VT Engage Faculty Fellows Program 2020-21

Overview
VT Engage invites applications for its 2020-21 Faculty Fellows Program. The goal of the program is to increase the prevalence of and quality of community engagement in the curriculum at Virginia Tech through curricular, faculty-led experiences. These experiences can include community-based work in the areas of service-learning, leadership education, and civic engagement. Selected Fellows will join other scholar-educators dedicated to integrating high-impact, ethical community-based learning experiences in their academic courses and programs. Fellows will receive financial resources and technical support from VT Engage during the one-year program (May 2020 to May 2021.)

Background
VT Engage is a center at Virginia Tech focused on community engagement in the areas of service-learning, leadership education, and civic engagement. We partner with nonprofits to create community-driven service programs, work with students to develop their leadership competencies, and engage with faculty on integrating community learning opportunities into their curriculum. Virginia Tech has a commitment to provide transformational experiential learning opportunities for students. Community engagement holds great potential to enhance pedagogical practice in a wide range of disciplines.

Well-designed courses contribute to the development of students as future leaders in their disciplines and their communities by integrating informal communal and guided experiential learning. Through the coupling of community engagement and problem-based learning, these pedagogies will present dynamic environments where students are able to innovate while gaining new perspectives and deepening their understanding of complex systems. Integrative learning initiatives can be strengthened by employing community engagement strategies at formative stages of course, sequence, and program development.

The Program
The Faculty Fellows Program is an opportunity for new and experienced community engagement practitioners to participate in the collaborative design of intentional, learning-focused opportunities. The program includes support for faculty who are developing or significantly revising courses or curricular programs utilizing these
pedagogies. During the program, VT Engage will support the design of high-quality community engagement experiences. Fellows will collaborate with community organizations to create or enhance mutually beneficial partnerships, build assessment strategies for student learning and community outcomes, and serve as community engagement ambassadors to the Virginia Tech community. Fellows will present the development of their course(s) and their findings to peers and will engage with broader scholarly and practitioner audiences.

Benefits of being a VT Engage Faculty Fellow:

• **Focused Investment:** Individual faculty may request up to $13,000 in support of the development process or $26,000 for a team.

• **Partnership Development:** Fellows will have designated time to invest in local, regional, or global partnerships to create mutually beneficial community-based learning programs. Fellows will have access to VT Engage networks of community collaborators and can develop or enhance existing relationships with governmental and non-governmental partners.

• **Learning Community:** Fellows will have opportunities to seek feedback and support from a growing body of faculty with expertise in community-engaged experiential learning. This diverse community can provide assistance as Fellows strengthen courses, test innovative pedagogies, and collaborate on projects to advance the scholarship of engagement, teaching, and learning.

• **Increased Visibility:** VT Engage will showcase the community-based work of each Fellow or team at key points during the project lifecycle.

Eligibility

This program is open to any full-time teaching or administrative and professional faculty member at Virginia Tech. Graduate students are not eligible. 2019-20 VT Engage Faculty Fellows are ineligible for this cycle of awards. Proposed courses may be at the undergraduate or graduate level. Applications will be accepted from individual faculty members or faculty teams. Interdisciplinary teams or teams from single departments are all encouraged to apply. Team proposals should create community-based learning experiences across course sequences or curricula.
Expectations during the funding cycle

- Develop new community-based learning course(s) or add substantial community-based learning elements to existing courses in the areas of service-learning, leadership education, and/or civic engagement. Course(s) must be offered at least once in the program cycle and twice in the three academic years following course development.

- Meet monthly with the cohort to discuss progress, challenges, and strategies.

- Establish a sustainable and mutually beneficial community-based learning program with at least one community partner.

- Present about the work at a conference or professional meeting focused on the scholarship of engagement, teaching, or learning. Share experiences with developing and teaching a service-learning, leadership education, or civic engagement course with interested faculty.

- Create an assessment plan to document student learning and community outcomes.

- Collaborate with VT Engage to publicize the project in appropriate outlets.

