

Walla Walla Community College Innovation Fund Handbook 2026-27



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Introduction & Overview

Purpose

The purpose of Walla Walla Community College's College Innovation Fund is to encourage and provide financial support for current faculty, staff, and students in developing and implementing innovative projects that will improve the quality and/or quantity of programs and services at Walla Walla Community College. Grant awards from the Innovation Fund are given for projects that benefit Walla Walla Community College and involve costs that fall beyond its operational budget. The Innovation Fund is supported by dedicated funds provided by Walla Walla Community College, which are separate and distinct from its operating funds.

College Council provides oversight of the program, ensuring equitable awarding projects and support for the projects that are selected for funding.

Disclaimer

WWCC College Council reserves the right to adjust the administration of this fund to address unforeseen problems as it continues to develop the Innovation Fund.

Funding Priorities

Applications for College Innovation Fund grants are encouraged for projects addressing perceived shortcomings or opportunities in the areas listed below:

- **Student Experience:**
 - Academic Excellence
 - Customer Service
 - Student Life
 - Improving Student Success Rates
 - Enhancing Technology
- **College Recruitment & Marketing:**
 - Increasing Enrollment
 - Increasing Presence in the Community
 - Elevating Walla Walla Community College's Image
- **Other:**
 - Any project that does not fit under the categories listed above but will move Walla Walla Community College from great to greater and aligns with Walla Walla Community College's mission.
 - Any project that relates to Walla Walla Community College's strategic priorities and strategies as described in the strategic plan or other master plans.

Example Projects

The following are examples of the types of projects eligible for funding. This list is not meant to be prescriptive or exhaustive. Any project supporting Walla Walla Community College's mission will be considered. Those aligned with the funding priorities identified above are expressly encouraged.

- **Student Experience:**
 - Enhancing the learning environment
 - Integrating technology into the curriculum
 - Improving student performance
 - Strengthening or expanding support services for students
 - Designing services for distance education students
 - Partnering with business and industry to provide work-based learning experiences for students, faculty, or staff
 - Promoting interdisciplinary collaborations to enhance the quality of education
 - Developing sustainable extracurricular activities for students
 - Improving the operation of an administrative office
 - Exploring and addressing issues related to student success'
- **College Recruitment & Marketing:**
 - Collaborating with K-12 schools and/or post-secondary institutions to strengthen or expand curricula
 - Developing new courses and/or programs
 - Cooperating with other organizations to provide a program or service to benefit the community
 - Fostering economic development in the community
 - Creating innovative ways to market Walla Walla Community College

Project and Applicant Eligibility

All proposed Innovation Fund projects must serve the mission of Walla Walla Community College. Applications may be submitted by full or part-time Walla Walla Community College students, student groups, faculty, administrative departments, staff, or any team comprised of members of these constituencies.

Ownership/Attribution of Products Created

With respect to copyright, all materials and products—whether in progress or completed—that are created with support from College Innovation Fund grants shall be owned by Walla Walla Community College. Attribution on products created through the Innovation Fund may refer to the product as being “created by” or “authored by” the grant recipient.

Funding Parameters

Applicants will request a specific amount in grant funding. Generally, funded grants will typically range from \$500 to \$5,000. All expenses must be submitted with receipts in ctclink by the project end date. Any unused funds remaining at the completion of the project will remain with the Innovation Fund. The Innovation Fund itself is currently capped at \$20,000 per year for all funded awards in total. At the discretion of the proposal review committee and College Council, projects of significant scope and exceptional merit, or those that involve collaborations may be funded at a higher level.

Eligible Budget Expenditures

Awardees shall abide by all college policies, procedures, and applicable regulations. Budget expenditures, which may be requested for funding, include but are not limited to:

1. Equipment
2. Software
3. Instructional Materials
4. Travel
5. Contracted Services
6. Consultants
7. Other – as approved

Areas not Funded

Board policy (Administrative Policy 2220 – WAC 132T-190) prohibits funding for political/lobbying activities and religion-related activities. In addition, projects for personal research will not be accepted unless there is a clear benefit to Walla Walla Community College and its constituent communities.

Innovation Fund Coordinator

The Innovation Fund Coordinator ensures the Innovation Fund program runs smoothly and serves as the main point of contact. To provide continuity, the Past Chair of College Council will serve as the Innovation Fund Coordinator. The following is a list of the duties the coordinator is responsible for:

- Ensure the Innovation Fund website is up to date
- Send out communication about the opening and closing of the current year's application
- Coordinate with the Foundation to establish how much funds are available for the year
- Act as the point person for any questions related to the Innovation Fund
- Act as chair on the Proposal Review Committee
- Notify candidates who are awarded and denied (see templates for awarded/denied). Any further feedback requested is handled at the discretion of the coordinator.
- Act as a liaison between Business Services (Grants and Contracts Fiscal Analyst) and the project leads to ensure access to funds
- Coordinate financial tracking with the Business Office and the project leads
- Coordinate project reports as defined in the timeline

Proposal Application, Evaluation, & Selection

Application Process and Minimum Requirements

To apply for the Innovation Fund Grant, individuals must complete the application located on the [Innovation Fund website](#). For employees, applications will route for approval from the applicant's supervisor, Vice-president, and Executive Sponsor. (Vice presidents may serve as the executive Sponsor). For students, applicants are required to have a faculty or staff sponsor who will submit purchase orders on behalf of the student, in addition to the other approvals. The Innovation Fund Coordinator will seek verification of supervisor/sponsor participation. **Please note: approval for the proposal is the acknowledgment and support for applying. It is not the award of the grant itself.**

A link to the application, timeline, and rubric are all available on the [Innovation Fund webpage](#).

