

## EDC GRANT APPLICATION

### Engaging graduate students as educational developers

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**PROPOSAL** (short form): Expanding on the concept of students as partners in higher education, we aim to gather an overview of current practices engaging students in educational development (ED) activities in Canadian teaching and learning centres (TLCs).

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

##### Context and need

Engaging with students as partners has been a valuable focus in higher education teaching and learning practice and scholarship for the past decade (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). Research to date has explored the benefits, challenges, and best practices of partnering with students in many areas of HE including course design (Money, Dinning, Nixon, Walsh, & Magill, 2016; Stoddard, Rieser, Andersson, & Friman, 2012), the development of classroom assessments (Meer & Chapman, 2014), subject-based research (Jenkins & Healey, 2015) as well as the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) (Bonney, 2018). The benefits of these partnerships extend beyond the students and instructors involved to other students whose learning experiences are enhanced through collaboratively designed and assessed courses and programs (Healey, Flint, & Harrington, 2014).

Another area of higher education teaching and learning in which students are becoming increasingly engaged as partners is educational development, most often through the activities of teaching and learning centres (TLCs). In this context, we are focusing on ED activities designed or co-designed, facilitated or co-facilitated by students as opposed to TLC activities in which students are participants. While the engagement of students in ED activities has been recognized as one of the pathways to introduce people to a career in educational development (Linder et al., 2011; McDonald & Stockley, 2008; Meizlish & Wright, 2007), there is little research documenting current practices. Through this project, we aim to begin addressing this gap by gathering and presenting an overview of current practices of engaging students in ED activities in Canada.

We, a graduate research assistant and I (see Student Partnership below for more details), have begun this work with an environmental scan of Canadian TLC websites and have observed a wide range of programs and practices that involve students in ED activities (Report in press, 2020). Ten Canadian TLC websites mention programs that involve graduate students undertaking educational development activities ranging from teaching assistant peer mentors to educational development apprentices. These preliminary findings are limited, however, as there may be other TLC activities that are not promoted on websites. Thus, the next stage of the project involves sending a survey to all institutions listed on the

Educational Developers Caucus website ([edc.stlhe.ca/learn/centres-list](http://edc.stlhe.ca/learn/centres-list)) to gather a summary of current activities and practices. The findings of this project will help inform continuing engagement of students in educational development.

### **Research questions**

In what ways are Canadian TLCs currently engaging students in educational development activities?

- What kinds of activities/programs engage students in ED?
- What are the key characteristics of these activities?
- What are the aims of TLC programs that engage students in ED activities?
- What kinds of preparation and/or mentorship are students provided for these activities?
- How are students recruited and acknowledged for these activities?

### **Student partnership**

This is an introductory study to establish an overview of current practices in Canadian TLCs that engage students in ED activities. It will be essential for future research to involve students as partners in conversations about the benefits, challenges and best practices of such activities. At this early stage, this study is also a kind of meta-project about students as partners in educational development since it is being collaboratively developed and undertaken with a graduate student who is not only a partner on this scholarship of educational development (SoED) project but has previously engaged with ED activities at two large American universities prior to coming to the University of Calgary.

### **Project phases**

1. Preliminary environmental scan based on Canadian TLC website data: **completed**  
Findings shared through open access report (In press, 2020)
2. Systematic conceptual review of educational development literature on this topic: **underway**
3. Survey Canadian TLCs where students are actively involved in educational development activities. Follow up interviews may or may not be necessary
4. Data consolidation and analysis
5. Sharing findings through a report to EDC and a presentation at STLHE Conference

This grant will enable the completion of phases 3-5 of this project. The deliverables will include a report to the EDC providing an overview of the findings and a national conference presentation of the study.

### **Benefit to EDC community**

We believe that this research will have tremendous value for the educational development community across Canada. It clearly aligns with the EDC Living Plan 2016-2021 priority to celebrate, reflect, and engage scholarship by providing an overview of current practices at Canadian TLCs and sharing findings that will inform the continuing engagement of students in ED activities. It has immediate implications

for institutions seeking to engage students in ED activities as well as lasting implications for the expansion of the students as partners model and for the potential induction of graduate students into the field of educational development.

**BUDGET and TIMELINE**

This budget is based on hiring a research assistant to collaboratively complete the final phases of this project in a timely fashion while also supporting a graduate student interested in educational development as a field of scholarship and practice. See the Student Partnership details above

Total budget: \$3000

University of Calgary rate for doctoral students in RA roles: \$30/hr x 100 hours = \$3000

**Timeline of activities**

| Phase 1          | Phase 2         | Phase 3   | Phase 4  | Phase 5   |
|------------------|-----------------|---|--|---|
| Summer 2020      | Fall 2020       | January-February 2021   | March- April 2021  | April-June 2021   |
| <b>COMPLETED</b> | <b>UNDERWAY</b> | RA: <b>30 hours</b><br>Co-creating Survey questions<br><br>Recruiting survey participants<br><br>Conducting surveys | RA: <b>30 hours</b><br>Collaborative analysis of survey data | RA: <b>40 hours</b><br>Co-authoring EDC report of findings<br><br>Co-authoring conference proposal and presentation |

**IMPACT OF PHYSICAL DISTANCING**

Thankfully, this project can be completed entirely using digital means of communication, so there will be no negative impact from physical distancing.

**AGREEMENT STATEMENTS**

[v ] I/We agree to provide the EDC community, who funds this grant, with access to resulting information and resources for which the copyright remains with the author(s).

[v ] I/We acknowledge that I/we will submit an interim report and a final deliverable (as described below).

## References

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