



Fund It!

The Grants Development Office
SUNY College at Oneonta
Oneonta, New York

Fall 2001

SUMMER RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS AWARDED

Five faculty were awarded summer fellowships to support their research conducted in the months of July and August. Rosenna Bakari, Educational Psychology, Dennis Banks, Education, Peter DiNardo, Psychology, Michael McAvoy, Economics & Business, and Eileen Morgan, English each received a fellowship which provides a stipend and can cover expenses associated with the proposed research project.

The Summer Fellowship is targeted to provide support for projects that represent an original contribution to the body of knowledge in the given field, for research activities integral to the faculty's position at the College at Oneonta. The Fellowships are funded by indirect cost recovery monies generated by successful grants submitted through the Research Foundation. The direct investment of these monies into the research activities of College at Oneonta faculty is done to increase our research activity, enhance scholarship and ultimately benefit the academic experience of our students.

SAVE THIS DATE

**FACULTY RESEARCH SHOW
MARCH 29, 2002**

THE SEARCH IS ON

In July 2001, a search was initiated to fill the grantwriter position vacated by Joseph McNicholas. (Joseph moved to California to a new position). A failed search was declared in August. A new search has been initiated. In the interim, Grants Development Manager Kim Muller is assisting faculty with proposal preparation and submission.

STAY TUNED FOR ON-CAMPUS GRANT FUNDS

The Faculty Research and Creative Activity grant programs will be announced by the end of the year. Part of the funding for these programs comes from NYS Graduate Research Initiative, so timing depends upon the State budget. Guidelines will be sent to each faculty member and will also be available at our website.

WHAT IS SEED MONEY?

In 1997, Po Bronson published a satirical novel about entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley entitled *The First \$20 Million Is Always The Hardest*. That was true then and it is true now! In the story, Bronson's characters invent an inexpensive computer, one that would overcome the digital divide, and they need money to go into production. They learn that having a good idea is a far cry from being able to execute it.

What they need, a measly \$20 million, is seed money; something to get them set up, so that they can create a self-sustaining, profitable company. They need a production facility, a supply chain, distribution system, a market position. These things cost money, and more than \$20 million, too.

Most of us are not interested in starting a company, but we can learn something from the entrepreneurial impulse. A Professor's raw material, like the would-be computer magnate, is good ideas. Our method, like the start-ups', is to develop a plan (in our case, a research or professional develop plan, not a business plan). And though our goal isn't to make a lot of money, we still intend to profit. We intend to contribute to our profession, to our students, to our community, and in doing so, further our careers, advance learning, and enhance our standing among our peers.

Fortunately, most of us don't need \$20 million to get started. But we do need something, and that something is seed money.

So, let's say you have developed an explicit research or service plan with specific goals and a timeline. For some professors, the goals will be to publish an article a year for three years and a book by the fifth year. For others it will be to develop an outreach program into local K-12 schools that helps area students achieve higher scores on standardized tests and go to college. Still others will seek to complete a cycle of experiments and write up the findings for the publication in a professional journal within three years.

Many of us get a general sense of what we want to do and just start doing it. That "can do" attitude should be applauded and encouraged. It is a measure of our self-sufficiency as academics. However, as you begin to implement our plans, we should also consider what resources you will need to achieve our goals. Which resources do you already have and which are you lacking? What will you need in the future? Once you have identified your needs, you should seek out ways of fulfilling them.

For example, to publish a collection of essays, a humanities

professor might need to travel to archives, have interviews translated and transcribed, and build a network of scholars working on the topic. A professor in the sciences might need lab equipment, research assistants or computing power in addition to attending a conference central to her work. There is a temptation to pretend that these costs aren't really there until you bump into them as obstacle six months or three years down the road. But you should anticipate these costs and develop a long-term strategy to provide for them.

Asking for money from chairs and deans is not a strategy. Why? Because they will not always be the position to provide the money needed, and if they can't, your research will be at a stand-still. Your plans will be delayed. Of course, some people reason that since we are working for a college, it should bear the costs associated with research. And, the college does provide a good deal of money for professional development through department budgets, grants programs, and other sources.

However, money provided through on-campus grants should be considered seed money to set ourselves up for bigger accomplishments. As you write the research paper with the help of a W.B. Ford grant, you should try to leverage that work into a bid for external

support through the NEH or through a professional foundation. As you develop that loose network of educators with help from professional development money, you should draw up plans for a consortium funded by the Department of Education. When you get new laboratory equipment from a school, you should look for ways to use it that can garner NSF, NIH or other governmental support to purchase more equipment.

For our own mental health, it is important to remember that we are doing this work for ourselves, because we want to be better professors, because we want to attain some stature in our professions, because we are curious or want to help others. The school is the platform on which we stand, but it is not our *raison d'être*.

In order to fulfill our own goals, we could take a cue from the entrepreneurs. Their aim isn't just to get \$20 million. Their aspiration is to start a viable company, and the money is the means to that end. Similarly, in our fields, the goal should not be to get \$2,000 for the summer. Like a seed plated in the fertile soil, \$2,000 should grow into something bigger, something you will be proud of, and something you will owe to nothing but your own hard work.

Dr. Joseph McNicholas

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The Grants Development Office Newsletter

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Dr. Richard Insinga, Economics and Business

Dr. Peter Muller, Earth Sciences

Dr. Barry Warren, Center for Economic and Community Development

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss your grant ideas further,
please contact Kim Muller.

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