

2015-2016 mini-grant awardees: project summaries

1. **Debbie Sturm (with Hannah Pelligrino and Elizabeth Brannon, Honors students), “Peer Support Services for Refugees and Migrants: Assessment, Comparison, and Consultation between Harrisonburg and Malta” (\$3500)**

This is a collaboration between two Honors students and a faculty mentor. The project has several key parts: (a) researching the effectiveness of the peer-to-peer mentoring program used by the Harrisonburg Refugee Resettlement Program, (b) travel to Malta to engage with NGOs and government agencies working on serving migrants’ educational and psychological needs, bringing the results of the effectiveness study in (a) to bear on consultations about and education on peer-to-peer models of support, and (c) writing up the results of the initiative for professional presentation and possibly publication.

A wonderful opportunity for civic engagement (responsible global citizenship – taking part in the problems of the world), engaged learning (field research leading to academic production and undergraduate research), and community engagement (taking part in solving community problems).

FUNDS USED FOR travel support, materials and supplies related to the HRRP study, and preparation of materials for professional presentations.

2. **Michael Davis, “Oral History Archive of Those Displaced by the Creation of the Shenandoah National Park” (\$2700)**

This project includes (a) interviews with individuals (and their descendants) who were displaced by the creation of SNP, along with park officials and historians, (b) archiving and indexing of public materials related to the relocation (currently there is no central database for these materials). The archive will be housed at JMU. The results of the project will be presented at a conference in the final weeks of the semester.

This project includes community service (Michael Davis was approached by the National Park service to work on this job – fulfilling a community need), engaged learning (for students engaging in interviews and archiving), and civic engagement (relating to questions about the responsibilities of citizens faced by, or aware of, such and similar circumstances).

FUNDS USED FOR transportation to the SNP, equipment (digital recorders, storage equipment), and support for the final conference.

3. **Karin Tollefson-Hall, “Support for Low-Income Family Participation in the JMU Summer Art Program” (\$3400)**

The JMU Summer Art Program is a non-profit program that offers art classes for children ages 6-17 in June; usually 150 visitors take part, coming from Harrisonburg, local communities, and neighboring states. This grant allows the expansion of this program to

include low-income families. Hitherto funding has relied entirely on donations; there is no source to generate scholarships. The grant allows for scholarships that cover the costs of attendance for low-income families.

This is a case of community engagement (aiding the community in the pursuit of worthwhile goals).

FUNDS USED FOR covering full tuition for 20 low-income students.

4. Rory DePaolis, “Support for Reducing the Impact of Poverty on Language Ability” (\$2240)

Children in poverty typically live in environments that are not rich in language. This project explores ways to mitigate the effect of poverty on language. The project started last year with funding from CHBS, which allowed for the purchase of equipment to record and analyze language interactions between mothers and children of different socioeconomic classes in order to devise interventions for helping low SES parents overcome the language poverty problem. The mini-grant will help (a) facilitate the collection of more data – 12 more participants for the study, and (b) to expand the study by allowing for the purchasing of resources that will allow for the assessment of language at a later age for comparison. The program fosters many mutually beneficial local partnerships: the Community Health team at Sentara RMH, five local Rotary Clubs, Massanutten Regional Library, and two community health clinics – many of whom have agreed to implement the interventions devised as a result of this study.

This is a case of engaged learning (undergraduate students will be working on this study), community engagement (aiding the community), and civic engagement (engaging in a practice with a view to changing relevant public policy).

FUNDS USED FOR paying low SES families to take part in the study, student labor, and the purchasing of related resources and equipment (the MacArthur-Bates Communicative Development Inventories, and an encrypted hard drive to store the recordings).

5. Anca Constantin & Klebert Feitosa, “Bridging the Science Gap Through Poverty” (\$3000)

This project attempts to overcome peoples’ lack of knowledge about science through comedy. It is staged by two physics professors who are the hosts. There is then a series of interactions between a science expert and the student-led improv/comedy troupe, “New & Improv.’d”. The audience gains crucial insights into how scientists work, what their work has discovered, and what the social and ethical impacts of these discoveries are – all through the use of comedy. An initial, similar program has had great success. This project seeks to expand on that success. The funding will support two such events in the spring in new environments (with associated data collection about the success of the events).

This is a case of engaged learning (a new way to learn about science) and community engagement (science outreach).

FUNDS USED FOR (modest) honoraria for those hosting the events, promotion and advertisement for the 2 events, recording and sound processing of the events, and catering services.

6. Kathleen Overfield-Zook, “Friendly City Chamber Players: New Engagements with Classical Music” (\$3500)

Classical music is considered old and stuffy. The Friendly City Chamber Players are committed to showing that innovative ways of showcasing classical music can lead to far greater appreciation for this kind of music, especially amongst the younger generation. The FCCP’s focus on new venues, innovative seating arrangements, more audience interaction, and the like. The funds will be used to support a FCCP event in the spring semester that services JMU students and the Harrisonburg community.

This is a case of community engagement (serving the community by promoting a good).

FUNDS USED FOR publicity of event and modest honoraria for professional FCCP musicians.

