Request for Proposals:
Consultant in Areas of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Overarching Project Goal

The POD Network is a professional society for people who work at (or with) colleges and universities to improve teaching and learning. Many of our members work in Centers for Teaching and Learning and work directly with professors and instructors, as well as graduate student instructors and Teaching Assistants to improve their teaching and their students' learning. The POD Network provides professional development and a community of practice for scholars and practitioners of educational development and serves as a leading voice on matters related to teaching and learning in higher education.

In this request for proposals, we seek an individual or group who can assist us in our ongoing efforts to examine our processes and practices as they relate to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). We seek a partner experienced in working with non-profit, volunteer-driven organizations, to help us identify systemic inequities, make recommendations, and work with us to create an action plan by which to address them.

About the POD Network

The Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (POD Network) is dedicated to improving teaching and learning in higher education. Founded in 1976, the POD Network provides its members with personal and academic relationships that are essential for professional growth. Central to the POD Network's philosophy is lifelong, holistic, personal, and professional learning, growth, and change for the higher education community.

Vision

The POD Network envisions that all post-secondary institutions value, support, and reward the work of their educators, scholars, and leaders, with an emphasis on teaching as a core scholarly activity, informed by research and reflection, and resulting in success for all students.

Mission

The POD Network exists to provide professional development and a community of practice for scholars and practitioners of educational development, and to serve as a leading voice on matters related to teaching and learning in higher education.

Values

The work and decisions of the POD Network are informed by its commitments to:

Collaboration: The POD Network strives to be collaborative and collegial, with distributed leadership as the basis for governance structures and operations. Sharing resources and expertise are hallmarks of member interactions.

Equity: The POD Network strives to be transparent and inclusive, with ongoing efforts to promote equitable access and involvement, eliminate systemic inequities that result from biases, and support members in advancing social justice. The organization is strengthened by and committed to expanding diversity among and on behalf of members.

Evidence: The POD Network strives to ground practices and decisions in evidence, adapt and reuse proven methods, and innovate to improve upon prior work. Diverse forms of evidence, a variety of inquiry methods, and a basis in theory are recognized as valuable and essential.

Strategic Priorities

Our work is guided by two cross-cutting strategic priorities, which are enacted across our strategic goals The following two sections are taken directly from the [POD Network 2018-2023 Strategic Plan](#):

Diversity and inclusion

One of the POD Network's values is that of equity; diversity and inclusion are important building blocks in service of that value. This priority reflects member priorities, a strong focus at many post-secondary institutions, and the recognition that progress toward equity requires great intentionality in order to reverse marginalization of historically underserved and underrepresented populations at all levels articulated below. Although the POD Network Diversity Committee contributes substantially to this work, efforts must be distributed across many working structures. This priority addresses multiple levels of focus:

- Diversity and inclusion within the POD Network, as displayed via the organization's leadership, event themes and coverage, membership, and publications and other outputs.
- Supporting members' work on diversity and inclusion on their campuses—two- and four-year institutions, public and private, of varying size and specialization—through the provision of resources, exploration of evidence-based practices, and distribution of research.
- Connections with other organizations, so that the POD Network may bring an educational development lens to issues related to diversity and inclusion in higher education more broadly.

Evidence-Based Practice

The POD Network's emphasis on evidence-based practice mirrors its increasing role in teaching and learning; recognizes increased demands for institutional accountability; and supports educational developers' desire and need to demonstrate the impact of their work. This priority also addresses multiple levels of focus:

- Evidence-based decision making for the POD Network's plans and operations, including strategic planning as well as ongoing and new programs and services.
- Evidence of the effectiveness of educational development for higher education broadly.
- Measuring effectiveness of local/campus-based methods and approaches for educational development work.
- Strengthening and promoting the scholarship of educational development.
- Supporting members as they support higher education faculty and instructors in using evidence-based teaching practices.

Organizational Structure

The POD Network is largely run by member-volunteers, with one-third of the board of directors ("Core Committee") turning over annually. The Executive Committee includes the Executive Director and the Current President, Past President, President Elect, and Chair of the Finance Committee, and is largely responsible for carrying out the work of the organization between semi-annual Core Committee meetings. The President serves for three years: one year each as President-Elect, Current President, and Past President. Each role carries distinct responsibilities.

Committees tend to follow the same model, with volunteers rotating through the chair-elect, current chair, and past chair positions in a three year cycle. Eleven standing committees and ten Special Interest Groups (SIGs) play crucial roles in POD Network operations and member-driven programming. Day-to-day operations are handled by the POD Network Executive Director and a small number of part-time staff.

