

Center for the Study of Community Colleges

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2017 CALL FOR PROPOSALS

THE CENTER Grants for Innovative Research on Community Colleges

Letter of Intent Deadline: Friday, September 29, 2017

Full Proposal Deadline: Friday, January 12, 2018

THE CENTER Grants for Innovative Research on Community Colleges are annually awarded by the Center for the Study of Community Colleges (The Center) to one or more members of the Council for the Study of Community Colleges. The purpose of these grants is to engender and support innovative, valid, and reproducible research that has direct application to community college policy and/or practice. Specific guidelines or themes may be introduced each year.

THE CENTER Grants for Innovative Research on Community Colleges will range from \$500 to \$10,000 depending on the annual number and quality of proposals and their associated budgetary requirements.

All applicants must be current members of the Council for the Study of Community Colleges (CSCC) at the time of submission. Applicants may apply for both a CSCC Research Grant and a CENTER Grant in the same year.

Two major changes have been implemented for 2017 and future CENTER Grants:

1. Beginning in 2017, proposals will be evaluated in a two-step process. Letters of Intent are due by Friday, September 29, 2017. The Center board will notify those applicants invited to submit a full proposal no later than November 1, 2017. Full proposals are due by Friday, January 12, 2018.
2. Beginning in 2017, all proposals for a CENTER Grant must adhere to one or more published research strands. The strands for 2017 are:
 - Community college contributions to the greater good
 - Public policy affecting community colleges
 - Community college student persistence and completion

Information about the 2017 Research Strands:

In 2017, the Center for the Study of Community Colleges aims to support research in 3 primary areas: community college contributions to the greater good; public policy affecting community colleges; and student persistence and completion. These topics are intentionally broad, and both qualitative and quantitative analyses—as well as empirically-grounded essays meant for broader public consumption—will be considered. However, all research questions must directly address issues related to the theme.

Possible research questions may include (but are not limited to):

Community College Work for the Greater Good

- What would happen to a community if its community college closed? What would be the effects on local businesses, students, high schools, other postsecondary institutions, and so forth?
- What role do (or can) community colleges play in legislative discussions or broader conversations about the overall purposes of higher education? What benefits may community colleges accrue by participating in these conversations? What might they have to lose?
- What is the value to society (in monetary or other terms) of increasing the percentage of a population with a workforce certificate or associate degree?
- How are community colleges reacting to new political realities? In what ways might they stand for democracy and equality in a society where these values are contested?
- Has a politicization of community college governing boards shifted the ways in which trustees and the colleges they govern work for the public good, institutional good, and/or individual good? If so, how?

Public Policy Affecting Community Colleges

- In what ways are major public policy initiatives (at a federal or statewide level) affecting community colleges? How are the colleges responding, and how do these actions affect student enrollment and/or success?
- How might a given proposed or newly implemented public policy initiative affect community colleges (in terms of student enrollment or completion, college finances, facilities, teaching, etc.)?
- In what ways might community colleges more effectively work to shape public policy in order to protect and grow their institutions? What policy areas might be targeted?

Student Persistence and Completion

- What academic programs, student support initiatives, and/or activities demonstrate a quantifiable positive effect on student persistence and completion? How might these programs, initiatives, or activities vary among different racial, ethnic, or gender groups?
- How have (or might) programs or support initiatives shown to positively impact student persistence and retention be effectively brought to scale? Can the same results be expected at a larger group of institutions (or among many more students)?
- What role does effective academic advising play in improving student persistence and completion? In what ways are specific advising expenditure patterns, best practices, advisor-student ratios, and/or approaches to advising (e.g., intrusive advising) associated with student progress and success?

Cover Page (to be submitted with Letter of Intent *and* Full Proposal)

Title of Project:

Principal Investigator:

Name:

Title:

Institution:

Mailing Address:

Email Address:

Telephone:

Other Investigators:

Name:

Title:

Institution:

Mailing Address:

Email Address:

Telephone:

Amount Requested (check one; please note that funds may not be applied to tuition, fees, or overhead):

- \$500 - \$2,500
- \$2,501 - \$5,000
- \$5,001 - \$7,500
- \$7,501 - \$10,000

Project Summary (200 words maximum):

Signature (Principal Investigator)

Date

Letter of Intent (LOI)

In no more than 5 double-spaced pages (excluding cover page and references), please provide a short description of the proposed project that answers the following questions:

- A. *Why is this work worth doing?* Describe the project by clearly articulating the importance of the proposed research, the research strand(s) to which it pertains, and your thoughts about why it should be undertaken. Your description should include the major research questions and a clear answer to the “so what?” question. Be sure to situate your research questions within the extant literature, identify the new knowledge you expect to gain, and describe how you plan to utilize it to inform practice and/or policy.
- B. *How will you accomplish it?* Using lay language, provide an overview of the methods you plan to use to answer your research questions, clearly specifying the sources of data, samples, instruments, and types of analyses you will employ. (If you are proposing a more conceptual exploration of a topic meant for broader public consumption, please describe how you will draw on existing empirical work to ground your essay). Linking your research questions and research design should be a clearly articulated conceptual framework.

