

MUS TEACHING SCHOLARS



MUS Teaching Scholars Call for Proposals

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Each year, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education recognizes a select group of faculty who have made exemplary contributions to high-quality teaching and learning and who demonstrate commitment to making the transformative experiences of higher education accessible and achievable for a diverse student body.

The goals of the MUS Teaching Scholars program are to elevate excellent teaching and learning as the signature feature of an MUS education and to continuously advance the profound impact of high-quality teaching on individuals as they apply their talents and knowledge locally and globally.

As part of the MUS Teaching Scholars program, awarded faculty will design and facilitate faculty learning communities (FLC) around the annual MUS Teaching Scholars theme, contribute scholarship and reflections on teaching and learning, and participate in system-wide MUS Teaching Scholars activities such as a speaker series and a system-wide symposium on teaching and learning.

2026-2027 Annual Theme: Being Human (and Human Wellbeing) in the Age of AI

This year's theme to the MUS Teaching Scholars program takes a slightly different approach by bridging two live issues in teaching and learning in higher education: grappling with the ascendancy of generative AI, its benefits, and its implications for the human-centered practice of teaching and how this intersects and interacts with the transformative mission of higher education to help students develop and achieve intellectual, educational, career, and personal fulfillment.

In support of this exploration, this year's MUS Teaching Scholars Program takes two thematic tracks. Faculty may submit proposals that address only one track or that bridge intersections between the two.

Artificial Intelligence in Teaching and Learning

In this track, the program will support faculty who are leaders in and propose to pursue a faculty learning community that explores issues related to AI and teaching and learning. The program will support faculty who are engaged with AI in ways that:

- preserve and even deepen the inherent creativity, human-centeredness, and integrity of teaching;
- understand and frame AI as material for intellectual inquiry, creating, and learning and not simply a tool;
- explore the ethical, generative contributions of AI to the project of teaching and learning in higher education rather than treating its use as something to be policed;

Faculty may propose faculty learning community projects exploring teaching and learning practices in areas including, but not limited to:

- Exploring and developing frameworks for critical AI literacies for instructors and faculty;

- Developing frameworks and praxis guides to AI literacies within and across disciplines;
- Reimagining assessment in the context of AI;
- Developing curricula that incorporate AI literacies and competencies across the curriculum within courses, across academic programs, and/or in relation to workforce and career field demands;
- Applying AI in practical ways that free up faculty time for human-centered mentorship, teaching, and feedback;
- Developing and/or pedagogically using AI tools to support accessibility and diverse learners in the classroom;
- Exploring how AI might expand opportunities for proven experiential practices —such as internships, service-learning, community-based learning, and prior learning assessment;
- Intentionally exploring and developing guides on AI tools that support pedagogy and instruction, curriculum development, and student engagement.

Being Human and Being Well

At the same time that the introduction of AI into the classroom and the broader world invites faculty and learners to consider new methods and purposes for teaching and learning, AI also raises deeper questions of what it means to be human, to flourish, and how learning itself can be an active agent in being a (well) human being. This track of the MUS Teaching Scholars program seeks to elevate and promote teaching practices and pedagogies that enhance student and faculty flourishing and wellbeing in the classroom. Proposals in this track may connect these “pedagogies of wellbeing” to AI or may address wellbeing independently of AI. Proposals may include, but are not limited to, those teaching practices and pedagogies that:

- explore and assess practical strategies to enhance student wellbeing in the classroom;
- support students in flourishing through intentional strategies that connect them to meaningful, purposeful, educational and career opportunities;
- understand learning and the pursuit of education as an essential component of human flourishing;
- employ evidence-based strategies that promote faculty wellbeing as an essential component of effective teaching;
- build intellectual communities of students and faculty in support of flourishing, including mentoring relationships, peer learning structures, and spaces where authentic learning can take place, belonging is fostered, and learners grow through being challenged in supportive, psychologically safe environments;
- explore and inform pedagogical approaches to AI that preserve and enhance the human-centeredness of teaching and learning;
- reimagine grading and assessment to prioritize growth, revision, opportunities for failure in supportive spaces with feedback loops, and mastery over time.

