TEG Learning Communities FY 2020/2021
Call for Proposals

I. Purpose
Teaching Enhancement Grants (TEG) provide financial support for scholarly work with the aim to improve the quality of teaching and learning at NUS. This initiative, under the umbrella of TEG, seeks to strengthen connections among teaching staff and create supportive networks for teaching at NUS through the establishment of funded Learning Communities. The purpose of these Learning Communities will be to engage in focused and sustained discussion of specific aspects of university teaching that relate to a topic of mutual concern to the group. The group will be comprised of teachers and other interested participants, including where possible students. Although Learning Communities can take membership from across the institution, projects may want to focus on a topic that is important for a particular Unit, Department or Faculty. That said, this initiative to establish Learning Communities in NUS is occurring against a backdrop of huge changes taking place in the Higher Education landscape both locally and internationally, and it is crucial that we consider how these changes may affect our institution. It is our hope that these Learning Communities will provide a space for colleagues to discuss, and develop appropriate solutions to, issues that genuinely matter and that as a result these Learning Communities will have significant positive impact on university teaching at NUS.

To support the generation of such significant impact, Learning Community grants will provide financial assistance for 1 year for a maximum of $6,000.

II. Eligibility
Application is open to all teaching staff of NUS, whether academic or professional. The Learning Communities will involve a collaborative effort and so it is envisioned that each proposal to form a Learning Community should consist of ONE principal facilitator and ONE co-facilitator. Members of the Learning Community can include faculty teaching members, professional staff, research assistants, and undergraduate and postgraduate NUS students. The optimal size of a Learning Community is 8–12 people, and it is preferable to include participants at different levels and stages of their careers. Existing Learning Community projects could also make a subsequent application to sustain their initiatives and to propose any new endeavours with justifications.

III. Selection Criteria
Learning Community proposals will be reviewed by the CDTL TEG Review Team. These reviewers will consider the following criteria in considering applications. In the proposal, applicants should consider the questions associated with each of these criteria.

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<tr>
<th>Relevance</th>
<th>Design</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What teaching and learning issue at NUS will the learning community address?</td>
<td>• How are you going to study your teaching and learning issue?</td>
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<td>• How are you going to organise your learning community?</td>
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IV. Timeline
The deadline for submission of Learning Community project proposals is Monday 22 February 2021. Applicants should submit their completed proposal form to CDTL at link.

Important dates:

- Briefing (on zoom) 22 January 2021, 10am-11.30am
- Deadline for submission 22 February 2021
- Notification of award 5 March 2021
- Recruitment of members 6 - 31 Mar 2021
- Kick-off meeting of facilitators Late March 2021
- First meetings of Learning Communities Early Apr 2021

V. Support from CDTL
Academic developers from CDTL will work with the Facilitators prior to the first meetings of the Learning Communities to provide guidance and to support the recruitment of members. These academic developers will then act as Coordinators to support the Learning Communities facilitators. A/P Adrian Lee, Deputy Director of CDTL, will act as the Programme Coordinator and will call for further meetings of the facilitators during the year as and when necessary.

VI. Expectations
The Learning Community is expected to meet regularly on an approximately monthly basis over the year of support. Although each Learning Community may organise their meetings differently, every group should have a structure and well-defined goals. During meetings, it is expected that facilitators will moderate the sessions by initiating tasks and activities to encourage everyone’s engagement. During the year, the Learning Community will work towards creating an output that will be of use both to the members of the group and to colleagues in NUS. At the end of the year, the Learning Community will share what they have learnt with the wider NUS community.
VII. Use of the Grant
Funds awarded for Learning Community projects can be used for, amongst other things, the following:
- Refreshments for meetings;¹
- Inviting experts to speak online or when appropriate, on campus;
- Purchasing relevant books or materials;
- Organising events to share the group’s work;
- Engaging part-time student research assistance;² and,
- Support for attending relevant workshops or conferences³.
(Note: Given the current COVID-19 situation, attendance at workshops/conferences are likely to be online; Learning Communities’ meetings are also likely to be held online and therefore meeting refreshments may not be required)

VIII. Post Award
The awarded funds will be provided in a project WBS to be drawn by the Principal Facilitator for the Learning Community project. Principal Facilitators should note that all funds awarded must be utilized in accordance with existing NUS financial guidelines and any grant approval guidelines determined by CDTL.

The Principal Facilitator will submit a final Statement of Account (SAP) at the end of the Learning Community project. Any unutilized funds in the project WBS will be returned to University OOE and the project WBS will be closed within 2 months.

IX. Example Learning Communities
CDTL started this initiative in FY 2019/2020. A list of supported Learning Communities can be found here.

However, Learning Communities such as the ones envisioned under this initiative come under different names and guises; the following websites from the Universities of Arizona, Miami and San Francisco give examples that may be helpful in your application. As noted in the University of San Francisco website, a key to a successful Learning Community is “to make a topic broad enough to invite participation across disciplines and schools, but narrow enough to lead to significant benefits for faculty and students”.

University of Arizona: https://academicaffairs.arizona.edu/flc-cohorts
University of Miami: https://miamioh.edu/cte/faculty-staff/flcs/index.html
University of San Francisco: http://usfcte.net/flcs/

¹ No more than $5 per member per meeting.
² Please see details and the recommended hourly rates for the NUS Student Work Scheme (NSWS) for NUS Undergraduate and Graduate Students relevant for Learning Communities interested in engaging research assistance
³ Up to a maximum $5,000 and subject to CDTL approval