



Request for Proposals: Learning Communities for Institutional Change and Excellence Evaluation Consultant

Overview of Initiative

The Learning Communities for Institutional Change and Excellence (LCICE), a unit within the Division of Diversity, Equity and Educational Achievement at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, invites proposals from qualified consultants to support learning and evaluation efforts for our Learning Community Model. We are excited to understand more deeply the impact of this unique model that has attracted participants from every School, College, and Division across campus over the last 20+ years.

We seek an evaluation consultant energized to support LCICE staff and partners in identifying and understanding the impact of LCICE's Learning Community Model on individual participants and on the campus, and gain clarity on areas of challenge, strength, growth, and opportunities to pivot to deepen community impact. We appreciate that there are many ways of knowing and being in this world and we are looking for creative approaches to learning and evaluation.

Scope of the Evaluation

The goal of the evaluation is to develop a thorough portrait of the impact of the LCICE Learning Community Model and to develop innovative means for conveying its strengths and areas and opportunities for growth. Working collaboratively with Learning Community staff and advisory team, the project will consist of four main components:

1. Comprehensively review of the existing participant demographic and assessment data.
2. Create an evaluation plan and develop instruments to gather targeted additional information on longitudinal impact.
3. Gather and make meaning from the data collected.
4. Share findings in innovative ways, including a summary of strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for growth.

Evaluation Activities

One key role of the evaluator will be to collaboratively work with our evaluation advisory team throughout the evaluation process. During the first few months, we anticipate that work will include collating and making meaning of the existing participant data, the creation of an evaluation plan and pilot testing of instruments. After we have a sense of what we currently

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know, we anticipate further data may be collected to better understand the model's longitudinal impact. The evaluation methodology should include a mix of qualitative and quantitative and suggestions regarding methodology are welcome based on the consultant's expertise provided they reflect the values of this project. Additional activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Collaborate as a creative, flexible thought partner who thinks outside the box
- Engage with diverse stakeholders, including past participants, to co-design eval
- Collate and make meaning from information collected over the past 20+ years
- Design qualitative and quantitative data collection protocols to collect new data on longitudinal impact
- Lead a collective data analysis process that includes stakeholders/advisory group
- Create visuals, reports, and/or presentations to help communicate our findings

Key overarching questions

Some of the key questions we would like to understand over time include the following:

1. Who has our model reached over the years?
2. What meaning can we make from the assessment information we already collected?
3. What have participants integrated into their own practice since their participation in a LCICE Learning Community?

The budget for this 12-month contract (November 2023-October 2024) is \$20,000-\$50,000.

Description of the Model

The Learning Community Model was founded by Dr. Seema Kapani in 1998. Learning Communities (LCs) are cohort-based professional learning and development opportunities open to all UW faculty, staff, and students. LCICE creates sustained communities in which participants commit to weekly engagement over critical equity topics including race and racism, power and privilege, disability and ableism, sexual identity and gender justice, and more. During the Learning Community experience, participants closely examine how current and historical issues shape their personal and professional lives, how they influence the context of campus climate and their own leadership. We believe that through dialogue, one learns how to engage in transformative changes of behaviors, policies and procedures that collectively impact the campus climate for ALL community members.

The Learning Community Model engages a transformative learning approach: As described by Education Scholar Edmund O’Sullivan, “Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our way of being in the world. Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations; our relationships with other human beings and the natural world; our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, race, and gender; our body awareness, our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of possibilities for social justice, and peace and personal joy.” To engage in this transformative model, the Learning Community participants join in dialogue with each other and critically reflect on their relationship with self, with others, and with systems.

Short-term goals of the Learning Community Model include:

- Co-create program spaces where all participants are heard, valued, & included.
- Build community and solidarity with others based on role, identity and/or work in justice efforts.
- Practice effective communication and conflict engagement within and across human differences.
- Use critical self-reflection to take accountability for perpetuating injustice, building equity, and collective healing.
- Evaluate historical and social contexts of work at UW in order to engage with how power, privilege, and oppression operate on self/others/systems.
- Develop skills and tools to build equitable/just working, teaching, and living environments.
- Plan to take action at levels of self, others, and systems to create just/equitable working, teaching, and living environments.

Theoretical Frameworks

The various theoretical frameworks below mirror social justice principles of equity and inclusion and are embedded in all LCICE Learning Communities, providing an ideological underpinning and means for shaping dialogue:

- Transformative Learning
- Intergroup Dialogue and Freirean Pedagogy
- Critical Identity Development
- Integrated self-work (self-to-self, -others, -systems)
- Liberatory Consciousness Development

- Healing Justice Principles (including restorative justice, generative somatics, and non-violent communication)

Desired Skills, Values, and Qualifications

We anticipate the successful applicant will demonstrate a significant number of the following competencies and skills:

- Experience capturing the impact of transformative and emergent learning and sharing evaluation findings in impactful and creative ways.
- Demonstrates commitment to racial equity and justice practice, broadly as well as specifically in terms of evaluation and learning.
- Familiar with transformative learning and our other social justice frameworks.
- Possesses excellent oral and written communication skills that are responsive to the needs of varied cultures.
- Demonstrates values of listening, learning, and flexibility.
- Willingness to be part of an emergent, messy, iterative process.
- Enjoys being part of a generative team and centers relationships in the work.
- Shows interest in the amazing learning opportunity at hand.

Submission Process

Interested evaluators should submit proposals (5pg max) outlining their qualifications for conducting this evaluation along with a proposed strategy for collaboration.

Please submit a proposal including a narrative description of qualifications (be sure to include how you have centered racial justice in all areas of your work) that will support the achievement of the activities and outcomes listed above. Please also include detailed information about fees & billing structure, and a resume and/or a brief bio of key staff.

All questions regarding this RFP can be submitted to Karin.Silet@wisc.edu

Selection Criteria and Review Process

The grant will be awarded based upon a careful review of responders' qualifications (personal and organizational), previous experience, and the quality of responses. Strong proposals are those that reflect an understanding of the nature of the initiative, the type of evaluation services needed, and can outline an organized and feasible approach to achieving the stated evaluation objectives. Partnership proposals are welcome.

Funding will be allocated through a competitive process with review by a cross-campus advisory committee. The advisory committee will evaluate all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline. After review, we will invite finalists to join us for a

conversation to get to know each other more. Based on qualification and initial interviews we will make an offer.

Timeline

August 28: RFP announced

September 28: Application Due

October 16: Notification

November 1: Start Date