A WWCC Innovation Fund proposal must meet all the following minimum requirements to be eligible for award consideration:

- Proposal has been approved by all required supervisors and sponsors
- Proposal addresses one or more of the program's stated funding priorities
- Proposal demonstrates how the project will ultimately benefit students attending Walla Walla Community College (even if indirectly for staff-related projects)
- Proposal provides evidence of an innovative approach to improving the quality and/or quantity of programs and services
- Proposal involves costs that fall outside Walla Walla Community College's regular operating budget and is not eligible for currently existing alternative funding (Perkins, Title 3, etc.)
- Proposal includes activities that are outside of the normal work and duties of the applicant
- Proposal was submitted by the deadline

Proposal Review Committee

Membership

The WWCC College Council will select individuals to sit on the Proposal Review Committee. Members are selected one month prior to the application deadline. Committee representation will include at least 5 participants (max 7) consisting of the following:

- Innovation Fund Coordinator – serves as chair of the committee.
- 2 members from College Council
- 2-4 four members from the college at large, keeping in mind the desire for a diverse representation. These members may also come from College Council if individuals are available/interested.
- A student if available

Evaluation and Selection Process

Each committee member will score applicants utilizing the Innovation Fund Rubric to evaluate each criterion. To establish the recommendation list, projects are ranked based on their overall scores. The scores will be compiled, averaged and ranked highest to lowest scoring. Awards are allocated beginning with the highest score until the full yearly allocation is spent. The committee will provide a final overview to College Council before officially announcing the selected projects.

Notification Process

Once proposals have been selected for funding, the Innovation Fund Coordinator will send out Award/Denial Letters. Award letters will include budget code information and timelines for reporting expectations. For both letters, individual aggregate scores will be provided along with the highest score and the lowest score to allow proposal submitters to see the range of scores.

Awarded Proposals

Funds Release

With assistance from the Innovation Fund Coordinator, project leaders/executive sponsors and the Grants and Contracts Fiscal Analyst will work together to ensure funds are released appropriately. Funds awarded should generally be spent according to the posted timeline, although exceptions will be considered. Funds not expended will remain in the College Innovation Fund for reinvestment and award subsequent year proposals. Project leads should be aware of purchasing deadlines and blackout periods and coordinate with the WWCC Purchasing Manager and Business Office.

Reporting Requirements

Recipients of the Innovation Fund grants are required to submit two reports and present the results of their work to the college community:

1. Midpoint check in with the Innovation Fund Coordinator, approximately halfway through the project.
2. Final report within 30 days of project completion be submitted to College Council.
3. A dissemination of project results made available to the institution (for example Fall Conference presentation, document postings, etc.)

The formats for the midpoint progress report are provided in the appendix. The Midpoint check and Final Report should be submitted to the Innovation Fund Coordinator according to the posted timeline. A list of all College Innovation Fund awarded projects, midpoint and final reports, and instructions and guidelines will be provided on the [Innovation Fund Webpage](#).

Appendix I –Innovation Fund Midpoint Progress Report

A midpoint progress report must be completed halfway through the project timeline and will be submitted via the Midpoint Progress Report Form. You will be asked the following:

Project Developer:

Project Title:

Project Starting Date:

Expected Project Ending Date:

Total Funds Spent So Far:

Answer the following questions.

1. What activities have been completed so far?
2. What activities still need to be completed?
3. What are the next steps in your project?
4. What issues or obstacles have you encountered so far?
5. How did you overcome these issues or obstacles?
6. Will you be able to complete your project by the project end date?
7. Based on your project end date and the progress thus far, will Walla Walla Community College benefit from your project? If not, is there a way to modify your project (e.g., more time, more resources, more participants) so it ultimately benefits Walla Walla Community College and its students?
8. Please share any other information that you feel is important for Walla Walla Community College Innovation Fund Proposal Review Committee to know.

Appendix II – Innovation Fund Final Report

A final report must be completed within 30 days after completing the project and will be submitted via the Final Report Smartsheet form. You will be asked the following:

Project Developer:

Project Title:

Project Starting Date:

Project Ending Date:

Total Funds Spent:

Answer the following questions.

1. What activities were implemented and completed?
2. What planned activities were not completed (if any)? Why they were not completed?
3. Please restate your outcomes. Describe the results of your project in terms of outcomes included in the proposal. What are the results of your project? Quantify as much as possible by providing data to show the results.
4. Did your project result in any outcomes that were not expected?
5. What issues or obstacles did you encounter with your project?
6. How did you overcome these issues or obstacles?
7. How have Walla Walla Community College and its students benefited or will benefit from your project?
8. What experiences from this project would you like to share that might help someone in the future complete a College Innovation Fund project? What other information would you like to share that you feel is important?
9. Would you recommend that Walla Walla Community College continue the work begun with this project? Why or why not? What costs and other resources would be required? Continuance of the project is at the discretion of the Walla Walla Community College President or their designee and dependent on the availability of resources, perceived return on investment, and other factors not reportable here.