APPLICATION CHECKLIST & BUDGET FORM
Research, Scholarship, and Creativity Grant

Deadline Monday, February 11th

Please complete this checklist and attach it as the cover page of your grant application, whether you submit electronically or via hard copy.

Faculty Information

Name: Baker Lawley

Dept: English

Email: blawley@gac.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.**

Submission instructions

Electronic — Submit a single document containing the entire application to
  rsc-proposals@gustavus.edu.

Paper — Submit one (1) copy of completed application to the John S. Kendall Center for Engaged Learning (Beck Hall, Room 103).

Research, Scholarship, and Creativity Grant: BUDGET INFORMATION

Directions:
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: Baker Lawley

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.	Project Costs Amount
I. Equipment (e.g. transcription machine, camera, digital recorder—but not computer hardware) 1. 2. 3. *II. Materials (e.g. books, printing, software, lab supplies)* 1. Books for Research into Serial Fiction 2. Web hosting, domain registration, website setup $200 3. *III. Personnel (e.g. typist, transcriptionist, student assistant)* 1. Studio Space rental at The Loft Literary Center: $350 2. 3._____ *IV. Travel (cannot include conference travel, see* *http://gustavus.edu/finance/travel.php for allowable expenses*) 1. Flight to Alabama for research: $450 2. Lodging/Meals: $400 3.	*I. Equipment* 1. 2. 3. *II. Materials* 1. $100 2. $200 3. *III. Personnel* 1. $350 2. 3. *IV. Travel* 1. $450 2. $400 3.
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	**$ 1500**
TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED (Total Project Costs + Stipend) (*Note: The RSC grant will fund up to an amount equal to your Full Stipend + 1,500 for Project Costs*)	**$ 2100**

Baker Lawley, Associate Professor
Department of English
Application for Research, Scholarship, and Creativity Grant

Previous Projects funded by RSC Grants

I've received two RSC grants during my eight years at Gustavus. In 2007 I received a grant to research the history of Winston County, Alabama during the Civil War, when Winston County seceded from both the Confederacy and the Union, declaring itself "The Free State of Winston." With the help of the RSC grant, I was able to conduct this research in the summer, including a trip to Winston County coinciding with historical document research at the Hoole Special Collections Library at the University of Alabama. I then drafted a novella based on this historical research, using studio space at The Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis reserved with RSC grant funds. I revised and completed *The Free State of Winston* novella during the academic year, and have subsequently submitted it for publication in literary journals and to publishing houses.

In 2011, I received a grant to complete my thematically-linked short story collection, *A Good Idea at the Time* (formerly titled *The Curtain-Puller's Understudy*). I used RSC funds to travel and research settings and dialect for several stories, and to reserve studio space at The Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis for drafting the stories and crafting the manuscript as a whole. The RSC grant was a huge help for the success of this manuscript. I've published each of the short stories in literary magazines, including *The Cream City Review*, *The Southeast Review*, *Atticus Review*, and *Copper Nickel*, and I've also published the story collection as a whole through ECRH Press as an ebook available on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Kobo, and other online bookstores.

Purpose:

When I came to Gustavus in 2005 as an English professor specializing in fiction writing, the path to publishing fiction was an old-fashioned one, virtually identical to the way writers got published in 1905. But in just the past two or three years, the entire publishing industry has been turned upside down by advances in technology and the rise of digital writing, ebooks, and self-publishing.

As a fiction writer, I'm excited and intrigued by these fundamental changes in publishing and I feel I need to engage with them to further my career as a writer. My project will take part in this new world of fiction and publishing. With the help of the RSC grant, I would like to write a new full-length work of fiction, and to write it in a serialized format uniquely suited to digital publishing.

First, I'd like to give some background on serialized fiction in my field of creative writing.

An interesting and ironic development in this digital publishing upheaval is that some very old publishing practices have come back in vogue. One such form is serialized fiction, in which parts or episodes of a longer story are published in separate installments that then come together in a full-length story arc. To offer a comparison, serialized fiction is akin to a book version of episodic television shows like *The Sopranos* or *The Wire*, made up of individual episodes that come together as a whole season.

While this may seem like a new development, serialized fiction is actually a very old, tried-and-true publishing practice. Charles Dickens published all of his novels as serialized episodes in magazines, beginning with *The Pickwick Papers* in 1836, and many other writers and publishers soon followed this model. In "A Short History of Serial Fiction," an essay on the website of Plympton, a serial fiction publishing house, it states,

> "Many of the novels we consider classics of the period began life as serials, including Eliot's *Middlemarch*, Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, James' *Portrait of a Lady*, and Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. In the United States, one of the earliest works released in serial format was Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*." (source: http://plympton.com/a-short-history-of-serial-fiction/)

When in its prime in the 1800s, serialized publishing was so popular that fans of Dickens rioted at a New York harbor while waiting for the next installment of the story to be unloaded from its shipping crates.

Ebooks and digital writing have once again made serial fiction a feasible method of publishing, and it has caught on so well that there are several publishing houses like Plympton dedicated solely to serialized fiction. (Link: http://plympton.com) In fact, Amazon.com has started its own publishing imprint, Amazon Serials, publishing for the Amazon Kindle e-reader market. (Link: http://amzn.to/XopiVI)

Today's readers are responding to the serial format, especially in ebooks. Many of the bestselling titles on Amazon are serialized fiction, including *Yesterday's Gone* by Sean Platt and David Writing, and *Hacker Mom* by Austen Rachlis. Many well-known authors who have been published in the traditional manner have now turned to serialized fiction, including Margaret Atwood, who is serializing her novel *Positron* through the serial publisher Byliner.

