

## **Enhancing Global Culture Knowledge at the Salem Campus and in the Salem Community**

### **Description:**

**Provide a general description of your project.**

This Summer Teaching Development Grant will support a two-part project to (1) develop the Honors Colloquium in Western Identity (HONR 13597), which will be a new course offering at the Salem Campus and (2) to begin planning a Cultural Awareness Event that will be finalized and executed by the colloquium students as a way for them to share their course knowledge with the wider Salem and Columbiana County Campus and Community. This is a joint grant request submitted by XXXX

There are three primary learning outcomes for this Colloquium. First students will learn about various world cultures. Although the course title is Western Identity, the actual description in the Kent State University Catalog also includes Non-Western Cultures. This course will use a non-traditional text to introduce and understand cultures: the television show *The Amazing Race*. This show provides an ideal way to explore global cultures since contestants travel around the world, interacting with local residents, and completing tasks related to each unique destination. Second students will learn social theory to understand how their own identity impacts how they see the rest of the world. A central theory will be that of 'the other' and students will read selections from Edward Said and Frantz Fanon to understand this idea. Third students will use their course knowledge to plan and execute a Cultural Awareness Event. This event will take the form of an around the world trip, with information about different countries and cultures presented in a fun and engaging format. Event attendees will be able to sample new foods and get a souvenir passport stamped by each country. The students' work on this event will be part of their required course activities. During the project period, we will create general guidelines for the event and seek to obtain financial and in-kind support. During the Fall 2015 Semester, Colloquium students will be responsible for making the final decisions about this event including what cultures will be represented, event content, and the recruitment of volunteers. This event will allow students to demonstrate their mastery of course content by teaching it to event attendees, including members of the Salem and Columbiana County communities.

The development of this Colloquium in Western Identity is essential to the continued success of our Honors Program. Over the past two years we have increased the total number of students in the program while also raising our admission standards. This Colloquium will allow us to expand the program even further. A requirement of the Honors Program is the completion of Honors English Writing so it is difficult for students with transfer or post-secondary enrollment hours to enter the program. This Colloquium in Western Identity can satisfy that writing course requirement, however, and allow us to recruit from a larger pool of students.

### **Goals:**

**Clearly state the goals of your project and define the audience to whom the project is addressed. Explain in detail how the project will enhance teaching excellence and demonstrate student learning.**

This Summer Teaching Development Grant will support a two-part project to develop the Honors Colloquium in Western Identity and to begin planning a Cultural Awareness Event targeted to the wider Salem and Columbiana County Campus and Community. This project will enhance teaching excellence through the development of a creative course that makes use of a unique and non-traditional text (*The Amazing Race*) and will generate effective learning by students and community members.

We have several goals for this project. The first part – the development of this unique learning experience – will allow for the expansion of the Salem Campus Honors Program. A requirement of this program is the completion of Honors English Writing, but many of our highest performing students enter Kent State with writing credits from the post-secondary enrollment option program. By offering this Colloquium in Western Identity, students have an alternative way to satisfy this writing course requirement and we can recruit more students into the Honors Program. This course will also enhance teaching excellence by introducing students to global cultures and social and cultural theory through an innovative pedagogy. Our Salem Campus student population is not very diverse. We draw primarily from the surrounding rural and Appalachian communities so many of our students have little experience with other cultures, especially non-Western ones. This course will provide an important introduction to culture, social theory, and the wider world for our students.

Not only will students learn about global cultures in this unique colloquium, they will be able to share their knowledge with the surrounding community. The second part of this project will see the Honors students assume responsibility for the Cultural Awareness Event, including creating content and presenting it to event attendees. Their active participation in this event will demonstrate their effective learning. Thus a significant goal for this project is not just to benefit the students in the classroom. We seek to bring excellence in teaching to the wider Salem and Columbiana Campus and Community. This Cultural Awareness Event will be held at our Downtown Salem Campus location (the City Center Building) and will be well-publicized, free, and open to all community members. Different rooms in the building will be themed to represent different countries. Event guests will be able to visit each country and learn about new cultures. We wish to attract community members who, like our campus student population, have little daily interaction with other cultures. It is our hope that this event serves to generate positive press and goodwill toward Kent State and the Salem Campus, to recruit new students, and to educate our community.

