

# Initiative White Paper / Budget Request Form for Strategic Goal 2.1 Experiential Learning

## **Introduction/Background – What will you do?:**

In 2011-12 the team for Strategic Planning Goal 2.1: Enhance Experiential Learning will continue with the institutionalization of two major initiatives: 1) funding undergraduate travel study, both international and domestic; 2) establishing a Student Research Center. Last year we piloted funding programs for scholarships for traditional independent semester-long study abroad; shorter course-based group international travel experiences (over spring break or in Summer I); and course-based group domestic travel. We plan to continue these programs, establishing their administration in OIPS, the Office of International Programs and Services, (for international travel), and CPSCE, the Center for Public Service and Community Engagement, (for domestic travel). For the second initiative, last year we hosted two day-long open forums on undergraduate research, sent team members to conferences on undergraduate research, awarded summer undergraduate research stipends, developed a proposal for a Student Research Center and conducted a successful search for a director. Next year's funding will support the Center itself.

## **Proposal/Purpose/Justification – Why will you do it?:**

**1) Undergraduate Student travel:** To quote President Bradley from the latest issue of ISU Magazine, “Studying abroad is a great form of experiential learning . . . . As part of our strategic goal to advance experiential learning, the university plans to double the percentage of students who participate in international experiences by 2014.” By helping to make international travel more affordable, and by providing shorter, faculty led course-related experiences that are more appealing to students unaccustomed to travel, we've significantly increased the number of students going abroad. This fall, our funding will send ISU students to Liaoning University as part of an exchange program between the two universities.

Domestic travel allows students to visit sites and attend events that enhance their learning beyond the classroom. They may attend a conference, professional meeting, or performance, view an exhibit or a demonstration, or have direct access to information or experience that they would otherwise only encounter second-hand, mediated by instructors or instructional materials. Travel to conferences and meetings supports students' professional development and broadens their horizons.

Having successfully piloted these initiatives last year, our plan for this year is to institutionalize the programs by moving them appropriate “homes” with the infrastructure for their on-going administration. OIPS currently supports programs for faculty travel grants that complement our student grants. A review committee for these grants already exists, and team members who reviewed international travel proposals would serve on the committee in its expanded role. The same is true of CPSCE, which currently funds student and faculty travel related to engagement and service and has review committees in place which team members could join. Also, both OIPS and CPSCE can sponsor faculty workshops to develop new proposals and to identify new sources of funding for established programs, since the goal is to expand opportunities for student travel, not just support existing ones.

**2) Student research centers** are the main way universities institutionalize undergraduate research. This activity is widely recognized as a key component of experiential learning—see Council on Undergraduate Research, Association of American Colleges and Universities, Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences, etc. The ISU center will serve as a clearinghouse for information, support, coordination, and communication about all ISU student research and creative inquiry activities.

- Direct faculty and students to information on internal and external funding
- Administer funds for undergraduate inquiry fellowships (student stipends)
- Provide direct assistance to faculty and students engaged in inquiry projects through graduate student mentors who work with faculty and librarians in the discipline area.
- Sponsor workshops, forums, etc for faculty, students
- Sponsor research showcases—Sycamore Scholars
- Coordinate CUR related activities—faculty attendance at conferences, etc.
- Publish on-line journal of undergraduate research
- Publicize student inquiry and creative activities on campus and in community.

### **Work Plan – Action Steps –**

### **How will you do it – brief work plan – please point to Benchmark Goals?**

#### **1) Undergraduate Student Travel:**

August 2011—OIPS workshop for faculty proposing course-related international travel for spring semester 2012

Information session and call for domestic travel proposals fall semester 2011

September—call for international proposals, review

Review and notification of domestic proposals

October—notification of international recipients

Call for domestic travel proposals spring semester 2012

Students apply for spring semester study abroad

November—notification of spring domestic travel and semester study abroad recipients

#### **2) Student Research:**

Summer 2011—Center Director begins work, identifies graduate student mentors to begin work in fall

Establishes working relationships with Cunningham Library, existing research programs and support

With Marsha Miller develops web presence (Sycamore Research Express)

Fall 2011—with advisory group develops mission, strategic goals and plan for Center

With Judy Connor, Director HMSU, arranges for displays of student research projects

Publicizes and institutes programming for Center

Spring 2012—hosts Sycamore Scholars exhibition

Call for proposals for summer undergraduate research project stipends—recipients notified in March.

