Right-Sizing Evaluation for ATE Small Grants
March 19, 2014

The webinar will begin at 1 p.m. Eastern

Introductions

Krystin Martens  Lori Wingate  Dennis Faber  Elaine Craft  Michael Lesiecki

This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under grant number 1204683. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the presenters and do not necessarily reflect the views of NSF.
Objectives

By the end of this webinar, you will...

1. Know the requirements and expectations for evaluation of ATE small grants.
2. Know how to maximize resources so that evaluation brings value to your small project.
### INTRODUCTIONS AND HOUSEKEEPING

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<td>Cost-saving Strategies for Economical Evaluation</td>
<td>Final Questions, Closing Remarks, Survey</td>
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</tbody>
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**Blackboard Orientation**

Type your comments and questions here at any time

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Blackboard Orientation

Select “Room” tab for general comments & questions

In the Chat Box, type
- name of your organization
- how many people are in the room with you today
Materials

We’ll email you everything by the end of the week
Also will be available from evalu-ate.org/events/march_2014

Introduction to ATE Funding

Dennis
Faber

Elaine
Craft
The NSF ATE program focuses on strengthening technician education at the post-secondary and secondary levels for the high-technology fields that drive our nation’s economy.

**NSF ATE Program**

**ATE grantees are expected to:**
- ensure that community colleges lead the grant efforts
- meet STEM workforce needs
- enhance STEM faculty teaching & leadership skills in technician education
- partner with employers & other key stakeholders
Funding Levels

**SMALL GRANTS**
- Institutions New to the ATE Program
- $200K for 3 years

\[\text{3yrs}\]

Funding Levels

**PROJECTS**
- up to $900K for 3 years

\[\text{3yrs}\]
Funding Levels

PROJECTS

- Program Development, Implementation and Improvement
- Professional Development for Educators
- Curriculum & Educational Materials Development
- Teacher Preparation

Funding Levels

CENTERS

National
- up to $5M for 4 years

Regional
- up to $3M for 4 years

Resource
- up to $1.6M, 4 years
Funding Levels

**TARGETED RESEARCH**
ON TECHNICIAN EDUCATION
$1.2M for 4 years

Suggested ATE Funding Pattern

- SMALL GRANTS
- PROJECT GRANTS
- CENTER GRANTS
Evaluation Considerations

Different funding levels usually require different types and extent of evaluation.

Evaluation Considerations

Regardless of funding level, the ATE Program is interested in:

- Impact
- Effectiveness
- Sustainability
- Leveraging prior work, lessons learned, research
Evaluation Effectiveness

Regardless of funding level, high quality evaluation requires:

Clear and specific goals and objectives
Clear and specific goals and objectives

Goal 1: Improve career awareness and increase student enrollment and success in the civil engineering technology program through college in-reach activities to improve career awareness.

Goal 1, Objective 1: Recruit from within the college to increase enrollment in civil engineering by 15% over three years, from a baseline enrollment of 60 first-year curriculum students in 2013-14.

Activities consistent with objectives
Activities consistent with objectives

Goal 1, Objective 1 Activities:

- Select and prepare four well-spoken, diverse student ambassadors from among second-year students in the civil engineering technology program to assist with in-reach events.

- Conduct three types of in-reach events per year for 60 or more already-enrolled students, targeting students enrolled in program prerequisites such as College 101 and Intermediate Algebra, classroom presentations by student ambassadors, lunch-and-learn programs with industry speakers, and peer mentoring.

- Student Ambassadors provide informal peer mentoring for up to 15 highly interested students to encourage prospective civil engineering majors.

Clearly defined and stated outcomes
Clearly defined and stated outcomes

- In response to student ambassador presentations in targeted classes, at least 25% of those enrolled in the classes indicate an increased interest in majoring in civil engineering.
- Lunch-and-learn programs each year attract 30 prospective students, of whom 50% are likely to choose the civil engineering major.
- Peer mentoring is provided to 15 or more students indicating they are likely to choose the civil engineering major.

Quantitative and qualitative outcome measures
Evidence to support your claims

Quantitative and qualitative evidence that implemented strategies worked:
- Event participation data
- Observation of audience interest and interaction with Student Ambassador speakers and industry speakers
- Event participant interviews or survey data
- Student Ambassador interviews and feedback
- New student interviews and feedback
- Faculty interviews and feedback
- Baseline fall 2013, and ....SO WHAT?
- Fall 2015 and fall 2016 program enrollment data
Right-sizing your project helps to right-size your evaluation.
Right-Sizing Evaluation for Small Projects

Lori Wingate

Image source: expertcytometry.com
Evaluation

The systematic determination of something’s merit, worth, or significance.
Evaluation

1. Ask important questions about a project’s processes and outcomes.
2. Gather evidence that will help answer those questions.
3. Interpret the results and answer the questions.
4. Use the information for accountability, improvement, and planning.

