

## APPLICATION CHECKLIST & BUDGET FORM

### Research, Scholarship, and Creativity Grant

**Deadline Monday, February 13, 2017**

Please complete this checklist and attach it as the cover page of your grant application.

#### Faculty Information

Name: Melissa Rolnick

Department: Theatre and Dance

Email: mrolnick@gustavus.edu

Rank: Associate Professor

#### Checklist

- Description of previous projects (and outcomes) funded by RSC grants**
- Complete project description, including separate statements of:**
1. **Purpose.** What are the intellectual, conceptual, or artistic issues? How does your work fit into other endeavors being done in this field?
  2. **Feasibility.** What qualifications do you bring to this project? What have you done/will you do to prepare for this project? What is the time period, i.e. summer, summer and academic year, academic year only? Is the work's scope commensurate with the time period of the project?
  3. **Project Design.** This should include a specific description of the project design and activities, including location, staff, schedules or itineraries, and desired outcomes.
- RSC Budget Proposal Form**
- If successful, my proposal can be used as an example to assist future faculty applications. This decision will not in any way influence the evaluation of my application. Check box to give permission.
- Area of Focus Grant**  
One RSC grant will be designated an **Area of Focus** from the Academic Strategic Plan or the Mission of the College. For the 2017-2018 grant period the Area of Focus is **Justice**.
- Would you like your proposal to be considered for the Justice Area of Focus RSC?** *Note:* If your proposal is not selected for the Area of Focus RSC, it will be placed in the general pool of RSC applications.
- Yes
- No
- If you selected "Yes" above, please provide a short description of how your project impacts Justice.**

Submit electronically as a PDF to [cblaukat@gustavus.edu](mailto:cblaukat@gustavus.edu) at the John S. Kendall Center for Engaged Learning.

RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVITY GRANT: BUDGET INFORMATION

1. Enter your **Name**
2. Enter the **Stipend Costs**
3. Enter the Project Costs (both individual costs and **Total Project Cost**)
4. Enter **Total Amount Requested** (Total Project Cost + Stipend)

Name Melissa Rolnick

**Stipend** (Please check one box to indicate your distribution preference)

*Note: The RSC grant will fund up to 1,500 towards **Project Costs**. If your project costs will exceed this amount, you may opt to apply a portion (or all) of your stipend to cover these additional costs. If this option is your preference, please select "Partial Amount".*

- Full Amount** (\$700- assistant professor; \$600-associate professor; \$500-full professor)  
 **Partial Amount** (apply a portion of the full amount to project costs)

Partial Amount:

Please indicate the amount that you would like to apply towards project costs (\$\_\_\_\_\_) and the remaining stipend after this deduction (\$\_\_\_\_\_)

**Project Costs: List each item individually with its cost. Attach additional sheets if necessary.**

*I. Equipment (e.g. transcription machine, camera, digital recorder, but not computer hardware)*

- |    |              |
|----|--------------|
| 1. | Amount _____ |
| 2. | Amount _____ |
| 3. | Amount _____ |

*II. Materials (e.g. printing, software, lab supplies)*

- |   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1. visual art materials                     | Amount <u>\$75.00</u> |
| 2. (paper, paint, canvas, pastels, pencils) | Amount _____          |
| 3.  | Amount _____          |

*III. Personnel (e.g. typist, transcriptionist, student assistant)*

- |    |              |
|----|--------------|
| 1. | Amount _____ |
| 2. | Amount _____ |
| 3. | Amount _____ |

*IV. Travel (cannot include conference travel, allowable expenses listed at:*

*<http://gustavus.edu/finance/travel.php>)*

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. Airfare:   | Amount <u>\$600.00</u> |
| 2. Mileage: Number of miles ____ @ \$0.53.5/mile    Airport shuttle | Amount <u>\$70.00</u>  |
| 3. Lodging:   | Amount _____           |
| 4. Meals:   | Amount <u>\$225.00</u> |

Total Project Cost: \$970.00

**Total Amount Requested (Total Project Costs + Stipend) \$1,495.00**

*Note: The RSC grant will fund up to an amount equal to your Project Stipend + \$1500 for Project Costs.*

RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVITY GRANT: BUDGET INFORMATION

**OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING**

Have you applied for, or received funding from, another source to help support this project?

Yes

No

**If no, skip a, b, and c below.**

a. Funding Source:

b. Amount:

c. Please explain how the Research, Scholarship, and Creativity grant will be used in addition to the other funding, and (if relevant), how the RSC grant project would be impacted if external funding is not approved.

