



Consortium for Innovative Environments in Learning

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Mini-grant Award Recipients Spring 2010

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| Title of Project | Outdated or Underrated: Exploring Experimenting Colleges and Universities in America |
| Award | \$3000 |
| Primary Collaborators | Rabbi Patricia Karlin-Neumann - The Johnston Center for Integrative Studies, University of Redlands, and Senior Associate Dean for Religious Life at Stanford University Joy Rosenzweig Kliwer- Associate Vice President for College Advancement Pitzer College, author of <i>The Innovative Campus: Nurturing the Distinctive Learning Environment</i> (Greenwood, 1999) |

Program Overview

The primary collaborators will co-teach a course on experimental colleges and universities for Johnston and Pitzer students in the Fall of 2010 at the Johnston Center for Integrative Studies at the University of Redlands.

Course description: In this seminar, “Outdated or Underrated: Exploring Experimenting Colleges and Universities in America,” we propose to understand questions such as: What is the present status of experimenting colleges and universities? Is there an enduring relationship between experimental education and social transformation? What educational values nurtured in uncommon settings can be transferred to more conventional educational settings? What places do our respective institutions hold in the pantheon of experimenting higher education? We intend to look at a variety of methodologies to understand the past and present landscape of experimental education: philosophical and historical underpinnings, social science research, memoirs of students and faculty in these institutions, self-studies of experimenting campuses and literature on creative teaching. We will ask what keeps successful institutions innovating and what accounts for those that have closed down. We will examine what contributions such campuses might or do make to the field of higher education or whether they are artifacts of the sixties and seventies. We hope to plan one evening celebrating founding faculty, current



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| Title of Project | Grand Canyon Semester |
| Award | \$2500 |
| Primary Collaborators | Prescott College, New College at the University of Alabama, Johnston Center for Integrative Studies at the University of Alabama and the Grand Canyon National Park |

Program Overview

Semester in the Parks: The Grand Canyon Semester

The Grand Canyon Semester (GCS) is an interdisciplinary, experiential education program designed to serve 20 students from universities across the nation. Students will begin their exploration of the Greater Grand Canyon Bioregion at Prescott College in Prescott, Arizona with introductory studies to the people and places of the bioregion. Students will then take to the Grand Canyon to work directly with Grand Canyon National Park personnel to better understand the current and future challenges of protecting the Park's biological integrity while maintaining relevancy and meaning in a new century. Throughout the semester, students will be engaged in a student-centered, expeditionary leadership curriculum that will include several river and trail-based field trips. These field trips will feature resource stewardship projects and student-directed research. One central component of the GCS will involve seminars with Grand Canyon topical experts such as authors, scientists, artists, and institutional leaders to grasp the multidimensional issues that shape the values, policy, and future of the Grand Canyon Bioregion. Students will examine these issues through self-directed research projects designed in collaboration with GCS faculty, and the semester will conclude with student presentations in a public venue. Part of this first semester's theme will focus on the sustainability of natural resources and regional cultures in the face of climate change. Faculty from CIEL universities are invited to join a collaborative teaching team to help design and deliver the GCS. The *Semester in the Parks* is a larger, long term idea that includes future plans to offer similar programs in other national parks and landscape monuments in the west.



Title of Project Reviewing Senior Honors Projects in Innovative Programs

Award **\$1000**

Primary Collaborators Steven Weisler, Dean of Enrollment and Assessment
Hampshire College, Massachusetts

Daniel Kiefer, Director of Proudian Interdisciplinary Honors
Contributing Faculty, Johnston Center for Integrative Studies
Associate, Professor of English, University of Redlands,
California

Program Overview

Are senior honors projects truly valuable for students in innovative college programs like Hampshire College and the Johnston Center at the University of Redlands? With our emphasis on collaborative learning and evaluation, helping students to learn best in their own ways and according to their own expectations, how much benefit do honors projects provide? Do the individual achievements they encourage, with emphasis on the elevated status of honors, work against the egalitarian spirit of shared learning goals?

We will address these questions in the specific instance of Hampshire College and the University of Redlands by conducting an inquiry into the intersection of two programs at Redlands, the Proudian Interdisciplinary Honors Program and the Johnston Center for Integrative Study.

The most important part of this study will be asking seniors and recent alumni in Johnston and Proudian how they have experienced their work on senior honors projects: preparation, starting out, seeking faculty guidance, completing the task in stages, preparing a final version, defending the thesis, and making revisions according to faculty suggestions. Our conversation with them, in person, by mail, and by e-mail, will form the basis for our work together.

We will also bring together a sample of Hampshire College senior theses with senior projects in the Proudian program and conduct a comparative evaluation using a rubric developed by CIEL member institutions. By asking Johnston faculty members who advise and teach in the Proudian program to help with this evaluation, we will include them in our project as well.

This study will have significance for both Hampshire and Redlands in various ways. We hope to enhance senior honors projects at Redlands, even beyond the Proudian program, as the faculty reflects on how to help students realize the greatest benefit from their work. Hampshire may use this study to consider the value of honors projects for seniors. Other member institutions of CIEL may use our results to determine the value of honors work as part of their own programs.



Title of Project Designing a Multi-Institutional Comparative Foodshed Curriculum

Award **\$3000**

Primary Collaborators Dr. Michael Gilmore, New Century College
Dr. Pramod Parajuli, Prescott College
Dr. Tim Crews, Prescott College
(Other participants from CIEL schools will be invited)

Program Overview

This comparative research and curriculum design project will reveal how local food cultures and agricultures developed historically in different bio-geographies, how these changed with the industrialization of agriculture in the twentieth century, and how communities in the short and long term might best respond to the current challenges of diminishing fossil fuels, climate change, globalization, immigration policy, as well as others. Case studies of farming and marketing in each region will be gathered along with the profiles of farmers, ranchers, gardeners, food projects and micro-enterprises around local and sustainable foodsystems. In the process of learning about farming practices of different foodsheds, students and faculty will work to identify specific sustainability challenges and tradeoffs faced by both farmers and consumers. The proposed project will involve an interdisciplinary cross-section of faculty from participating CIEL institutions conducting investigations on the past, present and possible futures of regional foodsheds in which the schools are located. At this point, we have two faculty members from Prescott College and one faculty member from New Century College already collaborating on this idea since fall 2008. We are seeking funds from CIEL to sponsor a meeting of these three faculty members, and three others from other CIEL institutions to design the Foodshed Curriculum “scaffolding”. This Foodshed Curriculum planning group will then meet through web-based conferencing with interested faculty and students from all interested CIEL institutions to develop and launch the Comparative Foodshed research and courses.

As the Comparative Foodshed project progresses, we also expect to develop a set of international courses that will be available to students who have taken the foodshed courses at any of the participating CIEL institutions. The international courses, with will build off of the established presence of specific CIEL schools in countries such as Nepal, Peru, Bolivia and Kenya, and will compliment and expand on the ecological and cultural understandings of agriculture that were established in the Comparative Foodshed courses.