Request for Proposals to Develop New Distance-Delivered Graduate Engineering Education Offerings

Purpose

This RFP invites proposals from College of Engineering faculty and departments that wish to develop distance-delivered graduate engineering education offerings for off-campus students. Support for proposals up to $20,000 funded under this RFP will be provided by the College of Engineering through the Department of Engineering Professional Development (EPD) to assist departments answer the following questions:

1. Is there a sufficient student population that will value the proposed degree program?
2. What resources (faculty, administrative) will be needed to implement a new degree program?
3. What funding sources are available to support implementation?

A workshop to discuss the RFP and answer questions will be held on January 31 at 12:00 pm in 1610 Engineering Hall. Proposals are due March 1, 2013.

Goal

The goal of this RFP is to provide funding and support for a department through the first two planning stages of the College of Engineering’s process to develop new distance-delivered degree programs (see Figure 1). The process ensures that new programs will enhance a department’s reputation through academic rigor, responsiveness to student needs, financial sustainability, and strategic value to the college. These offerings for non-traditional students must target an off-campus audience.

Figure 1: Process for Development of College of Engineering New Distance Degree Programs

Feasibility Analysis Tasks Funded by this RFP
At the end of these funded projects, a department, in cooperation with EPD, will have completed the following:

- Definition of the new program concept and selection of targeted student population
- Analysis of the potential student body, including testing of the draft curriculum with students and industry
- Creation of an academic plan that identifies program learning goals, courses and instructional strategy
- Completion of a faculty plan to identify faculty committed to work on program development and instruction
- Formulation of a business plan that budgets for subsequent phases of program development
- Recommendations, including identification of future funding sources, for the detailed design and implementation of the new program

Proposal Content and Selection Criteria

Proposals for development of new programs should be consistent with the College’s process for development of new distance degree programs. Proposals should note the current status relative to this process and the extent to which the requested funding will advance the proposed degree program along the depicted development process. Proposals for individual courses must demonstrate that the course is of high-level of strategic value supports broader College and department programmatic initiatives.

Proposals will be evaluated and selected based on the following criteria:

- Evidence of student demand for proposed degree/certificate or course.
- Commitment by faculty to develop curriculum and teach proposed courses.
- Willingness to adapt curriculum, course content and program format to the needs of non-traditional students or practicing engineers
- Strategic value to College of Engineering.
- Effective use of resources.

Examples of materials that support each of the selection criteria are given in Appendix A.

Proposals should include:

- A statement of the program’s goals and its alignment with departmental strategic goals
- A brief description of the target student population
- Key program learning objectives for students
- Verification of support for the proposed program by department chair and executive committee
- A brief section addressing each of the selection criteria:
  - Evidence of market demand for proposed program
  - Commitment by faculty to develop curriculum and teach proposed courses
- Willingness to adapt curriculum, course content, and program format to the needs of adult, distance practicing engineers
- Strategic value to the College of Engineering
- Effective use of resources, including a proposed budget (proposal budget should not include EPD assistance, which is funded separately)

- Work plan, consistent with College’s adopted process for developing new distance degree programs, identifying individuals’ commitment to each activity

Examples of specific tasks for the work plan are given in Appendix A.

Available Funding

The College of Engineering has established a development fund to support new online engineering graduate education offerings. Funding decisions will support the development of coordinated, cohesive and sustainable programs that are of strategic value for the College and participating departments. Proposals for new degrees and certificates may request up to $20,000 of funding under this RFP. Funding may also be available to support the development of a limited number of individual distance-delivered courses. Support for individual course development will be limited to $5,000 per proposal.

The funding provided for selected proposals will be supplemented with assistance in planning and analysis by EPD. The results of the work completed will determine whether or not a proposed degree program or certificate warrants further funding. Additional funding may be requested later if a proposed degree program demonstrates viability.

Process and Schedule

- Announcement of RFP
  - Mid January 2013
- Briefing for interested faculty and staff
  - Late January 2013
- Proposals due
  - March 1, 2013
- First-round selections announced
  - April 1, 2013
- Submittal, evaluation and selection of additional proposals
  - Ongoing, as funding allows

Contact and Submittal

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APPENDIX A

Examples of Possible Materials to Support Selection Criteria

- Preliminary evidence of market demand for proposed degree/certificate or course. What evidence exists that the proposed offering: satisfies an unmet educational need for practicing engineers, will attract a sufficient number of enrollments, and targets engineers or their employers that will pay to enroll in the proposed program?
  - Typical evidence includes industry and labor statistics, input from industrial advisory committees and research partners, benchmark success of similar programs at other institutions, and studies by academic/professional associations or education market researchers (e.g., EduVentures).
- Commitment by faculty to develop curriculum and teach proposed courses. The proposal should identify a core of faculty committed to successfully develop and deliver the proposed curriculum.
  - The team should include at least one key champion who will take the lead in advancing the program and faculty/instructors to teach most of the proposed courses.
- Willingness to adapt curriculum, course content and program format to the needs of practicing engineers. The proposed curriculum should demonstrate an understanding of the specific graduate-level needs of practicing engineers.
  - At a minimum, the proposal should clearly express a commitment to work with EPD to evaluate and modify course content and instructional strategies to ensure they meet the needs of practicing professionals (rather than assume that current on-campus courses for traditional students meet these needs). Typically this objective can be achieved through project- and problem-based learning.
- Strategic value to College of Engineering. The proposal should demonstrate strong alignment with academic and research strengths of the College, as well as with strategic goals of the College and departments.
- Effective use of resources. The proposal should demonstrate that requested resources are appropriate for the need and are applied for maximum effectiveness. Leveraging of resources through use of departmental and/or grant funding is strongly encouraged.

Examples of Workplan Tasks

Following is a description of tasks that selected proposal teams will complete as part of their workplan.

- Definition of Concept: A clear statement of the program’s goals; i.e., what does success look like from the perspectives of the Department, the College of Engineering, and program graduates? Describe the target student population (location, disciplines, current and projected job functions, required/desired years of professional experience, etc.).
  To be prepared by Department, with support by EPD.
• Feasibility Analyses, including:
  o Market Analysis
    Market test proposed degree and draft curriculum. Develop a profile of the intended market to ascertain potential sources of candidates, their funding sources, and the viability of the market over time. Assess current and projected competition. What are unique strengths of program relative to needs and competitors? Assess availability of employer support for tuition.
    To be prepared by EPD, with support from Department.
  o Academic Plan
    Identify program learning goals and competencies students can expect to gain from the program. Identify courses that comprise the program’s curriculum. For each course identify key learning objectives and instructional strategies. Address how current on-campus courses, or resources from those courses, could be adapted to fit the new degree program.
    To be prepared by Department, with support from EPD.
  o Faculty Plan
    Identify faculty committed to work as part of program development team, and/or willing to teach proposed courses. Identify unresolved needs for instructors and possible ways to address needs using UW faculty, faculty from other universities, and/or adjunct instructors.
    To be prepared by Department, with support from EPD.
  o Business Plan
    Develop budget for subsequent phases of program development. Develop budget for at least first three years of program launch, projecting enrollment, revenue, and costs. Identify any sources of funding, if any, beyond tuition revenue.
    To be prepared by EPD, with support from Department.

• Recommendation
  Based on the results of the feasibility analyses, prepare a recommendation addressing:
    o Whether the proposed degree program warrants further funding and development
    o Next steps, proposed schedule and funding for detailed planning and implementation
    To be prepared jointly by EPD and Department