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Proposal for a Curriculum Development Grant for “Food, Culture, and Nature” Course

1. Introduction

Goals. My goal is to collect information and hands-on examples for a new course that I am developing and that I will teach for the first time this fall ('06). The course is **Food, Culture, and Nature** and will be offered at the 300 level in our Sociology/Anthropology Department. I plan to travel to Portland, Oregon to research a variety of food-related programs linked to the city's Office of Sustainable Development and its Food Policy Council. I will be conducting interviews, taking photographs, and collecting materials for my course that relate to urban food composting, food policy for the city and schools, gardening projects, environmental justice issues, and neighborhood efforts to expand access to healthy, local and affordable food. I will also focus on food as a vehicle for celebration and community-building.

Justification. I like to take a place-based, interdisciplinary approach to environmental questions; this approach highlights sociology but encourages students to think across different fields and contexts about actual places and policies. Portland is a model city in terms of its commitment to sustainable development and its support of a large number of food-related programs. I want to use these programs as a model for comparison in my new course. Portland's Food Policy Council includes projects like: “The Diggable City,” which focuses on conducting an urban agricultural inventory; workshops to assist small farmers from a range of cultures including Latino, Hmong, Vietnamese and Mien; efforts to create a network of urban farms and to support local food production; efforts to promote food security and access; support for many dimensions of a healthy food system (including food served at schools and food composting, garden youth education programs, community development, and other programs). While many cities have programs such as community gardens, Portland has an unusually comprehensive network of sustainability initiatives. I want to get an up-close view of these projects so that I can think more comparatively as I develop the details of my course syllabus. I also expect to create connections between the new course and my existing course “Images of the City,” which includes the key theme of nature-city relationships and sustainable design, and which, as anticipated with the new course, supports the Environmental Studies and Sociology/Anthropology majors.

Match with listed priorities. My project matches the guidelines listed for Curriculum Development Grants in the following ways: it is a new course that will be taught for the first time this fall. It will be part of our Sociology/ Anthropology Department elective offerings for majors and non-majors. In addition, it will be listed as a “CW” (Challenges of the Contemporary World) course, one of our “collegiate center” requirements for all students. I have also proposed it for inclusion in our Environmental Studies major. Regarding specific priority areas listed in the Curriculum Development Grants guidelines, the course will relate to *sustainable development, environmental policy & practice*, and *environmental justice*. Because of my interest in overall community design, it is likely to relate to models like *new urbanism* as well. I have not previously applied for or received funding from the CFD alliance.

2. Project Description

Activities. During a five day research trip, I plan to visit four or five different sites and interview individuals who are involved with food sustainability projects and Portland's Food Policy Council. Judy Crockett at the Office of Sustainable Development has made useful suggestions about projects and contacts—some examples are the Diggable City, the permanent farmers market, outreach efforts to immigrant populations, Community Supported Agriculture projects, the local Chef's Collaborative, the Food Alliance, the Fork it Over campaign involving grants to food pantries, food waste collection, garden projects, and other sustainable community initiatives. In addition to interviews, I plan to take photographs for my class and collect relevant documents and materials.

Timetable. My research trip will take place this summer, July 10-16.

Budget and justification for each line item.

Airfare: \$436

Roundtrip price from Little Rock to Portland, Oregon, for the stated travel dates.

Car rental: approximately \$250 for an economy car, Thrifty Car Rental.

Per diem for food: 6 x \$25 = \$150

Purchase and developing of film, purchase of miscellaneous supporting materials such as audio tapes for interviews, books, or documentary materials relevant to the development of this course: \$200

TOTAL: \$1036

Syllabus. My syllabus is under construction (part of the purpose of my trip). Below is the approved catalog copy for the new course. Appended at the end of my proposal is a list of some books, articles, and other materials that give an idea of the range of possibilities for the class.

Food, Culture, and Nature SOCI 340

A sociological look at food in the context of cultural beliefs and social practices, from small-scale face-to-face interactions to the role of food in global systems. Some topics of interest include the relationship of food to community, understandings about nature, social justice and inequality, definitions of health, concepts of the body, celebration, and new technologies.

3. Evaluation and Dissemination.

Evaluation of the success of the project. I expect to make use of the information that I collect to offer more hands-on, place-based examples of sustainable food and community projects to students in this course in the fall. The Portland trip will help me imagine and design a syllabus that includes urban policy and environmental justice and equity questions as well as outreach efforts across ethnic groups in the community. My instrument of evaluation will be a teaching evaluation at the end of the semester.

Publicizing of the project within ACS. I will be glad to share my syllabus and to include it in information listed on the ACS website about environmental studies courses, and to consider other appropriate venues that would be useful for the ACS consortium.

4. *Institutional approval.* (a copy of this proposal has been sent to Dr. Robert Entzminger, Provost and Dean of Hendrix College).

5. *Disclosure statement:* other current and pending support that will coincide with the timetable of this proposal--none.

6. I am sending a modified CV that includes my activities that are relevant to environment, community, sustainability, and social justice--themes which will figure prominently in the Food, Culture, and Nature course. I also list some of my previous ACS activities.

APPENDIX: Possible Resources for “Food, Culture, and Nature” Course

Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik, eds. *Food and Culture: A Reader*.
Visser, Margaret. *Much Depends on Dinner*.
Gary Paul Nabhan. *Coming Home to Eat: The Pleasures and Politics of Local Food*.
“ “ “ . *Gathering the Desert*.
Mintz, Sidney W. *Sweetness and Power*.
Visser, Margaret. *The Rituals of Dinner: The Origins, Evolution, Eccentricities, and Meaning of Table Manners*
Groh, Trauger, and Steven McFadden. *Farms of Tomorrow Revisited: Community Supported Farms, Farm Supported Communities*.
Kimmrel, Andrew, ed. *The Fatal Harvest Reader*.
Kass, Leon. *The Hungry Soul: Eating and the Perfecting of Our Nature*.
Shiva, Vandana. *Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply*.
Reichl, Ruth. *Tender at the Bone: Growing Up at the Table*.
Robbins, John. *Diet for a New America*.
Schlosser, Eric. *Fast Food Nation*
Ausubel, Kenny. *Seeds of Change: The Living Treasure*.
Bove, Jose and Francois Dufour. *The World is Not for Sale: Farmers Against Junk Food*.
Curtin, Deane W. and Lisa M. Heldke, eds. *Cooking, Eating, Thinking: Transformative Philosophies of Food*.
Foster, Nelson, and Linda S. Cordell, eds. *Chilies to Chocolate: Food the Americas Gave the World*.
Griffiths, Sian, and Jennifer Wallace. *Consuming Passions: Food in the Age of Anxiety*.
The Hendrix Food Project (video and report).
Heifer Project International materials.

Resources from the Urban & Environmental Policy Institute, Occidental College:
Farm to Hospital: Promoting Health and Supporting Local Agriculture.
Fast Food and Healthy Food: Evaluating Programs and Policies for Healthy Food Alternatives in Southern California Schools.
Transportation and Food: The Importance of Access.
Building Food Security in California Communities.

Articles or chapters:

Pietrykowski, Bruce. “You Are What You Eat: The Social Economy of the Slow Food Movement.”
David E. Sutton. “The vegetarian anthropologist.”
Appadurai, Arjun. “How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India.”
Orlove, Benjamin and Ella Schmidt. “Swallowing their pride: Indigenous and industrial beer in Peru and Bolivia.”
Roseberry, William. “The Rise of Yuppie Coffees and the Reimagination of Class in the United States.”
Kingsolver, Barbara. “Lily’s Chickens.” *Small Wonder: Essays*.