7. Elena Savina, “Engaging Children in the World through the ‘Journey Around the World’ Project” (\$1500)

This project supports the implementation of the global education curriculum ‘Journey Around the World’ at Spotswood Elementary School. The project is aimed at promoting global consciousness/global citizenship. The JATW program prepares children to become responsible global citizens who can work collaboratively towards a sustainable future, and helps them to develop perspective-taking and empathy skills. The curriculum consists of 40 30-minute lessons, and will focus on second grade students. The curriculum is based on a storytelling format where four friends travel around the US and the world. Children encounter problem situations where they have to apply cultural knowledge and prosocial skills to act responsibly.

This is a case of civic engagement (learning to be a responsible global citizen) and engaged learning (innovative learning methods) and community engagement (servicing Spotswood Elementary students)

FUNDS USED FOR development of supporting pedagogical resources, both audial and visual, and a modest honorarium for the second grade teacher (Mrs. Suzanne Gilchrist-Thompson) at Spotswood who will administer the resources.

8. Mollie Godfrey & Sean McCarthy, “Celebrating the Local African-American Community”

During the spring semester, their team-taught course “Representing Black Harrisonburg” will involve its students in researching, designing, and launching a physical and digital exhibit celebrating the legacy of the Lucy F. Simms School, which served African American students in Harrisonburg and the surrounding counties until integration. There is significant community interest in making this exhibit a permanent part of the Simms School, but also interest in a traveling exhibit. They propose to make two exhibits – one permanent, one traveling. The latter is funded by an IDEA grant; the former by this grant. A booklet will be designed to accompany the permanent exhibit.

This is an example of engaged learning (for the students involved), community engagement (promoting the good of the Simms School), and civic engagement (reflecting and acting on important civic history).

FUNDS USED FOR materials, printing, and framing costs associated with the permanent exhibit and 100 copies of a 24 page full color booklet.

9. John Scherepeel, “Kosovo Summer Internship”

Following the signing by President Alger and Kosovo Minister of Education, Science and Technology Arsim Bajrami of a *Memorandum of Understanding* (which seeks to expand education, research, and cultural exchange between JMU and partner organizations in Kosovo), this project will promote interaction between JMU students at JMU’s Florence-based M.A. program in political science (focused on European Union Policy Studies) and partners in public and non-profit institutions in Kosovo. All such M.A. student complete an internship; this project is to create an internship in Kosovo. The project will support finding the right matching institutions for JMU students, travel for internship winners to go to Kosovo to engage in internships there, and the development of post-internship data and findings on the experience (which will be presented in Florence and at JMU).

This is an example of civic engagement (promoting cultural exchange and understanding, aiding in the development of policy studies) and engaged learning (the new internship experience)

FUNDS USED FOR travel, accommodation and per diem support for organizational and internship visits to Kosovo.

10. Mira Williams, “Support for Project Literacy TIPS (Teachers Including Parents & Students)”

This project expands upon an ongoing project that partners Rockingham County preschool program and the Mercy House. The basic goal is to serve the community by addressing literacy needs amongst at risk, low income families in the community. This is to be accomplished by a variety of interventions, including parent literacy nights, Content Acquisition Podcasts (multimedia learning modules with a strong visual and aural component), and ongoing student literacy tutoring. JMU students will be involved with hands-on experience collaborating with teachers, students, and their families (in-school

literacy training for preschool children). The methods employed will be evaluated for effectiveness in a variety of ways. Lastly, the results of the project will be presented by Dr. Williams at professional conferences, with the possibility of student research being involved as well.

This is an example of community engagement (serving a vulnerable part of the community in relation to an important need) and engaged learning (for the students taking part in the project)

FUNDS USED FOR children's books, pay for student assistants, and conference travel to present results.

11. Katrina Gobetz, David McLeod, William Flint, Oliver Hyman, Heather Griscom, & Idelle Cooper, "Student-Driven Research at an Urban Field Site: A Multifaceted Community Learning Approach to Bioscience"

For this project, a group of first-year biology students will conduct a series of interconnected biology research projects at a field site in Harrisonburg. Research conceptualization and planning is student-led; the faculty provide training, mentorship, and supervision from design through completion. Examples of student-conceived projects include: diversity and foraging of small mammals, competition between native and invasive species, site use by migratory butterflies, and many more. As research results come in, they will be archived in a public website. In addition, the property owner is thinking of making the field area into a park, and students will have the opportunity to present their work by making public educational displays. It is planned that students will present their work at the spring 2016 Research Symposium, as well as at regional and national meetings. It is also hoped that students taking part in this experience will serve as mentors for the next cohort of students in following years.

This is an example of engaged learning and community engagement.

FUNDS USED FOR the purchase of equipment (iPads, data software, digital video camera, night vision recorders, camera traps, lights for nighttime survey work, etc.) to support the research activities.

12. Michelle Hesse, Maria Wessel, Amy Russel Yun, Jerry Weniger, April Temple, Jonathan Moquin, Connie Peterson, & Margi Stickney (Department of Health Sciences Interprofessional Education Committee), "Hunger Banquet Student Engagement Event"

This Interprofessional Education Committee wishes to host a hunger banquet – an intentionally controversial event where participants are served meals representative of three different SES classes of Americans. The differences are designed to raise awareness about the tremendous gaps in income and the problem of poverty in the US. The Committee is exploring the possibility for participating students to donate a meal swipe to the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank.

This is an example of engaged learning (innovative way to teach lessons about social justice), community engagement (facilitating aiding lower income parts of the local community), and civic engagement (gaining a greater sense of social responsibility and greater awareness of the gap between rich and poor).

FUNDS USED FOR food, beverages, decorations, props, and advertising for the Hunger Banquet.