



## 2026 Large Grant Request for Proposals

The Wabash Center is pleased to announce its request for proposals in 2026. Colleges, Seminaries, and Universities teaching religion and theology may submit proposals for **up to \$30,000** that may be used for a period of **up to two years**. Proposals may be targeted to establish new projects or enhance existing programs that support improving teaching and/or deepening the teaching life. All proposals *must* be focused on some aspect of improving teaching or the teaching life. The Wabash Center is especially interested in supporting programs that help faculty address one or more of the following objectives:

- Strengthening teaching practices that attend to and respect minoritized, marginalized, or new immigrant populations of colleagues and/or students.
- Enhancing teaching practices that are more fully aware of the teacher as a whole person for the health and wellbeing of the faculty community.
- Drawing more fully on the arts, imagination, and creativity to enhance the experience of teaching and the teaching life.
- Creating opportunities for faculty networking, faculty exchanges, faculty connection through retreats, excursions, and pilgrimages that help faculty expand their vision of teaching and the teaching life.
- Enhancing teaching practices that more intentionally equip the teacher with practices of critical and imaginative reflection upon teaching.
- Developing teaching practices centered on issues of justice, civic engagement, techniques of advocacy and activism for more learner-centered experiences.
- Forming deliberate conversation groups to discuss and reimagine the classroom in a digital age.

We encourage you to consider such guiding questions as:

- In what ways might faculty develop instruction based on newly formed/ing expectations of learners and faculty?
  - In what ways might a narrative approach to pedagogy assist with newly-forming institutional identities and newly-forming communities in institutions;
- In what ways may faculty be better prepared for teaching in unfamiliar and/or changing circumstances (i.e. teaching in urban locations, climate of national politics, climate grief, AI)?
  - What might be some ways to navigate the classroom when the political climate begins to affect student engagement and learning in the classroom?

- In what ways might faculty explore ways of teaching while grieving and/or teach students who are grieving?
  - In what ways may grief and mental health impact the classroom? And what are ways to navigate the impact?
  - How might we design multilayered conversations and practices that tend towards healing, restoration, and wholeness in one's teaching identity?
  - How might we create self-care and communal care practices to better navigate the increase of trauma and mental health concerns within higher education?
- How might we better prepared to teach in an ever evolving, changing landscape?
  - What does it mean to prepare our students to live in a multifaith world?
  - What does it mean for our students to navigate a democracy that is slowly crumbling?
  - How might institutions better engage in interreligious dialogue?
- In light of the ever-evolving landscape of higher education, what are the new patterns of being a faculty member?
  - How might schools consider how their faculty profiles are changing—the increase in contingency and adjunct faculty and the decrease of tenure-track and tenured faculty?
  - What type of professional experiences are essential to bolster one's teaching identity?
  - How might we explore aspects of teacher's professional lives that shape their teaching identity (i.e. context, community, narrative teaching identity, subject specialization/discipline, family dynamics)
- In what ways might institutions tackle issues of social justice, equity and belonging?
  - In what ways might our institutions design more ecology-based justice initiatives?
  - In what ways might our institutions address issues of racism, bigotry, prejudice, and discrimination?
  - In what ways might our institutions address LGBTQIA+ issues?
  - In what ways are schools embracing the richness of racial diversity on the faculty as well as celebrating racial particularity?

We encourage you to consider such methodologies as:

- Establishing cohort groups for critical and reflective conversations on poignant and complex topics.
- Creating excursions, retreats, or pilgrimages to “go see,” then reflect upon the experience.
- Making use of a case study methodology to bring to bear actual circumstances, events, and experiences for reflection.
- Curating an inter-disciplinary conversation.
- Organizing a faculty retreat that offers greater preparation from outside experts.
- Conversations about the institutional support and ethos needed to sustain long-term commitment.
- Hosting a series of workshops to obtain professional skills, build capacity, and equip faculty to navigate the changing climate of your particular context?
- Creating a community of practice.

**Note:** Please be mindful that these resources cannot be used for curriculum and/or course development. Our mission is geared toward supporting faculty, which inevitably impacts student learning and course/curricula development. Also, as you write your proposal, pay close attention to the list of things that we [do and do not fund](#).

**2026 Special Focus**  
**Educational Experimentation Grant:**  
**Advancing Theology and Religion Education in the Era of Artificial Intelligence**  
*(Exclusively for faculty who teach in seminaries and theological institution)*

The Wabash Center invites proposals for grants up to \$30,000 (for up to two years) from faculty in theological school or seminaries who seek to explore the pedagogical and ethical implications of artificial intelligence (AI) in theological education. The integration of AI into higher education offers unique opportunities and challenges. This initiative aims to 1) equip faculty with critical insight and creativity to navigate the evolving technological landscape, 2) support the development of AI literacy in theological education, and 3) explore how AI reshapes the teaching life, learning environments, and academic values. Ultimately, this grant focuses on educational experimentation with AI as a tool, challenge, and context for teaching theology and religion to strengthen theological education.

**Key Areas of Exploration**

**Required Focus: AI Literacy**

All proposals **must include a focus on developing AI literacy** among faculty—helping educators critically engage with the technologies shaping their contexts. This includes:

- Developing essential knowledge of AI technologies and their implications for teaching and learning.
- Reflecting on ethical considerations, including bias, data privacy, and the influence of AI on academic integrity and human dignity.

**Additional Foci**

In addition to AI literacy, applicants should select one or more of the following areas to focus their projects:

**1. Understanding & Experimenting with AI and Its Role in Education**

- Offer professional development to assist faculty in gaining essential knowledge of AI technologies to integrate and make informed decisions about their classroom use.
- Develop pedagogical skills and approaches to ensure students are fluent in AI practices
- Building interdisciplinary networks for knowledge sharing and innovation in AI between the AI sector and faculty who teach theology and religion
- Explore and experiment with AI tools that empower educators and enhance instructional practices

## 2. **AI Ethics and Justice**

- Explore ethical considerations, including biases in AI tools, privacy concerns, representation, digital literacy, and the implications for academic integrity.
- Foster awareness of how AI intersects with issues such as social justice, equity, and human dignity.
- Investigate how current patterns of inequity might be disrupted or reinforced with/through AI.

## 3. **Optimizing Teaching, Learning, and Student Advancement with AI**

- Investigate how AI can streamline administrative tasks, personalize learning experiences, and foster deeper engagement with course content.
- Experiment with AI tools to enhance skills development, critical thinking, and theological reflection among students.

## 3. **Assessing AI Accuracy, Assessment, and Authenticity**

- Evaluate the reliability of AI-generated content and its role in student assessments.
- Design methodologies for ensuring authenticity in AI-assisted student work, considering the boundaries between assistance and authorship.

## **Grant Guidelines and Eligibility**

Funded Projects should:

- Advance faculty preparedness to teach in an AI-rich environment.
- Address ethical and practical challenges associated with AI in theology and religious academics.
- Produce sharable resources, insights, or practices for the broader academic community.
- Participate in a Wabash-sponsored event to share insights and learnings (AAR session, online gathering)

## **AI Disclosure Requirement**

Please include a brief statement describing how AI tools were used (if at all) in developing your proposal and how they may be used during the project. Transparency in tool usage will help us collectively learn about responsible integration of AI in academic life.

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