IIPD grant recipients must report on grant-funded activities in order to remain eligible for future IIPD grant program consideration. All grant recipients are required to submit a summary report of the completed project or activity to the Grants Department at the time that they submit their IIPD Reimbursement Form.

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Date IIPD Award was received: March 2016 (month/year)  

Purpose of Grant: To attend seminars in China and Taiwan to learn about the political contrasts between them, while meeting with government officials and business leaders in both.

1. Describe the new avenues of instruction, including changes in curriculum, teaching strategies or other changes that are resulting from your grant-funded activity.

The biggest change in curriculum will be in my PS 201 Comparative Government course. I often cover China as a country of comparison. This was my first time to Shanghai and I have learned what a world class city it is. No city around the world has anything on it. It is the New York City of China. It is as modern, cosmopolitan, multicultural, as any, with some of the world’s most impressive architecture and public transportation. In many ways it has returned to being the international city it was prior to World War II when it was under European control. Similarly, Shanghai Disneyland opened the week I was there, though I was in no mood to fight the crowds. The city is also the financial capital of mainland China. I came a way with anecdotal examples to relay this to my students.

My PS202 International Relations course will also benefit from my week in Taipei, Taiwan. The tension between Communist China and Nationalist Taiwan has been ongoing since 1949. It has been the epicenter of the Cold War and each government’s claim to the other’s territory has continued to require nuanced diplomacy by the United States. The US does not officially recognize Taiwan, but has built up its military to defend against a possible Communist attack. Since the election of Tsai Ing-wen this year as President of Taiwan, the mainland Communist government of China has refused to meet with Taiwanese officials. Her Democratic Progressive Party is opposed to efforts toward further integration with the mainland. It was interesting to talk to Taiwanese to hear how many people desire independence and want no part of reuniting the two countries. The years ahead promise to be more tense than those under the last government which saw it differently. The tension will remain a hotspot in East Asia, and therefore an ongoing problem for US foreign policy. This was my first time to Taiwan, and it gave me a fuller understanding of its people’s perspective of mainland China. And I will have numerous examples and photos to share with my students in Power Point presentations.
2. How will the grant-funded activity result in an impact on student learning and enhancements to student success?

I now have the best example to help my students understand the nuance of the relationship between the two states, such as the following. Imagine if there was a Communist revolution in the United States and the existing government was forced to flee to Puerto Rico where it set up a government in exile. The dominant language and culture on the island would not be the same as the newly exiled government and its many refugees. There would be cultural tensions between the people of Puerto Rico and the newcomers. The mainland government would continue to lay claim to the island, as rightly apart of the United States. Meanwhile on the island, some would see their history tied to the mainland and desire an eventual reunification, but others on the island would, over time, see themselves as culturally distinct and insist on a future of independence. This is basically the situation between China and Taiwan today.

I am using the digital photographs that I have taken as well as my seminar notes to supplement my course lecture with that of the textbook. The feedback on these photos in the past from students has been very positive, and I believe that their increased interest in the subject matter has resulted in better performance on class assignments.

3. What steps are you taking to assess the impact of this activity on student learning?

Assessing the impact of my international seminar is a difficult task. What I have done is to compare the results in classes where I have given my presentation with those in which I have not. My observations are that the classes that witness my photos and personal stories are more engaged and more interested. The photos seem to accompany an increase in questions on the part of the students. Some students express a desire to go there themselves.

I may be able to compare test scores with past classes to see if there has been improvement over similar exams given in previous courses.

4. How are you engaging others in the learning process and disseminating activity results with the wider campus community?

**NOTE:** If shared learning activities have not yet taken place, an addendum to this report must be filed with the Grants Department describing shared learning activities prior to applying for another IIPD grant, as required by IIPD Guidelines.

Besides preparing a presentation at GRCC this Winter, I will also plan to present to local service clubs and the Osher Life Long Learning Institute at Aquinas College. In the past, these presentations have been received very well. Although the photos enhance the experience for the audience, it is always the first hand accounts of the people that I have met with that always leave the biggest impact on my audiences.

5. Describe how the grant-funded activity is supporting the objectives of your department and your existing job responsibilities.

Klaas Kwant has always video taped my presentations at GRCC for broadcast as well as supplementing the college’s YouTube offerings on the internet. The same is planned for this presentation. In this way, the rest of my department and other departments at GRCC may take advantage of what I have learned and even use it in their classes.
6. **How has this grant helped in fostering your professional development goals?**

   Teaching International Relations and Comparative Government require an understanding about the rest of the world that is enhanced by actually going there. The first hand accounts of the people of China and Taiwan about their relations which each other has expanded my personal understanding of the conflict between them. The photos I will be able to use in class make me a better teacher and increase the interest of those in my classroom for the places I have been. It simply makes my job of teaching this material easier, as well as inspiring others to learn more, perhaps by going there themselves.

7. **Please add any other comments you would like to include in this report.**

   I just want to thank the foundation for all of its support in funding my professional development, and for making it possible for me to bring the world to Grand Rapids and GRCC in the presentations that I am able to provide. Although I do enjoy it, there is an enormous amount of work that goes into preparing and going on these trips. The travel pace is a grueling one, and I do what I can to squeeze as much as I can into the time frame I have, to get as much bang for GRCC’s buck. I am not getting any younger, and I can feel the difference in my age from similar trips I have taken just ten years ago. It is more taxing at 50 years old, but I hope that my presentations may continue to prove their worth.