Application for CELT Impact Grant

Title: Integrating Sustainability across the Curriculum

I. Principal requestor, contact person, and project title.

Name: Scott G. McNall and James Pushnik Date: February 21, 2009

Titles: Scott G. McNall: Professor and Executive Director of the Institute for Sustainable Development. James Pushnik: Professor and Rawlins Professor of Environmental Literacy.

Departments: The Institute for Sustainable Development and the Department of Biology.

Names of co-requestors: This is a joint proposal from Scott McNall and James Pushnik submitted on behalf of the faculty in all seven academic colleges. The endorsements of the College Deans are on an attached page.
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II. Relevance to Mission and Strategic Plan of the University.

Sustainability is expressed as a core value of the University; it is embedded in the Academic Plan; and it is the University’s 6th Strategic Priority. The purpose of this grant is to help implement the University’s 6th Strategic Priority. That priority affirms our belief that each generation owes something to those who follow, and it assures we will create environmentally literate citizens who embrace sustainability as a way of life. A sustainable future is one in which environmental, economic, and social needs are balanced. We need vibrant, economically viable communities, with healthy ecosystems.

These are not goals which the university aspires to alone; they are goals we must all strive for, if we are to have a sustainable future. We need to prepare our students for a world in which resource scarcity is real, in which the need to work with others to protect the health of the planet is a necessity. We must be mindful of the fact that the knowledge of a single discipline is not sufficient to address this range of issues.

III. Rationale and Objectives.

Rationale: Rapid climate change is seen as a problem of global significance, affecting all countries, all ecosystems, and all economies. The fact that humans are contributing to the warming of the planet has been well documented for over three decades, but only now are businesses, universities, and governments working earnestly to train people to deal with the host of problems related to rapid climate change (environmental degradation, irresponsible use of non-renewable fuels, drought, a world-wide lack of drinkable water, famine, mass migration, and government instability.) International treaties are being written or revised to limit the impacts of climate change; businesses are hiring sustainability directors; and universities are focusing more of their research and teaching efforts on questions about how to balance environmental, economic, and social needs: what is possible, and how we can work together to create a sustainable future.

The problem for many universities is that sustainability seems to be seen as something abstract, hard to define, and perhaps somebody else’s problem to solve. The reality is that every discipline has something hopeful and useful to say about what one generation owes to another. We must provide opportunities for students, and faculty, to understand the system of sustainability and how the links between the economy, the environment, and the social order are forged. Teaching about complex systems requires us to rethink our curricular efforts, and it requires us to move out from restrictive disciplinary approaches. At California State University, Chico, we have over 100 courses identified with the green “Oak Leaf” but there is not necessarily a deep connectivity among those courses, and sometimes faculty who are teaching a “green” course in their department do not know who their counterparts are in other departments or colleges. We must talk to one another and provide our students with guidance in completing their GE requirements.
Objectives: Our goals will be to:

1. Develop a faculty learning community during the 2009-2010 academic years focused on sustainability.
2. Create a series of workshops to support members of the learning community in integrating sustainability into their course or courses and enhancing and modifying existing syllabi to do so.
3. Post all modified syllabi to the web site for the Institute for Sustainable Development so that the work can be shared across the campus.
4. Identify these courses in our course schedule and catalogue so that students, who are interested in sustainability, can be more intentional in fulfilling their GE requirements.
5. Add value to our GE curriculum by having sustainability expressed as a distinguishing feature and something for which the university can receive national recognition.
6. Provide an opportunity for students to choose a sustainability “thread” to add value to their major.
7. Develop a successful grant application to the National Science Foundation (CLLI Program) to build on these efforts. (A successful grant would provide substantial resources for faculty development and “buy-outs” to aid in their redesign of courses focused on sustainability.)

IV. Research Plan and Design.

Background: We will begin this project with several important assets.

1. A core group of interested faculty from across all colleges who have attended Environmental/Sustainability Summits to discuss the question of how best to integrate sustainability into the curriculum.
2. A core group of faculty with significant knowledge of one or more dimensions of sustainability.
3. Many courses identified as “green” on which to build.
4. A core value statement focused on sustainability, which is embedded in the Academic Plan, and a Strategic Priority (6th) focused on sustainability.
5. The co-requesters (Scott McNall and Jim Pushnik) have both managed successful workshops on integrating sustainability into the curriculum and how to integrate an entire curriculum around the concept of sustainability.
6. An upper-division theme focused on issues of the environment.

