Bringing Theory to Practice Project

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
2015-2017

The Bringing Theory to Practice Project (BTtoP) requests proposals from campuses for funding to pursue initiatives in the following two categories:

Category I: Well-Being Seminar Grants
Well-Being Seminar Grants (up to $1,000) to provide support for campus-wide planning discussions (seminars) that give focused attention to a particular dimension of the well-being of those involved (students, faculty, or other leaders) in creating and maintaining an engaged culture for learning. Seminars should deepen participants’ understanding of the institution’s commitment to whole-person development and the learning-related policies and practices, both inside and outside the curriculum, that support such endeavors.

Category II: Well-Being Research Project Grants
Well-Being Research Project Grants (up to $10,000, plus institutional matching) to implement and assess a campus-based two-year research project that gives focused attention to the well-being of students, particularly those traditionally underserved by higher education. Projects should, through the gathering of evidence, provide justification for best practices for deepening and sustaining the institution’s commitment to whole-person development.

*Bringing Theory to Practice is an independent national initiative operating in partnership with the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and supported by the S. Engelhard Center with funding from The Charles Engelhard Foundation, The Endeavor Foundation, The Spencer Foundation, and other foundations and individuals.*
BTtoP History and Background

Founded in 2003, Bringing Theory to Practice (BTtoP) encourages and supports colleges and universities in reaffirming their core purposes and in developing sustainable campus cultures to support the advancement of higher learning and discovery, the well-being of the whole student, and higher education's mission as a public good to deepen and sustain the civic society.

BTtoP is a supportive ally and resource to institutions of all types as they craft their own campus culture for learning—one that promises and delivers a context in which students can have liberating and transforming experiences that are valuable in themselves and in their practice. Since 2003, BTtoP has awarded over 460 grants at varying levels to hundreds of diverse colleges and universities.

BTtoP’s Work in 2015-2017

BTtoP’s work in 2015-2017 will feature attention to how campuses can proactively support and improve their institutional commitment to advance well-being as an essential aim of the campus’s culture and its opportunities for engaged learning. In addition to support extended through this RFP, BTtoP intends to address this aim through three other areas of project activity: outreach, conferences, workshops, and research.

❖ Outreach to Campuses and Beyond
Through the 2015-2017 RFP, BTtoP continues to cast seeds of support that allow well-being initiatives to take root on campuses nationwide. This approach will be complimented by BTtoP’s participation in the crafting and promulgation of a national well-being agenda. That agenda could become the banner under which institutions can champion their own work, as well as help usher changes in public expectations.

❖ Conferences and Workshops
One of BTtoP’s key strengths has been its ability to bring together diverse campus constituencies to share with and learn from each other, whether it is with and from colleagues on a campus or with others across multiple campuses. During 2015-2017, BTtoP plans to feature the work of campus grantees at annual conferences and to host small, one-day “scholar conferences” for sharing insights in the field and previewing material for publication and research agendas.

❖ Research and Publications
BTtoP continues to support research projects by synthesizing their data and widely communicating what has been learned. BTtoP is committed to documenting and sharing the outcomes of the many grants that will be funded during 2015-2017, as well as outcomes from conferences and workshops. In addition, original BTtoP publications (modeled on the success of BTtoP’s The Civic Series) will contain both theory and evidence-based best practices.
Request for Proposals, 2015-2017

For the 2015-2017 round of support, BTtoP is requesting proposals that address either of the two emphases described below. Addressing these emphases is possible for an institution at any stage of consideration of the meaning, provision, or assessment of the well-being of students, faculty, and professional staff. We do anticipate, however, that many proposals will be coming from campuses that have already made institutional commitments to promoting well-being. Therefore, BTtoP will give primary consideration to proposals that aim to support existing campus efforts to go more deeply into one of the following emphases:

1. **The connections of learning opportunities (both inside and outside the classroom, including civic experiences) to the well-being of students, particularly those historically underserved by higher education (e.g., first-generation, under-represented minority, low-income, and transfer students).** [Applicants may define for themselves the students who have been historically or are currently underserved on their campus.]

2. **The connection of policies and practices that support the well-being of faculty and staff, including the effectiveness of such practices, implications for professional identity, and ability to influence a campus culture of engagement and whole-person development.**

BTtoP has special interest in supporting proposals in which diverse campus constituencies and representatives have fully participated in the planning and proposed implementation of the Well-Being Seminar or Well-Being Research Project. Preference will be given to proposals that are explicit in plan and strategy and that have assessable and sustainable campus objectives.

