Peer Mentoring Cluster Grants

Peer Mentoring Cluster Grants support the development of small groups of peers whose interactions enrich and strengthen teaching and the teaching life. The grants, awarded in amounts up to $10,000, serve full-time BIPOC faculty who teach Religion or Theology at colleges, universities and theological schools in the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico. These small groups make space for learning, professional growth, mutual support, and communal care.

Peer mentoring conversations–helpful in all seasons of a career–can surface ways to meet the demands of teaching and administrative responsibilities. Minoritized faculty face particular challenges and pressures. Fostering collaborative dialogues of solidarity through peer mentoring is critical for thriving in the academy, providing BIPOC colleagues with strategies to navigate career issues and work-life balance. Peer Mentoring Cluster Grants strengthen those committed to mutually advancing the professional and personal effectiveness of teaching in higher education and theological education.

Typically, the clusters are designed for 6-8 gatherings over the arc of a year–within the parameters of the Wabash Center mission. At least one gathering must be a face-to-face retreat. The conversational focus of PMC Grant, decided while writing the proposal, must be some aspect, practice, or issue of teaching or the teaching life.

Participating in a past or current Wabash Center workshop is not a requirement for faculty considering applying for this grant.

The Wabash Center encourages the exploration and utilization of the following principles and practices in the cluster's design and planning:
- Peer Mentoring Clusters honor a communal approach toward relationship building, which engenders reciprocity.
- Peer Mentoring Clusters consider norms of engagement that deemphasize hierarchy and encourage circular/communal models for mentoring.
- Peer Mentoring Clusters thrive when cluster members relate through compassion, curiosity, honest communication, and collaboration.
- Peer-to-peer mentoring flourishes when cluster members work together to curate a hospitable gathering space that is safe, brave, and sacred where peers can bring their whole self.

- Peer-to-peer mentoring flourishes when cluster members work together to cultivate a relational environment that privileges concern for healthy growth and facilitates collegial exploration and learning.
- Peer-to-Peer mentoring can help cluster members identify pedagogical postures, practices, habits, and tools that build from your wholeness.
- Peer-to-Peer mentoring can help cluster members consider and engage the multiple kinds of support, coaching, guidance, training, and continued education needed for the potential long-arch of the teaching life.

Successful proposals:
- are focused upon the needs of BIPOC scholars' identities and professional thriving
- are imaginative and creative concerning ways to strengthen and enrich teaching and the teaching life
- clearly communicate a focus for each of the peer-to-peer BIPOC clusters as well as a clear focus for each of the meetings over a year's time
- emphasize cultural celebration
- emphasize cultural and racial identity (communal and personal)
- facilitate issues of repair, restoration, healing, resilience, and agency
- are designed with the intention to deepen collegial connections among cluster members through activities, conversations, encounters, discoveries and mutual care
- engage mind, body, and spirit through embodied practices and rituals
- emphasize the distinctiveness of the schools' contexts inhabited by each participant
- build a network of support for the exploration of employment context, vocation, and the teaching life ate space to foster dialogues of honesty, vulnerability, and empowerment

- # Key Dates
    - **Application Deadline:** March 10, 2026
    - **Cluster Leader Orientation (mandatory):** May 7, 2026, 12–3pm ET

Submitting a Peer Mentoring Cluster Proposal

Application Deadline: March 10, 2026.
Login to *my*wabash
Select > Peer Mentoring Cluster

Through the online application portal, applicants are required to attach the required documents (pdf format) to the online application, including a signed copy of the Grant Information Form, the Proposal Narrative & Budget, and a CV document containing one-page CVs of each participant.

Submitting a Project Grant Proposal

3 parts need to be included in a Wabash Center Project Grant Application.

You will be prompted to attach the required documents (pdf format) to the online application, including a signed copy of the Grant Information Form, the Proposal Narrative & Budget, and an Institutional Letter of Support.

