SCHOOL OF GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

CURRICULUM INNOVATION GRANTS

Request for Proposals

Deadline: April 8, 2026
Spending Period: May 15, 2026 - June 30, 2027
Award Size: Up to $5,000 for individual applicants;
up to $10,000 for teams

Overview

The School of Global Environmental Sustainability (SoGES), with funding support from the President's Sustainability Commission (PSC), invites proposals for curriculum development that integrate sustainability into CSU coursework. This call is open to all departments and disciplines.

Priority will be given to departments with one or fewer sustainability-focused or sustainability-inclusive courses, as identified through CSU's STARS (Sustainability Tracking and Rating System) reporting process.

The goal of these grants is to increase the quality, depth, and reach of sustainability education at CSU by supporting meaningful curricular innovation. Proposals may focus on any sustainability topic and may apply to new or existing undergraduate or graduate courses.

Priority Departments (as identified in the 2026 STARS 2.2 report)

Departments currently identified as regularly offering one or fewer sustainability-focused or sustainability-inclusive courses include:

- Arts Management
- Biochemistry & Molecular Biology
- Biomedical Sciences
- Graduate programs in Cell and Molecular Biology
- Communication Studies
- Computer Science
- Health & Exercise Science
- Journalism & Media Communication
- Languages, Literatures, & Cultures
- Mathematics
- Microbiology, Immunology, & Pathology
- Occupational Therapy
- Philosophy
- Physics
- Psychology
- School of Biomedical Engineering
- School of Education
- School of Materials Science & Engineering
- School of Music, Theater & Dance
- Statistics
- Systems Engineering

Note: Proposals from all departments are welcome; proposals from the above units will receive priority consideration

Eligibility:
- CSU faculty (all ranks and instructors) with an active teaching role may apply.
- Proposals may be submitted by individuals or teams.
- Courses must enroll at least five students and cannot be seminars, group studies, or internship-only courses.
- Current PIs on active Curriculum Innovation Grants or current PIs on any of our funded research teams (GCRT's, Collaboratories, or Rapid Response) are not eligible to apply.
- SoGES staff and SoGES faculty (not including affiliate faculty) are not eligible.

Eligible Project Types
Projects may include:
- Development of a new interdisciplinary sustainability-related course.
- Integration of sustainability into an existing course that does not currently include these topics.
- Significant enhancement of sustainability content in an existing course.

Proposals should involve substantial curricular development beyond routine annual updates. Applicants must articulate how sustainability concepts will be integrated into course learning objectives and the course description.

Expectations of Awardees
Awardees are expected to:
- Develop and implement substantive sustainability-related updates to course content.
- Where appropriate, update course descriptions and learning objectives in the Curriculum Information Management (CIM) system (with SoGES support as needed). While CIM updates may not always be required for every project, proposals should aim to result in substantive changes that would warrant updates to the course description and/or learning objectives in CIM.
- Participate in a SoGES-hosted mid-year check-in meeting during the grant year.
- Submit a brief final project report to SoGES at the end of the funding period.

Proposal Components (2-page maximum, PDF)
Applications must include the following sections:

1. Short description / Elevator Pitch (~100 words)
   Summarize the proposed work in plain language for a general (technical and non-technical) audience. This description should clearly identify the learning gap your proposal addresses and how you will address it. This summary may be used for websites, media stories, and annual reporting and should be able to stand alone from the full proposal.

2. Curriculum improvement
   Describe how the proposed work will expand student exposure to sustainability and help students engage with complex, interdisciplinary sustainability concepts. Please:
   - Describe the course(s) that will be improved.
   - Explain what is currently missing from a sustainability perspective (if an existing course).
   - Articulate how sustainability content will be integrated into the course.
   - Include proposed or updated course learning objectives and an updated course description.
   - Indicate whether the course, with updates, would meet STARS criteria for sustainability-focused or sustainability-inclusive courses.
   - If proposing work that builds on an existing project, grant, or initiative, clearly explain how this work is distinct from what is already planned and how SoGES funding will add value beyond existing resources.

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3. Novelty and Innovation

Explain how the proposed work represents a creative or innovative approach to integrating sustainability concepts into the curriculum. Describe why this work would not otherwise be possible without this funding and how it is distinct from existing instruction or standard course updates.

