

Call for Applications: Fall 2026 and Spring 2027 Interdisciplinary Grand Challenge (GC) Seminars

The Dietrich College Dean's Office calls for proposals to develop interdisciplinary, team-taught seminars on topics that are grand challenges to society in the 21st century. Course themes will be based on faculty interests and expertise. We welcome proposals for first-year undergraduate seminars with the goal of exposing students to collaborative problem-solving and communication across disciplines.

EXPECTATIONS:

- Teaching teams should consist of preferably two or at most three faculty, representing a range of disciplines. Faculty teams should be composed of full-time, regular faculty members (tenure track or teaching track), with at least one in Dietrich College.
- For developing the class, **up to \$5,000** will be allocated per faculty member on the team for summer salary or discretionary research funds. For iteratively developing the course for the second and third iterations, **up to \$2,000** per faculty member will be allocated for each team.
- Faculty are encouraged to incorporate high-impact learning experiences into their course design. Each team can spend **up to \$3,000 per iteration** of the course on guest speakers, field trips, community building, etc. to enhance the class.
- Ongoing pedagogical support will be available to all teaching teams via workshops, consultations, and community-building events.
- Undergraduate TA support may also be available to teaching teams upon request.
- If selected, Grand Challenge recipients are expected to offer the seminar three times (not necessarily in consecutive years).
- All members of the faculty teams will be asked to participate in several brief teaching workshops to assist with initial course design and early iteration. Teams will be encouraged to incorporate [Early Course Feedback](#) in course development each term.

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT GC SEMINARS:

Learn more about core faculty and student and faculty perspectives on the [Grand Challenge webpage](#).

SUBMISSIONS:

Phase 1. Short letters of intent should be submitted by **the second Friday in January**. The letter of intent should be 1-2 pages in length. Submissions must be approved by the Department Heads of the faculty and should include:

- Short bios of the core faculty highlighting their disciplinary expertise
- Description of the "Grand Challenge" topic to be addressed
- Explanation of how the course will explicitly focus on introducing program learning objectives including:
 - Introducing students to the disciplinary approaches to solving complex problems pertaining to the proposed course topic based on the teaching team's expertise
 - Building opportunities for students to practice written, visual and/or oral communication skills
 - Collaborative practice and/or small group work (i.e., group projects, peer review, discussion boards, etc.)

Phase 2. Projects selected in round one will be invited to submit a slightly longer "full proposal" of 4-5 pages, **by the second Friday in February**.

For assistance on proposed course design or feedback on proposal drafts, consult Nuria Ballesteros Soria (nballest@andrew.cmu.edu). Final submissions should be emailed to Sharon Carver, Dietrich College's Associate Dean for Educational Affairs (sc0e@andrew.cmu.edu).

PROPOSAL SELECTION CRITERIA:

Desiderata will include but are not limited to:

- Topic relevance and importance
- Disciplinary synergy with respect to the topic
- Feasibility of the implementation plan
- Appropriateness of course material for first-year undergraduates