Plan: It is important to emphasize that we do not begin with the assumption that every GE course must focus on sustainability, nor do we assume that it is necessarily possible or even wise to teach all dimensions of sustainability (economy, environment, society) in every GE course. (Most faculty members are not going to have an equal amount of
knowledge about all dimensions of sustainability. They will, of course, enhance and expand their existing knowledge by participation in the learning community. **We do assume** that by emphasizing clearly at least one dimension of sustainability in a course, and noting how it connects to and relates to the other dimensions, we will enhance our entire GE program. This approach will allow us to reach across all colleges and disciplines, and emphasize the idea that all disciplines are needed to address the magnitude of the political, economic, and environmental problems we face as a nation and as a planet. Whether one is interested in civic engagement, internationalization of the curriculum, or sustainability, there is an opportunity in the proposed learning community to connect to all of these dimensions.

**Steps to implement:**

1. We will identify this spring (2009) 30 faculty members, representing all colleges, who will commit to participation in the Sustainable Learning Community, 2009-2010. (We will actively solicit those who already teach GE courses, as our goal is to integrate and enhance existing courses, not expand the GE curriculum.)
2. Learning community members will share their syllabus or syllabi. They will explain in 100 words or less which dimension of sustainability is represented in their current syllabus and which dimension they wish to expand or enhance.
3. We will develop a schedule for monthly meetings, and for three guest lecturers.
4. We will identify three guest speakers, each of whom will speak on one dimension of sustainability and note how this dimension connects to the other two components. (We anticipate these speakers will be from off-campus.)
5. We will have two common readings for the Learning Community:
   1. Environment: An Interdisciplinary Anthology, Adelson, et al., New Haven: Yale, 2008. (This exceptional book covers all dimensions of sustainability and deals with climate shock, species extinction, biotechnology, sustainable development, globalization, renewable energy, urban environments, biodiversity, agriculture, history, ethics and religion, gender, art, nature writing, politics and public policy, law and environmental justice, population, and action. So, for example, a faculty member who is interested in civic engagement can learn more about how to develop civic engagement projects related to sustainability.)
   2. A course packet designed by McNall and Pushnik focused on all three dimensions of sustainability. It will also contain those syllabi that have already been identified as having a clear focus on sustainability.
6. During the fall semester of 2009, participants will share their existing syllabi, reflect on the readings, and hear from at least two speakers.
7. Included during the fall semester will be at least four workshops lead by McNall and/or Pushnik on integrating sustainability into the courses of participants.
8. The second semester we will intensify work on the course syllabi, revising through discussions with the larger group.
9. We will then, through the Learning Community, seek to develop Course Links across the relevant GE areas.
10. By May 1, 2010, the syllabi of all participants will be posted to the web and shared with the campus, the community, and with other campuses and communities.

Evaluation:
1. Revised syllabi for all participants posted to the web.
2. Identification of courses to be linked.
3. Mechanisms in place to allow faculty to work across departments and colleges to deepen institutional commitment to sustainability.
4. Development of a questionnaire to assess students’ environmental literacy. (A draft is completed; it remains to be reviewed by the Learning Community.)
5. A successful grant application to NSF to provide support for the faculty over a two-year period, at the end of which time we intend to have a strong, and obvious, sustainability theme as part of our GE program.

VI. Budget:

- Total requested from CELT $3000.
- Partial match of $2500 from the ISD and the Rawlins Professorship $2500.

Total $5500.
- Reassigned time 0
- Books and course packets for 25 faculty $2500.*
- Printing (All materials, except for the “texts” will be via e-mail.) 0
- Guest lectures (3 for whom we will pay travel and expenses) $2500.**
- Other (costs for food and small receptions for one year) $500.

*This represents the real cost of the text and the course packet.
**We intend to keep these costs down, which are low for three speakers, by not paying an honorarium.

N.B. Our application to the NSF stands a greater likelihood of success if the institution demonstrates a prior commitment to the effort of integrating sustainability across the curriculum.
VII. **Endorsements by College Deans**

We endorse the CELT Impact Grant proposal to integrate sustainability across the curriculum, because it will:

1. Create a cross-college learning community focused on sustainability.
2. Provide needed support for those faculty members who wish to integrate sustainability into their course or courses.
3. Deepen an understanding of the challenges we face in terms of rapid climate change.
4. Allow us to develop a more intentional and focused General Education curriculum for sustainability.
5. Provide an opportunity to integrate “green” courses more effectively both within and across colleges.
6. Serve as the basis for a National Science Foundation Grant to enhance and integrate our General Education offerings in sustainability.

