APPENDIX C – CALL TO PARTICIPATE
[INSTITUTION] Course Redesign Initiative

[NAME], provost and vice president for academic affairs, invites participation in a new campus-wide initiative to redesign large-enrollment, multi-section undergraduate courses using technology-supported active-learning strategies. The goals are to achieve improvements in student-learning outcomes and reductions in instructional costs. During the period [2015–18], the program expects to support [five] course redesign projects.

The goals of the program are to

- Adopt new ways to improve student-learning outcomes
- Demonstrate the improvements by way of rigorous assessment
- Reduce institutional costs
- Increase consistency across multiple-section courses
- Free up instructional resources to be used for other purposes
- Develop the internal capacity of [INSTITUTION's] faculty and staff to continue the redesign process on an ongoing basis

Orientation Workshop*

An orientation workshop will be held on November 15, 2015, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at [PLACE]. It will feature Dr. Carolyn Jarmon, vice president of the National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT) or program leaders] who will discuss NCAT's successful national and state course redesign programs, on which the [INSTITUTION] initiative is based. The purpose of this workshop is to offer all interested members of the campus community the opportunity to learn about the program and why they might want to participate.

*Attendance at the orientation workshop is required in order to be eligible to submit a project proposal. Those who choose to submit a proposal are also required to attend a follow-up workshop on February 28, 2016.

BACKGROUND

[INSTITUTION], like academic institutions throughout the United States, continues to be challenged by the need to increase access, to improve the quality of student learning, and to control or reduce rising costs. These issues are, of course, inter-related. As tuition costs continue to rise, access may be curtailed for those least able to afford an education. Promises to increase access ring hollow when high percentages of students fail to graduate. The solutions to these challenges appear to be inter-related as well. Historically, improving quality or increasing access has meant increasing costs, while reducing costs has generally meant reducing both quality and/or access. To sustain its vitality while serving a growing and increasingly diverse student body, higher education must find a way to resolve these familiar trade-offs among quality, cost and access.

Many colleges and universities, including [INSTITUTION], have adopted exciting new ways of infusing technology to enhance the teaching and learning process and to extend

access to new populations of students. But [INSTITUTION], like most, has not fully harnessed the potential of technology to improve the quality of student learning, increase retention and reduce the costs of instruction in courses that have the broadest impact.

A New Approach

Since April 1999, the National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT) has managed a number of programs in course redesign that demonstrate how colleges and universities can redesign their instructional approaches by using technology to achieve quality enhancements as well as cost savings. In the seminal Program in Course Redesign, 30 institutions were selected to participate from among hundreds of applicants in a national competition. Each institution redesigned one large-enrollment course to increase quality while simultaneously reducing instructional costs through the use of technology. Those 30 institutions represented research universities, comprehensive universities, private colleges, and community colleges in all regions of the United States.

The first redesign projects focused on large-enrollment, introductory courses. As an initial target, those kinds of courses have the potential of generating significant cost savings and of having significant impact on student success. Studies have shown that undergraduate enrollments in the United States are highly concentrated in introductory courses. On average, nationally, at the baccalaureate level, the 25 largest courses generate about 35% of student enrollment. At the community college level, the 25 largest courses generate about 50% of enrollment. In addition, successful completion of those courses is key to student progress toward a degree. High failure rates in those courses—typically 15% at research universities, 30 to 40% at comprehensives, and 50 to 60% at community colleges—can lead to high dropout rates in the first and second years of enrollment.

NCAT required each of the 30 institutions participating in the Program in Course Redesign to conduct a rigorous evaluation of learning outcomes as measured by student performance and achievement. National assessment experts provided consultation and oversight regarding those assessments so as to maximize validity and reliability.

The findings of the Program in Course Redesign were that:

- Of the 30 redesigns, 25 improved learning; the remaining 5 showed learning outcomes equivalent to traditional formats.
- Of the 24 projects that measured retention, 18 resulted in reductions in drop-failure-withdrawal rates.
- All 30 projects reduced the cost of instruction—by 37% on average, with a range of 15 to 77%.

