

Application for Southwest Minnesota State University Foundation Grant

(Please submit electronically via email)
This format must be followed if typed on computer

Name Cori Ann Dahlager & Tanya McCoss-Yerigan Title Graduate Program Director

Department Graduate Office Bldg/Room # CH 129 A Phone # 507-537-6819

Date of last awarded Foundation grant: Never

Total number of Foundation grants received: 0

Estimated total amount of dollars received in the last five years: 0

Project Title Learning Community Alumni Ambassador Program

- Choose the **ONE** that best describes your project.
- Note: Priorities are listed in order with 1. being the highest priority and 4. being the lowest.
- * Select only **ONE** box.
1. One-time projects, that lead to activities which attract students or other persons to the university so as to enhance the image of SMSU.
 2. Innovative research and/or curriculum development proposals, that lead to new program development and which will have continued financial support from sources other than the Foundation.
 3. Applied regional research that leads to scholarly publication and a greater awareness of university service to the region.
 4. Travel to a conference or workshop to enhance expertise in a particular discipline or for the presentation of a paper. Travel is not prohibited, but the budget may not permit funding. This is a **LOW** priority for funding.

Amount Requested \$ 3,906.45

Beginning Project Date April 1, 2011 Ending Project Date August 31, 2011

If funds are not used by the end of the project ending date, then the grantee must request an extension from the Grants Committee. Changes made to the original grant request require resubmission of the proposal

Describe the project. Be specific and include the goals and objectives to be accomplished.

In an effort to assist prospective students with a multitude of life situations and experiences, we will be developing an SMSU Graduate Learning Community Alumni Ambassador Program. Through implementation of this program, learning community alumni will assist and guide prospective students by answering vital questions. According to research, those who have been through the program (alumni) are the group that prospective students most connect with. Pairing prospective students with alumni from a similar background and life situations will establish a forum for addressing specific questions and concerns. To establish this, the most common areas of prospective student concerns/questions were simplified into two broad categories including Program Issues and Student Roles.

Program Issues:

- Academic Expectations/Requirements (attendance, research, writing, presentations, portfolio, reading, homework)
- Time Commitment
- Affordability
- Site Location & Travel Requirements

Student Roles:

- Parenting Issues (single parent, busy parent, new parent, pregnancy)
- Multiple Career Commitments (coaching, multiple jobs)
- Specialist (school social workers, school psychologists, special education teachers, speech pathologist, etc.)
- Non-Teacher Educator (college/university staff, business employees, health care industry, etc.)
- New Educators (under 5 years' experience)
- Middle Career Educators (10-25 years' experience)
- Experienced Educators (25+ years' experience)

Since research indicates that prospective students prefer to have their questions/concerns answered by those who have experienced the program, the SMSU Graduate Learning Community Alumni Ambassadors will be matched up with prospective students with similar backgrounds. To adequately establish such a system, learning community faculty will recommend previous learning community students (graduates) who were stellar and met the roles established above. For purposes of this grant, a stellar student is one who not only excelled academically but also as a respected leader within the program and their school district.

These carefully selected and screened alumni will be trained by the program directors. The training will include such topics as listening skills, program expectations, commonly asked questions/answers, appropriate/adequate self-sharing and when it's time to refer and to whom.

When a prospective student inquire about joining a graduate learning community, if they have questions/concerns related to the identified program issues and/or student roles above, with their permission they will be personally matched with an ambassador with a like-profile. The appropriate ambassador will be contacted by the Alumni Ambassador Program Director(s) with a contact request. Then, the ambassador will make contact with the prospective student to share their experience and answer questions.

The Alumni Ambassador Program Director(s) will make every effort to match the prospective student with an ambassador who attended a learning community with the same faculty tentatively scheduled to facilitate prospective students' learning community of choice.

To express our gratitude/appreciation and reward the ambassador's dedication and loyalty to SMSU, ambassadors will receive a monthly newsletter, a padfolio embossed with the SMSU logo (including a pen and note pad) and SMSU apparel. These items will show our appreciation and also serve as a marketing tool. The majority of the alumni ambassadors are practicing teachers who have daily contact with other educators. The items delineated above will further promote SMSU and likely result in additional inquiries and possible enrollment. Additionally, these items will assist the ambassadors with the prospective student documentation and reporting process.

Goal #1: All materials for the program are organized.

Objective A: Program materials are ordered and received.

Objective B: All program items are stored in a secure location.

Goal #2: A comprehensive training manual will be developed for alumni ambassador training.

Objective A: The final training module topics are determined.

Objective B: Topic training content is written.

Objective C: A training agenda is developed.

Objective D: Manual layout is determined and copies are made.

Objective E: Training manuals are assembled and placed in the binder section of the padfolios.

Goal #3: Ambassadors are secured.

- Objective A: Learning community faculty will be trained on the functions of the ambassador program.
- Objective B: Learning community faculty will be given the list of program issues and student roles and the opportunity to add.
- Objective C: Learning community faculty will recommend at least one former student from each of the student role areas.
- Objective D: The Learning Community Alumni Ambassador Directors will contact and secure the alumni ambassadors.

