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College Procedure: 703.1 – Innovation Fund

Policy Reference:	703 – IE Operational
Responsible Department:	Institutional Effectiveness
Approval Authority:	Cabinet
Procedure Owner:	Vice President, Human Resources and Institutional Effectiveness
Effective Date:	09/30/2021
Version Number:	1
Legal Counsel Reviewed (yes/no):	No
Scope:	College-wide

Reason for Procedure

The Kirkwood Community College Innovation Fund enhances Kirkwood's strategic plan by encouraging innovation. The Innovation Fund is designed to encourage and fund creativity, ingenuity, and new ideas that have potential to benefit at least one component of Kirkwood's Learner Success Blueprint, including learner success, student experience, employee development, community impact, or operational excellence. The following describes the Innovation Fund and documents the procedure to manage the Fund.

The Procedure

The Innovation Fund provides financial support in two ways; (1) funding one to three-year implementation projects that investigate and implement innovative ideas initiated by faculty or staff; and (2) funding one-time exploration projects for faculty or staff members to research or explore whether an idea is feasible before implementation.

The annual fund allotment is $400,000 and can be divided among multiple proposals or awarded to one proposal. Unused funds from any fiscal year will be rolled into the fund for subsequent fiscal years. Cabinet has final authority to decide how the funds will be allocated.

Definitions and Roles:

Applicant is the individual faculty or staff member submitting an Innovation Fund proposal.

Project Lead is the individual faculty or staff member responsible for leading an implementation or exploration project. The applicant and the project lead should be the same person.

An **Implementation Project** investigates and puts into practice an innovative idea, which will be evaluated for success based on measurable outcomes established in the proposal. An Implementation Project can be funded over a one to three-year period.

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An **Exploration Project** researches or explores whether a certain innovative idea is feasible before actual implementation. An Exploration Project is funded on a one-time basis.

The **Innovation Fund Committee** includes representatives from Institutional Effectiveness, Faculty (KFA), Academic Affairs, Continuing Education/Training Services, Student Services, Kirkwood Staff Association, and Human Resources. Additional ad hoc members may be added at the direction of cabinet. The committee has the responsibility to apply the Innovation Fund Rubric to score proposals and recommended proposals for Cabinet review.

Institutional Effectiveness (IE) will administer the application and review process and steer the Innovation Fund Committee. IE has the responsibility to work with the applicant to assist with the application process and to provide data needed to support the proposal.

The President and Cabinet evaluate the proposals recommended by the Innovation Fund Committee and approve or deny funding.

Positive Impact is an innovation that enhances or benefits students, employees, community partners, or enhances operational excellence and is aligned with the mission, vision, and values of the College.

Innovative refers to a fresh, new, creative approach in terms of materials, process, or activities that adds value to or enhances one or more of the components of the Learner Success Framework.

Funding Information

The Innovation Fund has an annual budget of $400,000.00. The final fund allocation will be determined by Cabinet. Cabinet can allocate all the funds, or a portion of the funds, to one or more proposals. Exploration proposals approved in the past that exhibit successful outcomes and that need further funding will be reviewed for sustainability and moved to the general fund for ongoing funding. Innovation Funds not allocated in any one year will roll over to the following year.

Eligibility

Any faculty and staff member may submit a proposal. More than one proposal may be submitted per individual provided that each proposal is distinct. To promote creative thinking no proposal is off limits. However, a proposal must have the potential for a positive impact on at least one area of the Learners Success Blueprint: learner success, student experience, employee development, community impact, and operational excellence. The proposals must all provide an innovative way to fulfill one or more parts of the College's mission:

"Kirkwood Community College identifies community needs; provides accessible, quality education and training; and promotes opportunities for lifelong learning."

Applicants are required to consult with their department leadership team and with colleagues around the College to understand the College-wide impact of the proposal and to understand the collaboration that may be needed to successfully complete the project. Proposals do not need to be approved by a

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Cabinet member prior to submission. Institutional Effectiveness can help communicate the proposal with department leadership as well as with other affected departments.

