibility is to evaluate each proposal based on the Innovation Fund Rubric, recommend a cut score, and send recommended proposals to Cabinet.

Cabinet

Kirkwood’s Cabinet has the responsibility for approving or denying funding for a proposal. Cabinet will approve proposals, allocate appropriate funding, and review the projects’ outcomes yearly to determine further funding. Cabinet also has the responsibility to review approved projects coming to the end of their life to determine institutional sustainability. Cabinet has the authority to determine Innovation Fund dollars budgeted and subsequent distribution. Cabinet’s decision will be based on a majority vote and in the event of a tie the President will cast the deciding vote.