FWI Funding Statement

Name: Allan Spence
Faculty/Area: Engineering
Project title: Project Specific Application of Covey’s 7 Habits

Please summarize how the FWI funds have been spent:
A summary by broad category is sufficient, line by line accounting of individual expenditures is not required unless specifically requested. Alternatively, please provide a copy of your FAS for the accounts that have been used for the FWI funds.
Salaries and benefits: 0
Equipment: 0
Event Costs: 0
Travel: 0
Other (please specify): Course Registration Fee

Balance remaining:
Please indicate how the balance will be spent and when you anticipate that the funds will be exhausted.

Please submit separately a maximum 2-page summary of the results of the project with particular attention to:
1. How the activity enhanced the competence and effectiveness of this individual (or others) with respect to teaching, research, service and/or leadership;
2. How the activity contributed to the goals of a course/program/department/Faculty;
3. The results of your evaluation of the quality of the expected development and its potential impact;
4. How you have (or plan to) communicate and disseminate the insights gained with peers and broader McMaster communities.
5. How the outcomes of the project will be sustained or expanded.
6. Please outline any barriers or challenges that may have prevented you from achieving some of your project goals.

The financial and project reports can be submitted to fwi@mcmaster.ca.

Summary of Results
1. The FWI project is based on the book [1].
   The primary benefit to Dr. Spence was a greater effort to appreciate the different perspectives of other people, and a greater effort to put relationships before facts to achieve a mutually satisfactory solution. In terms of Covey, this is Habit 5 – Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood but mixed with Habit 3 – Put First Things First and Habit 4 – Think Win-Win. This is well expressed in a follow-up book entitled The Third Alternative [2] where the synergistic approach “Not your way, not my way, but our way” is promoted (Fig. 1).

Fig.1 (from [1])
2. The material will be introduced in Mech Eng 2C04, and Mech Eng 4M06. These are teamwork based design courses where conflict often arises. For example, because of the Engineering and Management/Society options, in Mech Eng 2C04 students are a mixture of Year 2 and Year 3. The Year 3 students often complain that the Year 2 students are less qualified and that their contributions are not useful. Year 2 students feel that they are not valued. By helping the students to see each other’s position, an improved partnership and best fit assignment of duties can result. In Mech Eng 4B06 students are assigned a faculty mentor, but earn a significant portion of their grade by presenting orally in front of other examining professors. Often these presentations go poorly, because the examining professors lacks technical background and understanding of the problem being studied. By mentoring students to understand this in advance, better presentations are made the first time. As well, by explaining “Seek First to Understand”, students more thoughtfully receive and reply to questions.

Extension of these principles to the department and faculty will occur over a longer period of time. A first meaningful opportunity will arise with the CEAB site visits in November 2015.

3. With an earnest approach and administration support, there is very significant impact potential. The sensitivity aspects of the material could lead to many disputes being diffused at an early stage, and students will implement the training in their future employment. This is expected to reflect positively on the quality of a McMaster education.

4. Lectures on the material are planned. These will be video recorded and made available through Avenue2Learn for Mech Eng 2C04, 4M06, etc.

5. If the administration wishes to further explore dissemination, Dr. Spence could deliver the full 7-Habits course material as a trained facilitator. This could potentially lead to a network of campus trained mediators that could augment the HRES and Ombuds offices. See for example reference [3].

6. In between receiving approval for the project and taking the November 2015 course, there was some misunderstanding and ensuing drama over a suggestion to create a Mech Eng 4M06 World Peace Flame (www.worldpeaceflame.org) project intended for offering to an emotionally fragile student.

As well, both of my elderly parents passed away in March/June 2015 so I was on leave for a period, followed by a Research Leave July – December 2015.

References