Proposal Submission

All proposals must be submitted by the due date published on the Innovation Fund webpage by 11:59 PM CT.

All sections of the application must be completed, including the Action Plan Template and the Budget Spreadsheet. The budget spreadsheet should include any expenses for the project and reflect the total commitment of dollars throughout the entire project shown in the year the expenses will be incurred. The committee is aware that resource time may be a barrier. Applicants are encouraged to discuss with their supervisors the potential need for release time and/or time away from their current responsibilities should their proposal be approved

Proposal Scoring Rubric

The following criteria are components of the rubric used to score each proposal. For the proposal to be recommended for Cabinet review, a minimum cut score, determined annually based on number of submissions and dollars available, must be met or surpassed. Please see the rubric for specific scoring criteria.

- Impact on the Learner Success Blueprint
- Impact on mission, institutional-level KPIs, and student learning objectives
- Innovation
- Action plan steps and timeline
- Measurable objectives/outcomes
- Assessment of objectives/outcomes
- Economic sustainability
- Plan for dissemination of results
- Potential for growth/scalability
- Collaboration across the college
- Exploration of alternate funding sources
- Development of project budget

Innovation Fund Committee

The cross-departmental Innovation Fund Steering Committee's responsibility is to evaluate each proposal based on the Innovation Fund Rubric and recommend proposals for Cabinet review.

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Cabinet

Kirkwood's Cabinet has the responsibility for approving or denying funding for a proposal. Cabinet will approve proposals, allocate appropriate funding, and review the projects' outcomes annually to determine further funding. Cabinet also has the responsibility to review approved projects coming to the end of their life to determine institutional sustainability. Cabinet has the authority to determine Innovation Fund dollars budgeted and subsequent distribution. Cabinet's decision will be based on a majority vote and in the event of a tie the President will cast the deciding vote.

Project Reviews

Quarterly - Budget vs. Actual reports are proved by Finance for each Innovation Fund project. IE and the project lead for each project have access to the reports which are located on KIN in the Budget section of the Financial Portal. IE reviews budget vs. actual expenditures and discusses any concerns with the project lead. IE will escalate any concerns with project progress or budgets to the appropriate cabinet member.

Annually – IE requests that project leads provide a general statement of progress. Included in that statement are a review of actual progress vs. the original action plan, progress on meeting objectives outlined in the original proposal, a more detailed budget vs. actual expenditure review, and an outlook for success of the project based on the funding available through project end and beyond (sustainability).

Annual Presentation to Cabinet – IE presents to cabinet a summarized version of each project's annual review. Cabinet has the ability to request additional information if they feel adequate progress is not being made. Cabinet will approve continued funding of the project at the original level, or they may choose to halt funding additional project work until more information is provided or a revised plan is presented by the project lead.

IE Feedback to Project Leads – IE provides feedback to each project lead based on the annual cabinet review. Additional discussion should continue to ensure cabinet, IE, and project leads are in alignment.

References

Innovation Fund Process Flowchart
https://kin.kirkwood.edu/depts/deptinef/IE%20Shared%20NEW/Innovation%20Fund/2021%20Documentation 2021%20Innovation%20Fund%20Flow%20Chart.v2.pdf

Innovation Fund Timeline
https://kin.kirkwood.edu/depts/deptinef/IE%20Shared%20NEW/Innovation%20Fund/Timeline%202022.vsdx

Innovation Fund Scoring Rubric
https://kin.kirkwood.edu/depts/deptinef/IE%20Shared%20NEW/Innovation%20Fund/2021%20Documentation 2021%20Innovation%20Fund%20Rubric.docx

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Innovation Fund Application
https://kin.kirkwood.edu/depts/deptinef/IE%20Shared%20NEW/Innovation%20Fund/2021%20Documentation 2021%20Innovation%20Fund%20Application.docx

Revision Log

Table 1 Revision Log

Version Number	Date Approved	Approved by	Description of Change
1	09/30/2021	Cabinet	New procedure