Other outcomes achieved included improved student attitudes toward the subject matter and increased student and faculty satisfaction with the mode of instruction.

While each of the 30 institutions participating in the Program in Course Redesign had complete freedom regarding how to redesign courses to increase quality and reduce costs, a number of common elements emerged.

- *Whole-Course Redesign.* In each case, the whole course—rather than a single class or section—is redesigned. Faculty members begin by analyzing the amount of time each person involved in the course spends on each kind of activity. Such an analysis often reveals duplication of effort. By sharing responsibility for both course development and course delivery, faculty members save substantial time and achieve greater course consistency.

- *Active Learning.* All of the redesign projects make the teaching-learning enterprise significantly more active and learner centered. Lectures are replaced with a variety of learning resources that move students from a passive, note-taking role to active learning. As one math professor put it, "Students learn math by doing math, not by listening to someone talk about doing math."

- *Computer-Based Learning Resources.* Instructional software and other web-based learning resources have important roles in engaging students with course content. Resources include tutorials, exercises, and low-stakes quizzes that provide frequent practice, feedback, and reinforcement of course concepts.

- *Mastery Learning.* The redesign projects offer students more flexibility, but the redesigned courses are not self-paced. Student pace and progress are organized by the need to master specific learning objectives—often in a modular format and according to scheduled milestones for completion—rather than by class meeting times.

- *On-Demand Help.* An expanded support system enables students to receive assistance from a variety of people. Helping students feel they are part of a learning community is critical to their persistence, learning, and satisfaction. Many projects replace lecture time with individual and small-group activities that meet either (1) in computer labs staffed by faculty, graduate teaching assistants, and/or peer tutors or (2) online, thus providing students more one-on-one assistance.

- *Alternative Staffing.* Various instructional personnel in addition to highly trained, expert faculty constitute students' support system. Not all tasks associated with a course require a faculty member's time. By replacing expensive labor (faculty and graduate students) with relatively inexpensive labor (undergraduate peer mentors and course assistants) when appropriate, projects increase the number of hours during which students can access help, and they free faculty to concentrate on academic rather than logistical tasks.

NCAT has now worked with more than 200 institutions to redesign large-enrollment courses at all levels of the undergraduate curriculum. Learning outcomes have improved in 72 percent of redesigns, with the remaining 28 percent producing learning equivalent to traditional formats. On average, costs reduced by 37 percent in redesigned courses, with a range of 9 to 77 percent. Based on the participating institutions' experiences, NCAT has identified six redesign models that represent different points on the continuum, from a fully face-to-face course to a fully online course. NCAT has also established (1) a number of proven approaches to assessing student learning and (2) a variety of strategies for overcoming potential implementation obstacles.

What Does Cost Savings Mean in Practice?

It is important to understand the context for reducing costs. In the past, cost reduction in higher education has meant loss of jobs, but that's not the NCAT approach. In the vast majority of NCAT course redesign projects, the cost savings achieved through redesigned courses remained in the department that generated them; and the savings achieved were used for instructional purposes. NCAT thinks of cost savings as a reallocation of resources that enables faculty and their institutions to achieve the things on their wish lists: what they would like to do if they had additional resources.

Institutional participants have used cost savings:
- To offer additional or new courses that previously could not be offered
- To satisfy unmet student demand by serving more students on the same resource base
- To break up academic bottlenecks—courses that delay students' progress in a subject area or program because the programs are oversubscribed
- To increase faculty released time for research, renewal, or additional course development
- In combinations of the above

Further information about NCAT and its course redesign programs is available at http://www.theNCAT.org.

THE [INSTITUTION] PROGRAM

[INSTITUTION] will build on the successful models and lessons learned from NCAT's national and state programs to create its own course redesign program for multi-section, large-enrollment courses. As part of that program, [INSTITUTION] will develop internal capacity to support the course redesign process on an ongoing basis.

