

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

Call for Proposals

Engaged Learning Groups

To Begin Fall 2013

I. Overview

Engaged Learning Groups have been part of Baylor's new student experience for the past six years. ELGs are team-taught living and learning experiences for freshmen that seek to integrate academic coursework with student life. ELG faculty teach the same group of freshmen for the entire academic year (fall 2013 and spring 2014) while the students earn credit for core academic courses. ELGs are residential in nature, and all ELG freshmen typically live in Kokernot Residence Hall.

To identify students who will participate in our fall 2013 ELGs, we need to select our ELGs well in advance of the fall semester so that Admissions can recruit students appropriately and students can make decisions on which ELGs they think are most appropriate for them. As a result, we are requiring that all ELG applications be received by **December 14, 2012**. Wes Null, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, will oversee the review and selection process. Selections will be made by **January 15, 2013** for ELGs that will commence in August 2013.

The following are basic characteristics of ELGs:

- ELGs are disciplinary-based in the sense that the students who participate will need to earn credit for currently existing courses. ELGs can be interdisciplinary in the sense that students, for example, may earn credit for REL 1310 one semester and ENG 1304 during the next, but, in all cases, credit for currently existing courses needs to be worked into all proposals.
- ELGs are funded at the university level for a maximum of one year. Consequently, for fall 2013, only new ELGs will be considered for approval. ELGs that have been funded previously can continue provided that they are funded by academic departments.
- All ELGs will last a maximum of two semesters.
- We will expect that all course scheduling and budget management be administered through the departments that propose ELGs. For housing arrangements, departments will work closely with Jeff Doyle in Student Life. ELG faculty must be available during June Orientation to administer the recruitment, admissions, and advising processes that take place during this time.
- All ELGs must incorporate the New Student Experience Course Expectations described below. The university's desire with ELGs is that new students have a credit-bearing New Student Experience Course. We will require that all ELGs be taught in such a way that students who participate in ELGs will be exempt from the University/BU 1000 course.
- We expect all ELGs to incorporate 6-12 hours of required coursework. That means that one ELG might last one semester and result in 6 hours of credit, or another ELG might last two

semesters and result in 12 hours of credit. Any other option within that range is sufficient as well. Departments are expected to work closely together to manage the logistics of classroom assignments, advising, and any other matters related to the administration of the ELG.

Departments should consider what they might be able to accomplish with their own majors or with students who complete core courses through their department or a closely-related department. Alternatively, two departments that teach core courses could consider teaming up to provide students with a yearlong, integrated experience that results in their completion of 6-12 hours of required coursework.

II. Eligibility Requirements

- A. ELG faculty teams consist of one or more full-time faculty. Full-time staff with part-time faculty appointments and qualified Ph.D. students may belong to the ELG leadership team, but the team must include at least one full-time faculty member.
- B. ELG faculty teams will designate one individual to serve as the ELG director (A full-time faculty member must serve as the ELG director.)
- C. Visiting faculty and postdoctoral fellows are not eligible to participate in an ELG faculty team.

III. Proposal Format and Content

- A. The ELG project period is fall semester 2013 through spring semester 2014.
- B. Proposers may design “large” and “small” size ELGs. A large ELG should be planned to accommodate an enrollment of up to 49 students. A small ELG (which has a smaller budget) should be planned to accommodate an enrollment up to 19 students.
- C. Proposals should be single-spaced and not exceed 15 pages total.
- D. A complete proposal consists of the following:
 - **Cover Page:** Identify the ELG faculty team and the ELG title.
 - **Project Overview:** State the academic theme of the ELG and provide a brief overview of the activities that will transpire in each ELG semester. ELGs are innovative, thematic learning communities that are intentionally designed to increase student-faculty interaction and academically-oriented peer-to-peer engagement. An ELG must have a coherent, well-defined intellectual focus, as well as a number of planned activities to build community and encourage academic growth.
 - **Participants:** Provide biographical sketches (**not to exceed two pages each**) for the ELG director, core leaders, and any other key personnel. Each biographical sketch should summarize the information most pertinent to qualifications for leadership and/or instructional participation in the ELG (e.g., record of mentoring undergraduates, involving students in faculty scholarship and research, etc.).
 - **Curriculum:** Provide details about the curriculum for the ELG and specify the names and numbers of the courses that students will take each semester.

- **ELG Environment:** Describe existing academic and student life institutional programs and activities, if any, that will complement and enhance ELG activities. Be sure to explain how the ELG faculty team will interact with students and each other as part of the ELG.
- **Out-of-Class Activities:** Out-of-class activities will vary according to the theme and specific aims of each ELG, but they are a requirement for all ELGs. Describe specific out-of-class activities and discuss how each enhances student engagement, facilitates student-faculty interaction, and builds scholarly rapport among student participants.
- **Student Selection:** Indicate the target student population you hope to attract to the ELG. Briefly discuss, if applicable, any criteria for student selection in addition to substantive interest in the ELG theme (e.g., academic performance in high school, test scores, previous academic and/or service experiences).
- **Itemized Budget:** The maximum budget is \$20,000 (for a large ELG) or \$10,000 (for a small ELG), for direct costs only. Funds may be requested for the following:
 - Faculty incentives. At the discretion of ELG core leadership, such incentives may take the form of faculty supplemental pay, summer salary, funds for professional travel not related to the ELG, and/or laboratory support funds.
 - Graduate assistant stipends and/or student wages.
 - Operating expenses (materials and supplies, curriculum materials, publications, laboratory and field supplies, poster production costs, speakers, conferences, meals, etc.).
 - Travel specific to the objectives of the ELG.
 - Other expenses after specific prior approval.