Goal #4: Alumni ambassadors will obtain adequate training.

- Objective A: Four separate trainings will be scheduled around the state for ambassador convenience.
- Objective B: The Learning Community Alumni Ambassador Directors will host the trainings.
- Objective C: Surveys will be conducted with the ambassadors regarding the training satisfaction and needs.

Goal #5: As an ongoing support and training tool, an ambassador newsletter will be developed.

- Objective A: A newsletter format will be selected that is in line with the university brand and department documents.
- Objective B: The newsletter will be developed and delivered on a monthly basis.

Describe the means by which you will evaluate the success of the project:

The project will be evaluated based upon the grant goals and objectives. The results will be quantified and presented in the final report.

Describe how you will give credit or promote the SMSU Foundation as a sponsoring agent in the promotion of your project or event. (i.e. by including the Foundation logo in your print materials, Powerpoint presentations, etc.)

The Foundation logo will be placed in the Learning Community Alumni Ambassador Program Training Manual, in the newsletter and in presentation materials.

Relate your project to:

**Special benefits to SMSU:* This program will benefit SMSU by providing a network of loyal graduate alumni who will establish relationships with prospective students. It is anticipated that this program will increase graduate program inquiries, enrollment and student satisfaction.

**Goals of your department:* The goals of the graduate office are to provide a forum to have prospective student questions answered by our alumni. Further, this program will help to build relationships with prospective students and possible increase in program inquiries and enrollment. It is important to note, the actual cost of this program is a small percentage of the revenue generated from the recruitment of just one student.

**Special benefits to students:* This program will benefit prospective students by making them feel important to SMSU. Further, it will give them a forum to get their vital questions/concerns addressed by students who have been through the program (our alumni). The program will benefit the alumni by keeping them involved with the university as advocates for prospective students.

Describe other sources of funds and what action has been taken to secure them; be sure to include any amounts received on the Budget Summary (next page).

With these start-up funds, this is a program that will be self-sustaining. The following amounts will be utilized to sustain the program:

1. Alumni Director, Tyler Bowen: Mr. Bowen has said that he will support the program with ideas and resources as needed. Also, he indicated that he could provide some financial support but this will be minimal.
2. Dean, Daniel Campagna: Dr. Campagna has stated that he will support the Learning Community Alumni Ambassador Program with financial assistance but an amount has yet to be determined.
3. Separate from this endeavor, we will be developing an active fundraising program for the graduate office. From this program, we will be able to fund future years of the ambassador program.

Budget Summary

	REQUESTED SMSU FOUNDATION FUNDS	FUNDS FROM OTHER SOURCES INCLUDING UNIVERSITY FUNDS			TOTAL FUNDS NEEDED
		Source	Cash	In-Kind	
PERSONNEL					
<i>Additional Staff</i>				6301.50	(in-kind) 6301.50
<i>Honoraria *</i>					0
<i>Other (Specify)</i>					0
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES					
<i>Telephone</i>					0
<i>Postage</i>	374				374
<i>Facilities</i>	75				75
<i>Other (Specify)</i>					0
SUPPLIES & EQUIPMENT					
<i>Supplies</i>	470				470
<i>Equipment</i>					0
<i>Other (Specify):</i> <i>Training Food</i>	120				120
TRAVEL					
<i>Transportation</i>	311.11				311.11
<i>Registration</i>					0
<i>Meals</i>				90.00	90
<i>Lodging</i>					0
<i>Other (Specify)</i>					0
PROMOTION					
<i>Printing</i>	562.50				562.50
<i>Media</i>					0
<i>Other (Specify)—see below</i> <i>Padfolios, Notebooks, Pens,</i> <i>Shirts</i>	1993.84				1993.84
TOTAL	\$ 3,906.45			\$6,391.50	\$ 10,297.95

Over 60% of this has been obtained through in-kind staffing donations.

* The Foundation prefers not to pay salaries for student assistants. If an exception is made and student salaries are approved, arrangements must be made to pay for the salaries via student help funding. (The Foundation will reimburse the university for any such expenses.). The Foundation prefers not to pay honoraria for SMSU faculty and/or staff. If an exception is made, payments must be processed through the university's payroll system.

APPLICATIONS AND QUESTIONS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE SMSU FOUNDATION,
UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT, FOUNDERS HALL 225, 537-6266

If you do not receive the total funds requested, what effect will this have on your project?

If we do not obtain the necessary funds to operate the program as outlined, the program may have to be put on hold until funds can be raised or secured elsewhere.

DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSON:	<u>3-31-11</u> Date	<u>Rhonda Burt</u> Signature
		<u>Education</u> Department
Please detail benefit to the department:		

COLLEGE DEAN:	<u>3.31.11</u> Date	<u>David Campagna</u> Signature
		<u>Business & Education</u> College
Please detail benefit to the University:		