Big v. Small

Conceptually, there is no difference between evaluating a small project and evaluating a large project.

Practically, evaluations of small projects involve
- smaller evaluation questions
- fewer evaluation questions
- less data
- shorter timelines
- smaller budgets
EXAMPLE

eLABorate Success Project

$139,658 | 2010-12
Northeast Wisconsin Technical College

...faculty-initiated project in response to challenges associated with the open lab format used at the college. Because students use the lab on an open-entry/open-exit basis, the staff member on hand at any one time might not have the expertise needed to help the student. To address this challenge, the staff is implementing a strategy of cross training, support and enhancement that provides all faculty members with enough knowledge to deal with basic content issues and questions in the shared concentrations (Electrical Engineering Technology, Electronics/Biomedical Technology, Electro-Mechanical Technology, and Automation Engineering Technology). ... 

Goals:
1. Enhance the quality of students’ learning experience in the Manufacturing Technology Center by improving the instructor’s ability to assist all students in select courses.
2. Improve the quality of the labs.
3. Increase the percentage of students successfully completing courses on his/her first attempt. 

1. What is the problem or need being addressed by this project?

←Failure rate must be relatively high
2. What are the main project activities?

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3. Who are the primary participants in the project’s activities?

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4. What will be different for faculty because of the project?

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5. Who is ultimately supposed to benefit from this project?
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6. What is expected to be different for students because of the project?

1. What is the problem or need being addressed by this project?

Need

Faculty do not have adequate knowledge to assist students in open labs.

A significant number of students are performing poorly courses requiring open lab work.
2. What are the main project activities?
3. Who are the primary participants in the project’s activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
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4. What will be different for faculty because of the project?

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6. What is expected to be different them?

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<td>Students learn more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students are successful in their courses.</td>
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Need, activities, and outcomes are logically linked

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Evaluation Questions

To what extent did the training meet the needs of faculty?

- **Activities**: Train faculty staffing the lab on all equipment.
- **Outcomes**: Faculty are able to help students in the lab.
  - Students learn more.
  - Students are successful in their courses.

Evaluation Questions

To what extent did the training improve the faculty’s competence with lab equipment?

- **Activities**: Train faculty staffing the lab on all equipment.
- **Outcomes**: Faculty are able to help students in the lab.
  - Students learn more.
  - Students are successful in their courses.
**Evaluation Questions**

**Activities**
- Train faculty staffing the lab on all equipment.

**Outcomes**
- Faculty are able to help students in the lab.
- Students learn more.
- Students are successful in their courses.

**To what extent did the training improve student performance in lab-related courses?**

**Evidence: Matching Data to Questions**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>EVALUATION QUESTION</th>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
<th>DATA SOURCES/METHODS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| To what extent did the training meet the needs of participating faculty? | - Faculty self-report of satisfaction, relevance, engagement  
- Degree to which training covered all lab equipment | - Interviews or surveys of participating faculty  
- Review of training content and/or PI self-report |
### Evidence: Matching Data to Questions

#### EVALUATION QUESTIONS

**To what extent did the training improve the faculty’s competence with lab equipment?**

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<td>Faculty self-report of learning</td>
<td>Interviews or surveys of participating faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of faculty participation</td>
<td>Project records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants’ ability to operate lab equipment</td>
<td>Performances tasks during training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student satisfaction with the help they receive in labs</td>
<td>Surveys or interviews of students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### EVALUATION QUESTIONS

**To what extent did the training improve student performance in lab-related courses?**

<table>
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<td>Student grades on assignments requiring lab work</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student grades for lab-related courses.</td>
<td>Provided by faculty teaching courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students passing courses on first attempt</td>
<td>Institutional data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evaluation

✓ Ask important questions about a project’s processes and outcomes.
✓ Gather evidence that will help answer those questions.
3. Interpret the results and answer the questions.
4. Use the information for accountability, improvement, and planning.

Interpretation

<table>
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<th>TARGETS</th>
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<td>To what extent did the training improve student performance in lab-related courses?</td>
<td>Student grades on assignments requiring lab work</td>
<td>75% of students will achieve a grade of ‘C’ or better on all assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student grades for lab-related courses</td>
<td>75% or more of students will achieve course grade of ‘C’ or better in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of students passing classes on first attempt</td>
<td>Increase from 50% to at least 75%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Compare results with targets in order to answer questions
Evaluation

- Ask important questions about a project’s processes and outcomes.
- Gather evidence that will help answer those questions.
- Interpret the results and answer the questions.

