

## The FAQs of CI – Everything you Wanted to Know, and Didn't (Know you Wanted to Know)

### Q: What's In It for Me? (student edition)

A: Among other things:

- A unique opportunity to follow your curiosity and exploratory instincts wherever they may lead – build, explore, and design things you've always wanted to.
- An opportunity to partner with faculty, other students, and partners with contagious excitement for what you are undertaking.
- An opportunity to take theory to practice.
- An opportunity to build up your portfolio of accomplishments – your “bundle of sticks” – so that when applying for your dream job, you stand out from everyone else who has a 3.8 GPA.
- An opportunity to change the world!

### Q: What is the Five-Minute Google Test (FMGT)?

A: Every project that is proposed is subject to the Five-Minute Google Test, in which we search the world's base of knowledge to find out if your proposed project has already been done. Creative Inquiry means that the idea has never before been attempted in the history of the world – or if it has been done, it has not been satisfactorily resolved. The FMGT allows us to clear that hurdle.

It's important to note that the FMGT is not about finding reasons to reject proposals – only to challenge you to think beyond your initial idea. Also, it's not just about searching for “products” – we can do an FMGT to look into artistic projects, documentary ideas, or new modes of poetic expression.

### Everything's been done before! How in the world do I pass the FMGT?

A: Yup – it's hard. We take the FMGT very seriously but here are a few suggestions:

- Discuss the idea with other students and mentors and refine it!
- Combine ideas! (Read *The Medici Effect* by Frans Johansson)
- Consider niche demographics, geographies, cultures. Instead of a new health-care delivery system, a health-care delivery app for homeless populations.
- Do your own FMGT, but for inspiration and sparks of ideas or questions.

### Q: What can I use my funds for?

A: The Office of the Vice Provost for Creative Inquiry commits up to \$300 per student involved in a CI project for a nominal project budget. We will also commit 1/3 matching funds for things like conference travel (if you are presenting!), travel for research, etc., and will help you find the rest.

Acceptable use of funds includes things like:

- Supplies (reagents, electronic components, post-it notes, etc.)
- Traveling to collect data, meet partners, perform a play, visit a factory, other bona fide project expenses
- Incentives for research efforts (IRB approval necessary!)
- Food for meetings (when necessary and appropriate)
- Hire a freelancer on Upwork or other websites. Use with care!

### Q: What can I not use my funds for?

A: Things like:

- Salaries or wages for yourself or your faculty partners
- Domain name registration and building websites
- Guest speakers

In general, you should not use these funds for purposes that you can obtain for free from the Lehigh community (e.g. public domain websites, website development, marketing/branding assistance...).

**Q: I am a first-year student. How can I sign up?**

A: At this time, you cannot sign up for CI projects (or Inquiry to Impact—"i2i"—projects) in your first year. Why don't you attend as many LearnX, MakeX, SprintX events instead, and build up your arsenal of ideas that pass the FMGT?

**Q: Is this open to graduate students?**

A: Yes! The CI project can be related to, but should be distinct from, your Masters/PhD research project. For example, it could be a new intellectual pathway that emerged out of your doctoral research. This is a great way to recruit a small team and try it out. Graduate students are expected to sign up for credits too.

**Q: If my Creative Inquiry Project involves human subjects, do I need to get IRB approval?**

A: Yes! The IRB protects research participants...and it also protects your team. Going through the IRB process ensures that you think through every aspect of your study and do it right. You can publish your work only if it has been approved by the IRB...and we really want you to present your work at conferences and publish it in journals. It's actually not that hard and we can help you with it!

**Q: What's In It for Me? (faculty edition)**

A: Perhaps a better question would be...

**Q: Does this count on my PAR?**

A: Yes – in the same way that supervising an independent study would count. Do you get paid? No. Do you get to work with highly motivated, awesome students? Yes! Those students take radical ownership of their projects, and you get to be co-author/co-creator on whatever value is created or produced as a result of the project.

**Q: Does money change hands?**

A: Yes – to a point. We will provide a small budget of up to \$300 per enrolled student for supplies and other needs (reagents, translation services, video equipment, rental fees, transportation, etc.). This is not the case in a traditional independent study. Beyond that, we will help you find additional financial support through existing Lehigh grants and research funding programs, and we will match 1/3 funds to send students to present at conferences, as well as for other dissemination opportunities.

