

Presidential Faculty/Student Collaboration and Publication Grant
Deadline Monday, February 22, 2016

Please use this checklist and budget. Include with your completed application. For more information about Presidential Faculty/Student Collaboration and Publication grants, please see <https://gustavus.edu/kendallcenter/grant-opportunities/presidential-grant.php>.

FACULTY INFORMATION

Name: **Martin Lang**

Email: **mlang3@gac.edu**

Department: **Communication Studies/
GWSS**

Rank: **associate professor**

STUDENT INFORMATION

Name: **Noah O’Ryan**

Email: **noryan@gac.edu**

Major(s): **Individualized (Film and Media
Production)**

Graduation Year: **2017**

CHECKLIST

Project Details

- X Brief description of the proposed project including its collaborative nature
- X Clear statement of anticipated outcomes
- X Likely placement for publication or performances
- X Anticipated research completion date

Participant Details

- X Names and brief biographies of all participants
- X Explanation of how this project fits into the career of the faculty member
Note: Applications from faculty at all career stages are encouraged
- X Explanation of how this project fits into the educational trajectory of the student
Note: Statement should be written by the student; include year of graduation; student eligibility is limited to full-time returning students

X Presidential Budget Proposal Form

- X If successful, my proposal can be used as an example to assist future applications. Check to give permission. This decision will not influence the application evaluation.

Submit electronically as a PDF to cblaukat@gustavus.edu at the John S. Kendall Center for Engaged Learning.

Presidential Faculty/Student Collaboration Grant

Budget Information

Faculty Stipend (\$300 per week, up to \$3,000 for a maximum of 10 weeks)

Student Summer Stipend (\$400 per week, up to \$4,000 for a maximum of 10 weeks)

Student Summer Campus Housing (\$60 per week, for a maximum of 10 weeks)

Budget Maximum (\$8,100 for all categories)

Item		Amount
Equipment (e.g., transcription machine, camera, cassette recorder – but not to include computer hardware)		\$ 80
1: SDHC cards (recording media)	Cost: 10 @ \$8 each	80
2:	Cost:	
3:	Cost:	
Materials (e.g., books, printing, software, lab supplies)		\$ 1200
1: honoraria for participants	Cost: ~ 14 @ \$50 each	700
2: entertainment/meals for participant meetings	Cost: 500	500
3:	Cost:	
Travel Costs (cannot include conference travel, see http://gustavus.edu/finance/travel.php for allowable travel expenses)		\$ 698
Airfare:		
Mileage: Number of miles__700__ @ \$0.54/mile updated 2016 IRS rate		378
Lodging:		
Meals: 20 days travel x \$8/lunch x 2 people		320
Stipends & Housing		\$ 6600
Faculty Stipend	\$300 per week, up to \$3,000 for a maximum of 10 weeks	2000
Student Summer Stipend	\$400 per week, up to \$4,000 for a maximum of 10 weeks	4000
Student Summer Campus Housing	\$60 per week, up to 10 weeks	600
Total Expenses		\$ 8578
Amount Requested (Total Expenses + Requested Stipends + Housing)		\$ 8100

Have you applied for, or received funding from, another source to help support this project? (If no, skip a, b, and c below.)

☐ Yes

☒ No

a. Funding Source:

b. Amount:

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

Presidential Faculty/Student Collaboration and Publication Grant Proposal
Narrative
Community Documentary Film Production
Noah O’Ryan and Martin Lang
Feb. 19, 2016

Brief description of the proposed project including its collaborative nature

We plan to produce a documentary film in collaboration with members of the local Somali/African immigrant communities (as well as local experts) in Mankato, St. Peter, and surrounding areas. Many immigrant families from Somali and other east African nations, most of them Muslim, have decided to set roots in southern Minnesota and other rural parts of the region, and their presence on the social landscape continues to grow by leaps and bounds. They bring enormous potential to their new communities and also face very particular challenges. While many, many media representations of Muslims and African immigrants to the U.S. strive to make sense of their habits, their beliefs, and their very existence, our process will be driven by the mission to facilitate their vision for sharing their own stories. The specific focus, format, and deployment of the film will be determined in direct consultation with members of the Somali/African immigrant community to determine the kinds of representations they would like to offer to the population at large. The production will be necessarily be shaped by the filmmakers’ expertise in communication and media production, as well as our status as outsiders to these communities, but we intend to place as much agency as possible in the hands of the people whose lives and stories will be depicted in the film.

