

AI Curricular Innovation “Spark” Grants [Call for Proposals]

Overview

The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs is pleased to announce the **AI Curricular Innovation “Spark” Grants** for the 2025–2026 academic year. These mini grants are designed to inspire Hudson County Community College faculty to integrate artificial intelligence (AI) in ways that meaningfully enhance teaching and learning.

Awardees - working individually or in teams - will receive **\$1,000** to develop innovative instructional units that introduce AI knowledge, tools, and skills into their disciplines, directly supporting our college-wide goal of strengthening AI literacy among students and faculty. Each grant recipient will also present their work to the HCCC community, contributing to a growing collection of AI-informed pedagogy and best practices.

Award Scope

AI Spark Grants support course-level projects that encourage thoughtful exploration of AI tools and concepts in teaching and learning. They’re ideal for first-time users curious to experiment with AI, as well as experienced faculty looking to test new ideas in a focused, student-centered way. Projects should support student engagement with AI in meaningful and ethical ways and may serve as a springboard for future curricular innovation. Funding serves as a stipend for curriculum design and experimentation.

Examples might include:

- Creating small projects allowing students to experiment with AI tools to achieve course learning outcomes.
- Hosting a series of readings and discussions to explore the ethical implications of AI in a specific field.
- Scaffolding an AI-infused final project across the semester that prepares students for real-world applications in their field.
- Designing low-stakes assignments where students critically analyze AI-generated content and/or compare AI-generated writing to human writing.
- Integrating AI-powered learning tools to personalize instruction and support diverse learners.
- Developing an AI-driven simulation or chatbot for on-demand course support.
- Assessing the impact of AI on student learning across course sections.

Eligibility

All HCCC faculty - full-time, adjunct, or CEWD - are invited to apply for a Spark Grant. Each proposal must designate a **faculty lead** to guide the project, while staff or other collaborators are encouraged to participate as part of a **team**.

Expectations

Awardees will:

- 1) Implement their AI integration project in Spring 2026.
- 2) Submit a reflection report addressing effectiveness, challenges, and student impact.
- 3) Present outcomes in a Fall 2026 dissemination event (e.g., panel or presentation).

Timeline

- **September 22, 2025** – Call for Proposals released
- **October 31, 2025** – Proposal Deadline
- **November 14, 2025** – Award Notification
- **Early December** – Orientation with Grant Committee
- **Late March** – Check-in meeting with Grant Committee
- **Spring 2026 semester** – Project Implementation

Proposal Review Criteria

Proposals must address all criteria to be considered.

- **Learning Goals:** Define the AI-related skills, knowledge, or understandings students will gain, and explain why these are important in your discipline and for student success.
- **Implementation:** Outline how you will bring your ideas to life in your course, showing alignment with effective teaching strategies and feasibility within the semester.
- **Impact on Students:** Describe both the depth (how deeply students will engage with AI) and breadth (how many students will benefit) of the project.
- **Evaluation & Assessment:** Explain how you will measure student learning and track the outcomes of your AI integration.
- **Sustainability:** Indicate how your project can continue or expand beyond the initial funding period.

[Find a rubric that will be used to evaluate each submission here.](#)

How to Apply

Applicants must inform their program coordinator, program director, or School Dean of their intent to apply.

[Please submit your completed application using this form by October 31, 2025.](#)

For questions or additional information, please contact mlabrake@hccc.edu or byearwood@hccc.edu