1. Phyllis Fernlund, College of Communication and Education.

2. Jennifer Fox, College of Agriculture.

3. Willie Hopkins, College of Business

4. James Houpis, College of Natural Sciences

5. Gayle Hutchinson, College of Behavioral and Social Sciences

6. Mike Ward, College of Engineering, Computer Science and Construction Management

7. Joel Zimbelman, College of Humanities and Fine Arts
I support the proposal.

Jim Houpis

Jim Pushnik and I have completed a CELT Impact Grant to create a faculty learning community focused on integrating sustainability across the discipline. (This grant is one step along the way to the NSF CLLI grant to strengthen the integration of sustainability into the curriculum.) Because this IMPACT GRANT will bring together faculty from all colleges, as would the NS grant, it would be very helpful to have your endorsement. Rather than going door-to-door to get your signatures, please send a note to Teri Randolph indicating you support the proposal, because of the rationale provided on the endorsement page. (PLEASE READ THE LAST PAGE WHICH HAS A PLACE FOR YOUR SIGNATURE AND THE REASONS FOR SUPPORTING THE GRANT.) If you cannot endorse the proposal, would you please let me and Jim Pushnik know your reasons? Thanks in advance for your help. Scott

Application for CELT Impact Grant

Title: Integrating Sustainability across the Curriculum
Randolph, Teri

Subject: Application for CELT Impact Grant.doc

From: Zimbelman, Joel
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2009 9:39 AM
To: McNall, Scott
Cc: Thorlaksson, Brooks
Subject: RE: Application for CELT Impact Grant.doc

Scott, yes, I'm happy to sign; I think we should brainstorm with the chairs in a short meeting sometime about people and strategies that we could employ in bolstering our contribution. Do I send this via email with an electronic signature or do you want a hard copy signed and sent? JZ

From: McNall, Scott
Sent: Mon 2/23/2009 8:46 AM
To: Fernlund, Phyllis; Fox, Jennifer; Hutchinson, Gayle; Houpis, James; Hopkins, Willie; Ward, Mike; Zimbelman, Joel
Cc: Randolph, Teri; Pushnik, James
Subject: Application for CELT Impact Grant.doc

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Randolph, Teri

From: McNall, Scott
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2009 4:23 PM
To: Ward, Mike
Cc: Randolph, Teri
Subject: RE: Impact Grant

Thank you very much.
Scott

From: Ward, Mike
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2009 4:23 PM
To: McNall, Scott
Subject: Impact Grant

Scott – I read your brief description of the impact grant and I wholeheartedly support it!

Regards,

Mike
Mike Ward, Interim Dean
College of Engineering, Computer Science, and Construction Management
California State University, Chico
(530) 898-5963
I support this proposal.

Gayle E. Hutchinson, Dean
College of Behavioral and Social Sciences
CSU, Chico
Chico, CA 95929-0450

ghutchinson@csuchico.edu

Office: 530.898.6171
Fax: 530.898.5986

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Scott
Randolph, Teri

Subject: Application for CELT Impact Grant.doc

-Scott

I endorse this grant. Good luck!

Willie

Willie E. Hopkins, Dean
College of Business
California State University, Chico
Office: 530.898.6272
Fax: 530.898.4584
wehopkins@csuchico.edu
http://www.csuchico.edu/cob/

From: McNall, Scott
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2009 4:00 PM
To: McNall, Scott; Fernlund, Phyllis; Fox, Jennifer; Hutchinson, Gayle; Houpis, James; Ward, Mike; Zimbelman, Joel
Cc: Randolph, Teri; Pushnik, James
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I support this CELT grant creating a faculty learning community. The Department of Recreation and Parks Management in my college is very active in such areas as ecotourism, green meetings, citizen science, and sustainable practices. I think they could play a vital role in such a community to truly reach across disciplines, and add to the conversation.

Phyllis Fernlund

Phyllis Fernlund, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Communication and Education
California State University, Chico
Chico, CA 95929-0145
Office: 530-898-4015
FAX: 530-898-4345
pfernland@csuchico.edu

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Scott
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