

Introduction

BCcampus is a collaboration of BC's colleges, university colleges, universities and institutes, building on existing programs and services, reducing duplication within the system and improving efficiency for students.

BCcampus provides a single access point for learners who want to take post-secondary courses and programs by distance. Students are also able to receive online support services.

The following values guide BCcampus in its work:

- Inter-institutional collaborative and effective working partnerships
- A learner-centric model for learning and student services
- Excellence, innovation and continuous improvement
- Recognition that the role of post-secondary education, skills training, research and development contributes to a successful BC economy
- Life-long learning opportunities for all British Columbians
- Increased choice for learning by utilizing technology

When fully operational, the goal of BCcampus will be to offer:

- Access to distance and online education courses and programs available throughout BC's public post-secondary system
- Flexible learning through a broad range of programs, schedules, courses and delivery formats
- A range of essential student support services – including online application, course registration and 24-hour help desk services
- Student "lounge" or "chat" areas to enhance networking and peer support
- Streamlined transfer of courses from one institution to another
- Professional development for faculty

One of the goals of BCcampus is to increase the number of post-secondary online courses, programs, technologies and services available to students in British Columbia. Toward that end in 2004/05 a \$1.5 million dollar Online Program Development Fund is being made available to BC's 27 higher education institutions.

Criteria for Funding

All proposals should:

- produce deliverables provided to all BC students through the BCcampus portal;
- produce deliverables to be shared with all BC public post secondary institutions;
- exhibit the characteristics of quality teaching and learning;
- demonstrate sustainability and cost-effectiveness;
- include contributions in dollars and/or in-kind from other sources, either internal or external (such as private partnerships);
- demonstrate collaboration among two or more BCcampus partner institutions.

The Online Program Development Fund invites proposals for two categories of development – 1. Programs & Courses and, 2. Learner & Educator Services.

1. Programs and Courses (expected allocation ~ 80% of the fund)

- Proposals for complete online programs in an area of high student demand and/or provincial, regional, or local labour market need are preferred.
- Preference will be given to online program proposals that increase access to BC's public higher education
- Proposals that improve access to remote or rural learners or reduce the percentage of qualified student turnaways are especially sought

- Preference will be given to proposals that build out existing online programs already started but requiring additional courses to be completed
- Preference will be given to credit based online programs
- Preference will be given to proposals involving partnerships or consortia
- All program proposals must show how existing online courses within the entire higher education sector will be used. Funding to create online programs and courses that already exist within the BC higher education system will not be provided. To see a listing of completely online and distance public post-secondary credit courses see <http://www.bccourses.com>
- Preference will be given to online program proposals that use the following model:
 - courses will be offered in a way that permits students throughout the province to enroll, through a planned central registration facilitation system, on an equal basis in the courses taught by faculty from your institution;
 - registration and admission is done with a home institution which keeps a single student record;
 - programs will support students at one institution to enroll in courses taught by faculty at other participating institutions
 - resulting courses will be hosted on shared servers run on behalf of BCcampus to facilitate extended-hour technical assistance available to faculty and students
 - proposals should include clear transfer and articulation mechanisms for all courses. Transfer and articulation agreements of 100 and 200 level courses may already exist, see <http://www.bccat.bc.ca>. BCcampus expects that for courses that are not now articulated by are potentially transferable, a plan should be submitted explaining how transfer will be ensured for those courses among participating institutions. The plan should involve a mechanism for sign off by institutions involved in the proposal.
- Innovation around institutions partnering with BC e-learning companies for project deliverables is encouraged.

Currently, BCcampus is providing a gateway for students to take the following programs from BC post-secondary institutions:

- Adult Basic Education
- Associate of Arts
- Applied Business Technology
- Bachelor of General Studies
- Bachelor of Tourism Management
- Library Technician Diploma

BCcampus is actively working to bring on additional institutional or inter-institutional programs on an ongoing basis. The Online Program Development Fund provides funding to increase the range and breadth of programs available.

2. Learner & Educator Services

2a. Open Source Education Technologies (expected allocation ~ 5% of fund)

- BCcampus is seeking to partner with higher education institutions in the use and development of Open Source education technologies. Proposals that seek funding to support use of open source educational technologies in the development and delivery of a complete range of learning services are invited.
- Preference will be given to proposals that seek to select, host and support a standards-compliant open source course management system
- Preference will be given to Open Source proposals that involve multiple institutions from within the BC higher education system.
- Innovation around institutions partnering with BC e-learning companies for project deliverables is encouraged.

2b. Learner Online Community (expected allocation ~5% of fund)

- BCcampus is seeking to partner with online learners in BC's higher education system on the creation of a BCcampus Learner Online Community.
- Preference will be given to proposals that seek to use an online community to supplement formal online learning with a more fully online "campus" experience including support for informal social networking and online activities of interest to learners.

- Preference will be given to proposals from online learner led groups that provide community services such as organizing and hosting events, calendaring, moderating discussions, coordinating clubs, providing lounges, study groups, help wanted, web-based radio, health, jobs etc.
- Preference will be given to proposals that personalize the online learning experience including such things as review systems for programs, courses, and professors, creation of a learner led uPortal Special Interest group, systems that broker and provide peer-to-peer help, and systems that aggregate learner academic program market demand data.
- Proposals should identify online learners willing to provide these services and budget for their involvement on a part-time and/or full time basis.
- BCCampus will provide the infrastructure for the community. The BCCampus community technology includes:
 - Text discussion forums
 - E-mail subscription service for discussion forums
 - File posting centre
 - Contributions area
 - Calendar
 - Automatic e-mail updates
 - Unlimited e-mail list serves
 - Integrated instant messenger
 - Photo gallery
 - Polls and surveys
 - Announcements
 - Capacity for doing webcasts
 - Group e-mail broadcasts
 - Voice discussion room – 10 seats
 - Voice discussion boards – 3 boards
 - Voice e-mail
 - Basic chat room
 - Related content
 - Search
 - Admin controls

2c. Learning Objects (expected allocation ~ 10% of fund)

- BCCampus is developing a prototype Learning Object Repository for use by institutions and instructors in BC's public higher education system. Proposals for creation of small, stand-alone unit of instruction that can be tagged with descriptors and stored in repositories for reuse in various instructional contexts are welcome
- Learning objects should have the following characteristics:
 - Small unit of learning (2-15 min at topic level)
 - Self-contained in such a way that it can be taken independently
 - Be reusable in multiple contexts for multiple purposes
 - Can be grouped into larger content
 - Be tagged with meta-data providing descriptive information to enable searching
 - BCCampus will look more favourably on projects that can deliver their final outputs packaged according to the IMS Content Packaging Specification 1.1.3, including the use of the Cancore Metadata profile to describe the content package's resources for later discovery.
- Preference will be given to proposals involving multiple institutions producing many learning objects for use in multiple courses and teaching contexts
- Innovation around institutions partnering with BC e-learning companies for project deliverables is encouraged.

Application Process

Complete the application form and forward electronically to: pstacey@bccampus.ca. The form may be used as a cover sheet for more detailed proposals that require more space than provided on the form.

The deadline for submission of proposals is May 21, 2004.

Review and Selection Process

External committees, to be established by the BCCampus Implementation Steering Committee and the Executive Director of BCCampus, will review and approve proposals.

The Online Program Development Fund will be allocated in a manner that will encourage the participation of all sectors of the public post-secondary system.