



WILLIAM E. KIRWAN

CENTER *for* ACADEMIC INNOVATION

Elkins Professorship for Academic Transformation

The Elkins Professorship for Academic Transformation is awarded competitively to a faculty member in the University System of Maryland to support a project that can foster or illuminate improvements in access, quality of outcomes, and/or stewardship of people's time, money, and other scarce resources. Work on "academic transformation" advances at least two of those three goals.

The Fellowship award of \$40,000 is for work to be carried out over one semester of full-time work or two semesters of half-time work, likely as part of an academic leave/sabbatical. If the institution matches the award, the project could be extended to a year of full-time work. The awardee's activities would be carried out in collaboration with the staff of the William E. Kirwan Center for Academic Innovation.

The proposed work should advance and illuminate some aspect of academic transformation, directly or indirectly. More often than not, proposals will expand on inquiry or initiatives already underway. Proposals would typically outline some combination of study of existing research and evidence, new research, development, and/or action toward the solution of an educational need or challenge such as:

- The need to educate students who differ substantially, for example in their perspectives, sense of themselves as learners, motives for learning, preparation, and abilities;
- The need to demonstrate to potential students, taxpayers, employers, benefactors and others that our graduates have been well-prepared and even transformed by their experiences in our institutions;
- The need to make more productive use of information about students and learning to guide and improve instruction and advising;
- The need to expand, extend and sustain practices that have demonstrated their value and potential on a smaller scale.
- The need for education to continually improve in its methods, content, and resources rather than treating change as an exception to normal practice;
- The need for more inclusive, useful strategies for helping large numbers of faculty gradually expand their repertoire of teaching strategies.

These are only examples. The funded work might focus directly on teaching and learning or on conditions, policies, and infrastructure that influence teaching and learning.

Eligibility: Faculty from any of the USM institutions are eligible to apply. Applicants must be full-time faculty members with a rank of associate or higher. Deans, vice-presidents, and the president are not eligible to apply. Applicants may request that these eligibility requirements be waived for special circumstances of educational importance to USM.

The Elkins Endowed Professorships were created in part to honor the prior contributions of the recipient. The faculty applicant should have a **substantial track record** of contributions to the education of students (such as innovations, teaching awards, participation in important initiatives to improve student learning). Specifically, all holders of Elkins Professorships should have:

- A solid record of achievement in one's academic or professional discipline;
- Demonstrated desire and ability to lead and inspire undergraduate and graduate students in the full range of learning situations, from lectures to student-teacher discussions;
- Evidence of significant achievement beyond one's traditional discipline, but with a scholarly and professional relationship to the academic enterprise at USM; and
- Demonstrated ability and intent to pursue scholarly or professional endeavors beyond the USM (e.g. work through professional associations, editing journals)

Criteria for Assessing Proposals

Academic transformation: The proposed activity should address at least two of the following:

- Enhancing access (how many and the variety of people who can be educated),
- Increasing affordability (how well the project stewards time, money, and other scarce resources).
- Improving outcomes (what students learned by the time they finish their education), and/or

Broad influence: The proposed activity should address a widely felt need and therefore have the potential for broad influence across the USM institutions and beyond.

Built on prior experience and research: The proposal should explain how the plan has built upon prior experience and research; both the applicant's and also the experiences, achievements, and challenges encountered by others in the field.

Feasibility: The proposed work plan should be demonstrably feasible. For example, if proposal readers are likely to wonder how the work can be done in the time available, it would help to include a timeline. Appropriate documentation should be included; if the work will involve, for example, the institution's teaching center, then the proposal should include a letter from the director of the center that explains what the center will provide.

Evaluation plan: The proposal should include a plan for a final evaluation or peer review of the work.

Appropriate budget: The proposed budget should be consistent with the activities described in the narrative, and also demonstrate good stewardship of these funds.

Preparing a Proposal

Please use the following outline to prepare your proposal:

- I. Brief abstract that summarizes the essence of the project.
- II. Explanation of the need or opportunity, and its importance.
- III. Summary of the proposed work, including an explanation of how prior work in the field has influenced the plan. Include a schedule of activities if appropriate. We recognize that work plans evolve, so give us your best guess now about how the work might unfold.

- IV. Planned deliverables. At minimum, this should include a final narrative report including some kind of external assessment of the work and a final financial report.
- V. Budget.
- VI. References cited.
- VII. Any supporting documents needed, including at least:
 - a. Abbreviated c.v. (up to 2 pages and including only relevant publications) and a 250-word biographical sketch explaining the applicant's relevant experiences for carrying out the proposed work.
 - b. Letters from the Dean and Provost supporting the faculty member's candidacy and permission to be released from academic duties that will allow either full-time (1 semester) or part-time (2 semester) work with the Kirwan Center. If the proposed project involves action within the institution, these support letters should also indicate the degree to which their authors support the effort.

Sections II-V should be no more than 10 pages, single-spaced, 12-point font. Applicants may confer with Kirwan Center staff while considering and preparing proposals, for example about ways in which the Kirwan Center might support the work.

Deadline: Proposals are due to Zakiya Lee (zlee@usmd.edu) by April 15 for work to begin in either the subsequent Fall or Spring semester.

The Elkins Endowed Professorship was established in 1978 as a fitting way to perpetuate the name and contributions of Wilson H. Elkins, a former Rhodes scholar who led the University of Maryland to new levels of distinction as its president from 1954 to 1978. Under Dr. Elkins' leadership, the university grew notably in size, scope, and standing.

The William E. Kirwan Center for Academic Innovation was founded in 2013. The Center is becoming a focal point for conceptualizing, promoting, studying, and disseminating groundbreaking academic transformation work both within Maryland and across higher education nationally. More information about the Center is available at <http://www.usmd.edu/cai>.