**Research, Scholarship, and Creativity Grant**

**Application prepared and submitted by**

**Aaron L. Banks, Ed.D.**

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**Description of Previous RSC Funded Projects**

I was awarded a Research, Scholarship, and Creativity grant in 2008 and 2010. The 2008 grant coincided with my sabbatical work and was a great help in accomplishing my project, which was the development a self-defense manuscript for publication in the 15th edition of Mood, Musker, & Rink’s historic and well known text, *Sport & Recreational Activities*. In 2010 I was awarded a second grant to continue my work with Dr. Dale Mood. Based upon the initial chapter I wrote for his upcoming text in 2008, Dr. Mood invited me to write two additional chapters. In 2010 I completed a chapter on Yoga and another on the game of Speedball. I am excited to say that all three chapters were featured in the 2012 publication of *Sports & Recreations Activities (15th edition,* McGraw-Hill Publishing). I would not have been able to achieve this success without the assistance of the 2008 and 2010 RSC grants.

**Description of Project Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to examine and interpret the evolution of a service-learning project within a collegiate level introductory leisure studies course. Specifically, I will write a manuscript for publication in the *Journal for Leisure Studies* targeted toward practitioners and educators within the leisure discipline. This is a highly regarded and competitive journal within the leisure discipline. The manuscript will explore and discuss the four phases of evolution that I have identified through the ongoing implementation of a service-learning project (Adirondack chairs) within my First Term Seminar course here at Gustavus.

Below I have identified the four phases of evolution within a service-learning project. I have also provided enough information to help each member of the committee understand from where I am coming. Please read on.

*Phase 1 – Community Service (2005-2006)*

For the past seven years I have had the opportunity to teach first year students about my passion: leisure! Together, we have explored our most precious commodity, that being *time*. As a faculty member that has the privilege to work with young people, it is obvious that finding time for relaxation and renewal is often difficult in our hurried world. Many of us feel as though life is moving at an accelerated pace with little time for personal contemplation and conversation. The pace on a college campus tends to be even faster among twenty-somethings. Whether it be racing to class, purchasing a bag lunch to eat on the run, text messaging a friend or loved one, or heading to the library to meet a study group, these young adults fill their days with necessary obligations. Unfortunately, little time is taken for personal relaxation and renewal. From my teachings and through my students, I have been inspired to help these young people develop strategies to “take back their time”, all the while establishing a more authentic and satisfying life experience here at Gustavus Adolphus College.

Early into the teaching of my First Term Seminar, I was motivated to find a way to impact the leisure and lifestyle upon this campus. An avid woodworker, I already knew I wanted to do something with my hands. Furthermore, as a newer faculty member in the early 2000’s, I had observed the lack of utilization of outdoor spaces by the undergraduates on the Gustavus campus. The problem was that very few physical spaces existed on the campus that invited students to gather. Most of campus possessed concrete benches that were hard, cold, and uninviting. As a result, I developed a community service project in which my FTS, an introductory leisure studies course, built and donated Adirondack chairs to enhance the use of outdoor campus space. The initial build was a great success and warmly embraced by the campus community. At this stage of the project I was encouraged to further develop the academic nature of this project.

*Phase 2 – Service Learning (2007-2008)*

Working closely with Jeffrey Rathlef, Director of Community-Based Service and Learning, the project transitioned from a community-service endeavor to that of a service-learning endeavor. Through self-reflection and self-discovery techniques, the students who built the chairs in the following years not only provided a necessary service to the campus, but learned how to identify community problems, design an action plan, and actively engage in a project designed to increase civic responsibility. Additionally, I utilized the building program as a platform to introduce, discuss, and evaluate values. Once again, we experienced great success. I turned my work with this project into a presentation when in 2008, Bonnie Reimann and I submitted and were accepted to present at the 2008 World Leisure Congress in Quebec City, Quebec, Canada. The title of the presentation was *Adirondack Chairs & Leisure Courses?: Developing Service Learning within the Leisure Concept.* The presentation was well received by a diverse international audience and we were encouraged with the many questions and follow-up messages we received. Personally, I began desiring to write about this project, to share my story, and to help other educators bring the leisure concept to life for modern students. If only there were more time in the day!

*Phase 3 – Campus Reaction (2009-2010)*

In an interesting twist, with the hiring of President Ohle and the college’s new marketing campaign, the Adirondack chairs became prominently featured within marketing print and electronic materials mailed and communicated to perspective students. It was fascinating to see how a simple classroom project began to take on a greater meaning. I certainly did not foresee this happening when I first developed the project. It is difficult to put it into words, as I believe these chairs mean many things to many people. To me, the chairs serve as a constant reminder to take time for oneself, to remain balanced, and to utilize nature and all its glory. Regardless of what they mean to you, the Adirondack chairs have become somewhat of a symbol for the college. In an effort to explain this within an academic realm, once again Bonnie Reimann and I were accepted to present at the 2010 World Leisure Congress in Chun Cheon, Korea. The title of the presentation was *The Impact of a Service Learning Project on the Identity of an American College.* Unfortunately I was unable to travel to Korea with Bonnie, nevertheless, the presentation went forward and was once again well received!