## Proposal: Research, Scholarship and Creativity Grant' 17-18

Name: Melissa C. Rolnick  
Department: Theatre and Dance  
Email: [mrolnick@gustavus.edu](mailto:mrolnick@gustavus.edu)  
Rank: Associate Professor

### Previous projects funded by RSC Grants:

#### 2011 RSC Grant

The grant was used to support the process and production of a “self- produced” dance concert in collaboration with Jeffrey Peterson titled, *Fe/Male* at Intermedia Arts in Minneapolis, MN during the summer of 2011. A final report was submitted

#### 2014 RSC Grant

The grant was used during my sabbatical to support a collaborative research/performance project with performance artist, Clare Whistler. The result was a site- specific, performance piece and subsequent video titled, *The Whole Inside*, which is available on vimeo. The process, performance and filming took place in East Sussex, England during September and October of 2014. A final report was submitted.

### Brief Explanation:

**MEISA** is a developing contemplative and somatic movement practice/form, which is the acronym for *movement-exploration-imagination-sensation-awareness*. The practice has arisen out of and been informed by my life’s experience in movement, dance, somatic and contemplative practice, injury, rehabilitation, teaching, choreographing and aging. MEISA invites curiosity into the kinesthetic experience through experiential investigation. Guided and sustained exploration in movement enlivens a practitioner’s creative impulse as they attend to sensations and engage imagination. Embodied expression manifests as the kinesthetic experience unfolds. The MEISA form involves a tiered structure of movement exploration that is supported by an ancillary processing in visual art. (Drawing serves as an essential transitional thread that supports the integration of the participant’s movement experience.)

#### 1- Purpose:

- A- To collaborate with my colleague Topaz Weis.
- B- To learn new techniques from Topaz Weis to enhance my skillful management of emotional responses to the MEISA practice, and redirect energy back into the creative process.
- C- To continue the development of MEISA by sharing it with new audiences.

During the summer of 2017, I will travel to Burlington, Vermont to collaborate, and subsequently teach with expressive arts facilitator, Topaz Weis, director of **Expressive Arts Burlington**. *Expressive Arts Facilitation is oriented towards the life affirming and healing qualities of creative expression*. As a trained Expressive Arts Facilitator, Weis works in a variety of modalities including visual art, music and movement. She states that her job as a facilitator is to “foster an atmosphere of acceptance and safety, which allows the participant to enter the unknown and explore all aspects of their expression.” Weis guides

and facilitates the creative process. As the teacher/facilitator of MEISA, it is my charge to do the same. (Please note: I have taught two semesters of MEISA at Gustavus and will continue to offer it within the context of repertory, dance technique classes, special topics courses and eventually as a regular offering within the T/D curriculum.)

The idea for a collaboration between Weis and myself was borne out of our mutual desire to learn from each other, by exchanging ideas and experiences in order to approach our individual work with an enhanced spectrum of strategy and skill. Through our exchange I will glean information from Weis' training in Expressive Arts Facilitation to engage with the creative process, while adroitly supporting the emotional responses arising within MEISA participants. Weis, in turn will learn about the practice of MEISA and ways to engage with her students more deeply through movement. Weis and I share a long history together as colleagues, collaborators and friends. We met in a dance studio 24 years ago and have been sharing ideas ever since. However, it has been a number of years since we have had the opportunity to collaborate face to face entering into practice through the current lens of our evolving work. Having the opportunity to go to Burlington, Vermont, delving into intensive collaborative practice in Weis' studio will enable us to seize this moment of invaluable learning potential.

My research in the studio (both personal and with students) has continued to guide me on a trajectory towards clarification and refinement of the MEISA form. However, I feel that I am still in the "middle" realm with respect to crystallization of the practice. I have confronted challenges in containing the emotional gestalt that sometimes arises through a participant's experience in the work. *First and foremost, the MEISA practice is meant to serve both the realization of movement potential and the creative process.* And the work awakens the body on an internal level during which emotional responses may be activated. MEISA may be experienced as therapeutic, yet is not therapy. Reliance on my intuition has guided me somewhat successfully in maintaining this distinction. Yet, I have had minimal "formal" training in this area. Weis' expertise in expressive arts facilitation using inter-modal fluency (one modality of artistic expression flows into the next) will help me to develop an enhanced pallet of skillful strategies to responsibly acknowledge what transpires within the individual, and the space, thus containing it in a safe manner, and **redirecting it back into the creative process.**

The contemporary modern dance world is evolving on all fronts including the realm of higher education. Creative, contemplative and somatic practices are being taught throughout programs in Europe, Israel, South America, and the United States. These practices go beyond the teaching of skill based learning. They cultivate embodied "knowing" through experiential and creative process inquiry to promote transformation and self-realization. The work I am offering in MEISA to the students at Gustavus and beyond is currently aligned with this evolving trend. Furthermore, I would argue that teaching MEISA places Gustavus right at the forefront of this changing landscape precisely because it is new and invites the students to enter the form as active collaborators/ participants in the form's crystallization.

Students have written the following statements taken from their personal reflections.

