

2011-2012 Grant Proposals

Maria Curtin & Sue Mooney
SENCER Summer Institute
Pedagogy Travel Grant

Project Proposal:

"Inter-disciplinary and Inter-institutional Collaboration, Community based learning and Assessment"
Susan Mooney and Maria Curtin would like to apply for a travel pedagogy grant to attend the SENCER (Science Education for Civic Engagement) Summer Institute, July 21 through July 25, 2011. A Stonehill Team that also includes Heather Bleakley, Corey Dolgon and Massasoit Community College faculty applied and was invited to attend the SENCER Summer Institute (SSI).

Two of the main areas for improvement in our programs we proposed to work on at the SSI are:

1. Possible Community Based Learning projects in our General Chemistry courses and other science courses:
Our general chemistry course themes include Food and Nutrition, and Environmental Issues. Using these topics as "hooks" to motivate student learning has been successful. However, as yet, the students have not been challenged to take that learning to the community, to investigate and address the problems related to those themes that affect people every day in our neighboring working-class city, Brockton. Mooney's Environmental Science courses have included some environmental health analysis of Brockton, but including this sort of science work as part of a collaboration with community partners would be ideal.
2. Increased Collaboration with Massasoit Community College in Science Education:
Together with colleagues from Massasoit Community College, we'd seek to design significant science-in-the-public-interest components for use in the themed general chemistry courses and environmental science courses on both campuses. In addition, we're seeking to institutionalize follow-up on data students in these introductory courses collect - pathways by which upper-division chemistry and biology courses (and independent research) would further the investigation and ways in which the scientific work is communicated effectively back to the community, informing consumer behavior and political action.

This summer the institute will be held at Butler University in Indianapolis. Based on our SSI application and team discussions, we have several objectives for our team:

1. A better understanding of what is needed to develop successful community based projects to be incorporated in our courses
2. Discussions with other University/college teams about maintaining a productive collaboration between private (Stonehill) and public (Massasoit Community College) institutions.
3. Discussions with other University/College teams about the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
4. Current methods of Assessment

Benefits:

Sue Mooney and Maria Curtin have attended previous SENCER summer institutes and have brought back to Stonehill very useful ideas. Sue Mooney developed several successful Learning Communities based on SENCER ideals, both Maria and Sue have used the assessment tools learned at these institutes and Maria introduced to the Stonehill Community the use of the clickers for classroom participation and assessment after learning about it at a SENCER meeting. These summer institutes are in our experience excellent venues for collaboration and dissemination of new pedagogies for teaching science.

(Also included on our team is the new biology hire, Irvin Pan. Irvin's attendance at this meeting will give him an excellent introduction to many best practices in teaching science presented by many institutions attending this meeting. His attendance will also allow him to network with faculty here at Stonehill and at other institutions, which will help him as he starts his tenure at Stonehill. The Dean of Faculty has promised to find funding to support Irvin's attendance.)

In the next academic year along with incorporating some of the ideas we get from the Institute in our teaching, we would like to disseminate some of the information we obtain from the SSI. We will discuss these ideas with our colleagues through departmental meetings as well as presenting on specific topics through Teaching Round Tables sponsored by the Center for Teaching and Learning.

Budget:

The budget per person is as follows:

Registration fee= \$500.00

Airfare= \$280.80

Transportation to and from the airport= \$50.00

Housing 4 nights @ \$70.00= \$280.00

Total= \$1110.80 X2 = \$2361.60