You will be prompted to attach a signed copy of the Grant Information Form, the Project Proposal, and the signed Institutional Letter of Support to the online Grant Application.

Part 1 – Grant Information Form

The Grant Information Form requests information necessary for the consideration of your proposal, including contact information, grant project dates, amount of the grant request, and a 150-word proposal abstract (which might be uploaded on the website pending your acceptance). The Grant Type to select is "Peer Mentoring Cluster."
This form requires contact information and signatures for:

- **The Cluster Leader or Project Director/s**: The person/s responsible for providing narrative report on grants, typically the person/s overseeing the administration of the grant and writing the project proposal to apply for the grant.

- **Cluster Participants** (NO SIGNATURES REQUIRED).

- **The Financial Contact**: The person responsible for receiving the check and providing financial reports of expenditures for the institution. This should be a different person than the project director.

- **The Authorization Contact**: The person authorized to sign grant contracts for the institution.

Part 2 – Proposal Narrative and Budget

Successful proposals will include specific examples, demonstrate thoughtful reflection about the project's presenting problem, identify and address relevant pedagogical questions, attend to the alignment of the design with the goals, and provide clear plans for evaluating, assessing, and responding to what was learned during the course of the project.

In 1000-1250 words, please:
- Describe the focus of the proposed BIPOC peer-to-peer mentoring cluster, the relevant context for this work, and why it is necessary for you at this time. Describe the racial and identity politics the members of your cluster are navigating.
- List 3-4 aims/goals you have for mentoring, building networks, nurturing friendships, and/or moving toward community within the cluster. State how you will know, after a year of meetings, that this set of conversations has met your aims/goals.

- Describe who will be involved in the cluster and what they will contribute to the articulated goal(s).
- Describe the collaborative practices and processes for internal evaluation to assess what is happening throughout the cluster cycle.
- Narrate the structure and timing of the conversations and gatherings, including details about the strategies and objectives for each stage; group activities, rituals, excursions, and encounters throughout the mentoring cluster cycle; cultural enrichment relevant to the focus of the peer-to-peer mentoring cluster, and facilitated discussions germane to the focus.

Line Item Budget and Budget Narrative

In consultation with your institution's financial officer, build a budget to support the activities projected, delineating yearly estimates if requesting a multi-year grant. Provide a brief narrative in support of each line item expense. Make sure the budget is congruent with how expenses can be allocated at your institution. Institutional indirect costs are not permitted for this size of grant. Read: [Grant Budget and Expense Guidelines (pdf)](#)

Curriculum Vitae
- Attach one document containing a one-page CV for each of the participants in the Peer Mentoring Cluster

Part 3 – Institutional Letter of Support
- Written on institutional letterhead by a dean, department chair, provost, president, principal, or rector
- Demonstrates institutional support and engagement with the project
- Describes how the institution will respond to what is learned during the grant
- Must be signed, scanned, and attached to the application
- If the project director holds one of the above offices, the letter must come from someone higher in the institution

Policy on Deadlines for Program Deadlines

The program deadlines are meant to facilitate application by a wide array of participants, as well as create fairness in the selection process. Program deadlines also assist administrative staff who work to support each group and all programs. The Wabash Center will, when we see the necessity, extend the deadline of an application process. We will rarely, if ever, extend the deadline for individual requests. We ask participants, as well as recommenders, to respect these important deadline boundaries. Adherence to deadlines foster fair-mindedness and a spirit of collegiality. Should an issue need to be arbitrated, please be in touch with the Director of the Wabash Center.

Orientation for Cluster Leaders
Date: May 7, 2026, 12–3pm ET (mandatory)

This orientation introduces grant leaders to Wabash Center staff, peers, and requirements. During the session, leaders will:

1. Share their project's vision, aims, and strategies
2. Explore practices for effective mentoring and community-building
3. Refine their designs through conversation with other leaders
4. Review reporting requirements and dissemination strategies
5. Consider ways their project may foster institutional change