Critical Thinking is one of the three university essential learning outcomes currently being assessed across undergraduate programs. Critical thinking can be described as engaging in an evidence-based and comprehensive study of an issue, idea, event, document, etc., before forming or accepting an opinion or judgment about it. Critical thinking can also be described as higher order thinking in the discipline. Currently, the university assesses critical thinking by sampling student writing in an upper-level course within each major and using a Critical Thinking Rubric developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (for link, click here). In addition, as part of the University’s strategic planning process, each major has integrated at least six High Impact Practices (HIPs) distributed throughout the typical four-year undergraduate curriculum. Most of these HIPs help students to develop critical thinking skills. (For link to HIP list and criteria, click here.)

This request for proposals seeks to establish a second cohort of Critical Thinking Fellows to create opportunities in coursework to build students’ critical thinking skills. Last year, 14 faculty members were funded to work on 13 projects in the inaugural class of Critical Thinking Fellows. Like last year, we seek faculty from various disciplines to form a collaborative, supportive group focused on cross-disciplinary dialogue, structured activities, and reflection in explicitly building and assessing student critical thinking skills. Faculty will work to revise existing, or create new, assignments, tests, and syllabi and to lead class discussions that deepen both students’ awareness of critical thinking and student proficiency with critical thinking skills.

Faculty participants in this project will be expected to attend a two-day summer workshop on May 24-25 in which strategies to improve critical thinking will be discussed and Fellows’ project plans will be refined. Drs. Brian Barnes and Patty Payette from University of Louisville will return to campus to lead this workshop. They will provide a foundational critical thinking framework, instructional design and assessment principles, and specific guidance on the participants’ projects. In the summer, faculty participants will complete their project plans for implementation in Fall 2018.

During the 2018-19 academic year, all participants will attend monthly gatherings as a learning community to deepen knowledge of critical thinking, share ideas, discuss resources, and brainstorm solutions to problems. Each participant will be awarded $200 for attending the summer workshop and $1300 for: working on the summer project, fully participating in meetings during the academic year, serving as a resource for departmental colleagues, and submitting assessment data at the end of the project. Moreover, fellows will be invited to share their work with department, school/college, and university colleagues at venues including, but not limited to, college meetings, CTEI Learn@Lunch workshops, and the annual Curriculum Festival. Finally, Critical Thinking Fellows will be supported through the faculty learning community in developing a scholarship of teaching and learning project to assess the effectiveness of their project.

Please address all of the following in your application (two pages, maximum):

1. **Background Information**
   Include your name, department, and the course number and title for the course in which you are planning to work on student critical thinking skills. Is this course a requirement for
a major? How many students do you anticipate will be impacted by your course in the coming year, and each academic year thereafter? Please indicate if your course includes one of the six HIPs identified for your program.

2. **Innovative Teaching Activities to Date**
   Briefly describe particularly innovative teaching activities in which you have been involved. This may include past efforts or events attended to improve your teaching and the subsequent changes made, development of new curricular materials, etc.

3. **Your Critical Thinking Problem or Question**
   What specific problem(s) do you see in your course where student critical thinking skills are concerned? What thinking skills need development or improvement? In answering this question, review the AAC&U or your department’s critical thinking rubric to get a sense of the attributes and vocabulary of critical thinking most relevant to your program.

4. **Your Goals for Students as Thinkers**
   What is your goal during the Fellowship year in terms of improving critical thinking? Share some early thinking or preliminary plans you have in mind for improving student critical thinking skills in your course. [Note: These are subject to change as faculty participate in the workshop and develop plans during the summer of 2018.]

5. Please have your department Chair and Dean indicate support of your application by signing your proposal.

**Applications are due via email to Desiree Kleykamp (kleykamp@hartford.edu) by Friday, April 27, 2018.**

Thank you!
Jean McGivney-Burelle and Jim Shattuck