### **Impact:**

**Explain who will be affected by the project and in what way. Describe its scope in terms of, for example, the number of students and/ or units affected (program, department/school, college, campus).**

This project will impact 2 distinct groups. It will benefit Salem Campus Honors students in several different ways. Those students enrolled in the Fall 2015 Semester Colloquium in Western Identity will directly benefit from course content. As registration has not yet begun, it is impossible to predict what the course enrollment will be, but we expect between 10 and 20

students to register. Future students will also benefit from this project as this Colloquium will be offered every Fall Semester. Since the development of this course will allow us to expand the Honors Program, the number of students who may eventually benefit from this course is considerable. This project will also benefit Honors Students who do not actually enroll in the course. Beyond just students in the course, this project will impact all Honors Program students. All of our Salem Campus Honors students are required to actively participate in a community service event. Assisting with the Cultural Awareness Event will be an approved and recommended service activity.

This project will also benefit the larger Salem Campus and Columbiana County communities. A major activity in this Colloquium will be planning and executing a Cultural Awareness Event. This will be held toward the end of the semester at our City Center Building (located in Downtown Salem). Although students will have the ultimate say over how this event progresses, we will create general requirements and expectations. Our intentions are for the various rooms of this City Center Building to represent different countries, with food, music, movies, and information presented to event attendees. Our guests will be able to learn about new cultures in a fun environment with music, games, and food available. This event will be advertised to the community, free, and open to the general public.

### **Activities and Timeline:**

#### **Provide a step-by-step plan for completing your project, including a timeline for the 5-week or 10-week grant period.**

We are applying to share a ten-week \$9,000 grant. We have outlined 3 main activities for the project period.

##### **Activity 1: Course Development and Planning**

While XXXX will consult on the broader course goals and objectives, these course planning activities will largely be carried out by XXXX during the entire 10 week project period. Since this course has never been offered at the Salem Campus this preparation will occupy a significant amount of the project period. The goal of this course, as listed in the Kent State University Catalogue, is to compare Western and Non-Western Cultures and for students to understand how their own culture impacts how they see and interact with the wider world. To achieve this course goal, we will use the reality show *The Amazing Race* to view and learn about different global cultures. We will also use social theory, especially principles of “othering” to understand how people view cultures other than their own.

The course is scheduled to meet twice per week. During one 75 minute meeting per week, we will view an episode of *The Amazing Race* (each episode is approximately 45 minutes in length). Immediately after the episode viewing, students will complete a travel journal entry. They will use this journal to note what they learned about the place and its culture and to document how the contestants reacted to their experiences. After a period of in-class free writing, we will begin our class discussion of the episode, the place, its culture, and how its themes fit into the course. The other weekly course meeting will be devoted to discussing assigned readings on social theory and background materials to help students understand the intricacies of various cultures.

Some course meetings will also be set aside for dedicated work on the Cultural Awareness Event. This project period will therefore be devoted to selecting cultural case studies, identifying *The Amazing Race* episodes to show in class, selecting readings, creating travel journal entry prompts, and creating activities to help students understand the often complicated concepts of social theory.

#### Activity 2: Creating Cultural Awareness Event Guidelines

These activities will be carried out by Sarah and Andrew during the first half of the 10 week project period. Together we will create a series of broad guidelines for the Cultural Awareness Event. While students will be responsible for the specific details, we will create general requirements and expectations for the students to use as their framework. This event will take the form of an around the world trip, with event guests provided the chance to visit different countries to learn about their cultures. Each country represented in the event (with the total dependent at least in part on the number of students enrolled in the course) will have its own room that will contain food, music, video, information and handouts, children's activities, and potentially cultural artifacts for guests to see and use (such as fabrics, baskets, decorations, and musical instruments that could be loaned from faculty and staff). Event guests will receive a passport and each country will stamp the passport upon exit. Our work during this portion of project period will be to decide on the minimum expectations for this event in terms of the information provided on each country, the event duration, and how other Honors students will be able to contribute as a way to fulfill their community service requirements. As part of the guideline creation, we will work with the Salem Campus library to determine technology needs and to determine the potential for creating and printing informative materials.

