Call for Participation
VCU Course Redesign Program
Fall 2018

VCU invites participation in a new campus-wide initiative to redesign large-enrollment, multi-section undergraduate courses using technology-supported active-learning strategies. The goals are to achieve improvements in student-learning outcomes and reductions in instructional costs. Learn more at https://provost.vcu.edu/engage/ncat-cfp/

Timeline

October 29, 2018	Call to Participate issued
November 15,	Faculty submit Letters of Intent
2018 January 25,	Course teams submit final proposals
2019 February 8,	Grants awarded
2019 Summer/Fall	Project planning and development
2019 Spring 2020	Course redesign pilots
Fall 2020	Course redesign full implementations
March 2022	Final project reports due

1. Letters of Intent

To ensure that we are able to provide appropriate resources for the development of proposals and implementation of course redesign, letters of intent are required by November 15, 2018. The letter of intent need only be an email with your name and department as well as the name and number of the course that you would like to redesign – send to provost@vcu.edu with a copy to your department chair.

2. Establishing Course Redesign Teams

The first step in developing a redesign plan is to form a course redesign team. Successful course redesign is the product of a team effort. It is neither a faculty project nor an administrative project nor a professional staff project. It takes *all* of those people—because it is a team effort.

Those interested in participating in the program should establish redesign teams that include the following people:

Faculty Experts
Course redesign requires that faculty experts explicitly identify a course's desired learning outcomes and agree on course content. Most courses appropriate for course redesign are typically taught by more than one faculty member. To ensure course consistency, faculty experts must work together on the redesign—resolving any differences in how the course will be offered—and must collaboratively plan the most effective way to accomplish the redesign goals.

Administrators
Because redesigns affect multiple sections, large numbers of students, and academic policies and practices, it is important that the team involve academic administrators. The level of those administrators will depend on the organization of the institution and the institution's size. For some, it will be the provost or academic vice president or designee; for others, it will be a dean or department chair. Those team members play important roles when institutional issues arise such as changes in scheduling or the use of classroom space. If unexpected issues arise in the process of redesign implementation, administrators can help the team resolve them quickly and effectively across institutional offices.

Technology Professionals
These team members provide expertise so that the redesign goals can get accomplished in ways that make the technology as easy as possible for students to use. Technology professionals contribute ideas about how to increase interaction with content as well as with other students. They also suggest design approaches that make sure the technology will not limit students' learning options.

Assessment Experts
In Chapter VII of How to Redesign a College Course Using NCAT's Methodology, NCAT sets forth straightforward methods whereby student learning in the redesigned course can be compared with student learning in the traditional course. But it's useful to include on the team a member who is knowledgeable about assessment and research design—especially if the institution seeks to measure additional facets of the redesign such as performance in downstream courses or student satisfaction. Such expertise may be found in a department of psychology or a department of education or in offices of institutional research.

Instructional Designers
If your campus is fortunate enough to have instructional designers on staff, you may wish to add one to the team. An instructional designer can help guide the re-sequencing of instruction and provide insight into learning theory and modularization. Subject matter experts are not always learning experts, and such guidance can be crucial.

3. Identifying the Course

Some courses may be more ready than others to be the focus of a large-scale redesign effort. Because of prior experiences with technology-mediated teaching and learning and because of numerous attitudinal factors, some faculty members may be more ready to engage in large-scale redesign efforts to achieve the program's goals.

1. Course Choice
Choosing the right course is the first step in a successful course redesign project. Courses that face academic or resource problems or both are the best targets. What impact will redesigning the course have on the curriculum, on students, and on the institution; that is, why do you want to redesign this course? Please be specific by providing data on pass rates, enrollment numbers, and so on.

Is there an academic problem in this course such as a high failure rate? Does the course face a resource problem such as how to meet increased enrollment demand with no commensurate increase in resources?

2. Redesign Model
When you develop your redesign plan, you will be asked to select a redesign model. Please read Chapter III of How to Redesign a College Course Using NCAT's Methodology, which describes six possible models. At this point in the planning process, which redesign model do you think would be most appropriate for your redesign? Why?

