FWI Funding Statement

Name: Sandra Preston
Faculty/Area: Faculty of Social Sciences
Project title: Faculty Training for Community-Engaged Education

Faculty Training for Community-Engaged Education: Forward with Integrity
Project Report

Sandra Preston, (director of the Office of Experiential Education for the Faculty of Social Sciences)
Catherine Swanson, (MIIETEL)
Sean Beaudette, (Student Success Centre)
Ruthanne Talbot, (Office of Experiential Education for the Faculty of Social Sciences),
Chase Collver, (graduate student, hired to assist with our research)

We were very happy to receive a FWI grant in May 2013. Over the summer our group worked together to create an education plan for faculty and instructors considering community-engaged education. We decided that we would begin with a guidebook since this would be easily accessible, either in print or on-line, for everyone. We understand that faculty are very busy and often find it difficult to attend workshops in person. “Incorporating Community-Engaged Education into Courses: A Guidebook” completed in October provides a starting point for McMaster educators. Our plan is to build on this base with a series of workshops that will be offered in 2014.

1. How has the project fostered collaboration and interdisciplinarity?

This project was the product of an interdisciplinary group which has continued to work together on other projects. It makes sense that Faculty offices of experiential education, the Student Success Centre and MIIETEL co-operate in the development and implementation of education in this area. For many faculty and instructors, experiential education is a new idea and providing some guidance will mean that faculty are much more likely to engage in this form of education and while doing so, feel supported.

a. Have other projects been initiated as a result of this project?
This project has a second phase which will be the provision of workshops. These workshops will be integrated into the Community of Practice on Community-Engaged Education. The literature review produced by Chase Collver, the graduate student working with us, will also be available on the Avenue to Learn site for the Community of Practice.

b. If it was recommended in your award letter that you connect with particular individuals/groups, have you done so and what was the result?

This does not apply as none were recommended.

c. Have you worked with others who have or have not been funded through the current RFP?

During the presentation of the FWI projects we connected with many others doing FWI projects and were able to share information as well as provide the guidebook to them.

2. How has the project exposed students to new or emerging research?

Chase Collver has been able to spend a considerable amount of time doing research in this area. He is involved with the Health in the Hubs project and related course and has passed on his learning in the capacity of a TA. Indirectly, faculty and instructors who use the guidebook have access to an extensive bibliography which they can share with students.

3. How has the project offered students an experience beyond traditional borders?

Again, students will benefit from this project indirectly as faculty and instructors incorporate experiential learning/community-engaged education into their courses.

4. How has the project challenged the confines of existing programming and advanced new paradigms of research or education?

Our project is interesting in that it provides information and direction for new types of education rather than actually advancing either research or education itself. I do believe that the bibliography for the guidebook and the literature review on Avenue to Learn provide an excellent starting point for those who are interested in research in the area of community-engaged education.

5. How will the outcomes of the project be sustained or expanded?
The guidebook is a living document. We have encouraged people to provide feedback for us after they read it. We will incorporate such feedback and feedback from the workshops into the guidebook on a regular basis. It will be available in an on-line version which will be easy to edit. The guidebook is also the basis for a series of workshops which will be presented in 2014. Workshops will also be updated as new information becomes available. Faculty and instructors will be able to request workshops on topics of interest to them.

6. Please outline any barriers or challenges that may have prevented you from achieving some of your project goals.

Our group worked very well together. I think that expanding the opportunity for input to other Faculties would be useful. It was somewhat difficult to write a guidebook that could apply across the university as each Faculty is quite different. This will also be true of the workshops. However, the response from faculty members and instructors across campus has been very positive.