*Phase 4 – Cultural Integration (2011-2012)*

Currently, the college is celebrating it’s Sesquicentennial! As recently reported on the Gustavus website (January 26, 2012), Stephan Koplowitz will be in residence for the next three months. He has been commissioned to tell the Gustavus story from his unique perspective. Koplowitz is an internationally known and award winning director and choreographer. Well known for his work with *site-specific* dance, he will create four *site-specific* dances to be performed on May 2 and May 5, 2012. According to our colleague, Jeffrey Peterson of the Theatre & Dance Department, “Site-specific dance, and especially that of Stephan Koplowitz, seeks to honor the history, architecture, and community in a site en route to developing deeply rooted choreography. This is an opportunity to vividly display how Gustavus integrates the arts into its liberal arts curriculum, and broadcast it to a greater population.”

Although Steven Koplowitz will be in-residence for the next three months, he has visited the Gustavus campus several times over the past year in an effort to research, plan, and effectively tell the Gustavus story. Early in his visits he identified the Adirondack chairs as a part of that history and identity of the College. In fact, one of his four performances will feature 30 Adirondack chairs and 30 Gustavus dancers. In essence, we will witness the fusion of leisure and art very soon on this campus. Once again, I am amazed at how the Adirondack chairs take on a different meaning to each individual. I am excited to see how Stephan Koplowitz will bring the chairs to life!

I am hoping to receive a Research, Scholarship, and Creativity grant to aid in the completion of my proposed project. The completion of this project will allow for the diversification of my current research agenda.

In order to complete the manuscript the following tasks are essential:

* Funds for Materials – I will need access to the most current research and trends regarding service learning, leisure, and art. I will also draw upon my resources here on campus which include Jeffrey Rathlef and Stephan Koplowitz, should they have time to meet this spring. In the meantime, I will need funds to purchase relevant materials and begin a thorough literature review prior to July, 2012.
* Funds for Travel to Miami University & the Scripps Center – I will spend one week in July, 2012 at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, working to complete the manuscript and meeting with a leisure studies content expert, Dr. Valeria Freysinger. Having access to Dr. Freysinger and the materials contained within Miami’s Scripps Center is imperative to complete this project. Dr. Freysinger is highly regarded throughout the world leisure community and very well published. I believe she is the catalyst I need to help me synthesize the service learning and art concepts through a leisure lens. As you can probably tell, I’ve been thinking about this idea for some time. Unfortunately, my momentum and progress has stalled. I am at a point that I need additional help and I believe Dr. Freysinger can provide the help I need.

**Description of Project Feasibility**

Completion of this project is very feasible, however an extensive amount of work will have to be completed during spring and summer 2012. I am confident that I will be able to complete the manuscript within the time frame allotted if financial support is granted. I have been in contact with Dr. Freysinger, we have discussed the project and timeline I am proposing, and she has agreed to meet me in July, 2012 in Oxford, Ohio for one week. It should be noted that I have known Dr. Freysinger since 1996 when I was graduate student at Miami University. In fact, my interest in teaching leisure studies was cultivated when I served as a teaching assistant under her leadership. Should my manuscript not be accepted for publication in the *Journal of Leisure Studies*, there are several other leisure journals available with which to submit. If the manuscript develops as I am hoping, I plan to present the cultural integration concept from this manuscript (Phase 4) at the 2014 World Leisure Congress.

**Description of Project Design**

This project will reach completion in the following order:

* Spring 2012 – Purchase necessary resources and begin informal literature review.
* June 2012 – Develop a general outline for the manuscript, including the four phases.
* July 2012 – Travel to Miami University to meet Dr. Freysinger, continue research, and draft the manuscript.
* Early Fall 2012 – Complete the manuscript and submit for publication.

**Funding Requested for Project Budget**

Funding requested as follows:

* Stipend for Associate Professor - $0 – I would like to use the stipend to defray overall costs.
* Materials – Funds for Purchase of Relevant Information - $300
* Travel – Flight, Gas to MSP, Parking at MSP, Rental Car - $1080
* Lodging – Funds for One Week of Hotel Stay in Oxford/Cincinnati - $825
* Food for One Week in Oxford/Cincinnati - $200

\*Should the costs of my visit to Miami University be higher than estimated, I will personally absorb any additional expenses.

**TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED - $2,100.00**

Thank you for considering this proposal for a Research, Scholarship, and Creativity grant. I will gladly answer any questions you might have regarding my application.

Respectfully submitted,

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Associate Professor

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