3. Assessment Plan
When you develop your redesign plan, you will be asked to select an assessment model. Please read Chapter VII of How to Redesign a College Course Using NCAT's Methodology, which describes four possible models. At this point in the planning process, which assessment model do you think would be most appropriate for your redesign? Why?

4. Cost Savings Plan
When you develop your redesign plan, you will be asked to select a cost reduction strategy. Please read Chapter V of How to Redesign a College Course Using NCAT's Methodology, which describes a number of strategies for producing cost savings. At this point in the planning process, which cost savings strategy do you think would be most appropriate for your redesign? Why?

5. Learning Materials
Successful course redesign that improves student learning while reducing instructional costs is heavily dependent on high-quality, interactive learning materials. Today's commercial marketplace offers many reasonably priced materials that meet that requirement. NCAT has worked with more than 200 redesign projects that have

considered, used, and continue to rely on such materials. Are participating faculty members able and willing to incorporate existing curricular materials in order to focus work on redesign issues rather than materials creation? What learning materials are you thinking about using in your redesign? Teams are encouraged to consider and evaluate Open Educational Resources (OER) and seek assistance from VCU OER Library consultants. The point of contact for OER at VCU is Hillary Miller, https://www.library.vcu.edu/about/staff/miller-hillary.html.

6. Active Learning
Greater student engagement with course content and with one another, supported by information technology, is essential to achieving student success. Do the course faculty members have an understanding of and some experience with integrating elements of computer-based instruction into existing courses to support active learning?

7. Collective Commitment
A collective commitment is a key factor for the success and the sustainability of redesign projects. As part of the planning process, you have been asked to form a course redesign team. Please describe the members of your team, the skills they bring to the project and what their roles will be in both the planning and implementation phases of the project. Please read Chapter XIV of How to Redesign a College Course Using NCAT's Methodology, which discusses how to achieve initial and ongoing consensus among faculty, campus offices, and senior administrators.

4. Develop a Course Redesign
Teams are encouraged to establish regular meetings and request assistance as needed from the Office of the Provost. VCU has retained Dr. Carolyn Jarmon to assist teams during the course redesign development phase. Dr. Jarmon is willing to conduct virtual meetings with design teams. In addition, the VCU Office of the Provost is willing to bring Dr. Jarmon back to campus to assist course redesign teams with proposal development.

5. Submit a Course Redesign Proposal to the VCU Office of the Provost

Each final plan must contain the following documents:

A. **Cover letter** containing the following information:
  • List all team members by name and include title, academic affiliation, phone number, and e-mail address for each one.

  • Identify the person who is the primary contact for your team project, with the understanding that the primary contact will distribute communications appropriately with the rest of your team.

B. **Pilot and Final Project Plans**
In no more than 10 pages (single-spaced), teams must address the following:

- Course choice
- Redesign model
- Assessment plan
- Cost savings plan
- Learning materials
- Active learning

C. **Detailed Budget**

D. **Letter of Support from Department Chair**/Director/Program Coordinator (if role exists)

E. **Letter of Support from Dean/**Vice Provost

THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION IS January 25, 2019. Proposal packets should be submitted electronically to Gypsy Denzine, Ph.D., Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs (gmdenzine@vcu.edu)

Projects will be selected to participate in the program by February 8, 2019 so that teams can begin work in late summer.

6. Selection Criteria
- Large-enrollment courses may be courses with very large sections (e.g., traditional lecture courses) or courses that offer large numbers of smaller sections. In all cases, more than one person should be involved in teaching the course.
- The course selected for redesign should be facing an academic problem (e.g., low successful completion rates), a resource problem (e.g., inability to meet demand based on current resources), or a combination of both.
- The course selected for redesign must be at the undergraduate level.
- Participants must be fully committed to completely redesigning and delivering a large-enrollment course currently offered at VCU.
- The full implementation of the course redesign must include all sections of the course.
- The course redesign must include a pilot phase during the spring 2020 term and collect data on comparative student-learning outcomes between traditional sections and redesigned sections. Pilot implementations should involve a substantial percentage of students enrolled in the course in order to test the efficacy of the redesign. Pilots do not have to involve all students and sections but should be designed such that they can scale to all sections if successful.

This information was adapted from resources provided by the National Center for Academic Transformation. For questions and/or additional information, please email provost@vcu.edu