PROPOSAL 14
Submitted to:  EWU Strategic Planning Council
c/o MJ Brukardt, Office of the President

A Grant Proposal for Advancing Academic Affairs Strategic Planning

Title:  Diversity Training for Academic Success:  Engaging Students, Faculty, and Staff

Project Lead:  Nanette Wichman, Ph.D. Department of English. Editor in Chief, Eastern Voices Project

Key Project Contributors and Group CV:

The members of the Scholars Learning Community on Diversity will be the key contributors for this project.  Now in our third year of operation, this group CV includes a presentation at an international conference on diversity and a publication forthcoming in their proceedings.  The travel for our presentation was supported by a grant from the Board of Trustees Diversity Initiative.  We have tested the case story approach to teaching diversity in our classrooms in various departments and examined the scholarly basis for using it.  We are currently assembling a publication of local case stories, which was supported last year by grants from the Teaching and Learning Center and the EWU Foundation.  Among other campus activities such as collaboration with other SLCs, our most recent public works include a presentation at the 2005 QSI Gearing Up conference and participation in the 2005 New Faculty Orientation workshop and the Faculty Fair.  Most recently, we have agreed to assist the “Demonstration Project to Ensure that Students with Disabilities Receive a Quality Education” as the faculty advisory body on curriculum development.

Membership:

Helen Bergland.  Teaching & Learning Center
Mary Ann Clute.  Social Work
Romel Mackelprang.  Social Work
Mimi Marinucci. Philosophy
Dale Turner.  First-Year Experience
Chris Valeo.  English
Nanette Wichman.  English

Narrative Description of the Initiative:

We propose a pilot series of multi-disciplinary workshops for Teaching Assistants and others, on a variety of diversity issues to equip them to use locally situated case stories on issues of difference and student success in their classes.  In this way, we will engage all participants and the students they serve in integrating the abstractions of diversity with the pragmatics of university life in a tangible and measurable way that supports the Academic Strategic Plan’s third goal.  The training will then be extended to include faculty and professional staff in further support of the plan’s second goal.  Since the
training will facilitate discussions that promote critical thinking by considering other perspectives, avoiding stereotypical labels, and approaching diversity issues as opportunities for problem solving, the sessions will equip the students, faculty, and staff participants for personal success at the university, which is the first goal of the plan.

We are approaching this project as research in order to enhance the level of scholarly rigor in our efforts and allow our findings to be used for further refinement of teaching and training as the university continues to promote an academically rigorous and successful experience for all members of our community. The workshops we propose will include issues of disability, race and ethnicity, and gender and sexuality.

**Project Goals:**

The pilot workshops are designed to address the needs of graduate students as both instructors and students. Since we entrust our graduate students with the responsibilities of teaching lower-division courses, they play a significant part in our undergraduate students’ learning experience. In our attempts to provide a rigorous and engaged learning for all students at EWU, we must include our teaching assistants in campus training opportunities and provide them strong pedagogical support.

At the same time, teaching assistants, as students, are “instructors-in-training.” As many will go on to a Ph.D. program and become a college professor some day, their experience as a teaching assistant at EWU is a crucial part of their career development. Their effectiveness as a classroom instructor will affect their success in Ph.D. programs and beyond.

The goals of the Teaching Assistant Diversity Workshops are:

1. **To equip participants with the “case-story” method as a pedagogical tool to (a) engage students in thoughtful and constructive dialogues on diversity issues, and (b) develop students’ problem-solving and critical thinking skills, that can be utilized across academic disciplines (SP Goal 1)**

   Teaching assistants in many disciplines will have to address diversity-related issues in at least part of their course curriculum. Even experienced teachers find it challenging to engage students in productive dialogues in these sensitive and controversial subject matters. Some teaching assistants might have shied away from these issues due to the lack of confidence in their ability to facilitate discussions that can be emotionally charged. By introducing the case-story method through instructors who have used this teaching tool in their classrooms to share their experiences, teaching assistants will be encouraged to incorporate diversity issues in their own classes.