4. Plan of Work

Outline how the proposed work will be carried out. Briefly describe:
- A timeline for completing the work
- Key milestones or deliverables
- Any anticipated training, research, or interdisciplinary collaboration needed to support the curriculum updates
- How you will assess whether the proposed changes were successful

5. Budget and Spending Timeline

Provide a clear budget and timeline for how funds will be used. Allowable uses of funds may include summer salary, course buyout, undergraduate or graduate student support, workshops or training, research or development time, guest speakers, or instructional materials. **Examples of past funding uses include: course development time, guest speakers, workshops or training, conference-related curriculum development, student research or teaching assistance, and instructional materials.** All salary requests must include fringe. Funds may not be used to increase the pay rate of 12-month salaried employees. **Funds are available beginning May 15, 2026 and must be fully expended by June 30, 2027.** It is helpful to indicate in your budget narrative whether any requested **summer salary could be spent between May 15 and June 30, 2026.**

6. Contribution to Broader Campus Curriculum (required; not scored)

Briefly (2-3 sentences) describe:
a.   the improvement being made or the new course being created, and
b.   how others across campus might engage with, learn from, or adapt this work. This information will be used in a SoGES-hosted curriculum idea exchange during the grant year.

7. CV(s)

Not included in the 2-page limit.

8. Department Head Letter (new courses only)

For newly proposed courses, include a brief letter of support from the department head confirming departmental awareness and support.

Selection Priorities

Priority will be given to proposals that:
1. Originate from STARS-identified priority departments
2. Move courses toward the sustainability-focused STARS designation.
3. Reach large numbers of students and/or strengthen sustainability-related credentials (certificates, minors, majors).
4. Demonstrate strong interdisciplinary integration, high-impact practices, and/or cross-college collaboration.
5. Are clearly developed, feasible, require investment for the proposed updates, and well-aligned with program goals.

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Abbreviated STARS Course Definitions
- **Sustainability-Focused Course:** Sustainability is a primary organizing concept of the course. Course descriptions and learning objectives make clear the integrated treatment of environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability.
- **Sustainability-Inclusive Course:** The course focuses primarily on another subject but incorporates meaningful sustainability content (e.g., a sustained module, assignments, or themes related to sustainability challenges). Ideally, sustainability is reflected in learning objectives.

Proposals that meet the sustainability-inclusive bar will be considered; preference will be given to proposals that move courses toward sustainability-focused designation.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How can I tell if my idea will be considered a sustainability-focused or sustainability-inclusive course?
Use the abbreviated STARS definitions above. Sustainability-focused courses center sustainability as a primary organizing concept; sustainability-inclusive courses meaningfully integrate sustainability content within another primary focus. For the full STARS definitions, please refer to the Technical Manual, pg. 5-6.

I teach in a department that is not on the priority list. Can I still apply?
Yes. This call is open to all departments; proposals from priority departments will receive preference.

My course currently has nothing to do with sustainability, but I'd like to make the connection. Can I apply?
Yes. We encourage proposals that introduce meaningful sustainability content into courses where it is not currently represented.

I want to propose something that builds on an existing curriculum project, grant, or research effort. Is that allowed?
Yes, as long as you clearly explain how this grant-funded work is distinct from what is already planned and how it adds significant value beyond existing resources.

My course already includes sustainability content. Can I still apply?
Maybe. These grants are intended to introduce sustainability content where it is not currently included or to support substantial improvements where content exists but could be meaningfully strengthened. If your course already meets the sustainability-focused or -inclusive bar, explain why additional updates are still valuable and substantial.

Can I apply for more than one Curriculum Innovation Grant?
No. An individual may not serve as PI on more than one proposal.

How many grants will be awarded?
We anticipate awarding approximately 3–6 grants during this cycle.

How are proposals reviewed?
Proposals will be reviewed and ranked by a cross-disciplinary panel of CSU faculty and SoGES leadership/committees.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS continued:

Is SoGES seeking proposals from the arts and humanities as well as from the sciences?
Yes. We welcome proposals from all disciplines and encourage applicants to describe how funding would meaningfully advance sustainability education in their course(s).

Can I propose a new course to be housed at SoGES or with a GES prefix?
No.

What in-kind support does SoGES provide that should not be included in the budget?
SoGES can assist with CIM updates, convening/meeting space, event logistics, and communications support. These should not be included as budgeted expenses.

I can't use funds for summer salary. Can I propose other expenses?
Yes. Proposals may request other allowable expenses (e.g., course buyout, student support, workshops/training, research materials) consistent with CSU policies.

Can funds be carried over beyond June 30, 2027?
No. All funds must be expended by June 30, 2027.

I have an idea that doesn't neatly fit this RFP—should I still ask?
Yes. If your idea would meaningfully increase student exposure to sustainability or climate concepts, contact SoGES to discuss fit before applying.

Submission
Submit a single PDF (2-page proposal + CVs) by **April 8, 2026** online at https://smr.to/p108626.