

8 January 2018

CFP: The Graduate Student Professional Development Challenge —deadline: March 1, 2018

The professional and career development of all graduate students is a top priority of the Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences. We foster a culture in which the value of diverse, excellent, and high-impact careers both within and beyond the academy is broadly understood and embraced.

Complementing programming developed by the University, School, and Departments, this pilot program is intended to support **student-designed and student-led projects that will contribute to the professional development of graduate students**. This is an opportunity for you to take the lead on a project, to implement it and assess its impact, and thus also to develop leadership skills.

Supported projects might include, but are not limited to, student-facilitated or organized workshops or panel discussions on a specific versatile competency or transferable skill; student-organized events with doctoral alumni from employment sectors beyond the academy; activities that incorporate partnering with non-academic campus units to promote professional development; or projects that link professional development with other strategic priorities in graduate studies, such as diversity and inclusion, or global awareness and engagement.

All current graduate students across disciplines are eligible to apply. Individuals and groups of no more than three students from one or from across several programs can submit a proposal.

Preference will be given to proposals that address needs and topics not covered by current professional development programming, to proposals that are put forward by teams including and targeting students from two or more graduate programs in the Dietrich School, and to proposals that promise a sustainable impact. Each proposal must focus on a specific professional development need related to success in graduate school and beyond.

Please submit your application in a single pdf attached to an email to graddean@pitt.edu by March 1, 2018, 5 PM. Your application must consist of the following elements, in this order:

Project Narrative (max 3 pages, single-spaced, font size 12+, 1-inch margins all sides]

- Title of the proposed project and names of author(s)
- The issue(s) or need in professional development of graduate students to be addressed by the proposed project
- The proposed approach, solution, or idea and how they will impact graduate education
- Implementation plan: define the intended audience and the proposed intervention strategy/strategies that will address the need; outline your communication strategy to maximize visibility and turnout
- Team: explain the role of each author and how the experience will impact their professional development
- Timeline of implementation: when, how, where (interventions can be implemented between September 2018 and April 2019).
- Assessment plan: define how the intervention will be effective, how your initiative will result in change, and what measurable outcomes you will be tracking

Proposed budget:

- Justify the amount of support required and provide a full breakdown of expenses (\$750 maximum)
- Specify any matching funding (e.g. from departments) and whether requested or committed at the time of application

Letter(s) of support for each proposal (co)author: please ask your faculty mentor to explain how your leadership of the proposed project aligns with your academic and professional development objectives; successful applicants will be asked to document reflections on their project in an IDP.

CVs (2 pages max) for each graduate student leader; plus mini-bio (brief single paragraph) for any other key participants, e.g. external speakers or panelists

Review

Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed by a committee of graduate faculty and students. The proposals will be evaluated for the importance of the identified professional development need; creativity and innovation of the idea; feasibility of the approach to addressing the challenge/issue/skill; appropriateness of the team and budget; quality of the evaluation plan.

Proposals must be submitted to graddean@pitt.edu by March 1, 2018, 5pm. Late applications will not be considered. Successful applicants will be notified in March 2018.

Applicants of funded proposals will:

- Attend a leadership and project management workshop (April 2018)
- Implement the proposed project and evaluate outcomes
- Engage in on-going communications with other students and Office of Graduate Studies
- Document reflections about their own leadership skills in an IDP with their faculty mentor
- Highlight this experience in developing transferable skills and leadership in job searches

Resources

As you prepare proposals, you might find these resources helpful:

[Current professional development programming and resources \(Dietrich School\)](#)

Recent national reports on needs and best practices in professional development include:

[CGS–ETS Pathways Through Graduate School and Into Careers](#)

[STEM](#)

[Humanities and Allied Social Sciences](#)

We encourage you to discuss your ideas with your peers within and across programs, as well as your faculty mentors and Directors of Graduate Study, and to reach out to non-academic units across campus as appropriate. For questions about proposal preparation, contact Gloria Mou in Graduate Studies: <gloriamou@pitt.edu>.

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