

**Proposal for a Campus-Community Partnership Grant
Associated Colleges of the South Environmental Initiative**

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I. Introduction

Students at Trinity University enroll in a First Year Seminar during one of their first semesters on campus. These small-group classes, typically made up of 15 or fewer students, emphasize reading, writing and speaking skills. They are taught by faculty in all departments and focus on a topic of particular interest to the instructor. Library faculty members Barbara MacAlpine and Bea Caraway will be team teaching a section of the First Year Seminar during the Spring 2006 semester entitled “Making a Difference for a Livable Planet.” Students will read and discuss books and journal articles by ecologically-oriented authors on such global issues as biodiversity, climate change, agriculture, overpopulation, and water. One of the goals for the class is that students will begin to understand and accept their responsibility as stewards of the earth.

In a departure from typical seminars, this class will also include a service learning component. Each of the 13 students will be strongly encouraged to spend at least two hours per week volunteering at the San Antonio Botanical Garden. Some of what they will be learning as a volunteer will be reinforced by a field trip to the Bamberger Ranch Preserve in the Texas Hill Country near Johnson City. This proposal is a response to the portion of the Campus-Community Partnership Grants that focuses on service learning.

II. Project Description

Trinity University First Year Seminar students enrolled in “Making a Difference for a Livable Planet” in the Spring of 2006 will volunteer at the San Antonio Botanical Garden. Located in the center of the city, this 33-acre haven provides access to a variety of flora and offers gardening experiences to people of all ages. Trinity students will have the opportunity to work in one of three projects areas. They may help to maintain an endangered species garden and develop educational signage. In the water saver area, they may construct and plant a bed and keep records related to water usage. If they choose the children’s garden, they will work directly with children, helping them to establish and maintain a vegetable garden. Students will volunteer for a minimum of two hours per week. While they will be working under the guidance of Botanical Garden

employees, the coordination of their schedules will be managed on a weekly basis by the peer tutor for the seminar.

Near the end of the semester, the class will visit the Bamberger Ranch Preserve, a 5,500 acre ranch that has been described as the largest habitat restoration project on private land in Texas. The activities at the ranch will offer students additional examples of the importance of supporting endangered species and native plants that are not water guzzlers. As described on its website (<http://www.bambergerranch.org>), the goals of the founders include maintaining the ranch in a natural state of grasslands and wooded canyons, which provide healthy habitat for native and endangered species as well as domestic plants and animals, while protecting the land from development. Through its working example of grass-based agriculture, the ranch demonstrates the practices of good conservation and their value to the entire ecosystem. Another goal of the Bamberger Ranch Preserve, which relates directly to the First Year Seminar, is to provide a place where visitors can learn the importance of good conservation and land stewardship, and leave with a sense of power that the individual can positively impact his or her environment.

III. Timetable

The First Year Seminar will be taught from January 12 through April 27, 2006. Student volunteering will occur between January 31 and the week of April 17.

The trip to the Bamberger Ranch Preserve is scheduled for April 1, 2006.

All expenditures will be completed by May 1, 2006.

IV. Budget and Justification

The budget falls into two areas: payment to the peer tutor for coordination of the service learning project, and funds for transportation and entry fees to the Bamberger Ranch Preserve.

A. Coordinator for service learning project 2 hours/week for 11 weeks @\$6.50/hour	\$143.00
B. Rental of two 8-person vans Estimated at \$70.00 per van	\$140.00
C. Mileage 120 miles round trip X 2 vans @\$.48/mile	\$115.00
D. Entry fee to Bamberger Ranch Preserve 16 people @\$10.00/person	\$160.00
TOTAL	\$558.00

Trinity University provides \$100 per first year seminar class, which is typically used to host a meal at the professor's home. For this course, those funds are already earmarked for lunch at a local restaurant that emphasizes regionally grown or produced food; the owner will be joining the students to discuss sustainable agriculture. No other money is available for this class, from the Office of Academic Affairs or the Library's budget. While most of the peer tutor's work with the class is considered academic and applies to her course credit, the service learning project coordination is an extra responsibility and merits payment. The trip to the ranch, which goes hand-in-hand with the volunteer work at the Botanical Garden, is completely unsupported financially.

V. Evaluation and Dissemination

The success of the student volunteers will be evaluated in two ways: by their self-description (through journal writing) and observations of the peer tutor, and by solicitation of comments from their supervisors at the San Antonio Botanical Garden. This class, and its service learning component, will be repeated in later semesters if it is successful, so monitoring progress and maintaining communication at the site will be very important. Evaluation of the trip to the Bamberger Ranch Preserve will also be achieved through student journals and conversations on the return trip to San Antonio.

Both instructors would be happy to write about the class for any ACS newsletter or other publication that reaches faculty teaching environmental subjects at other universities. In addition, we would welcome the chance to attend meetings of like-minded faculty and exchange experiences.

VI. Disclosure Statement

Neither Barbara MacAlpine nor Bea Caraway has other current or pending support that will coincide with the timetable of the submitted proposal.

VII. Contact Information

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