3. Use the information for accountability, improvement, and planning.

Using Evaluation

Accountability
- Include results in your annual report to NSF
Using Evaluation

Accountability
- Include results in your annual report to NSF

Improvement
- Monitor results as data are gathered to determine if changes are needed in implementation

Planning
- Determine what worked and what didn’t as you plan your next project
- Summarize outcomes and lessons learned in your next proposal’s “Results of Prior NSF Support” section

Evaluation

✓ Ask important questions about a project’s processes and outcomes.
✓ Gather evidence that will help answer those questions.
✓ Interpret the results and answer the questions.
✓ Use the information for accountability, improvement, and planning.
ATE Program Goals

– produce more qualified science and engineering technicians to meet workforce demands
– improve the technical skills and the STEM preparation of these technicians and the educators who prepare them
“What does NSF want to see in a project evaluation?”

Ask your program officer!

(If you’re not sure who your PO is, find out!)
Check out the NSF User-friendly Guide to Project Evaluation

Keyword search our DIGITAL LIBRARY ON “friendly”
www.evalu-ate.org/resources

NSF Expectations for Evaluation

Read the solicitation carefully for clues and cues for expectations for ATE project evaluation
NSF Expectations for Evaluation

ATE-Specific INTELLECTUAL MERIT Criteria about Evaluation:

“Is the evaluation likely to provide useful information to the project and others?”

“The most important purpose of evaluation is not to prove, but to improve.”

—Daniel Stufflebeam
NSF Expectations for Evaluation

CURRICULUM AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

“Evaluation activities are deep and broad, demonstrating the impact of the project on many students and faculty. Evaluation must include measures of increased student learning of content and processes and have input from employers.”
NSF Expectations for Evaluation

CURRICULUM AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

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NSF Expectations for Evaluation

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

“Evaluation should demonstrate use in the classrooms and sustainable changes in practice of participating faculty and teachers. Changes in student learning outcomes as well as students' perceptions of technical careers should be measured.”

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NSF Expectations for Evaluation

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

“Evaluative activities should provide evidence on the extent to which the project goals and objectives are realized.”
PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Evaluative activities should provide **evidence** on the extent to which the project goals and objectives are realized.

**BUT WAIT!**

A new solicitation for 2014 proposals will be issued soon.
Questions & Comments

Introductions and Housekeeping
Introduction to ATE Funding
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Right-sizing Evaluation for Small Projects
Comments & Questions Break
Evaluation in the ATE Program
Cost-saving Strategies for Economical Evaluation
Final Questions, Closing Remarks, Survey

Cost-saving Strategies for Economical Evaluation
Lori Wingate
Investing in Evaluation

- Evaluation is too small: Minimal investment yields minimal return.
- Evaluation is too big: Drains resources away from project implementation.
- Evaluation is just right: Adds value to the project.

Budgeting for ATE Evaluation

“The funds to support an evaluator independent of the project or center must be requested and the requested funds must match the scope of the proposed evaluative activities.”
Budgeting for ATE Evaluation

The funds to support an evaluator independent of the project or center must be requested and the requested funds must match the scope of the proposed evaluative activities.

What makes an evaluator INDEPENDENT?

- Does not have other roles on the project
- Is not supervised by someone who works on the project
- Has no financial or intellectual stake in the project’s success
Degrees of evaluator independence (externality)

- Internal to project
- External to project, but internal to institution
- External to both project and institution

**MUST** have an external evaluator

---

Degrees of evaluator independence (externality)

- Internal to project
- External to project, but internal to institution
- External to both project and institution

**MAY** also have an internal evaluator
Evaluators in the ATE program

Any type of evaluator: 94%
Evaluator external to both project and institution: 77%
Both internal and external evaluators: 8%
Evaluator external to project, internal to institution: 4%
Internal evaluator only: 3%

Budgeting for ATE Evaluation

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How much does evaluation cost?

On average, ATE projects allocate 8% of their budgets to evaluation.

Median expenditure among small projects: $5,000/year
How much do evaluators get paid?

Salaries vary widely:
~$200/day to ~$2,000/day

For illustration
Average daily rate of a U.S. associate professor: $640/day

$15,000 total evaluation budget
$640 daily rate
= 23 days total (not accounting for travel and other costs)
< 8 days/year

Cost-saving Strategies

1. Develop a tracking system to monitor project reach and participation.
2. Maintain a record of key project activities and accomplishments
3. Utilize institutional research data to the fullest extent possible.
4. Leverage internal and external evaluation to answer the most important questions.
Cost-saving Strategies

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Keep good records!
1. Develop a tracking system to monitor project reach and participation.

