

ACS Mellon Foundation Faculty Renewal Grants

Final Report

Final Reporting Guidelines

Mellon Foundation Faculty Renewal Final reports are due within 30 days of the end of the project period. The due date is in your award email from ACS. Your report should be e- mailed to mwhite@colleges.org At the ACS Faculty Renewal Initiative, 1975 Century Blvd., Suite 10, Atlanta, GA 30345. Fax: 404-636-9558.

Please address the following points in your ‘detailed narrative’ report with evaluation and dissemination information:

Name of Person (s) Submitting Report: Sean Patrick O’Rourke
Margaret Oakes

E-mail sean.orourke@furman.edu
margaret.oakes@furman.edu

Phone O’Rourke: 864-294-3057 Oakes 864-294-3148

Institution Furman University

Name of project/event Engaging the Humanities

Original Date(s) of Project June, 2009-December 31, 2009

Amount Awarded \$7930.00

1. Original Goals and objectives. We sought funding in the Professional Development category for Engaging the Humanities, an interdisciplinary collection of essays by scholars (faculty and student collaborators) in the humanities at Furman University. The essays would describe the different ways in which these scholars have defined and practiced humanities research and education in the liberal arts tradition under the guiding vision of “Engaged Learning.” We proposed that each chapter would consist of a lead essay (c.5000 - 7500

words) written by a humanities faculty member (or two) at Furman, which would describe the “engaged learning” projects and programs s/he has created. Each lead essay would be followed by two shorter essays (c.1000 - 1500 words), each written by a Furman student involved in the projects described in the lead essay. The resulting book, we contended in our proposal, would argue for an engaged learning approach to the humanities, one that would employ collaborative, basic research as an educational activity and model.

2. If goals/objectives changed during the course of the project, please state the revised goals/objectives. **All substantive goals and objectives remained the same. In an attempt to meet the contemporary publishing standards of scholarly presses, we changed the length of the main essay to a maximum of 5,000 words. We also made changes to our timeline and our budget allocations. Timeline: Our original timeline was to have a revised and copy-edited manuscript to the publisher by 31 December 2009. Due to a combination of illness (O’Rourke), family emergencies (Oakes), and the unanticipated difficulties of orchestrating the efforts of 44 colleagues (several of whom have been or are now in India, the Ukraine, Arizona, and elsewhere), we requested and received an extension of the project completion date to 30 June 2010. This constitutes the final report on our project, which is due to ACS on 30 July 2010. Budget: Our proposal was to fund two plenary sessions (\$2500), meetings and expenses of research teams (\$4200), and editing supplies and costs (\$1230). As it turned out, however, we were able to save considerable money in the first two areas and ran into much greater needs in the last area. The expense for the copyeditor is greater than the original budget figure since she has been asked to continue to work past the original terminus date of our contract with her (August 1, 2010).**

Since the grant period is now ending during the summer, we have decided not to have a second plenary session with the contributors since many of them are not in town. A better use of the remaining funds, in our estimation, was to create a resource library on liberal arts and humanities teaching and scholarship.

3. In what ways were the goals/objectives met? Please give examples. We gathered our initial group of scholars together for the first plenary session in May of 2009. This gathering allowed us, as planned, to collect biographical and contact information on all contributors, request

abstracts of all essays, disseminate essay guidelines and style sheets, provide deadlines and timetables, and discuss disbursement of grant monies to research teams. We were also able to add some scholars about whom we had known little at the time of the grant proposal and determine who, for whatever reason, did not have a project that did not fit the profile of the book we envisioned. By early fall we received essays from most of our contributors and began the extended effort of editing and suggesting revisions in the essays. We also met with then Furman President David Shi to discuss his role in the project, and those discussions resulted in a slight expansion of the essays included in the book. Finally, we were able to approach and negotiate with Alex Moore of the University of South Carolina Press and Ms. Meg Hyre, an experienced copy editor in New Haven, Connecticut.

