

February 25, 2016

*Associate Provost for Digital Learning*

Greetings!

When the [Vanderbilt Institute for Digital Learning \(VIDL\)](#) was established in 2013, one of the ways in which we hoped to encourage inventive digital work on campus was to offer a number of macrogrants to faculty with innovative ideas and large-scale projects. While we were successful with this model, we have decided to rethink our approach this year and modify the framework of VIDL's innovation grants. Our thinking is driven by the idea that digital innovation in teaching and research takes place in a variety of ways and by a large number of diverse individuals on campus. As a result, why limit ourselves to one particular type of macrogrant as we have done in the past? Moreover, in addition to smaller grants helping a larger number of people, we also hope to draw attention to a wider variety of projects that are being pursued on campus.

While we will unroll these four grants or awards over the next month, I will briefly describe them here:

First, we will offer a number of small microgrants for faculty and staff who need to purchase equipment or software to pursue innovative digital projects. We have often noticed that people who have good ideas put them aside if there are speed bumps in the way, such as gaps in technology. Hopefully, the microgrants will help remove a few obvious hurdles for some projects. Please click [here](#) to read the microgrant proposal call.

Secondly, we will continue to offer (although smaller in number) macrogrants for more extensive innovative projects being pursued by faculty and staff. These grants, with an upward limit of \$10,000.00, are meant to enable larger scale digital projects. By offering greater sums of money with broad guidelines, we hope to incentivize projects that promote truly innovative thinking.

Third, in order to encourage multidisciplinary groups of faculty and staff who work together to develop strategies for digital innovation, we will offer funding to help support a cross-discipline, team-based approach to digital innovation. We have noticed that a number of such groups are already working together on campus (housed, for example, in the [Library](#) or the [Center for Teaching](#)), but individuals involved have often noted that their work could be advanced with small funding to support purchases, expert speakers, and so forth.

Finally, in order to encourage (and recognize) innovative digital work being carried out by students, we will make a call for awards at both the undergraduate and graduate levels for innovative digital projects that have been pursued over the course of the academic year. By publicly recognizing the good work and scholarship that is already being pursued on campus, we hope to draw attention to projects that might be useful to others and, hopefully, such publicity will in turn spur other innovative ideas.

I am very excited about these grants, as each is crafted to reward innovation, highlight work across the institution, and encourage transinstitutional collaboration. Moreover, given the wide range of recipients for various awards—faculty, staff and students—we hope to encourage digital innovation from every sector.

I want to conclude by giving thanks to [Ole Molvig](#) of VIDL for suggesting a rethinking of the grants and of being the contact person for each one.



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