

St. Lawrence University  
Center for Teaching and Learning  
**Technology for Teaching Grant Proposal**

(Full-time faculty members are eligible to submit proposals for teaching grants.)

Technology for Teaching grants are designed to infuse technology-enhanced pedagogy into the university curriculum. Intended to serve both experts and newcomers to technology, the grants help faculty members explore, develop, and support technology-related strategies and curricula. Examples include, but are not limited to: workshop attendance, course-specific software or hardware, using trained student assistants to enhance technology-orientated teaching, or travel to a technology and teaching conference. Any questions about proposals can be directed to the CTL.(x5981)

Both small grant proposals (\$500 or less) and large grant proposals (\$501 to \$1500) are reviewed on an ongoing basis. All proposals will be reviewed by a committee of faculty and IT staff. Larger grants are limited to one every other year, and requests for travel will be approved only if the applicant's regular pedagogy travel fund has been exhausted.

**Grant Criteria:**

1. Before submitting this application, faculty members consulted with IT to check on the university's standard solution or service agreements on particular technologies and software. Expectations for implementation and support are clearly outlined and agreed upon.
2. **In order to secure technology support for your project, a Purchase Order for technology and other equipment must be processed by April 30 (for the Fall semester) and October 30<sup>th</sup> (for the Spring semester).**
3. The project represents an innovative use of technology to enhance teaching, or changing technological need related to past innovations.
4. The project represents a new pedagogical direction for the instructor or the course. We particularly encourage projects that involve students in collaborative research and instructional roles.
5. The project exhibits a demonstrable connection to institutional or departmental curricular goals.
6. The project's outcome represents a new application of technology to the course(s) involved.
7. A final report summarizing the project must be submitted by June 15<sup>th</sup> of the academic year in which the funding was received.

**Name: John Collins\_\_\_\_\_ Department: Global Studies\_\_ Phone: x5661**

**Project Title: The Weave\_\_\_\_\_**

**Dates of Project: November 1, 2007-August 31, 2008\_\_\_\_\_**

Please send this cover sheet and the following information by email as a Word attachment to [ctl@stlawu.edu](mailto:ctl@stlawu.edu) or via campus mail:

- Project description and specific goals with respect to enhancing teaching
- Itemized list of resources and expenditures needed for project
- Student support responsibilities (if applicable)
- Brief description of how you might share the pedagogical impact of this project through a CTL sponsored Shop Talk or IT program

**Total amount requested: \$1500.00\_\_**

**Faculty Signature: John M. Collins\_\_\_\_\_ Date: 10/14/07\_\_\_\_\_**

**OFFICE USE ONLY:**

**CTL Director: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Total amount approved: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Final report received: \_\_\_\_\_**

## **The Weave** **A Technology for Teaching Grant proposal**

John Collins (Global Studies Department)  
October 2007

### Project description and specific goals with respect to enhancing teaching

The Weave was originally created as a class website by the GS340 (Global News Analysis) class in Fall 2006. The project, intended to create a space for students to provide commentary on global news events and coverage, was partially successful: students were able to produce a sophisticated website design and some initial content. Sustainability was an issue, however, as few students have the programming expertise to maintain such a complex site (which was designed with Dreamweaver).

I then taught the same course in Spring 2007, and my students and I decided to take the project in a different and more sustainable direction. We turned the Weave into a new site whose primary feature was a set of individual student blogs which were linked to a common homepage located temporarily on the Global Studies Department website. Student bloggers in the class spent the semester writing about their research into important global news stories that are underreported or ignored by the mainstream media. Some of them also posted examples of their formal writing. All received comments from visitors to the site. In the creation of v2.0 of the Weave, we were assisted greatly by Adam Gordon, who coordinates the university's student blogs under a contract with TypePad.

Toward the end of the semester, the students expressed a collective commitment to continue developing the project after the conclusion of the course. We met with then-Dean Cornwell and several members of the IT and Web Services staff to discuss options. In the end we decided to launch a new v3.0 with an independent domain name and featuring blogs in four main areas: Global Perspectives (for students who are studying or have studied outside their home country), Recent Graduates, Campus Organizations, and News Analysis. Tendayi Chakanyuka '08 (see below) spent the past summer designing the new site using an open source content management system (CMS) called Joomla. Meanwhile we put together a group of bloggers willing to write for the site. These included current and former Global News Analysis students and Global Studies majors; students, faculty and staff representing campus organizations; and students in Fred Exoo's Fall 2007 seminar on "Politics and the News Media" (GOVT290). In early September we purchased our new domain name (<http://www.weavenews.org>), and the site is now up and running as we continue to fine-tune its design.

We had hoped to fund our activities as a new organization through Thelmo, but Thelmo's current budget crisis has made that impossible. I am therefore seeking a Teaching With Technology grant to cover our expenses for the coming year, after which we should be able to maintain the project with Thelmo funding.

The project's enhancement of teaching is already well underway. Students in my Global News Analysis have already benefited from the experience of designing the site, writing their own blogs, and working through the complex conceptual and ethical issues that arise when putting together such a project. I will be teaching the course again in Spring 2008, which will give a new group of students the chance to enjoy similar benefits. As mentioned above, Fred Exoo has built a blogging

assignment for the Weave into his GOVT290 course in Fall 2007. Assuming that this arrangement continues to work well (initial signs are very promising), I will seek to extend invitations to other faculty to have their students contribute to the Weave in the future.

Itemized list of resources and expenditures

• Domain name (August 2007-August 2008)	\$50.00
• Joomla components	\$150.00
• Student worker for Fall 2007 (75 hours@\$8.00/hr.)	\$600.00
• Student workers for Fall 2008 (75 hours@\$8.00/hr)	\$600.00
• Initial advertising expenses (e.g. posters, stickers)	\$100.00
TOTAL.....	\$1500.00

Student support responsibilities

When we set up our formal organizational structure last spring, we agreed that we would have one student worker responsible for site design and maintenance. Since that time, Tendayi Chakanyuka '09 has been serving admirably in this capacity, but it is highly skilled work and he deserves to be paid. I would like to pay him for roughly five hours of work per week for both the Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 semesters. As the university's contract with TypePad will expire in April 2008, Tendayi's main task for the year (in addition to general maintenance) will be to work on importing the Weave blogs directly into our site from TypePad. He is already exploring multiple options for doing this. We also envision developing other components to the site (e.g. an open discussion form, a space for hosting short videos, a space for long student essays) during the coming year.

Sharing the pedagogical impact of the project

I would be more than happy to share the pedagogical impact of this project at a CTL-sponsored workshop. I see this project as something that could be a model for faculty in many departments and programs and would be eager to let others benefit from my experience. In particular, I would like to see other faculty members building the Weave into their syllabi, either by having their students contribute to the site as writers or by having their students analyze the content of the site. A public workshop would be a good way to foster such collaboration.