

## **Call for Grand Scholarly Challenges Faculty-Led Programming: Funding Opportunity**

The Office of Global Programs is committed to expanding internationalization efforts across the university. As a beacon to the world for progress and uplifting our students through world-class education, UMass Boston must also continue expanding opportunities for our students to gain highly impactful experiences and experiential learning opportunities. This includes increasing faculty-led UMass Boston programs, which are generally short in length and provide the best opportunities for our students with various barriers (cost, personal & family commitments, work schedules, etc.) The Office of Global Programs currently assists faculty in faculty-led program development, connections with partner universities and organizations, logistics, and potential locations. It is our goal to strategically increase short-term faculty-led programs for our students. To this end, we are sending out a call to the campus community for faculty-led program proposals for the Summer 2026, and beyond. We are excited to partner with the Honors College at UMass Boston to assist in funding these new program developments that will align with the University of Massachusetts Boston strategic plan 2022-2032, particularly with faculty-led programs that coincide with one or more of the [Grand Scholarly Challenges](#).

### Overview of the four Grand Scholarly Challenges (GSCs):

UMass Boston will array research, scholarship, and academic programming around four Grand Scholarly Challenges (GSCs)—issues of great consequence and relevance to individuals, families, and communities. These thoughtfully chosen GSCs embody the values and ideals that underpin the university's research and scholarly strengths.

1. **GSC 1: Climate Equity and Urban Coastal Areas:** Climate change is the existential threat of our times. In our harbor city, it is a clear, urgent environmental challenge that touches upon health and wellness, our economic future, and the very livelihood affecting every individual, family, and community in Boston and beyond. UMass Boston will research, design, and implement leading-edge, equitable, and restorative adaptations to and mitigation of the impacts of climate change. And we will infuse an ethic of environmental care into our culture and curriculum through teaching, research, and service initiatives that promote knowledge and action on climate change mitigation and adaptation, and sustainable development moving forward.
2. **GSC 2: Bridging Divides in Health Equity – Cells to Societies:** Societal changes are bringing into focus existing and emerging acute and chronic health challenges fueled by intersecting inequities. Addressing health inequities requires bridging disciplinary divides in understanding the root causes of disease, increasing access to health care, improving mental and physical health outcomes, and addressing health care policy. UMass Boston will contribute to wellness and equity by promoting systems that facilitate access to care and train a diverse, skilled biomedical workforce. We will leverage our strengths in basic, translational,

clinical, social, psychological, and biomedical research and in public health scholarship to empower innovative, transdisciplinary projects.

3. GSC 3: Education for the Future: Reinventing education that fosters inclusive excellence requires strategic, creative inquiry that enables educational structures to support alignment with the histories, experiences, values, and aspirations of students who are not the same as those for whom historical educational systems were designed. UMass Boston will lead in conducting research that facilitates new K–16 educational paradigms, leveraging partnerships to explore collaborative solutions to education for the future, and providing opportunities that align with workforce and community development.
4. GSC 4: Advancing a Just Society – Local and Global Dimensions: Our local community, indeed our economy and society, must address systemic inequities and anti-democratic trends such as the rise of authoritarianism in the United States and beyond, and assaults on truth. These trends, exacerbated by growing inequality and social media, contribute to polarization and the erosion of democratic norms, which limit our ability to address persistent inequities. UMass Boston will promote scholarship focused on developing strategies to safeguard democracy, foster dialogue and civility, and direct collective action toward just and secure futures for all.

**Overview of the funding award for Summer 2026: Available Grants (1 x \$10,000)**

The Office of Global Programs will dedicate \$5,000 per program selected for new faculty-led international programs that will run in Summer 2026. The Honors College will dedicate a matching award of \$5,000 per program for programs that will run in Summer 2026. We ask that the selected department, and/or college, commit a matching amount, or similar, if possible.

