2019-2020 Assessment Fellows Grant Program of the University Assessment Steering Committee (UASC)

Purpose of Program: To award grants for research on assessment that advances student learning and program quality—including those programs located at extended sites or branch campus locations—of Western Michigan University. Full and part-time faculty, staff and graduate assistants in academic departments, academic/learner support units, and interdisciplinary units in academic affairs, as well as departments and programs within the Division of Student Affairs are eligible to apply. The focus of the grants is to aid in measuring the achievement of learning and/or operational outcomes but the review committee will give preference to those applications that express interest in measuring learning. Funding preference will also be given for projects involving departments that have not been previously funded by the Assessment Fellows Grant program.

Outcomes can be measured using direct or indirect measures. For projects focusing on operational outcomes, the committee will not prioritize the applications based on the type(s) of measures described.

For projects focusing on learning outcomes, priority is given to activities related to the direct measure of learning or achievement where feasible. Direct measures of learning require students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities in response to a task (e.g., essay, presentation, portfolio, commercial instrument). They can also help to determine whether students have mastered the content of their academic programs. On the other hand, indirect measures ask students to reflect on their learning. Assessment can also include self-assessment as students consider their own progress and make specific plans for their continued growth and learning.

Application Process: Individuals must send a brief proposal application, (to include a proposal cover sheet, budget template, plus 4 pages for a 6-page maximum), electronically to David Reinhold at uaus-info@wmich.edu. No more than one proposal per department will be reviewed for possible funding each year and only single-year proposals will be considered. Each application must contain three identified sections as noted below. Proposals that exceed 6 pages will not be considered.

1) Objectives: Purpose (title) and objectives for the project are key elements and should be stated clearly. Objectives flow from purpose and are the specific aims for the project. What is the purpose of the project, what do you intend to do, what assessment methods will be used, what data analysis will be employed, and why is the project important?

For project examples, visit: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/assessment_faculty_grant/

For application examples, visit: https://wmich.edu/assessment/grants

2) Dissemination: Uses and diffusion of information acquired throughout the course of the grant should be stated. For example, how could results be used for program improvement? Is it expected that the results will be used for advising, curricular changes, or changes in service delivery characteristics? Further, the application should note how many faculty and/or students will be impacted by the accomplishments of the grant. How, when, and by whom will the information be disseminated?

3) Proposal Budget (maximum award of $4,000): Refer to the budget template (wmich.edu/assessment/grants). Please note that the Assessment Fellows Grants can be used...
to support student assistants, research time, materials, software support, or conference registrations. However, Assessment Fellows Grants may not be used to support release time from assigned teaching or administrative responsibilities, costs of academic credit, computer or other technical equipment, conference travel, or external consultants. Additionally, all proposals will be reviewed to determine the suitability of budgeted items in terms of stated departmental assessment planning activities and fidelity with University policies and regulations. Consider the following: What materials do you need to purchase, what student assistance do you need, what analytical assistance is required, or what payment is required for the applicant to do what and when?

For information regarding University guidelines for student employment, you can go to the following website: https://wmich.edu/hr/officemanagement/student-resources

**Timetable:** Assessment Fellows Grant applications for 2019-2020 are welcome until April 29, 2019. Funds will be made available for awarded projects the following academic year. The associate provost for assessment and undergraduate studies will announce awards by June 1 each year. The grant project must be completed by the end of the spring semester of the subsequent academic year. Requests for reimbursement of funds must be submitted prior to termination date of the project.

**Grant Reviewing Criteria:** A subcommittee of the UASC will review proposals and recommend projects for funding to the UASC at its May meeting. Applicants will receive reviewer comments in summary form upon request. The subcommittee will use the following criteria to recommend proposals for funding:

- ✓ □ The resourcefulness of the project in its alignment with the unit, college, or division assessment programs and the project’s intent to facilitate change with regard to improvement of student learning, program quality and ongoing departmental program planning initiatives. (40%)
- ✓ □ Demonstration of student learning and/or operational outcomes, including a plan for disseminating information and conceptualization of impact on faculty, students and/or campus community. (30%)
- ✓ □ Budget of expenses congruent with the project goals. (15%)
- ✓ □ Timeline of activity congruent with project goals. (15%)

**Responsibilities of awardees:**

**Assessment Fellows Cohort:** The cohort will meet monthly during the academic year to receive progress reports on projects, study questions related to assessment, and facilitate access to campus resources related to assessment research. Fellows meet September through April.

**Assessment Exemplar:** Assessment fellows are expected to report the outcomes of their work during WMU’s annual assessment conference.

**Final Report:** A brief report, two to four pages only, shall be sent to the associate provost for assessment and undergraduate studies no later than the termination date of the project. The required sections for the final report are:

1) Description of accomplishments (as related to the original proposal): success in accomplishing the purpose of the grant, or what happened that was different and why. This description must address the degree of attainment of objectives;
results of or achievement of stated purpose; and the effectiveness of design or plan.

2) Specific outcomes: uses for grant information outcomes, or how the processes involved with the grant affected your department or unit, such as development of departmental assessment activities or programs.

3) Summary: Reflect upon the assessment impact of the grant project.

Appended to the report should be one copy of any resultant publication (bearing acknowledgment of support*) or each announcement/program/catalogue, or performances/exhibitions/presentations resulting from this project. Similar materials not available at the time of submission of the final report should be forwarded for subsequent attachment.

The reports will be used to demonstrate what accomplishments are possible from these grants, and will be circulated to the University Assessment Steering Committee as well as the academic deans and the provost.

*Acknowledgement of support: “This work was supported by funds from the Assessment Fellows Grant Program, Office of Assessment and Undergraduate Studies, Western Michigan University."

Summary of Project: Assessment fellows shall write up a brief summary of their assessment projects to be included in the program for the annual WMU Assessment in Action Conference.

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board: Assessment proposals that do not meet the federal definition of research or human subject (45 CFR 46) do not require HSIRB review, approval and oversight; however, if you plan to publish the results in a professional journal, you should seek HSIRB approval prior to implementation and data collection. Most assessments designed to measure achievement of desired student learning outcomes at the classroom, program, or institutional level do not require HSIRB oversight. If you have any questions about your proposed project, please contact the associate director for research compliance at 387-8293 or via e-mail at research-compliance@wmich.edu.

Condition for Acceptance: Awardees authorize the Office of Assessment and Undergraduate Studies to post project findings for the given year on the ScholarWorks Assessment page (http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/assessment_faculty_grant/).

Budget Contact Information: The name, email and phone number for the budget contact within the department shall be provided by awardees upon signing the grant contract.

Application Submission: Contact information for the application process, ideas, assistance, or questions:

Dr. David Reinhold, Associate Provost for Assessment and Undergraduate Studies
Phone: 269-387-4564 or 387-0399
E-mail: uaus-info@wmich.edu