#### Activity 3: Seek Financial and In-Kind Support for Cultural Awareness Event

Sarah and Andrew will carry out this activity during the second half of the 10 week project period. Our intention is for this project to attract a significant number of attendees and for all guests to leave with new knowledge about global cultures. To this end, we want each guest to truly feel as if he or she has really visited other countries. To achieve this goal, we want guests to sample food, listen to music, and see visual materials. We want them to leave the event with souvenirs such as a stamped passport and informative handouts. To provide this experience, we will need financial and in-kind support.

Dr. Steve Nameth, the Salem Campus Dean, is extremely supportive of this event. Not only is he pleased with the expansion of our Honors program, he also sees this event as a very worthwhile activity in terms of community service and campus recruitment. He has already pledged campus support, both in terms of staff to help promote and assist with fundraising and in terms of actual monetary support. He has stated that a campus contribution of \$1,000 is possible. We do not wish to rely entirely on campus support and fully intend to seek external support for this Cultural Awareness Event. We will work with Tina Smith, our Public Relations Coordinator, and Leonard Koshinski, our Director of Advancement, to identify potential avenues of support. Matthew Butts, the Executive Director of Advancement for Regional Campuses (and the former Advancement Officer for the Salem Campus), will also be a useful resource for the wider Salem Community. We will seek different kinds of support including monetary gifts and in-kind donations of food, drinks, and paper goods. We will also seek to obtain support from local newspapers to advertise the event.

### **Communication Plan:**

**Discuss ways you will communicate the results of your projects to others in the University and to professional colleagues. Will publishable results be derived from this project? Will presentations at professional meetings result? Recipients of this award are expected to present their findings at the annual UTC conference in the fall.**

We envision various forms of communication and dissemination including but not limited to a joint presentation at the UTC Conference. For the course itself, the approach to use *The Amazing Race* and travel journals presents a new pedagogy that will ultimately be written up and submitted to the *Journal of Geography*. Sarah has published in this peer-reviewed journal on two occasions and as the premier journal for the National Council of Geographic Education, it publishes a range of articles including teacher's notebook lesson plans and articles on the intersection between theory and practice in the classroom. This type of content is entirely appropriate for the journal, as it regularly publishes pieces about the use of film and television in the classroom. We are not aware of any academic research on the use of *The Amazing Race*, however, and are confident that it would be of interest to this journal. For the Cultural Awareness Event, we envision communication within the Kent State Community. We will work with our Public Relations Coordinator to publicize it in the *E-Insider Newsletter*, on the Columbiana Campuses website, and within the Salem community. This communication will help to increase attendance, and it will promote our campus, our Honors Program, and the University Teaching Council.

### **Evaluation Plan:**

**How will you evaluate the success of your project? Discuss specific plans and procedures for assessing the success of your project. Please bear in mind that this is over and above regular semester class evaluations.**

Since this project has multiple goals, we will have multiple evaluations of success. For the Honors Students taking the course, success will be judged by their end of semester knowledge of social theory and global cultures. They will demonstrate this knowledge through their regular travel journal entries and through their contributions to in-class discussions. The most important form of evaluation will be the role that these students play in the Cultural Awareness Event. Beyond just their success in planning and organizing, they are playing the lead role in creating and disseminating content at the event. Students will share information in the various country rooms so must be conversant in cultural knowledge. Their ability to teach others about global cultures will be the true measure of their learning. We will also evaluate project success, therefore, on the experience that attendees have at this event. We hope for them to leave with new knowledge and respect for other cultures.

**Professional Background:**

**Provide a description of your background and how it specifically relates to the goals of this project. Do not include your vita.**