Successful proposals will exhibit familiarity with [Resource Materials](#) available on BTtoP’s website, which include research studies based on funded projects, essays that provoke possible direction and substance for a proposal, and background materials from BTtoP’s well-being discussions, planning sessions, and national panels.
Categories of Funding

Category I: Well-Being Seminar Grants
Grant Amount: $1,000
Matching Support Required: No
Project Completion Deadline: Six months following award
Interim Report Required: No
Final Report Required: Yes

Well-Being Seminar Grants are available for institutions to bring together diverse members of the campus community for a one-day (or series of days) facilitated conversation or “seminar.” Ideally, seminars will result in actions that lead to further analysis and greater manifestations of the facilitation of opportunities linking learning to well-being. The BTtoP website includes information that might prove useful in proposing and planning a well-being seminar, including an adaptable format, illustrative questions, and a reporting process that may produce a national sharing of ideas and actions that could be used by institutions of all types.

Requirements for Proposals
Well-Being Seminar Grant proposals will be expected to include the following three components and should not exceed four pages in entirety:

- Name and contact information of the primary contact person (PI) and the name of the seminar host/facilitator. Proposed date(s) of seminar. Amount of funds requested (see budget requirements below).
- Proposal Narrative – organized to reflect the following categories:
  - Purpose of the seminar
  - Participants by campus area and rationale for their selection
  - Facilitation process and proposed initial guiding questions that reflect the context and culture of the institution
  - Anticipated outcomes and subsequent action steps
  - Evaluation and reporting plans (see requirements below; additional evaluation is always encouraged)
- Budget (see requirements below)

Evaluation, Dissemination, and Reporting
Well-Being Seminar Grant recipients should follow the reporting guidelines provided on BTtoP’s website and must submit their final report no later than 60 days after the completion of the seminar. As a shared contribution to institutional practices and a national learning community, reports will be made publically available on the BTtoP website, may be used for BTtoP’s own internal research purposes, and may be cited in publications in order to advance discussions and developments on other campuses.
Budget
A very brief budget narrative should include the amount requested and briefly describe the proposed expenditures. Seminar Grants do not require institutional matching. Funding is not available for honoraria or salaries.

*BTtoP may consider well-being seminar grant proposals up to $3,000 for applications involving consortia institutions to offer inter-connected seminars held over the course of the academic year. BTtoP defines consortia as organized collections of institutions, rather than a single college or university.

Examples of Potential Seminars
- A campus seminar regarding initial or early campus-wide discussions of the connections of engaged learning and well-being. This seminar could focus on what particular learning opportunities (service-learning, action based research experiences, study-abroad, etc.) are associated with specific manifestations of well-being (for example purposefulness, self-identity, or persistence). Consideration would be given to how these opportunities could be made more available and their effectiveness examined.
- A research-oriented campus seminar focusing on existing and/or needed evidence related to the well-being of students, particularly traditionally underserved populations. Faculty, student affairs professionals, and Institutional Research staff could then develop a strategy to advance various dimensions of student well-being, and how such dimensions are relevant to the success of underserved students on campus.
- A seminar that strategically examines the understanding and valuing of faculty well-being. A seminar might consider: What determines faculty identity and well-being? Are faculty prepared to be fully engaged? What steps could maximize the connections of faculty well-being to their multiple forms of engagement? This seminar may consider how institutional resources and expectations could be used to enhance faculty well-being.
- Consortia seminars could bring together teams of institutional leadership from across campuses or national associations for a collective discussion of engaged learning and well-being pertaining to one of the two areas of funding emphasis identified above.

Proposal Submission Guidelines
Proposals must be submitted by September 15, 2015 for a seminar to be offered during the fall of the 2015-2016 academic year and by January 15, 2016 for a seminar to be offered during the spring of that academic year. Awards are announced two-four weeks after each deadline.

Applicants are required to submit proposals via the online submission form and to send a copy of the online submission confirmation with one complete hard copy proposal to: Bringing Theory to Practice, 1818 R Street NW, Washington, DC 20009.
Category II: Well-Being Research Project Grants

Grant Amount: up to $10,000
Matching Support Required: Yes
Proposal Submission Deadline: August 1, 2015
Project Completion Deadline: December 31, 2017
Interim Report Required: Yes
Final Report Required: Yes

Well-Being Research Project Grants are available for institutions to design, implement, and assess a well-defined, campus-based, two-year project that gives focused attention to the well-being of students, particularly those traditionally underserved by higher education. Through the project’s implementation, a campus will document and provide justification for sustaining in practice and in priorities how such attention advances the institution’s commitment to engaged learning and whole-person development.

Proposals should address how to examine the efficacy of an existing or newly implemented program that connects engaged learning opportunities and the well-being of students, particularly underserved students (as defined on page three.) For example, proposals might consider: What affects resilience, self-esteem, or sense of purpose for a particular group of underserved students? What affects students’ confidence in learning or in life or their sense of belonging at the institution? What specific learning opportunities lead to a greater sense of purposefulness, persistence through risk and challenge, and overall sense of flourishing in the short and long term among students of various backgrounds or levels of risk?

Ideally, what emerges from the Well-Being Research Project Grant will be sustainable and attendant to the reallocation of institutional resources, rather than dependent upon new funding streams.