4. Describe the evaluation/assessment process used. Summarize the results of this process? Include any instruments used to evaluate/assess your project.
N/A

5. If you were to redesign your project, what would you do differently and why? (What are the “lessons learned?”) **We have learned that constant communication is necessary to keep the project at the forefront of the participants’ minds and that we need to keep ourselves available for consultation and advice. We have found incentives for the participants to complete their projects and provided editorial assistance through Meg Hyre, our copyeditor. We have also learned that as a rule of thumb, student/alumni scholars tend to be more excited about the potential of their first publication, therefore making them an easier group to work with at times. If anything, this lesson further supports the thesis of the book: good undergraduate students can be good scholars.**

6. How did your project impact other faculty on your campus? **The project includes 28 faculty members, from a very wide variety of departments, who have engaged in research with undergraduate students. Many expressed surprise that there were so many other faculty doing these projects, so we have now created a community for conversation and support of such work. Those faculty members are now aware of what others are doing, and have a body of resources to develop further projects using the ideas and methods of their colleagues. We are also pleased to have drawn more attention within the university community,**

from both the academic and administrative sides, to the challenging and often unrecognized work being done by these professors and students.

If done jointly with one or more institutions, how did it impact faculty on the other campus(es)? **All participants are Furman University faculty, students, or alumni. However, we hope that publication of the book will have a positive influence on teaching and researching in the humanities at many other institutions. See #9, below.**

7. How did the project impact the institution (s) as a whole? **In short, the project has gone a long way toward establishing undergraduate research at Furman as an important, perhaps even central, aspect of humanities teaching and research. Before this project, undergraduate research was well established in the sciences and, to a lesser extent, in the social sciences – but the received wisdom in many humanities departments was that undergraduate research (or faculty/student collaborative research) was simply not possible given the highly individualized (and specialized) work we do. Our project has proven this notion to be happily false, and highlighting the faculty and student contributors to this project has demonstrated that to the university.**

8. If students were involved, what was the impact on them? **Each faculty contributor worked with one or two student collaborators, who wrote short essays outlining their participation in undergraduate research and what they learned from it. All of the students have stressed in their essays the skills and knowledge that they learned during their research work. They also said that they found the opportunity to reflect on their experiences in these essays very valuable and were pleased to be able to share them and encourage other students and faculty to create research partnerships.**

9. How have you shared the results with ACS colleagues and beyond ACS? What are your plans for dissemination? **We intend to share our work with other ACS institutions through their libraries and through individual contacts with other humanities scholars at those institutions. In November, 2010, we will be presenting a session entitled “Engaging the Humanities in Undergraduate Research” at the “Creativity, Inquiry, and Discovery: Undergraduate Research In and Across the Disciplines” conference, presented by the AAC&U’s Network for Academic Renewal.**

10. Did any publications result from this project? If yes, list here. **The larger objective of the project is to have the manuscript published. The objective of the grant period was to elicit appropriate contributors and their student collaborators and work with them in preparing their essays. The prospectus for the book is currently under review by the University of South Carolina Press. Since this is a book that involves numerous collaborators, the publication process will thus continue past the grant period.**

11. What are the next steps (follow-up) in your project? Evaluations, surveys, etc. are to be included as a part of this report. **Currently, we are working with current Furman President Rod Smolla, past President David Shi, and former Secretary of Education Richard Riley on their contributions to the book and are awaiting word from USC Press. Evaluations and surveys are not part of the scope of this work. However, book sales and interest from libraries will indicate a measure of the success of the work.**

12. A complete financial statement, showing original budget (the breakdown of the amount awarded) and expenditures.

13. Please include a summary of your work that may be included on the ACS Faculty Renewal website. ***Engaging the Humanities* is an interdisciplinary collection of essays by scholars in the humanities (faculty and student collaborators) at Furman University. The essays describe the different ways in which these scholars define and practice humanities research and education under the guiding vision of “Engaged Learning.” In the largest section of the book, each chapter consists of a lead essay written by a humanities faculty member (or two) at Furman and describing the engaged learning projects and programs he or she has created. This essay is followed by one to three shorter essays, each written by a Furman student involved in the projects described in the lead essay. The resulting book argues for an engaged learning approach to the humanities, one that employs collaborative, basic research as an educational model and activity in the liberal arts tradition.**