I. Overview

Rationale
Communication skills, verbal and non-verbal, are critical to success in many of the careers that our current undergraduates will pursue.\(^1\) \(^2\) Specifically, being able to construct effective, structured narrative, allows students to tell a compelling story about their research or scholarly inquiry. Visual communication is equally important. Studies have shown that the brain processes images more rapidly than text and may retain visual information longer.\(^3\) The benefits of effective narrative and visual communication aren’t limited to specific disciplines. Students, educators, researchers, and professionals in many fields communicate their ideas in a format that best suits their content – oral, visual, text, multimedia. Moreover, by developing these kinds of communication skills, students gain fluency in the realms of digital literacy and visual literacy.

The NV Grants
The Center for Educational Resources (CER) announces a program of grants for faculty who wish to support the acquisition of narrative and visual communication skills by their undergraduate students at Johns Hopkins University. The focus will be on courses offered to Homewood undergraduate students in the Whiting School of Engineering and the Krieger School of Arts & Sciences. In addition, the grants will provide funding for graduate student teaching opportunities. These grants are made possible by the generosity of Johns Hopkins Trustee and Sheridan Libraries Advisory Board member Christopher Hoehn-Saric and the Smart Family Foundation.

The goals of this program are:
1. To create sustainable instructional modules that support the development of narrative and visual communication skills in undergraduate education.
2. To provide graduate students interested in teaching with an instructional development opportunity. If the graduate student helps facilitate the project in a course, then it may allow him/her to meet the Phase 3 – Practitioner/Scholar certification in the University’s Teaching Academy – [http://www.cer.jhu.edu/graduatestudents/pftta.html](http://www.cer.jhu.edu/graduatestudents/pftta.html)

---


3. To identify a community of instructors interested in advancing the effective narrative and visual communication skills of undergraduate students.

Graduate students and faculty members will work as teams to identify opportunities within existing or new courses for creating sustainable instructional modules to improve student narrative and visual skills. Teams will identify learning objectives and propose assessable exercises, activities, assignments and/or final projects to achieve these objectives. Developing the resources (assessment strategies and rubrics, instructions for assignments, instructional aids, lists of examples, links to online sources of information, collaboration with Academic Librarians and/or other instructional support staff, including CER staff) to support and sustain these efforts will be considered an important part of the proposal. The format or output for student assignments or activities include (but are not limited to):

- Multimedia
- Podcasts (oral recordings)
- Video
- Posters
- Timelines
- Data visualization
- Assignments that emphasize new ways of elucidating primary source research
- Assignments that use new media applications (blogs, wikis, exhibition software)
- Websites

Projects should build on and reinforce known best practices in education, including active learning, the encouragement of high level student-faculty interaction, and student collaboration. Proposals should demonstrate awareness of the variety of student learning styles.

CER staff are available to provide feedback on proposals before submission and offer assistance in identifying qualified students to work on projects. Questions may be directed to Macie Hall at macie.hall@jhu.edu, 410-516-6165 or Reid Sczerba at reid@jhu.edu, 410-516-5198.

Examples

- History: Students working individually or in groups engage in research involving primary materials in JHU special collections, or other archives/collections in Baltimore area, with the goal of creating a final project in the form of a multimedia essay, an illustrated and annotated timeline, an online exhibition, or poster project combined with an oral presentation.
- Public Health Studies/Anthropology/Sociology: Students are assigned a neighborhood to conduct research on a course-related issue. Field work might involve interviewing residents, taking photographs, and/or making short on-the-spot videos. The output for their research could include geospatial mapping, a multimedia project, podcasts, or a series of illustrated blog posts.
- Engineering or Science: For a lab course with both prescribed and investigative sessions, in a prescribed lab, pairs of students are assigned to conduct research on an appropriate topic and, given a set of criteria, asked to produce an impromptu poster. At the end of the lab, time is given for short presentations. An assignment for the investigative sessions might be to create a formal poster with a presentation session.
- Mathematics: Students are develop one or more Khan-Academy-style videos to explain the process of solving a challenging concept or problem, or to investigate and report on the origin
and development of commonly taught concepts and theorems in calculus and/or other high-
level mathematical field.

Eligibility
Proposals may be submitted by individual faculty, groups of faculty, single departments or multiple
departments. Interdisciplinary proposals are encouraged. Graduate students are envisioned as
partners and collaborators, however, project proposals must be submitted by faculty members.
Courses must be offered to Homewood undergraduate students in the Krieger School of Arts &
Sciences and/or Whiting School of Engineering and be listed or cross-listed in the Krieger School of Arts
& Sciences and Whiting School of Engineering course catalog.

Proposal Submission Deadline
The deadline for proposals is 5:00 PM EST March 2, 2015.

II. Funding and Project Period
The CER is committing approximately $100,000 to this grant program.

Monies will be used to fund graduate students to partner with faculty members in developing
instructional modules and related resources. Graduate students will be paid an hourly rate of $16.00 an
hour up to $10,000.

The CER will provide in-kind support, including project management, instructional design, access to and
support for the use of CER multimedia lab and related software and equipment, pedagogical
consultation, assessment assistance, and workshops to assist project teams and/or undergraduates
enrolled in the courses.

Project development may begin once funding announcements are made; project completion expected
by the end of spring semester 2017.

III. Application and Submission Information
Proposals are due by 5:00 PM EST March 2, 2015
Funding announcements will be made before the end of March 2015

Content and Form of Application
1. Name, department, email address, phone number, short bio-sketch for each participant (limit ½
   page per participant).
2. Title and Abstract (limit ½ page).
3. Project Description (limit 2 pages). The project description should include the following:
   - description of the course; the relevant learning objectives; the proposed assignments, exercises
     and/or projects that will be developed to meet those objectives; plan for implementation;
     anticipated outcomes; and plan for sustainability beyond the timeframe of the project.
4. Project Plan and Timeline (limit ½ page).
5. Evaluation and Assessment Plan (limit 1 page).

Submission Procedure
Proposals should be submitted in PDF format as email attachments to Macie Hall at
macie.hall@jhu.edu. Deadline for submission: 5:00 PM EST March 2, 2015. An acknowledgement of your
submission will be sent within 24 hours.

IV. Criteria for Project Selection

Proposals will be reviewed by a committee consisting of KSAS and WSE faculty and CER staff. Projects
will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Enhances undergraduate instruction: The proposal describes ideas for creating new courses or
   enhancing existing courses with the creation of new educational resources that advance
   narrative and visual skills.
2. Creates opportunities for the acquisition and practical application of narrative and visual
   communication skills: The proposal suggests assignments that employ experiential learning
   strategies.
3. Enhances students’ critical thinking skills: The proposal documents learning objectives that
   demonstrate how students will be challenged to perform critical analysis of key concepts.
4. Has a viable assessment strategy: The proposal suggests concrete ways to evaluate and report
   its impact on teaching and learning in the course it supports.
5. Reflects an ongoing commitment: The proposal is grounded by persistent core values of the
   Krieger School of Arts &Sciences and the Whiting School of Engineering and the department or
   program represented. Specifically, the course or resources developed will be offered/used
   recurrently.
6. Develops an approach that can be generalized or scaled: The project serves as a prototype that
   can be modified, enhanced, or extended to other venues, divisions, departments, or courses.
7. Demonstrates a good fit between purpose and plan: The proposal embraces a thoughtful and
   selective use of technologies and other resources. The proposal describes how the course and
   resources developed will be sustained beyond grant support.