- Submit a mid-term and final report documenting the results of course and partnership development relative to the original proposal and the proposed teaching schedule.

Application Process

Applicants should submit the following materials in a single document to program manager Catherine Cotrupi at cotrupi@vt.edu by 5 pm on April 1, 2020.

1. Proposal/Concept Paper (<2500 words), including:
   a. Course description to be developed/redesigned
      i. If team proposal, indicate why coordinated development is desirable.
      ii. How will community-based learning pedagogies support specific student learning goals?
      iii. How will you ensure that students will learn about the societal issues or social justice perspectives in depth and/or from multiple perspectives?
      iv. How do you anticipate the course’s academic content and the community-based learning experiences will be linked?
      v. How will you structure this to ensure that students will learn the academic content more deeply or rigorously than if they did not participate?
b. Vision for how the course(s) will engage students and community partners
   i. Anticipated community partner(s)
   ii. Proposed projects: include the clear and substantive need or issue that the community or partner has identified and that contributes to the public good
   iii. Anticipated support needed from VT Engage
   iv. Connections to broader curriculum or university initiatives such as: Destination Areas or Strategic Growth Areas, Pathways to General Education, VT-Shaped Student, Aspirations for Student Learning, etc.

c. Anticipated course development and offering timeline

d. Self-assessment
   i. Primary Barriers to Success
   ii. What other expertise would be necessary for success? (Academic Units/Offices, Community Partners)

2. **Budget**: individual faculty may request up to $13,000 in support of the development process or $26,000 for a team. Budget transfers to faculty members’ departments will be based upon the type of project and program needs.

3. **Faculty Profiles**: for each faculty member, provide a brief biographical sketch (1 page maximum) including any similar or related courses taught and level of experience with community-based learning.

4. **Letter(s) of Support from Department & Community Organizations**: 
   a. Each application must provide evidence of support from the department chair(s) associated with the course(s) and/or faculty member(s). Specifically, the letter should affirm departmental intent to offer the courses under development.
   
   b. If partners are identified, include letters of support from the organizations.

5. **Additional Requirement for Teams**: submit the email address and phone number for the team’s primary point of contact as well as a list of courses and who will teach them.
Proposal Evaluation Criteria

- **Course Proposal Quality (35 points):** the quality of course proposals will be scored based on the clarity of learning goals for students, the relevance of community-based learning pedagogy, the depth of the experience for students, and the vision for benefit to the community. Proposals that include active, ongoing student reflection as part of the course design are preferred, as are proposals that address assessment of student learning outcomes.

- **Community Engagement (25 points):** points will be awarded based on the plan for involving community in the identification of community needs, strategies, and outcomes presented in the concept paper. Proposals that identify authentic, meaningful roles for community members during the project are preferred, as are proposals that address assessment of community outcomes.

- **Feasibility and Sustainability (25 points):** proposals deemed to have a high probability of implementation success will be favored—including departmental support, support from community partners, faculty/team, and consideration of ongoing costs. Proposals that explicitly address efforts to sustain the partnership will be favored. Opportunities for continuing, post-course engagement between campus and community are preferred.

- **Self-Reflection (15 points):** faculty have a clear understanding of the supplemental coursework and reflection that will need to be integrated into the curriculum to support student learning and community-based pedagogies in connection to challenging societal issues. Has identified potential barriers associated with community engagement and discussed plans for support.

Applicants will be notified of the status of their application by April 10, 2020.

Questions & accommodations requests

All questions can be directed to VT Engage Assistant Director for Campus & Community Engagement, Catherine Cotrupi, at cotrupi@vt.edu or 540-231-9186. If you are an individual with a disability & desire an accommodation, welcome! For requests related to submitting this application, please contact Catherine by March 26, 2020 during regular business hours.

If you anticipate needing accommodations during the program period, we are glad to discuss any needs before or after your application is submitted. Our goal is to remove whatever barriers possible for faculty members (and the students they work with) to be able to fully participate in the program.