**Q: So how is this different than an independent study?**

A: Independent Studies are of two types: For Type I, you engage in structured guided study of existing knowledge - you read a few books and papers, understand and analyze what has been done, maybe write some papers. For Type II, you take a deeper dive and build on existing knowledge; you create something new; you go beyond what is. The Type I independent studies are great! We are interested in supporting, incentivizing, and elevating the Type II studies that involve Creative

Inquiry...where we go above and beyond what is known; where we take a deep dive and then leap out like a dolphin through the water...

**Q: Who selects the projects for inclusion? How are projects selected?**

A: A panel of students will review all proposal ideas under the supervision of the OVPCI. First, we will look at feasibility issues like the scope of the project, resources needed, and personnel. Once we have checked that the project is feasible and aligns with the ethos of Creative Inquiry, our panel of students will do a FMGT. If the project does not pass, we will gently encourage you to pursue it as a traditional independent study or will work with you to shape your idea into creative inquiry. If the project passes the FMGT, then congratulations! You have a Creative Inquiry project.

We are not looking to exclude projects, we are looking to include as many as possible!

**Q: Are you open to projects that do not have an end “product” for the marketplace?**

A: Yes! We are open to all kinds of creative projects and value creation. If your idea does involve a product for the U.S. marketplace and you wish to make money selling it, you should simultaneously work with the Baker Center for Creativity, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship.

**Q: I don’t know what to create. Any ideas?**

A: A lot of stuff: [here is](#) one big list of some fruits of innovation.

**Q: Is there a “deliverable” expected at the end of the semester? How am I graded?**

A: Early in the semester, we will work with you to identify your potential end results – where you think you can be at the end of the semester. Once those goals and possible outcomes are determined, then your work in the course will be evaluated on how well you have reached them, how impact-oriented you have been, and how dedicated you have been to getting stuff done.

**Q: Why do I have to sign up for credits?**

A: Accountability and responsibility – not that you need them! Plus, the opportunity to leverage academic work into a real portfolio of accomplishment, while progressing toward your degree.

**Q: What happens at the bi-annual CI Expo?**

A: A controlled explosion of creativity and innovation across Lehigh. And there are awards and recognition and free food!

**Q: How are these projects related to the Inquiry to Impact Projects?**

A: CI projects last just a semester or two...a thousand flowers bloom. Lower investments, lower expectations. Some could lead to i2i group projects, which are multi-semester, larger team efforts that lead to big impacts. Everything starts with a small idea, a little question!

**Q: I need \$6,000 to do my research. What should I do?**

A: Talk to your advisor! You could still sign up – we will only provide \$300 per student enrolled on your project, but we will help connect you to other sources of funding at the university.

**Q: I have never done 3D printing (or edited a documentary, or used AutoCAD software, or fabricated something, or worked with power tools, or programmed anything, or x, or y, or z) before. What should I do?**

A: Look for (or request), and attend a LearnX/MakeX/SprintX event that fits your area of need. These are held at Wilbur Powerhouse and other locations on campus throughout the semester.

**Q: I want to build something on a 3D printer, improve my woodworking skills, photograph cool things, or create innovative sculptural art. Are these Creative Inquiry projects?**

A: Maybe, but first you should attend a LearnX/MakeX/SprintX event and do your thing. Then, when it's more of a semester-long project, you can come back to us.

**Q: Does everything need to have measurable, tangible impact?**

A: You shouldn't have to ask, but...yes. You can come up with a new flavor of cupcakes, but preferably they will taste like hope and change or include a nutrient that can feed the world. See our "examples" page for more possibilities.

**Q: Can Lehigh staff members (who are not full-time faculty) mentor projects?**

A: Although faculty have to sign off on students receiving credit for CINQ395, you are absolutely welcome and encouraged to serve as a mentor or even generate a project yourself.

**Q: What if my project idea is tied to an existing faculty line of research?**

A: This does not automatically disqualify the project, but we would want to have a conversation with you first. We cannot fund existing research, but if you have a new idea for your research and have 1-3 students to explore something which could lead to external funding, then we will gladly fund it as a CI project.

Our mission is simply this: support more creative inquiry at Lehigh!

Let's get to work!