For my project with the RSC grant, I plan to join in this old tradition made new, and write a new work of serialized fiction. I am interested in a serialized story focusing on a run-down and isolated motel in the Deep South. This set-up for a serialized story excites me for many reasons. First, I am a native of Alabama and set much of my fiction there, as I'm fascinated by the rich and complicated historical burdens of the South and often use them in the themes of my writing. Further, the setting of a desolate motel offers an organic opportunity for new visitors to arrive in each episode, a trope that has long been used by serial fiction. In fact, my inspiration for the motel is an actual place, The Moon Winx Lodge, with one of the most iconic neon signs in the South. See a picture here: http://www.flickr.com/photos/aeranthes/107910636/

The digital revolution has changed publishing and reading, and presents many intellectual and conceptual issues for this project. But the artistic issues of good writing remain the same. Even with these new technologies and resurgent formats, the writing must be very good for it to reach a reader. As a practicing fiction writer and writing teacher, this is something I firmly believe.

My project proposal for this RSC grant would therefore involve travel to Alabama for immersive writing research, to visit the setting, hear the dialect, and get an understanding of the citizens there to help me develop the characters in my serialized story. Further, I

need to research the landscape and the natural world of that particular setting, as I intend to focus on the interaction of Man and Nature in the modern world as one of the themes throughout the story, as indicated by the contrast of the moon and the neon in the motel's sign.

In addition to research in the particular setting, I would also do a great deal of research about the serial form, by reading primary texts like poplar serial fiction as well as books on the craft of writing serials.

After the research trip to rural Alabama and the Tuscaloosa area to view the Moon Winx motel, I plan to return to Minnesota and begin drafting the episodes for the first collection of the serialized story. Working on this scope, writing individual episodes that work as a cohesive whole, is an intricate task, so I would use RSC grant funds to rent studio space at The Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis, a space for working writers to write but also meet and share ideas, drafts, and revision suggestions.

While drafting, I would also use RSC funds to integrate my fiction into the new digital methods of publication and author promotion. I would use RSC funds to create a website for this serialized work and to cover publication costs as I submit the finished serial to publishers like Plympton or Amazon Serials, or to pursue publication directly as an ebook.

Feasibility:

My qualifications for this project can be seen in my writing history. While at Gustavus, I have authored two full-length novels (*The Battle Hymn Blues* and *Stealing the Show*), two novellas of 150 pages each (*The Man Who Invented Writing* and *The Free State of Winston*), and over a dozen short stories, many of which are collected in a full-length manuscript (*A Good Idea at the Time*). I've had good success in finding publishers for my short stories and am building an audience of readers for my longer works as well. After an initial adjustment period during my early years at Gustavus, I've found ways to be very prolific with my fiction, and the aid of the RSC grants has been very valuable in this.

One way that I'm able to be prolific is through a very targeted and focused use of the summer months. During this period, I do a major amount of drafting, writing rough but complete versions of manuscripts. While we are in the busy times of the academic year when the hectic schedule doesn't allow for more immersive writing, I am able to go back to the rough drafts that I wrote during the summer for editing and revising, and in the course of the school year I can produce a finished product.

This serialized fiction project is feasible for getting a draft completed during the summer months, as I have already begun reading research and making notes and plot outlines. I plan to use the summer to generate first drafts of all the individual episodes in order to conceive of the larger context of the serialized novel. This will allow me to revise with the overall effect in mind, to weave the independent installments together more tightly, plan foreshadowing and cliffhanger effects, and shape the larger narrative arc of the entire story.

Furthermore, the feasibility of publishing these works is greatly enhanced by the form.

Serialized fiction is of great interest to publishers, and many are targeting writers working on these types of projects. I am gaining experience in the new world of self-publishing as well, and will research this option after the initial drafting and revising of the serialized story is completed.

Based on my writing habits and the current work that has been done toward this project, I know that by the end of the summer I will be able to complete rough drafts of all the episodes of the larger serialized novel, and I would use the academic year to revise and prepare those manuscripts for submission to serial publishers or for self-publication.

Project Design:

As part of the project research, this grant will include funding dedicated to a research trip to western Alabama, to see the environment of The Moon Winx Lodge and the natural landscape surrounding it, as well as observational research into local dialect and culture, and historical research at the Hoole Special Collections Library at the University of Alabama, and the Birmingham Public Library Southern History Collection.

A great deal of the writing will be done at The Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis—this writing studio space rental and membership will allow a dedicated place for intensive writing throughout the summer, but more importantly, it will allow me access to a professional writing community in which I can converse with other writers of fiction to discuss my drafts, receive feedback, brainstorm ideas, and form and shape the project as it grows, using the crucial help of outside opinions on the art of the writing.

To coincide with the writing of the serialized novel, I also want to pursue publishing in the new digital formats, as this is clearly the direction publishing is going to go for the foreseeable future in my writing career. I would like to have a website built for this serial novel, and to market the book using digital tools such as social media, email, and other online interaction.

The desired outcome of this project is a publication-ready version of the first six episodes of this serialized novel, available individually as shorter installments and collected together as a larger work. I would make use of the intensive summer period to generate the basis of the manuscript, and during the academic year I would work on revising and editing the drafts to ready for publication while also slowly building online resources such as the website and social media connections.