The project will begin in earnest as soon as funding is secured. Using networks already established or in development, we will spend time in late spring conducting informational interviews and focus groups to build relationships, establish our project’s parameters, and gather insight about the kinds of stories our subjects seek to share. The bulk of shooting and editing the film will take place throughout the summer of 2016. The project will continue into fall 2016 with refinements based on feedback from the Somali community, with a “final cut” goal of early November 2016 that will preserve the opportunity for submission to regional and national film festivals if that is deemed appropriate during the development stage. Whatever format the film takes, we anticipate a local premiere screening event to honor our collaborators and provide a valuable opportunity for community cohesion.

The project, like most any media production, will be intensely collaborative not only with local community but also between the filmmakers themselves. Both Noah and Martin bring important production experience with complementary emphases, and we anticipate sharing nearly every aspect of the work from logistical coordination and relationship development to field production and editing.

Clear statement of anticipated outcomes

The material outcome of the project will be dictated through our conversations with the community members, with the particular format to be determined by a collective determination of the best use of the film to accomplish the community’s goals. Because this

project hinges heavily on community collaboration, we are less able than other projects might be to predict the final outcomes. Though we have begun preliminary conversation, we will cannot burden our community partners with involved planning conversations until we can assure them that the resources for the production are in place and we will not be wasting their time. However, possibilities for publication/distribution/presentation include:

- semi-feature length documentary (45-60 minutes) for formal screening in film festivals, community events, and online
- serial-style documentary in short episodes (2-3 or 5-7 minutes) for internet and social media distribution
- short educational videos (~10 minutes) to be deployed in schools, businesses, government organizations
- other formats not yet imagined

In addition to the material outcomes, we anticipate several key community outcomes. These include the general mission-related outcome of bringing new voice to a subset of our community who may exist on the margins and suffer the burden of popular misconceptions about who they are. They also include forging new and deeper ties with a local population of people whose prominence will continue to grow and shape local culture. These ties can provide a mutually beneficial, ongoing relationship with several benefits:

- provide an avenue for Gustavus students, staff, and faculty to explore new insights into a key constituency in our local, national, and global community
- provide resources for local Somali/African immigrants to pursue their own community goals with support from Gustavus student, staff, and faculty
- facilitate open channels of dialogue among various community stakeholders (families, churches, government agencies, support organizations, universities, etc.) to resolve pressing community problems and pursue collective goals

Likely placement for publication or performance

Placement for performance will depend heavily upon the community's desires for how to deploy the film, but several conspicuous options exist. This non-exclusive list includes:

- local distribution through a network of support organizations
- local public screenings through support organizations, community centers, etc.
- campaign for social media distribution, perhaps in conjunction with an established advocacy organization, school district, or government agency
- statewide venues where interest in Somali/African immigrant issues is high (e.g St. Cloud, St. Paul)
- Regional, national, and international film festivals such as
 - Minneapolis/St. Paul International Film Festival
 - Frozen River Film Festival (Winona, MN)
 - San Francisco Documentary Festival
 - Vibgyor International Festival for Short & Documentary Films (Kerala, India)
 - ALBA Human Rights Documentary Film Festival (New York University)
 - African Film Festival (New York)

Note regarding community support

Establishing an effective network of community support will be vital to the success of this project. In addition to extant connections forged through many years of community-based research and creative work, we are actively fostering important new relationships.