This funding will go towards overall program costs, to lower per student costs. Our goal is to have each GSC have an associated faculty-led program by 2027. The selected programs will focus on one or more of the grand scholarly challenges and must be a high-impact program with a key focus on hands-on research and learning opportunities for students. The funding is intended to defray the per-student cost to attend the program, to make participation in these programs available to as many UMass Boston students as possible. The Honors College will host the course section for the faculty-led programs, but the course itself will be open to all UMass Boston students to participate.

**Preferred Program Development:**

- Students will participate in coursework before traveling to the abroad destination university/country, to make the experience on-site as beneficial and impactful as possible.
- Ideally, students will begin a research project in the semester/weeks leading up to the travel component of the course. The research will culminate/continue during the international travel, then be completed once the student returns using what they have learned during their experiences abroad. For example, students begin

their research 4-5 weeks during the start of the summer term, then spend 1-2 weeks abroad, finishing their projects upon return.

- The student-driven research projects ideally will also partner ahead of time with the university partner abroad. For example, a group of students from the host university abroad are paired with UMass Boston students to work collaboratively on their research ideas, then meet in person when the UMass Boston students travel to the location. Collaboration could continue when the students return before a final presentation of their work.

### **Program Selection:**

The Office of Global Programs will convene a campus-wide committee to select the winning program proposal(s). Selection will be based on:

programs that meet the mission of this program call with clear indication of which GSC the program will focus;

- faculty expertise in proposed field of study;
- feasibility of student mobility to the selected location, including affordability, logistics, accommodation, on-site support, access to health & safety;
- climate-friendly on-site programming;
- high-impact deliverables for students who attend the program;
- increased diversity of study fields, students, and study locations not traditionally represented in study abroad programs at UMass Boston

### **Student Selection:**

Selection to this program will be competitive, with a committee to oversee student selection. For the selected department that will run the program, majors and minors of that department will take priority for selection and funding. Selection will be both need-based and merit based, with recommendation from department a strong component of selection. Selected students will be required to engage in detailed recording of their experiences, lessons learned, and engagement with weekly blog posts, post-trip reflections, and participation in a presentation of the program in the Fall after the program completes. Graduating seniors and graduate students will not be considered for participation. Graduate students may apply as Graduate Assistants to the faculty-leader, if the college/department wishes to have one or more join to help lead undergraduates on the program.

**Deadline for Proposals: July 18, 2025**

**Notification of Results: September, 2025**

**Program Proposal's Must Include:**

**Faculty Name:**

**Faculty Email:**

**Department:**

**College:**

1. Identification and Explanation of GSC addressed in this program
  
2. Rationale: why this course, this place?
  
3. Site Description: Any known logistics, partners, places, events, etc. Knowledge of city, area, country, region. Expertise and experience of faculty-leader at this site.

4. Tentative dates and any itinerary items, including locations within country/region to travel to and modes of transportation/ climate-friendly programming.

5. Tentative course description:

6. Tentative course outline: How long will the course be taught in total? How much of the course will be taught in Boston, and on-site abroad? Will the portion of the course taught while in Boston be in person? Days per week? Will the course extend beyond the end of the travel days (i.e. final presentations)? If yes, will the final presentations be open to the university public to attend?

7. How the structure of the course and location will be utilized in support of learning objectives, in particular in giving students hands-on research experience?

8. Plan for intercultural interaction and processing student experiences?
9. Plan to prepare students for risks and for access to emergency services
10. Any identified funds available to lower student cost to attend this program, including departmental or college funds, grants, etc.?
11. Name/Contact for any identified university/partner for logistics and collaboration on site?
12. Plan for air transportation: Purchased as group (more expensive, earlier deadlines, non-refundable), or individually?
13. Costs of faculty to be included in student program fee. Select all that apply:
  - Salary (Enter salary for summer course here)
  - Faculty Airfare
  - Faculty Accommodation
  - Per Diem (including meals):
  - Events, tickets, etc. on site as part of program

---

Signature of Faculty

---

Signature of Department Chair

---

Signature of Dean of College