

UTSA Connect & Thrive Faculty Mini-Grant

Overview

Faculty-student interactions have long been identified as a high-impact practice in higher education influencing student persistence, success, and thriving (e.g., [Schreiner, 2010](#)). In fact, in a study conducted in Spring 2023, faculty-student connections were found to be one of the greatest predictors of student thriving at UTSA. The Connect & Thrive Faculty Mini-Grant Program is designed to increase overall student-faculty engagement outside of the classroom, enhance students' sense of connection and belonging to UTSA, and develop engaging relationships among faculty and students.

Mini-Grant Process and Funding

UTSA faculty may apply for **one mini-grant of \$1000 per semester**, which will be used to fund a variety of engagement activities to include but are not limited to the following:

- Visit a local art or music exhibit.
- Purchase extra-curricular/interest area material to review and discuss.
- Meet for refreshments or a meal to discuss discipline or interest-related topics.
- Engage in an outdoor activity related to the curriculum.
- Facilitate book or movie club/discussion on current events or topics relevant to discipline/interest area.
- Organize speaker/panel around topics relevant to your field/interests.
- Host career networking activity with alumni and/or other faculty in your discipline.
- Host a game or movie night with refreshments.
- Participate in a community-service activity.

This award is open to all UTSA faculty regardless of academic title. The award is not currently open to Teaching Assistants or Graduate Student Instructors.

Program Requirements & Deliverables

If you are awarded a mini-grant, you are agreeing to the following requirements:

- Participate in an orientation hosted by Student Success and Academic Innovation prior to engaging with students.

- Create a small group, or *familia*, of at minimum 10 students to engage in discussions or activities you plan.
- Organize and engage students in meaningful interactions, events, or activities outside of the classroom **AT LEAST 2 times within the semester.**
- Share the Student Experience Insights survey at each of your events or activities.
- Upload event overview and details, including pictures, to share with program facilitators after each event.
- Complete an end-of-cycle feedback survey to share insights into the faculty experience facilitating a familia or small group.
- Attend at least one check-in meeting hosted by Student Success and Academic Innovation to share your experiences and connect with colleagues leading other familias.

Application Review Process

Please be creative when proposing ideas! Priority will be given to applications that describe intentional interactions with first- and second-year, transfer, or first-generation students.

Applications will be scored on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated understanding of the manners in which faculty-student engagement impacts student success and retention
- Creativity of approaches to engage students
- Potential positive impact of proposed activities
- Clarity and feasibility of plan
- Completeness of responses

Application

To apply, complete the [Connect & Thrive Faculty Mini-Grant online application](#) by 11:59pm on **Friday, August 1 (priority)** or **Friday, August 15 (final)**.

Questions?

For more information, please email StudentSuccess@utsa.edu.