PALS Curriculum Development Grants

Grant Overview

The PALS Curriculum Development Grant program is committed to furthering the core mission and values of PALS to support, expand, and inspire sustainability in arts and design higher education. Faculty and academic staff are encouraged to **submit an application for a $1000 USD curriculum development grant for the 2026/2027 grant cycle**. Grants should address the key mission and values of PALS.

We encourage curriculum development grants that address:
- innovations in sustainability teaching and learning
- materials resource pedagogy
- intersectional teaching and learning in higher education arts and design

The PALS Curriculum Development Grant supports arts and design faculty and academic staff to create and cultivate learning experiences that move beyond awareness to inspire agency. By addressing sustainability challenges through creativity, collaboration, and critical reflection, the grant supports curricula that empower students to imagine alternatives, build resilience, and take meaningful action in their own work and communities.

We encourage cross-disciplinary and collaborative (multiple courses, departments, institutions) curriculum development.

Mission Statement

The Partnership for Academic Leadership in Sustainability (PALS), an initiative of AICAD, promotes academic sustainability in art and design higher education institutions. We believe it's vital that creative education places sustainability at its core, preparing artists and designers to lead in shaping a more sustainable future.

PALS is committed to collective action and community; we harness shared resources and partnerships to embed sustainability at the heart of art and design education.

PALS Values

- **Collective action and community** – We harness shared resources and partnerships to embed sustainability at the heart of art and design education.
- **Impact & innovation** – We provide an opportunity for member schools to collaborate to address the challenges of global climate change and other key sustainability issues through the power of creativity and an art and design education.
- **Ecocentric over egocentric** – The diversity of strengths within our collaborative network cannot be replicated by any individual school.
- **Strength in collective commitment** – We uphold the importance of convening as a network to celebrate progress, renew dedication, and build the collective knowledge needed for lasting impact.
- **Active participation** – PALS participants are active collaborators who engage fully—sharing ideas, offering feedback, and helping shape the collective work of the network.
- **Equity, access, and meaningful engagement** – We believe in decolonizing approaches that create space for equitable and meaningful participation across our community.

Use of Funds

Funds may be used for (but not limited to):
- Materials for innovations in studio/lab processes
- Faculty curriculum development labor and time
- Participation in professional development opportunities that result in new curriculum or material innovations
  Note: This is not a grant for presenting work or attending conferences or symposia unless participation directly supports curriculum or material development outcomes.

Successful grant proposals will result in specific curriculum for a class, department, or institution (a course module or a new or adapted course). While the funds may be used for professional development, material innovations, and curriculum development, the application should indicate which courses/curriculum will benefit from the grant work product.

We welcome inquiries from faculty and staff about how proposals might be shaped according to these guidelines.

Grant Report/Outcomes

PALS is actively engaged in co-creating shared resource hubs for innovations in sustainability teaching, material resources, and intersectional approaches. A Grant Report is the final step of the grant process. After the proposed project takes place, grantees should write a clear and shareable report of the project, including:

- Name and Institution
- Specific need the grant addresses
- Alignment with PALS Mission/Values
- Overview of work process
- Institution, department, course, and/or student impact
- A project description, studio/lab procedure/material processes outline
- Assessment or measure of success for the project

Eligibility

This grant is open to faculty and academic staff (with priority given to those from AICAD Schools) who play an active role in teaching, curriculum development, or academic programming in art and design higher education.
In an effort for equity, we will aim to distribute across as many applying institutions as possible.

Application Process
- Grant announcement: **February 19, 2026**
- Applications due: **April 15, 2026**
- Grant awards announced: **May 15, 2026**
- First award distribution $750: **within two weeks of AICAD receiving funding paperwork**
- Grant work period: **May 15, 2026 - May 15, 2027**
- Summit attendance: **late February 2027**
- Submit report, present at PALS Summit or PALS Presents (or other as agreed upon): **May 1, 2027**
- Final award distribution $250: **Upon submission of report or presentation**

Grant Proposal Review Criteria

1. Alignment with PALS Mission & Values
The proposal demonstrates a clear connection to the core mission and values of PALS, advancing sustainability in higher education arts and design through creativity, collaboration, and collective action. Strong proposals articulate how the work contributes to innovations in sustainability teaching and learning, materials resource pedagogy, and/or intersectional approaches to sustainability.

2. Curricular Impact & Clarity
The proposal identifies specific, implementable curriculum outcomes—such as a course module, revised course, or new or adapted course—and clearly indicates which courses, departments, or programs will benefit. Successful submissions move beyond awareness to inspire student agency and demonstrate how sustainability concepts will be meaningfully integrated into teaching and learning.

3. Feasibility, Innovation & Use of Funds
The proposal presents a realistic and well-considered plan for using grant funds to support curriculum development, material or pedagogical innovation, and/or professional development. Strong submissions balance creativity and experimentation with feasibility, clearly demonstrating how the proposed activities and budget will result in tangible curricular outcomes.

Application Overview

- Applicant/team information
- Project overview
- Alignment with PALS mission/values
- Curricular impact
- Budget Breakdown
- What is the planned report or presentation of the grant outcome?

Application Link

Grant Payment

Grant recipients will receive a letter outlining the grant award of $1000 USD, and the process by which grants are paid.

Grantees will be compensated as individuals for their PALS Curriculum Development Grant. Payments will be issued directly by AICAD and processed in accordance with applicable tax regulations. All grantees will be required to submit a completed W-9 form and an ACH authorization form prior to payment. Each grantee will receive an initial payment of $750 at the start of the award period to support project launch and development, followed by a final payment of $250 upon submission of all required deliverables. Payments are considered taxable income, and grantees are responsible for reporting and remitting any applicable taxes.

Funding Acknowledgment & Credit

The PALS Curriculum Development Grants are supported through the Association for Independent Colleges of Arts & Design (AICAD), with funding from the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation.

Questions

We welcome inquiries from faculty and academic staff at any stage of proposal development and are happy to discuss how projects may be shaped in alignment with these guidelines.

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Apply for a 2026-2027 PALS Curriculum Development Grant