Be sure to address as many of the following questions as possible in the development of your proposal:

- What will be the focus of your community and how will it enhance the learning experience?
- What courses will students complete as part of the ELG? If there is more than one course, how will these courses relate to one another?
- Who will be the ELG director and what duties will he or she perform?
- In what ways do you anticipate that faculty will be involved in the residential community where your ELG students will live?
- How will your ELG integrate the New Student Experience Course Outcomes?
- What strategies will you use to promote your ELG and ensure that it attracts enough students to be viable?
- Will your ELG last one or two semesters and why have you chosen the length you have?
- What assessments will you use to measure the effectiveness of your ELG?

- What creative learning opportunities will you provide that students would not get otherwise?
- How will your department handle the classroom scheduling and advising duties that accompany the administration of ELGs, especially during June Orientation?
- What type of support does this proposal have within the departments of the faculty who will be leading it? (On this point, be sure to include a statement of support from department chairs for all faculty who will be participate in the ELG.)
- What type of application process do you intend to implement to select students to participate in your ELG? What types of students do you want to recruit and how do you plan to do so?

IV. Review Procedures

- A. The ELG Proposal Review Team, chaired by Wes Null, will evaluate the ELG proposals for substantive merit according to the following criteria:
 1. the extent to which the ELG engages students in a thematic learning community.
 2. the extent to which the ELG focuses on an academic theme and promotes enhanced learning through substantive faculty-faculty, faculty-student, and peer-to-peer interaction.
 3. the extent to which the ELG provides students with common learning experiences.
 4. the extent to which the ELG assists students in exploring majors or in developing concentrations that complement their majors.
 5. the extent to which the proposal includes valid assessment of learning outcomes (formative and summative).
- B. Additional review criteria will include the following:
 1. the extent to which qualifications and experience of ELG core leadership and other key personnel indicate an ability to engage undergraduates in a team-taught academic environment.
 2. the extent to which the ELG uses existing resources and programs to facilitate the accomplishment of ELG goals and objectives.
 3. the extent to which the ELG shows promise to extend student benefits of participation beyond the ELG project period.
 4. the extent to which the ELG budget request and budget justification (with the exception of faculty incentives) flow from the learning objectives identified in the ELG.
 5. the extent to which the ELG will be marketable to a diverse group of incoming freshmen.

V. Award Conditions

- A. **Administration:** Administrative oversight of ELGs will be provided by the ELG program coordinator (Wes Null, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education).
- B. **ELG Activities:** ELG core leadership will be required to conduct the ELG in accordance with plans as described in the ELG proposal. Major deviation from proposed activities will require prior written approval of the ELG program coordinator.
- C. **Expenditures:** An account in the name of the ELG director will be established in TRAX (the Baylor Financial Transactions System).
- D. **Progress Reports:** ELG directors must provide progress reports to the ELG program coordinator at the end of each semester, in a format to be determined and provided by the program coordinator.
- E. **Final Report:** ELG directors will be required to provide a final report to the ELG coordinators by August 31, 2014. The format for the report will be provided by the program coordinator.
- F. **ELG Seminars:** So that other faculty can profit from lessons learned and experience gained through funded ELGs, ELG core leadership will be required to participate in brief colloquia/seminars/workshops in which they share their ELG experiences and respond to questions from interested colleagues.

VI. Submission Procedures

- A. ELG proposals are due to the ELG Proposal Review Team on **December 14, 2012, by 5:00 p.m.** All proposals should be emailed to Wesley_Null@baylor.edu.
- B. The Proposal Review Team will select and announce the winners by **January 15, 2013.**

For more information, contact:

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New Student Experience Course Expectations

A “New Student Experience” course is designed, at least in part, to help students transition to college life and make a strong connection to the Baylor community. Our overarching goals are to improve student success and retention by establishing new courses and reframing existing courses to help students actively engage in the learning process and thereby remain high-quality Baylor students. By definition, University and BU 1000 are both “New Student Experience” (NSE) courses, but other courses, such as BIC 1212, can be approved by the provost’s office to count as NSE courses. If a course for credit is New Student Experience-approved, students registered in that course are exempted from taking University or BU 1000.

For New Student Experience course approval, the instructor is expected to attend a faculty development session focused on best practices of new student education (compensation of \$200 provided), host the Friday evening Welcome week dinner with the class, and work with ELG Proposal Review Team to ensure that one of the courses taken by students in the ELG meets the expectations for New Student Experience courses.