Use spreadsheet or database software to keep a log of WHO PARTICIPATED and their
✓ key demographics
✓ contact information
✓ involvement in the project, including dates

EvaluATE Example:
Tracking Reach & Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College administrators</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluators</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIs</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project staff</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No ATE role</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoPIs</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ATE role</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
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</table>
**EvaluATE Example:**

**Tracking Reach & Participation**

Data on project participants are also needed for:
- NSF annual reports
- ATE annual survey
Cost-saving strategies

1. Develop a tracking system to monitor project reach and participation.

2. Maintain a record of key project activities and accomplishments.

3. Utilize institutional research data to the fullest extent possible.

4. Leverage internal and external evaluation to answer the most important questions.

2. Maintain a record of key project activities and accomplishments.

A vita for project or center provides succinct documentation of your past performance and capacity for future work.
2. Maintain a record of key project activities and accomplishments.

- Mission
- Goals
- Funding
- Staffing levels
- Activities/Deliverables
- Personnel (including paid staff, consultants, and collaborators)

Puts lots of the information you’ll need for your NSF annual report at your fingertips
Cost-saving strategies

1. Develop a tracking system to monitor project reach and participation.
2. Maintain a record of key project activities and accomplishments (e.g., a project fact sheet or vita).
3. **Utilize institutional research data to the fullest extent possible.**
4. Leverage internal and external evaluation to answer the most important questions.

Institutional Data

- student ID
- demographics
- program of study
- retention
- graduation
- track over time
- create comparison group

Make friends with your institutional research person now.
Find out how and when requests should be submitted.
Cost-saving strategies

1. Develop a tracking system to monitor project reach and participation
2. Maintain a record of key project activities and accomplishments (e.g., a project fact sheet or vita)
3. Utilize institutional research data to the fullest extent possible.
4. Leverage internal and external evaluation to answer the most important questions.

4. Leverage internal and external evaluation to answer the most important questions.
External Evaluator as Coach

External evaluator provides guidance and feedback to the project team throughout the project.

External Evaluator as Heavy-Lifter

- External evaluator plays lead role in planning the evaluation, designing instruments, analyzing results, and writing the report
- Project team gathers data
External Evaluator as Architect

- External evaluator designs the overall evaluation and data collection instruments.
- Project team executes the plan.

Divide and Conquer

- Internal team responsible for evaluation of reach, participation, and immediate outcomes.
- External evaluator responsible for evaluation for longer-term outcomes.
EvaluATE Example: Internal-External Evaluation of Webinars at EvaluATE

- View recording of last year’s webinar on same topic
- Review results from previous webinar evaluation survey
- Revise webinar content and structure based on identified strengths and weaknesses
**EvaluATE Example: Internal-External Evaluation of Webinars at EvaluATE**

1. View recording of last year’s webinar on same topic
2. Review results from previous webinar evaluation survey
3. Revise webinar content and structure based on identified strengths and weaknesses
4. Debrief about event & record notes on perceived strengths and weaknesses
5. Compile webinar evaluation survey results
EvaluATE Example: Internal-External Evaluation of Webinars at

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- Revise webinar content and structure based on identified strengths and weaknesses
- Debrief about event & record notes on perceived strengths and weaknesses
- Compile webinar evaluation survey results
- Use results to inform planning for next webinar

External evaluator collects data annually about:
- Participants’ perceptions of the overall quality and utility of webinars
- Extent of use of EvaluATE resources
- Impact on evaluation practices
**Internal Evaluation**
- View recording of last year’s webinar on same topic
- Revise webinar content and structure based on identified strengths and weaknesses
- Compile webinar evaluation survey results

**External Evaluation**
- Review results from previous webinar evaluation survey
- Debrief about event & record notes on perceived strengths and weaknesses
- Use results to inform planning for next webinar

**EvaluATE**
- External evaluator collects data annually about:
  - participants’ perceptions of the overall quality and utility of webinars
  - extent of use of EvaluATE resources
  - impact on evaluation practices
- Results included in reports to NSF and National Visiting Committee

**Questions & Comments**
- Introductions and Housekeeping
- Introduction to ATE Funding
- Comments & Questions Break
- Right-sizing Evaluation for Small Projects
- Comments & Questions Break
- Evaluation in the ATE Program
- Comments & Questions Break
- Cost-saving Strategies for Economical Evaluation
- FINAL COMMENTS & QUESTIONS

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Introducing...

FAS4ATE
FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS FOR ATE

The FAS4ATE project seeks to identify key evaluation questions and data to help PIs make real-time changes to improve their projects.
They are seeking PIs and evaluators interested in engaging in a process of logic modelling and evaluation planning, culminating in a one day workshop.

Participants will have the opportunity to develop logic and evaluation models specific to their projects, identify real time data sources, plan for data collection systems and interact with colleagues working in the same program areas.
WEBINAR INVITATION:

Making a Logic Model that Works for You

May 21, 2014, 1-2:30 EDT

Learn more and register at

www.evalu-ate.org/events

www.evalu-ate.org

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Events (including past webinars)
Newsletters
Thank You!