Opportunity Knocks Again!

As many of you sit down to read this newsletter, our students have departed the campus and I have seen my first year at Westfield State University come to an end. Although it has been challenging at times for all of us here at Westfield State, perseverance has brought us success on many fronts.

The Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs has seen a great deal of activity. Not only have we submitted over 12 grants, we have managed over 12 grant awards that faculty are currently conducting research or programmatic work on. With the help of Finance and Administration and Lisa Freeman, paperwork has been submitted to secure a Federally-negotiated finance and administration rate for all public grants submitted in the future. Policies and procedures have been created to streamline the grant administration process for faculty, staff and librarians. In addition, the reporting process to funders and submission of drawdowns for grant reimbursement has been developed.

The Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs has conducted several workshops about researching grant opportunities. We have also started planning on our first "Primary Investigators Awards Ceremony" as a way to recognize and promote faculty members who have applied and won awards during the last year fiscal year. We have plans for several additional workshops that will be more interactive and multi-department based. We continue to work to streamline processes and ensure that all accounting, reporting, and reimbursements are done accurately and in a timely fashion. We are confident that faculty, staff and librarians will benefit from the changes.

Summer is a great time to come to our office and talk about projects you wish to secure funding for, sign up for SPIN and learn how to use Foundation Search. As always if you have any questions, I encourage you to email, stop in or call me.

Louann D’Angelo

SPIN: Create Your Interest-Specific Profile Now!

SPIN is a grant research tool subscribed to by Westfield State University through InfoEd, Inc. It contains solicitations from both public and private sources. Faculty and staff at Westfield State University who are interested in accessing SPIN may contact the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs (OGSP) for directions how to register, or may go directly to the GENUS component of InfoEd to create a profile for themselves. After creating a profile, only opportunities that match your interests are sent to you. A SPIN "Getting Started" PowerPoint Presentation and A SPIN Users Manual (PDF) can be found on the Employee Resource tab in the WSU Portal in Odyssey under Academic Affairs. Training is also available through the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs.
In April 2012, two awards were announced for the Semester Time Award for Research and Scholarship (STARS) Program. Out of a total of six applicants this spring, Byung Jun Cho of Criminal Justice and Sophia Sarigianides of English, were chosen.

Byung Jun Cho submitted a proposal entitled “Developing and Testing a Revised Measure of Self-Control in the General Theory of Crime.” Dr. Cho will continue his studies of Gottfredson and Hirschi’s “General Theory of Crime” (1990) and its more recent modifications, specifically as applied to the statistical association between self-control and crime and crime equivalents in South Korea.

Sophia Sarigianides submitted a proposal entitled “Thinking Adolescence: Teacher and Student Conceptions of Youth in the Secondary Classroom.” Dr. Sarigianides will continue her work at a local urban high school, and through the use of professional development workshops, will work to disrupt stereotypical discourses of adolescence embedded in the curriculum by exposing the way that teachers rely upon stereotypes when thinking about and teaching young people, and by considering the implications for student learning of these preconceptions.

Community Art and Massachusetts Cultural Council

Wondering what the metal sculpture is on the Horace Mann lawn? It is none other than a sculpture by the Connecticut artist David Hayes who has had installations at the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Smithsonian in Washington DC, and the Musée Rodin in Paris, France.

This is the first phase in a hoped for plan to enhance the cultural community of the city of Westfield and a collaboration between Faith Lund and the WSU Downtown Art Gallery, the Westfield Business District, and Westfield On Weekends.

Through a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, this ambitious plan has begun to unfold wherein the sculptures of David Hayes will decorate various locations around the city coinciding with the completion of Westfield’s downtown revitalization project. The intention of this collaboration is to put the city of Westfield on the cultural map and attract visitors to a transformed downtown.

SMARTS: Travel Grants for Students

Westfield State University offers a number of avenues for undergraduate and graduate students interested in pursuing academic research or undertaking special projects.

For students who participate in scholarly activities off-campus, Westfield has established a modest competitive grant program called SMARTS: Seed Money for Academic or Research Travel for Students. These opportunities include attending or presenting at academic conferences or workshops; participating in off-campus research projects; or engaging in service learning directly related to an academic program or purpose. Each semester, up to $500.00 in reimbursements for expenses per student may be awarded until the total fund is expended. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the academic year; therefore, grants are awarded on a “first come, first served” basis.