Note: The Center recognizes that 5 pages is very little space to provide detailed answers to the above questions. However, we believe that this format provides researchers with a chance to focus on the heart of their research questions and their importance to community college policy, practice, and scholarship.

Requirements and Guidelines for Submitting a Letter of Intent

1. Submit one electronic, signed copy of the Cover Page ([PDF](#)), as well as one electronic copy of the Letter of Intent ([Word](#)) by Midnight (EST), Friday, September 29, 2017 to Dr. Carrie B. Kisker, Center for the Study of Community Colleges (carrie@kiskeredconsulting.com).

Please ensure that the Cover Page is in a separate file from the LOI to allow for blind review, and that the project title is clearly identified on page 1 of the LOI.

2. LOIs will be evaluated by Center board members, including the two ex-officio members (CSCC President and Past-President).
3. Evaluation criteria include:
 - Research design and questions that take on broad issues of importance to community colleges and to society at large
 - Unique or innovative contribution to a 2017 research strand and/or related policy or practice
 - Clearly articulated connections between conceptual framework, literature, and research design
 - Feasibility of carrying out the proposed research
 - Potential for the project to contribute to the professional body of knowledge about community colleges
4. Carrie B. Kisker, representing the Center board, will notify those applicants invited to submit a Full Proposal by November 1, 2017.

Full Proposal

In no more than 10 double-spaced pages (excluding cover page, budget, and references), please provide a detailed description of the proposed project that includes the following:

- A. Purpose of investigation and significance for research, policy, and/or practice
- B. Connection to research strand (community colleges for the public good; public policy affecting community colleges; and/or student persistence and completion)
- C. Research objectives and questions
- D. Relevance of the investigation to existing literature
- E. Detailed research methodology
- F. Potential implications for community college research, policy, and/or practice
- G. Plans for utilizing findings to improve community college policy and/or practice
- H. Project timeline (including expected dates of investigation, analyses, and dissemination)
- I. Human Subjects approval required (if so, please provide current status and/or expected dates of IRB application/approval)

Budget (not less than \$500 or more than \$10,000)

Please provide a brief rationale for how funds requested within each category are necessary to accomplish project objectives.

CATEGORY	RATIONALE	AMOUNT
Personnel (researcher compensation, graduate and/or administrative assistants, etc.; specify amounts for each. Please note that funds may not be utilized to pay graduate school tuition or fees.)	(If requesting researcher compensation, clearly articulate why it is necessary.)	
Contract Services (including transcription)		
Materials/Supplies (including software licenses)		
Travel (for research and/or dissemination of results to policymakers/practitioners; specify amounts for each.)		
Postage		
Other (please specify)		
TOTAL		

If the project will also be supported through other funds, please indicate this in a short narrative statement and explain how the funding sources will complement one another.

Note: Due to the relatively small amounts of CENTER Grants, no overhead charges will be allowed.

Requirements and Guidelines for Submitting a Full Proposal

1. All applicants must be current members of the Council for the Study of Community Colleges (CSCC) at the time of submission.
2. Submit one electronic, signed copy of the Cover Page ([PDF](#)), as well as one electronic copy of the Proposal and Budget ([Word](#)) by Midnight (EST), Friday, January 12, 2018 to Dr. Carrie B. Kisker, Center for the Study of Community Colleges (carrie@kiskeredconsulting.com).

Please ensure that the Cover Page and Human Subjects Approval/IRB Paperwork are in separate files from the Proposal and Budget to allow for blind review, and that the project title is clearly identified on page 1 of the Proposal.

3. Proposals will be evaluated by Center board members, including the two ex-officio members (CSCC President and Past-President).
4. Evaluation criteria include:
 - Research design and questions that take on broad issues of importance to community colleges and to society at large.
 - Unique or innovative contribution to a 2017 research strand and/or related policy or practice
 - Innovative methodological and/or conceptual approaches to research on community colleges.
 - Proposal quality, including:
 - Clarity of information
 - Demonstrated knowledge of relevant and recent literature
 - Appropriateness of research methodology
 - Adequate details of research methods and procedures
 - Feasibility of the timetable
 - Adequacy of budget to support personnel costs and research expenses.
 - Clear, concise writing style that can effectively communicate the purpose and results of the project to both lay and scholarly audiences.
 - Potential for the project to contribute to the professional body of knowledge about community colleges.
 - Concrete ideas for how research findings might be utilized to improve community college policy and/or practice (grant dollars may be utilized for this purpose).
5. Carrie B. Kisker, representing the Center board, will notify award recipient(s) by early March 2018 and will arrange for payment at the annual CSCC meeting in April 2018.
6. CENTER Grant recipients are required to:
 - Submit a copy of their institution's human subjects approval letter, if applicable.
 - Acknowledge support from the Center in publications that result from the funded research project.
 - Provide Carrie B. Kisker with a copy of the resulting research report, draft manuscript, or publication that is based on the funded research project. This must be submitted within two years of receipt of the CENTER Grant. This document will be maintained as a permanent record of CENTER Grants and may be posted on the Center's website (www.centerforcommunitycolleges.org).
 - Present findings of the research project at either the 2019 or 2020 CSCC annual conferences.