What we do

The POD Network is the largest and oldest educational development organization in the world, with over 1,500 members. The annual conference, our flagship event, consistently draws over 1,200 attendees. Even in 2020, an exceptional year due to travel restrictions, the conference drew 950 attendees. We offer additional virtual events throughout the year and host an active discussion group. More information about the POD Network can be found on our website, podnetwork.org.

Scope of Work

POD Network is seeking to retain the services of an experienced individual or organization to facilitate an equity-focused assessment of the POD Network and to guide our work in DEI. Specific objectives include the following three areas:

1. Conduct an audit of the organization's established policies and practices, including internal- and external-facing activities and structures, through a DEI lens to identify past and ongoing inequities and harmful practices.
2. Make evidence-based recommendations for building a more equitable organizational structure with embedded, iterative opportunities for continuity, leadership development, and continuous improvement.
3. Collaborate with stakeholders to create a clear action plan that will help us address key discoveries from the audit.

Structure of the proposal

Please introduce yourself and/or your organization by providing the following information:

1. **Consultant / Organizational overview**
   - Legal company name and parent company name (if any).
   - Primary mailing address and primary phone number.
   - Leadership / organizational structure (if applicable).
   - Number of years of experience working in the DEI field

2. **Organizational members and expertise**
   - Name and titles of individuals who would work on this project, and current roles and responsibilities.
   - Relevant experience, portfolios, and/or awards.

3. **Experience working with volunteer-based, non-profit organizations**
   - Describe your experience and expertise in consulting with volunteer-based, non-

profit organizations about issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Please address both a) auditing current policies and practices and b) facilitating the development of an action plan to advance the organization.
- Include a list of clients for which you performed work of a similar scope and have provided professional services in higher education or in other non-profit settings. Elaborate on one of the projects to illustrate the process and outcomes of the work.

Address the following questions

In your proposal, please include responses to the following items:

1. Describe your qualifications and ability to do this work, especially with a volunteer-driven, non-profit organization.
2. Describe how you will accomplish each of the three Key Objectives and the processes and methodologies you will employ.
3. Provide a timeline for completing each of the three project components, and indicate what will be expected of you and of us in each stage.
4. Provide a detailed budget and fee schedule.

Partners in this work will be the Executive and Core Committees, the Professional Development, Membership, and Diversity Committees, and the chairs of all committees and special interest groups. (For additional details on the committees, see the Governance section of the web site.)

Submission Guidelines

As an organization interested in submitting a sealed offer in response to this RFP, please submit a proposal in accordance with the evaluation factors provided and the schedule of dates noted below. Proposals should be no more than 8 pages, all inclusive (i.e., no linked documents). Please use 1" margins all around and font size of 11.

We ask that you submit one (1) digital copy in PDF. Please send via email to podoffice@podnetwork.org with a Cc to fglazer@nyit.edu. Include "DEI Consultant" in the subject line. Responses are due no later than 5:00 PM, MST, on the date of RFP submission.

Respondents may modify or withdraw an offer in writing at any time prior to specified deadlines.

Schedule of Dates

DATE	EVENT
March 15, 2021	RFP Issue Date
5:00 PM MST March 22, 2021	Send written questions/requests for clarifications to: podoffice@podnetwork.org
5:00 PM MST March 31, 2021	POD Network's responses to questions/requests for clarification (responses to all questions will be sent to everyone)
5:00 PM MST April 14, 2021	Deadline for submission of proposals to podoffice@podnetwork.org
April 20, 2021	Finalists notified
Week of April 26, 2021	Presentations
June 10, 2021	Approximate date of award
July 1, 2021	Work begins

Evaluation Factors

The following elements will be primary considerations when we evaluate the submitted responses:

1. Completion of all required responses.
2. "Goodness of fit" of your proposal to our organization.
   a. Effectiveness
   b. Realistic scope
   c. Reasonable timeline
3. Demonstrated ability to work with, and provide viable solutions for, a volunteer-based, nonprofit organization.
4. Organizational experience and demonstrated expertise based on record of performance.

5. Demonstrated experience working collaboratively with organizational leadership.
6. Capacity to the work requested in a timely, collaborative, and efficient manner..

All costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals and related documentation, including potential partner presentations to the POD Network, will be the responsibility of the proposed partner. The POD Network is free to withdraw or amend this RFP at any time. The POD Network is not bound in any way by this RFP and has the right to select or not select an organization at its sole discretion. The successful organization selected for this partnership will be expected to enter into a written agreement with the POD Network. Both parties reserve the right to withdraw due to COVID-19 related business disruptions.