Program Focus: Large-Enrollment Undergraduate Courses

In order to have maximum impact on student learning and achieve the highest possible return on the [INSTITUTION's] investment, redesign efforts supported by this program will focus specifically on undergraduate courses with high enrollments. In addition to having an impact on large numbers of students, there are other advantages of such a focus. In many large-enrollment courses, the predominant instructional model is the large lecture. While recognizing the limitations of the lecture method, many departments continue to organize courses in this way because they believe that it represents the most cost-effective way to deal with large numbers of students. The program will demonstrate that alternatives that improve quality and are less costly than lecture-based strategies are possible.

In addition, many large-enrollment courses are introductory. Introductory courses are good prospects for technology-enhanced redesign because they have more or less standardized curricula and outcomes that can be delineated more easily. They also serve as foundation studies for future majors. Successful learning experiences in introductory courses influence students to persist in key disciplines like the sciences. Finally, because introductory courses are feeders to other disciplines, success in them will help students more easily make the transition to more-advanced study.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAM

To learn more about this exciting new initiative, plan to participate in the initial orientation session to be held on November 15, 2015, from 10 am to 4 pm at [PLACE]. Dr. Carolyn Jarmon, NCAT's vice president, or program leaders] will provide an overview of the successful planning methodology used in NCAT's redesign programs and the results they achieved. The workshop is open to all members of the campus community who want to learn about the program and why you may want to participate.

The goal of this workshop is for participants to acquire a solid understanding of what is needed to implement a good redesign. Through presentations, case studies, and group work, participants will learn the basic planning steps as well as how to adapt NCAT's redesign methodology to the needs of their particular courses.

Workshop topics will be:

- *An Introduction to Redesign.* Offers an overview of the redesign methodology, its purpose, the premises upon which it has been developed, the strategies it employs, and the planning process.
- *Case Studies in Redesign.* Engages participants in an interactive application of course redesign models to institutional cases.
- *Course Readiness.* Includes a discussion of how to choose appropriate courses for redesign.
- *Planning for Assessment.* Provides guidance about how to assess the impact of course redesign on student learning.
- *Planning for Course Redesign.* Provides an overview of NCAT's Cost Planning Tool, which facilitates the quality- and cost-planning tasks associated with redesign.
- *Developing a Cost Savings Plan.* Discusses how resources can be saved through redesign and what can be done with the savings.

The outcome of the workshop will be that participants will have learned that there are many ways to redesign a course to achieve quality improvements and cost savings and that what can be achieved is only limited by one's creativity.

IMPORTANT: Representation at the orientation workshop is required in order for an academic unit to be eligible to submit a project proposal.

Homework

Participants will be expected to have completed the following assigned reading about course redesign prior to the workshop. Click on the titles to access the links.

- *An Overview of Course Redesign*
  This article provides a brief overview of NCAT's course redesign methodology and outcomes.

- *Improving Learning and Reducing Costs: New Models for Online Learning*
  This is an edited version of a September/October 2003 *EDUCAUSE Review* article

that describes the six redesign models that have emerged from NCAT's course redesign programs.

- Chapters I and III of [How to Redesign a College Course Using NCAT's Methodology](#)
This is a summary of the redesign techniques that are essential to improving student learning while reducing instructional costs.

- [Application Guidelines](#)
This document tells how to apply to participate in the Course Redesign Initiative. Please pay particular attention to Stage Two: Identifying the Course.

Who Should Attend?

All those interested in submitting grant proposals for this program must attend this workshop as well as the follow-up workshop scheduled for February 28, 2016. However, participants who attend the workshop are *not required* to submit a proposal. Participants may be faculty, professional staff, campus administrators, or others. The workshop will help prospective applicants decide which courses are the most ready to be redesigned.

To Register

Send an email to [NAME] at [EMAIL ADDRESS]:

1. Subject line: Registration for Course Redesign Workshop

2. Include the following information:
   - Your name and title
   - Academic unit
   - Phone
   - Email address

3. You may register multiple attendees from the same academic unit in a single e-mail by including name, phone, and email address for each attendee.

Location

The workshop will be held at [PLACE].

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For further information about the [INSTITUTION] Course Redesign Initiative orientation workshop, contact:

[NAME
PHONE
EMAIL ADDRESS]