Important allies have made commitments to support our project, including representatives from the African Family and Education Center (Mankato), the Mankato Islamic Center, and the Minnesota Valley Action Council. We also have budding connections to Nicollet County Human Services and Nicollet County Adult Basic Education, two agencies with close ties to the Somali/African immigrant communities. Of course, we have and will continue to rely on the Gustavus Center for Community-Based Service and Learning for vital support.

Biography and trajectory, Noah O’Ryan

I am a Junior Film and Media Studies major. I’m originally from Maryland and I have wanted to get in filmmaking since I was young, creating animations and some basic student films during my childhood. That curiosity for filmmaking has followed me into college. I have during my time here created a club, “The Gustavian Society of Filmmakers”, and an individualized major. An important aspect of filmmaking is the actual facilitation and practice of it; it is very much something that cannot be taught completely out of a book. I have had experience in production in Video Art and other classes at Gustavus, but none of them have provided me the opportunity to do a long form project spanning months, something that is very common in Hollywood and other places that make film. This project would allow me to experience that long form project by doing a professional documentary shoot that no class at Gustavus, or at any other college would allow me to experience in quite the same way. This summer I would be a collaborator as opposed to an intern that gets coffee or some other relatively trivial task that other opportunities would perhaps put me into. This project would weave the production and theory I have learned in the disciplines of Communication Studies, Art and Art History, and English to create an effective and engaging documentary and is a perfect way to finalize my major with a “capstone” experience as I end my time here at Gustavus. Also, the project is important to my career because the film industry, like most industries, greatly values experience. This is an experience most other graduates in my field would not have, giving me an important first step to success beyond graduation.

Biography and trajectory, Martin Lang

In my tenth year of teaching at Gustavus in the role of as associate professor of Communication Studies, Film and Media Studies, and Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies (where I am currently serving as program director). I’ve been teaching courses and conducting research in media studies, gender studies, practical argument, and related areas for 16 years. I have been deeply involved in community-based learning since arriving at Gustavus, having fostered many community collaborations and successful student projects in both my COM 265 Video Representation and COM 120 Public Discourse courses. I have been advisor to GAC-TV since its inception and am currently also advisor to the Gustavian Society of Filmmakers. My last film project, *Farming Forward*, was very successfully completed in 2009 with my student co-producer, Ethan Marxhausen, under the support of a Presidential Faculty/Student Collaboration Grant.

As a scholar of communication, my teaching and research tends to gather in a loose constellation of three key elements: identity, power, and media. I explore how their interaction shapes meaning in ways that foster or inhibit a just society. Most of my work takes a critical media literacy approach, examining the artifacts and processes of meaning-making in order to help members of a community recognize, interpret, and respond to mediated messages that shape dynamics of power in their lives. Since learning techniques

of video production in graduate school, I have been able to extend the mission by creating, and teaching the creation of, those media messages directly.

This production-based approach has two unique benefits for my pedagogy and scholarship. First, by pulling back the curtain on the processes of media production, my students and I gain an understanding of the opportunities and limitations that media producers face when creating messages for television, film, radio, etc. While a “naïve” approach to media literacy considers only the relationship between a message and its receiver, this more robust approach factors in the processes that shape the message’s creation as well. Whereas a naïve approach to media literacy seeks to inoculate the patient against media’s ill effects, an approach that integrates an understanding of production can pursue an active and systemic treatment plan, potentially utilizing the media as a tool of that treatment.

The second benefit to getting hands-on with media production in the community is that it allows me to actively implement those treatment plans. Among its several goals, *Farming Forward* sought to disrupt traditional representations of Minnesota farmers as well as the stereotype that sustainable farming is merely an environmentalist fad. This new project, among other things, aims not only to offer alternatives to the standard media representations of Muslims and African immigrants, but to go further into territory Stuart Hall calls “rendering the stereotypes uninhabitable” so that those corrosive representations cannot operate in the same way any more.

In these ways, the project proposed here fits very well into the ongoing trajectory of my career as a scholar and teacher.