May 29, 2013

Dear Colleagues:

We are very excited to announce the Provost’s Challenge awards in the Inspiration Challenge category. The Inspiration Challenge projects offer a variety of solutions that use technology to lead to improved student success and graduation. Please see the hyperlinked list of awarded projects below totaling $200,000.

- Online Academic Advising & Career Development Modules
- Continuing Engagement for Social Change: At and Beyond Portland State
- Last Five Miles: Coaching Students to Degree Completion
- Reaching Out: Utilizing Technology to Enhance the Student Experience
- Faculty Advising Initiative
- Tools for Improving Orientation Advising
- Digitizing the Process: Development of a Digital Academic Requirements Committee (ARC) Petition
- PDX Open: Reducing Student Textbook Costs
- Mentors Advocating and Promoting Success (MAPS): Mapping an Online Presence for UNST Mentors Supporting Retention
- Promoting Excellence in Teaching through Online Faculty and TA Development
- Automate batch degree audits
- Build an automated/online major change mechanism that includes the ability to enforce the requirement for UGE students to declare a major by the time they earn 90 credits
- Digital Badges for Creativity and Critical Thinking
- Mobile and Augmented Reality Resources for Learning
- Using Technology to collect and analyze data to answer key questions on the success of students in STEM at PSU

For more details on the funding of these projects, please see LINK.
In addition to these awards, $2,310,000 was awarded in the Reframing and Acceleration categories; $250,000 for ePortfolio, platforms, and IT; and $240,000 for Centralized project management support (2 years)

The purpose of the Provost’s Challenge at the onset was to solicit ideas and allow our institution to imagine and implement changes that provide leadership in response to issues in higher education. Over one third of our faculty and staff engaged in one or more of the over 160 concepts submitted. This “crowd sourcing” effort created many important campus conversations that we hope will continue.

As a reminder, the Provost’s Challenge is part of a larger initiative to reTHINK PSU. It was made possible by one-time funds collected from online fees. These fees are restricted funds; they could only be used for efforts to enhance the curriculum via technology.

The Inspiration Challenge was modeled on the success of the Last Mile initiative (at PSU, which has shown that it is possible to have a large impact with very modest cost when we are inspired to collaborate around an opportunity or issue that affects our students.

There were so many great ideas generated by the Provost’s Challenge—the majority of which we could not fund. We are happy to hear that some of these will continue through the efforts of our faculty and staff. They reflect a forward thinking approach to how we deliver instruction and these ideas should not be abandoned.

We are excited about the work ahead and the innovative ideas and energy of our faculty and staff. If it any time you have questions, comments, or ideas related to the Provost’s Challenge or the reTHINK PSU initiative in general, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Sona K. Andrews
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Sukhwant Jhaj
Vice Provost for Academic Innovation and Student Success