### **Reporting and Deliverable Schedule – When?:**

For each funding program (travel and stipends), review committees will report proposals received and funded to goal co-chairs at time of notification. See work plan for schedule.

December—Student Research Center vision, goals, and strategic plan will be reported to goal co-chairs and to Director’s reporting line in Academic Affairs (Jennifer Schriver).

June—Annual report of Center activities submitted to goal co-chairs and to Director’s reporting line in Academic Affairs. Annual evaluation of Director.

### **Budget – How Much will it cost?:**

Our budget request for 2011-2012 is similar to 2010-2011, and reflects primarily what we actually spent on our two main initiatives of Travel Study and the Student Research Center. Additional budget lines this year include clerical support equivalent to at least a one-half time position (that would not need to be a new position, of course, but our request reflects the need that will be there). The largest single item is for Travel Study (that related to courses and semester-long, individual experiences), on which we spent \$85,000 in 2010-2011. (This figure does not include money allocated for students who will be studying in China at LU in 2011-2012, which came from our original allocation). The budget requests related to the new Student Research Center are estimates.

Our budget may be helped by Dean Gatrell, who has pledged tuition waivers to help support the graduate students who will staff the Student Research Center, working with undergraduates on their projects.

### **Management Plan – Who (by name if possible) will do the work?:**

Tom Steiger, Director of Student Research Center

Chris Olsen & John Conant, co-chairs of the initiative

Members of the initiative committee: Chad Becker, Janis Halpern, Harriet Hudson (Co-chair Emeritus), Debra Israel, Gloria Plascak, David Robinson, Jennifer Ryan, Brad Venable, Carol Yaw,

Chris McGrew, Director OIPS

Nancy Rogers, Assoc. V.P. Academic Affairs and Director CPSCE

Jennifer Schriver, Assoc. V.P. Academic Affairs for Student Success

### **Outcome Assessment & Future Testing – How Well did we do?**

#### **How will we know that we have moved us toward our benchmarks goals?**

##### **1) Student Travel:**

Quantitative—increased numbers of students in semester study abroad\*.

Increased numbers of students participating in course-based travel\*

New proposals for course-based travel

On-going course-based travel programs have sustaining funding independent of strategic goal budget

\*Since the funding we are able to offer will not increase, any increase in the number of students traveling will be considered a move toward the benchmark of doubling the number of students who graduate with an international travel experience.

Qualitative—course-based travel proposals are more thoroughly integrated with course content and incorporate interaction with local people and institutions.

This information will be available from reports to co-chairs referenced in Reporting and Deliverables section.

## **2) Undergraduate Research:**

Center is fully functioning (criteria in Center proposal and Director position description).

This information will be available in annual report to co-chairs and Academic Affairs referenced in Reporting and Deliverables section.

### **Budget Narrative for Goal 2, Initiative 1**

**1.** Course buyouts for faculty, specifically for Director of the Student Research Center and for grant-writing initiatives in support of the SRC. Also stipend support for faculty attending summer workshops. (line 7)

**2.** Clerical support for SRC, equivalent to one-half time position. (line 13)

**3.** Graduate student stipends for those staffing the Student Research Center. We are anticipating that these students will be graduate assistants in various departments across campus. (line 27)

**4.** Undergraduate research fellows. Students work in collaboration with faculty on original research projects. In summer 2010 we were able to fund 23 students working with 14 faculty members (encompassing 8 departments). (line 32)

**5.** Event support for showcasing student research, will be coordinated through SRC. (line 37) (Dean Gatrell has indicated that he might be able to offset these costs with money transferred from the budget for the current research showcase.)

**6.** Supplies and expenses related to the Research Center operation. (line 38)

**6.** Faculty travel, for committee members to investigate best practices and for the SRC Director to attend CUR and other events. (line 40)

**7.** Student travel study. Students traveling abroad for individual, semester-long experiences and for study related to courses. In 2010-2011 we funded 23 students in semester-long study abroad experiences. We were able to support 6 international and 19 domestic travel study trips that involved 57 and 314 students, respectively. (line 41)

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