Applications can be found online on the Grants and Sponsored Programs web page.
Innovative Pedagogical Initiatives Awards for Spring 2012

Nine IPI Grants were awarded during the Spring 2012 term.

1. Mara Dodge, History; to attend “Teaching History with Technology” in June 2012.
2. Rachel Gibson, Music; to attend “Curso de certificacion del primer nivel del metodo Zoltan Kodaly” in June 2012.
3. Chalet Seidel, English; for a project: “A Rhetorical Genre Based Approach to ENGL 392: Business and Technical Writing.”
4. Ricki Kantrowitz, Psychology; for a project: “Interdisciplinary methods to train counseling students.”
8. Teri Shiel, Library; to attend “Institute for Information Literacy Immersion 2012 Program Track” in July 2012.

New! International Travel Opportunities for Faculty

There is a new program on campus to benefit faculty. Faculty travel abroad is a high priority as outlined in one of the key initiatives resulting from the strategic planning process: provide high quality, innovative educational programming.

Ricki Kantrowitz was asked to head a program to make faculty aware of international travel opportunities. In the selection among faculty who submitted proposals, preference was given to those who had not traveled internationally. Three proposals were awarded:

1. Diane Prusank of Communication will travel to Istanbul, Turkey to attend the seminar “Consuming Istanbul: Space, Spectacle and the Politics of Popular Culture”
2. Hugh Jo of Political Science will travel to Japan to study at the Japan Studies Institute.
3. Brian Steinberg of Political Science will travel to Krosno State College in Poland to attend the Erasmus Program.

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A Big Thank You To Our Grant Advisory Committee!

The work of the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs staff is enhanced by the guidance of the Grant Advisory Committee. The Grant Advisory Committee collaborates in the development of grant-related policies and procedures and represents faculty interests. The membership of the Grant Advisory Committee includes the Dean of Faculty and the Grants Director as ex-officio members, 4 full-time faculty members/librarians, two staff and one student representative.

Members of the Committee are instrumental to Westfield State’s active internal grants programs, such as STARS and IPI. The Committee participates in the evaluation of Internal Grant applications.

This year’s committee members were: Sunday Fakunmoju, Social Work; Dan Price, Criminal Justice; Elise Young, History; Chris Proulx, Movement Science; Lori Comeau, TRiO Program; Suzanne Tiranno, Library; Armand Hunter and Jennifer McDiarmid, student representatives.
The Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs is the department at Westfield State University responsible for the solicitation and management of funding from external sources. This includes the identification, submission, post-award management, and compliance for various types of funding (i.e. grants, contracts, sub-contracts, cooperative agreements) from corporate foundations, private foundations, and public entities at the local, state and federal levels.

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A Conversation with Sophia Sariganides of English

I had an opportunity to discuss with Sophia Sariganides her interactions with the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs during this past year. Sophia initially came to our office with a great idea but unsure how to proceed. I thought it would be helpful for our faculty, staff and librarians on campus to hear about Sophia’s journey. Here is some wisdom she shared:

Take advantage of the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs resources. Sign up for SPIN. Learn to use Foundation Search. Look at grants internally or locally. Break down the elements of your project and talk to someone who doesn’t know anything about it. Brainstorm. Ask questions to find people who would fund your project. The Grants Office may help you define or expand your idea, help you reduce jargon and/or write in an active voice and in laymen’s terms. Some of this may seem very elementary but others may need direction and help in narrowing their scope.

Not all grant applications are successful but if you can tell a story, produce research that is understandable to others, develop a sound budget that includes all the elements of the project, and most importantly on the private and corporate side, talk through your project with a program officer, you are well on your way to success.

Sophia’s journey this year has been one of success. She applied for and was awarded one of WSU’s IPI grants to help her define her research. Once she was well on her way with her project, she was encouraged to apply for STARS, which she was awarded for the next academic year. Sophia is excited about teaching here at Westfield State and has made her research a reality.

Louann D’Angelo