- "MEISA has changed my relationship to movement, and to art and the question of what art is. MEISA has given me deeper insight into myself, my movement, and creative process. Writing this reflection, it is apparent that I cannot put my finger on

exactly what it was that changed me and how, but this semester's study of MEISA has been powerful, learning and much appreciated." Ellie

- "MEISA has given me the gift of what is alive in me, and I believe this is a discovery that I cannot ignore... MEISA has changed me because it has let me see what is truly moving and flowing through me, deep into my bones." Grace
- "I believe an element of MEISA is exactly that, it's the feeling in our bones, hearts and minds that we are searching to discover. And when we've found a thread that provokes us, we work to trace it through the body, the mind... The experience has definitely challenged me to grow as an individual." Kendra

## **2- Feasibility:**

MEISA: Research, Teaching and Presentation:

For the past 4 years I have been on my research trajectory developing MEISA. In 2015 I was awarded the *Frederick P. Lenz Foundation for Buddhist Studies and American Culture and Values* residential fellowship at Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado. I engaged in a semester long research project that involved teaching an experimental movement course in **MEISA** (movement- exploration-imagination-sensation-awareness). As mentioned above, *MEISA* is a contemplative, somatic practice/form that I began developing in 2013. Previous to receiving the Lenz Fellowship I had been limited to "piece meal" engagement with the MEISA in my classes due to curricular constraints in the Dance Program at Gustavus. The Lenz Fellowship allowed me to realize the practice as I had envisioned it over the course of a sixteen- week semester with a dedicated group of students at Naropa. It gave me the time to solidify the practice in its formative stages to bring it back to Gustavus as a teaching modality and practice.

The subsequent fall of '15, I brought the results of my Naropa experience teaching and researching MEISA into the studio at Gustavus where I facilitated a group of 16 students who continued the embodied explorations and helped me bring the form one step further into its realization. We worked throughout the Fall semester of 2015 and on into the spring of '16, creating a dance titled, *Hopes' Bowl*, which was performed in the spring dance concert in May of 2016. Additionally, in the spring of 2016 I presented and taught MEISA at the American Dance Association Conference in Stevens Point, Wisconsin.

During the summer of '16, I presented an extended workshop in MEISA at the *Now Next Dance Leadership Institute Symposium* in Washington D. C. and at the *International Somatics Performance Festival and Conference* in Geneva, NY. This past fall semester of '16 I taught a special topics course in MEISA, T/D 244. Every time I teach the form and I receive feedback, I discover more clarity, and the form evolves one step further. Student responses in discussion and writing have been invaluable to the process. Just recently I taught a three- day intensive during the January interim experience at Gustavus. The continued realization and subsequent clarification of the practice/ form is building in momentum. Traveling to Burlington this summer for three weeks will enable me to build upon the research that has already transpired. Both the work and I are poised for this next cross pollinating experience with Topaz Weis.

### 3- Project Design:

Topaz Weis and I have already been in consultation with each other about the intensive collaboration. We have discussed a tentative calendar with time and dates designated for the following: 1- “pure” one on one studio/exchange/collaboration, 2- demonstrating/sharing with Weis’ present clientele at Expressive Arts Burlington, 3- teaching in the Burlington area at other venues where Weis has an established history of presentation and teaching. Those venues include the Ethan Allen Residence for Memory Loss, The Flynn Center and the University of Vermont’s Living Well Center and the Everything Space in Montpelier, Vermont. I will travel to Vermont for 3 full weeks in either July or mid-August. We have yet to solidify the dates due to present variables in venue calendars and Weis’ teaching schedule. We will need to finalize dates for workshops with local constituencies.

#### Proposed Schedule:

Week 1: working one on one in the studio focusing on Weis’ expressive arts modalities and protocol particularly the use of inter- modal processing. We will document the collaborative process through drawing/painting, writing, photography, and video.

Week 2: working in the studio focusing more specifically in movement, working within the tiered structure of MEISA and offering preliminary collaborative workshops at Expressive Arts Burlington. Again we will document the process through writing, drawing/painting, photography, and video.

Week 3: integrating MEISA into Weis’s expressive arts protocol for workshops at the Ethan Allen Residence, the Flynn Center the University of Vermont’s Living Well Center and possibly the Everything Space in Montpelier. We will need to finalize dates for workshops with local constituencies as we move into the spring. The process will be documented through, writing, drawing/painting, photography and video.

### 4- Budget Rationale:

I will be flying to Burlington via Minneapolis. At this point in time, round trip travel expenses to Burlington are listed at \$600.00. Van expenses to and from the MSP airport will be \$70.00. I will not have to pay lodging expenses while in Vermont, as I will be staying with Weis. However, I do expect food expenses to be about \$75.00 a week for 3 weeks. Other expenses include visual art materials for the Expressive Art protocol estimated to be about \$75.00.

#### Budget:

Travel to Burlington from Minneapolis	= \$600.00
Land to Air Van roundtrip from St. Peter to MSP	= \$ 70.00
Food costs (\$75 a week x 3)	= \$225.00
Visual art materials	= \$ 75.00
Stipend	= \$525.00
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>= \$1,495.00</b>