2. **To provide a safe learning environment for teaching assistants to discuss diversity-related issues they encounter in the classroom (SP Goal 2)**
For fear of judgment, teaching assistants might be reluctant to bring up issues they have confronted in the classrooms to their faculty supervisors. The “case-story” method will allow the teaching assistants to engage in dialogues with their peers on these sensitive issues in a non-threatening manner. Conducted in an interactive format, the workshops will give teaching assistants the opportunity to share their experiences with their peers in the classroom, bring up questions that they are afraid to ask, and, as a group, develop strategies to effectively deal with these issues in their own classes.

3. **To encourage teaching assistants to become reflective instructors who are sensitive to students’ needs.**

An effective instructor must be responsive to students’ needs. In order to do so, the instructor needs to be reflective about his or her teaching and interactions with students and have the ability to see the classroom from the perspectives of individual students.

Because the case stories used in the workshop are based on the real experiences of college students at EWU and elsewhere, they help bring abstract diversity issues to “real-life” situations in university settings. In particular, with a strong emphasis on perspective taking, the case-story method will encourage teaching assistants to see a situation from different angles. The teaching assistants can apply the same perspective-taking skill to critically evaluate their interactions with students and improve their teaching.

Furthermore, dialogues between teaching assistants in the workshops will also encourage them be more reflective about their own teaching.

4. **To develop participants’ critical thinking skills so that they can handle difficult classroom situations more effectively. (SP Goal 1)**

The case-story method is a teaching tool designed to enhance the critical thinking and problem solving skills of students. In addition, since the stories are based on “real-life” experiences of college students, they will provide real-life scenarios that the teaching assistants may encounter in their own teaching and use their critical thinking skills to brainstorm possible courses of actions. Thus, they will be better prepared when similar situations do arise.

5. **To engage participants across academic disciplines in a dialogue on teaching strategies for engaged student learning and diversity-related subject matter. (SP Goal 1)**

By introducing the “case-story” method to the teaching assistants, it opens up discussion about new teaching strategies to engage their students in active learning. In particular, teaching assistants are given to opportunity to exchange ideas and broaden their pedagogical horizons with their peers from a variety of academic disciplines.
6. **To provide resources on pedagogy for teaching assistants’ continuous professional development (SP Goals 1 and 2)**

Teaching assistants will be given a list of resources on teaching and learning to further their professional development as college instructors.

7. **To provide teaching assistants the professional socialization as future college faculty by engaging them in dialogues on pedagogy (SP Goal 2)**

8. **To promote an integrative model for addressing diversity issues and build networks of collaborations across academic disciplines and student services units at EWU. (SP Goals 1 and 3)**

The workshops are designed to integrate different areas of diversity such as disabilities, race & ethnicity, gender & sexual orientation. We believe that interdisciplinary collaboration is essential in order for the university community (a) to provide a rigorous and engaged learning environment for our students and (b) to strengthen our continuous efforts in promoting diversity and improving campus climate.

The collaborative efforts in organizing the workshops will help build the foundation for sustainable partnership between faculty and staff from a variety of academic and administrative units for future endeavors.

**Expected Outcomes:**

Our overall outcome is an expanded assessment of the efficacy of using case stories as a means of engaging students in an academic culture that supports and respects all members of our diverse community. Participants who have received the diversity training should be able to

1. Use the “case-story” method in their classes as a tool to engage students in dialogues on diversity-related issues and to develop students’ critical thinking skills.
2. Develop a variety of effective learning strategies to incorporate diversity issues into the subject areas of their classes
3. Be more reflective on their teaching and more responsive to the diverse needs of students
4. Use their critical thinking skills to make better decisions when confronted with difficult situations in their teaching.
5. Engage in dialogue with their colleagues on pedagogical issues.
6. Continue to develop their pedagogy through the use of resources available at EWU and elsewhere.
Budget:

The scope of this project will be driven by the funds available. We could conduct fewer workshops to serve fewer participants for a smaller cost; however, the reliability of our findings would be reduced by using a smaller sample, and the range of diversity issues we could address would be correspondingly reduced. We see this project as expandable to faculty and staff, so the investment in these pilot workshops would be returned in terms of quality training opportunities for the balance of the EWU community. Our budget contains the following components.

a) consideration for workshop participants @ $50/ participant.
   includes participation in the workshop and completion of pre-training, post-learning, and long-term evaluation assessment instruments.

b) stipends for workshop facilitators @ 100/workshop.
   includes preparing for the workshops, facilitating them, and administering the pre- and post-learning instruments.

c) cost of workshop materials @ $50/workshop,
   includes copies of materials and supplies.

d) overload stipend for coordination @ $3000/quarter.
   includes overall management of the project to include ensuring that logistical and timeline items are accomplished and the final report is prepared.