Requirements for Proposals

Well-Being Research Project Grants proposals will be expected to include the following three components and should not exceed eight pages in entirety:

- Name and contact information of the primary contact person (PI). Dates and timeline of implementation. Amount of funds requested (see budget requirements below).
- Proposal Narrative—organized in the following categories:
  o Purpose of and rationale for the project
  o Participants by campus area and rationale for their selection
  o Facilitation process and proposed initial guiding questions that reflect the context and culture of the institution
  o Anticipated outcomes and subsequent action steps. A logic model outline or its equivalent is expected
  o How the proposed work will link the research objectives to advancing the larger campus strategy of attending to well-being as a core purpose
  o Evaluation and reporting information (see requirements below; additional evaluation is always encouraged)
- Budget (see requirements below)
Evaluation, Dissemination, and Reporting

Applicants should clearly indicate the project’s anticipated outcomes and the methods by which these outcomes will be assessed. Successful proposals will have included a completed logic model (see template on BTtoP website) that clearly details the project’s vision, intended outcomes, expected outputs, planned activities, and available resources. Research projects should consider a mixed-methods approach for evidence collection (e.g. existing campus data, individual interviews, focus groups, student reflections, and surveys.) The BTtoP website includes a BTtoP Toolkit Instrument and other assessment resources available for download in the “Assessment Tools” section.

Proposals should include plans for communicating the project’s findings to the campus community (e.g., constituent group convenings, presentations to key stakeholders, reports in faculty newspapers, etc.) and next steps to sustain successful outcomes. Grantees will also be expected to participate and present their findings in the BTtoP Newsletter, and at gatherings hosted by BTtoP during 2015-2017 that will provide opportunities for sharing work and learning from other grantees. Moreover, grantees will also be expected to participate in efforts to broaden the audience for its work beyond the institution and beyond “the academy” to the greater public. Results may also be included in published studies and other relevant professional outlets.

Grant recipients will assess and report on their progress midway through the project by submitting an Interim Report one year into implementation and by submitting a Final Report no later than 60 days following the completion of the grant project. Recipients will use the reporting templates provided by BTtoP.

A webinar will be offered on April 29, 2015 at 2:00 pm EST to provide guidance on crafting research questions, developing logic models, and defining outcomes. More information, including instructions, will be posted on BTtoP’s Funding Opportunities page.

Budget

Well-Being Research Project Grant proposals must include an itemized budget with both the amount requested and other sources of institutional support. A budget narrative is expected to describe and justify the proposed expenditures by category and sub-category and include information on the relationship of budgeted costs to project activities.

Well-Being Research Project Grants require 1:1 institutional matching, which must include at least 50% cash matching; the remaining 50% of the match may be in-kind. BTtoP favors projects for which budgets provide a balanced distribution of grant funds across categories and that are especially attentive to programmatic expenses. BTtoP does not fund endowment or development campaigns or separate budget line items considered to be “indirect” or “overhead” costs. For information on how BTtoP defines these costs, see our Grant Applicant Frequently Asked Questions.

Proposal Submission

Research Project proposals must be submitted by August 1, 2015 and, if granted, be implemented by December 31, 2017. Awards will be announced six-eight weeks after the application deadline. Applicants are required to submit proposals via the online submission form and to send a copy of the online submission confirmation with one complete hard copy proposal to: Bringing Theory to Practice, 1818 R Street NW, Washington, DC 20009.
Checklist for Successful Proposals

BTtoP Core Elements
- Does the proposal address the stated objectives and emphases of BTtoP for this round of grant support?
- Does the proposal reflect awareness and consideration of the multiple materials, background, and examples provided in the BTtoP RFP Supporting Materials (see link below)?

Institutional Commitment
- Does the project intend to build institutional commitment and capacity for sustainability in the long term?
- Does the project demonstrate strong institutional commitment by senior leadership that includes the president and vice presidents for academic affairs and student affairs, in addition to faculty and students?

Quality and Sustainability
- Does the project have a qualified person and core group with potential to represent key campus constituencies, formulate strategy, and provide leadership?
- Does the project have potential to increase student and faculty involvement in crafting a campus culture that integrates learning inside and outside the classroom?
- Does the institution have a project team that represents relevant campus constituencies and has the potential to strengthen the implementation and sustainability of the initiative?

Evaluation
- Does the institution have the capacity for evaluation, including the ability to gather empirical data, assesses outcomes, and answer specific evaluative questions?
- Will the project evaluate and disseminate findings to individuals and institutions in a systematic fashion?
- Will the project express and explain the significance of its work to audiences both within and beyond the campus, building awareness of the full purposes of the institution and of higher education?

Resources
- [BTtoP Glossary](#)
- [RFP Supporting Materials](#)
- [Grant Proposal Frequently Asked Questions](#)