

TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES PROGRAM
**Description of 2003 Non-Competitive Process for
The Distribution of Capital Improvement Funds**

CAP-060 \$3,650,000

Section 19.05 TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES

The foregoing appropriation CAP-060, Technology Initiatives, shall be used by the Board of Regents to support collaborative initiatives to improve the quality and efficiency of instruction, services, and program offerings at Ohio's state-assisted colleges and universities.

Process

As in past rounds of Technology Initiatives, a small statewide advisory committee has been formed to provide advice to the Regents on the use of the Technology Initiatives funds. Representation is from Ohio's state-assisted college and university leadership and augmented by representation from the Office of Budget and Management, Legislative Office of Education Oversight, Ohio Learning Network and the Ohio Resource Center/Eisenhower National Clearing House. The Advisory Committee is charged to:

- Provide purpose and guidelines for funding
- Guide and review any Request for Proposals (RFP) process (if needed)
- Engage in proposal selection process
- Critique the process

Proposed Eligibility & Use of funds

Given the relatively limited funding for Technology Initiatives, this round will focus on selective collaborations that address service and instructional needs of the state. The collaborative statewide programs will include numerous colleges, universities and students in each project. The programs will substantially improve the quality and efficiency of instruction and services of a substantial number of state-assisted colleges and universities. A number of criteria were used by the advisory committee in the selection of programs for consideration, including the following:

- Meet state needs and addresses the needs of students
- Include a critical mass of colleges and universities
- Addresses theme of shared resources that provides services to institutions
- Will provide a statewide impact
- Activities already underway or well along in the planning process.

While a number of emerging programs may be eligible, the advisory committee

invited the following to apply for review and funding consideration. It is understood that the grant dollars will not necessarily be distributed equally since programs differ in the magnitude and scope of work and potential impact. The following program areas are invited to submit a proposal to the advisory committee for consideration

- ✚ The Ohio Digital Commons (and associated programs under this umbrella)
- ✚ Third Frontier Network Applications
- ✚ The Distributed Learning Workshop (electronic mathematics tutorial dissemination)
- ✚ Back Office Shared Services

Timeline

March 18, 2003 – Advisory Committee named

March 25, 2003 – First meeting

March 26-April 15, 2003 – Staff works with OLN, OSC and others for invitations to submit a proposal abstract

April 16, 2003 – Abstracts to be shared with the Advisory Committee

April 18, 2003 – 9:00 a.m. telephone conference with Advisory Committee

May 5-11, 2003 – Staff works on Letters of Invitation for full proposal, etc.

May 22, 2003 – Process described to the Ohio Board of Regents members

June 24, 2003 – Proposals received by Board of Regents – distributed to Advisory Committee

July 9-13, 2003 – Presentations, review and selection of grant recipients

July 19, 2003 – Funding recommendations to Board of Regents

Aug 16, 2003 – Release of funds

July 1, 2004 – Program process update

Invitation for Proposals

The process to be followed in developing and submitting proposals for each program area is described below.

Digital Commons

The advisory committee endorses the Ohio Commons for Digital Education (“Digital Commons”) project led by OhioLINK, the Ohio Learning Network, and the Ohio Supercomputer Center and wishes to commit funds to produce services which several state committees have recognized as valuable.

These services include:

- course management system licensing and hosting
- digital media repository/central archiving
- and associated support services, e.g. a 24X7 helpdesk

As proposed, the project will be implemented in consultation with other related initiatives, such as current multi-institutional research projects and the effort to create a shared storage place for courseware modules. Those projects will be pilot users of the repository capability.

It is expected that all of Ohio’s universities and colleges can be potential beneficiaries of the project. It is also expected that, while some resources such as individual courseware packages may not be accessible to PreK-12, the result of the digital commons proposal will be services that are available across the PreK-16 community. Where applicable, the proposal is expected to pay attention to the possibility of supporting relevant PreK-12 standards, e.g. SIF or the Ohio Academic Content Standards, which may increase the value of the Digital Commons to the PreK-12 community.

Mechanism for Proposal Development: Proposals/requests for funding are invited from the OBR service organizations of OhioLINK, Ohio Learning Network, and the Ohio Supercomputer Center/OARnet acting in concert and collaboration with participating universities and colleges.

A call to collaborate will be issued to bring institutions of higher education together to develop a proposal.

Funding available: Up to \$1,500,000 for this category

Third Frontier Network Applications

The Third Frontier Network (TFN) offers the possibility of using new or changed network applications that can radically improve the way higher education achieves its mission in teaching, research, and service.