Based on a maximum of 20 participants per workshop and four workshops per quarter with summer devoted to evaluation and final assessment, our quarterly budget is below.

Winter:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshops</th>
<th>Coordination</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 @ $1150</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>7600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spring:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshops</th>
<th>Coordination</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 @ $1150</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>7600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coordination</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3000</td>
<td>3000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grand Total: $18200

Project Sustainability:

Our project will serve as a pilot test of this training. In the immediate future, subsequent years’ presentations of the workshops will be covered under the 3-year Department of Education Grant under their Universal Access Model. Ultimately, we see the departments that have been served by this training rolling it into their training and faculty development programs as a means of contributing to the retention of students in their programs and contributing to the overall environment of the university. Finally, as long-term faculty and staff receive the initial workshops, the workshops could be reduced to being a part of existing new faculty/staff orientation programs.
**Timetable:**

Several activities are already underway to ensure the success of this project. We have scheduled a pre-pilot presentation to a class of English Department graduate student early in January. We have met with faculty and staff administering the Department of Education Grant to plan collaboration and join with them in their scheduled presentation at the Deans’ Council.

Upon confirmation of funding (December-January)

- Secure IRB approval to assess the effectiveness of our Diversity Workshops
- Contact departments
  - to secure their buy-in
  - determine actual number of likely participants
- Contact relevant staff (e.g. DSS, Women’s and Ethnic Studies Programs)
  - to secure their cooperation and assistance in promoting the workshops
- Locate meeting space for workshops
  - suitable for both discussions and group work
  - classrooms OK
- Schedule meeting times for workshops
  - Coordinate presenters’ schedules and areas of expertise
- Prepare pre- and post-workshop survey and the follow-up survey

As workshops commence (Winter and Spring 2006)

- Publicize workshops
- Schedule individual attendance to ensure space and optimal group size
- Confirm and coordinate other logistics –
  - presenter availability
  - ensure copies are made and materials available
  - double check space availability

After workshops (Summer 2006)

- Organize and analyze surveys and follow ups
- Prepare reports
- Transition workload to the DOE grant faculty and staff.
Evaluation and Assessment:

The Scholars Learning Community of Diversity is committed to evaluating the impact of the trainings on participant knowledge and beliefs. The SLC-D intends to collaborate with the research staff on the Department of Education Grant to develop the content of the evaluation tools and facilitate seamless transition upon completion of our pilot project. That joint effort would blend expertise in evaluation and afford the SLC the use of existing evaluation tools available for the project. However, we are not dependent upon them.

The evaluation design is anticipated to be a Pretest-Posttest-Posttest design. Evaluation instruments created for the training topics will be used to measure: pre-existing knowledge and attitudes of the training participants; knowledge and attitudes immediately following the training; and knowledge and attitudes at the end of the academic year. Our sketch of the assessment protocol is shown below.

Assessment for Diversity Training Multi-disciplinary workshops

1. Pre-training evaluations will be completed by participants prior to the beginning of the training session.
   a. Rate participants’ understanding of the specific diversity issues to be discussed in that module using Likert scales for each item.
   b. One qualitative question will be asked: What are you hoping to achieve by attending the training?

2. Post-learning written evaluations will be completed immediately after each workshop.
   a. Using the same scales:
      Rate your understanding of the diversity issues now that you have completed the training.
   b. Qualitative questions:
      1. What have you learned that you can use in your future academic career?
      2. What would you improve about this training?
      3. Would you attend another training session on a related topic?
      4. What other diversity-related trainings would you like to see offered?

3. Prior to the end of the school year, evaluations will be mailed out to participants to evaluate long term impact of the training.
   a. Repeat the scales from the pre-post evaluation.
   b. Qualitative:
      Have you used what you learned in the training since then?
      If so, what have you use since the training?

The results of these three surveys will be assembled, analyzed and evaluated in the form of a project report. The report will be used for refinement of future training.