Program Goals and Expectations

The MUS Teaching Scholars program seeks to build communities of practice around strategies, practices, pedagogies, and scholarship that advance and elevate teaching and learning as it relates to the annual theme. As MUS Teaching Scholars, faculty commit to building and sustaining communities of practice by:

- Designing and facilitating a faculty learning community (FLC) of 6-10 faculty at your institution working to advance strategies, practices, or scholarship on teaching and learning related to this year’s theme;
- Participating in MUS Teaching Scholars program events;

- Submitting a white paper to the MUS Teaching and Learning Commons, a digital community of practice where teaching scholars and FLC participants can bring scholarship, lessons learned, pedagogical strategies and more to a wide community of faculty across the system.
- Participate in a system-wide teaching and learning symposium to share scholarship, strategies, and best practices on topics related to the annual theme and learnings from the Teaching Scholar's faculty learning community.

Award & Recognition

MUS Teaching Scholars will be awarded and recognized for exemplary approaches to teaching, exceptional commitment to bettering outcomes for all students, and narrowing equity gaps through teaching excellence. Selected MUS Teaching Scholars will be announced in late October. In addition to recognition, scholars will also receive a \$1,500 award and up to \$500 to directly support activities of their faculty learning community.

Application Guidelines & Eligibility

MUS faculty and instructors of all ranks and at any stage of their career are invited to submit a proposal to be recognized as an MUS Teaching Scholar. Faculty may submit a joint proposal, with the award and FLC stipend to be split evenly among team members. Faculty who have previously been awarded an MUS teaching scholar grant may apply, however, preference will be given to first time awardees.

Complete Applications must be submitted by October 9, 2026

To apply, please:

1. complete a brief [online application form](#);
2. submit a letter of application that includes a proposal for a faculty learning community (submitted through the online form); and
3. submit a letter of recommendation from the applicant's department chair, dean, or provost. Referees should submit letters directly to Crystine Miller: cmiller@montana.edu.

Application letters may be up to two pages and should address how your teaching demonstrates excellence and positive student impact around this year's theme as well as a proposal for leading a faculty learning community (to be conducted in Spring 2027). Strong proposals describe a particular challenge, opportunity, strategy, or research question related to the theme; proposed learning outcomes for the FLC; and how the work of the FLC will advance high-quality teaching and learning across the system.

Requirements for Participation

All MUS Teaching Scholars must:

- attend MUS Teaching Scholars orientation (date TBA).
- compile roster of 6-10 faculty for learning community before the beginning of Spring 2027 term.
- have plan for conducting learning community including learning outcomes and proposal for how FLC will contribute to enhanced teaching and learning in the MUS.
- participate in Spring 2027 teaching and learning community.
- contribute a white paper that includes focus areas; tested strategies; learnings or best practices emerging from the FLC; and considerations for implementation. Faculty may produce white papers consistent with their fields' genre standards.
- complete all expense reporting and reimbursement by deadlines to receive stipend.

Selection Criteria

Applications will go through a double blind review process from faculty and directors for MUS centers for teaching and learning at MUS campuses with final confirmation by OCHE staff and Deputy Commissioner for Academic, Research, and Student Affairs. Selection for MUS Teaching Scholars will be based on:

- Demonstrated commitment to addressing teaching, pedagogy, and learning related to this year's theme including the areas identified in, but not limited to, the annual theme description;
- Clear proposal for a well-designed FLC including clear learning outcomes and description of how FLC will support participating faculty in developing, adopting, and assessing teaching practices and pedagogies;
- Demonstrated commitment to teaching practices that foster equitable learning and academic achievement for all students;
- Potential impact of FLC on participating faculty and their own teaching and/or scholarship of teaching and learning;
- Commitment to contributing learnings from FLC to the larger MUS faculty community through participation in learning commons and teaching and learning symposium.