- One example of an application that can impact all of these areas is videoconferencing. The TFN will provide significantly higher quality than anything that is available now, and this should change the way people think about working together across a distance.
- While videoconferencing is an obvious priority area, there may be others of considerable importance to effective implementation of the TFN. For example, the network can be used for remote access to the output of scientific instruments or supercomputers.

Unfortunately, if the network were available today, we would not be able to take full advantage of it. The reason is that there are numerous issues of contemporary network architectures that will make it difficult if not impossible for the packets from these new applications to flow from end to end with the simplicity and quality of service that is our goal. One major issue is the barrier presented by the campus firewall, but there are others—notably the fact that the bandwidth separation that will obtain on the TFN side of the system will not likely obtain once the packets enter the campus.

The advisory committee has set aside this portion of the Technology Initiatives funds to help address the difficulties in providing support for new applications from the TFN across the campus network to the faculty or student's desktop. The result is expected to be knowledge of the device specifications and architectures needed to support these applications.

Mechanism for Proposal Development: Regents and OSC/ OARnet will act as conveners and catalysts for this process.

- 1) Regents will issue a "call to collaboration" to campuses around the state. Using language similar to that above, this document will solicit ideas and suggestions for how a TI grant might be structured.
- 2) Once these ideas have been received, Regents and OSC/OARnet would convene a meeting with institutional representatives to discuss priorities and develop a proposal.

Once a proposal has been constructed and approved by the advisory committee, the award will go to a consortium of campuses.

Funding available: Up to \$750,000 for this category

Distributed Learning Workshop (DLW)

Ohio needs to address the high-cost of remediation. This can be done by improving the quality of high-school mathematics instruction or with better tools for remediation at the college level. To meet this need, Ohio has invested in the DLW (Distributed Learning Workshop). The DLW is a project that is developing high-quality, modular mathematics courseware which maps to the Ohio Academic Content Standards. It will provide Ohio with the ability to have unlimited use of these materials for K-12 and non-credit college instruction.

Because of Ohio's right to have unlimited use of these materials for K-12 and non-credit instruction, there is a very large community that could potentially benefit from this project. The courseware can be used to support remedial, K-12, and mathematics teacher education. The value of the courseware has been validated by the members of Ohio's DLW advisory board which includes representatives of university teacher education programs, K-12 schools, and community colleges.

The DLW has begun to deliver this courseware to Ohio. It will be completed by the summer of 2003. Recognizing the value of this courseware, the advisory committee has set aside this portion of the Technology Initiatives Funds to provide supplementary funding that can support the use and enhancement of this courseware. A proposal is expected to include a plan for accomplishing the following goals: 1.) modify the courseware to a format that will work on the Macintosh; 2.) add an upfront assessment system that can be used to direct students to the modules they need to complete; 3.) support the initial deployment of the courseware; and 4.) re-package the courseware to allow it to be included in a repository of Ohio courseware.

Mechanism for Proposal Development: The Ohio Resource Center for Math and Science will coordinate the development of a proposal in this area. As a part of the development of the proposal they will convene a meeting of university or college education deans, 2-year chief instructional officers, and school superintendents.

Funding available: Up to \$750,000 for this project

Shared Services

Back office computer systems are essential for university and college operations. Examples of these systems include backup and disaster recovery systems, database management systems, content management systems, and administrative computing systems. The implementation of these systems, as well as the staff, hardware, and software they require, places a great burden on university and college information technology budgets.

Given the present fiscal environment and Ohio's past successes in finding collaborative approaches to providing technology infrastructure, e.g. OhioLINK, a number of institutions have responded to the high cost of back office systems

by considering the possibility of sharing those systems or the hardware and staff that they require. They have considered many different ways in which they might share the burden of these systems, from sharing hardware, to jointly licensing software or sharing an implementation of the software on a common server. Recognizing the widespread interest in shared systems, the advisory committee has set aside this portion of the Technology Initiatives Funds for the development of new shared back office systems.

Mechanism for Proposal Development: A call to collaborate will be issued by OBR to bring colleges and universities together to design creative approaches to shared services. Competitive proposals/requests for funding to create shared approaches to back office systems will then be invited from groups of universities and colleges. Proposals can include both two-year and four-year participants, and must include a framework by which additional universities or colleges could become participants. Preference will be given to projects that are already underway over projects for which planning is required. Regents reserve the right to combine proposals where multiple groups propose similar collaborative projects.

Funding Available: Up to \$650,000 available for this category