Grand Rapids Community College Foundation
Instructional Improvement and Professional Development (IIPD) Grant
Report Form

IIPD guidelines require that any individual who receives an IIPD grant must submit a report on their activities within 60 days of completion of the activities. This report must be received by the GRCC Grants and Resource Development Officer in order to be considered eligible for an IIPD grant in a subsequent year. Submit your report to the Grants and Resource Development Officer, mezzanine level, College Park Plaza Building.

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Date of IIPD Award (insert year award was received):
October, 200_  March, 2008

Purpose of Grant:
Attend AAP Conferences (Assist of Writing & Writing Programs)

Please respond to the following questions related to the activity for which you received grant funding and attach your report to this form.

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

2. How will the grant-funded activity result in an impact on student learning and enhancements to student success?

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

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 Office describing shared learning activities prior to applying for another IIPD grant, as required by IIPD Guidelines.

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

6. How has this grant helped in fostering your professional development goals?

Revised 2/07
R142 “The City—Real and Imagined”
We did not arrive at the conference site in time for me to hear all of this presentation, and I was particularly sorry to miss Stuart Dybek. However, as my own experience and sensibilities have a distinctly rural bent, I felt an examination of urban experience as it appears in the panelists’ literature and outlook would help me tune in to what makes a city a city and perhaps help me in time to infuse my own work with credible urban insights. The panelists I did hear and the Q&A following prompted these notes:

Chicag (particularly, so they said) is a city where extremes mingle. It’s full of contrasts and contradictions, the best and the worst; the counterpoint of fantasy and reality rooted in experience and familiarity.

A writer must determine how important it is to her intentions for either character or place to be anonymous, and to consider what an urban setting contributes to that need.

Concern that literature of the city indulges in nostalgia was countered by the assertion that, even as ghosts, forces that have shaped a city are still active; and that cities “in decline” (cf. St. Louis, Detroit) are nevertheless in a cycle that is itself self-renewing—and certainly as far as its literature goes.

Lunch with a poet friend from Detroit meant shop talk and exchange of notes: She had thus far attended, among others, a particularly stimulating session on aphorisms as a literary construct. We had a good time creating our own (such as ‘A fart in a hole stays in a hole’…).

R183 “Editing—The Business of Writing”
My interest in finding markets for my own poetry prompted this choice. The panel comprised the editors of The Georgia Review, Gettysburg Review, New Orleans Review, Short Fiction, and The Southern Review talking about their publications’ priorities and how they involve themselves (or don’t) in the revisions process when they’re interested in a piece of writing that they don’t think is quite ‘there.’

F115 “Beyond the Personal Landscape: Reinventing the Memoir”
The requirement in EN 101 for students to produce personal writing—as well as the pleasure I take in reading memoir—prompted me to attend this session. The moderator observed that memoir is an “excuse to explore what matters” and to examine how the personal sheds light on the culture at large. One panelist talked about her experiences w/
\textit{in vitro} fertilization and how the ancient and basic experience of reproduction (personal) can be spun by current scientific practices (culture at large). Another had found parallels between the Chicago Cubs (personal) and religion's cardinal virtues (culture at large). My notes for the remaining panelists in this session do not distill wisdom as neatly: something about linear vs. non-linear presentations and ways that a non-linear narrative can nevertheless convey memory since "memory does not record duration" but rather gets images talking to images almost accidentally until their shapes shift into a reinvention of themselves. ....OK.

\textbf{The Book Fair.} Trade show. This was an opportunity, again, for me to investigate publishers that might be suitable for my own work. I was there nearly two hours striding up and down the aisles, chatting with editors and representatives, collecting free samples and occasionally actually purchasing an issue. (It would have taken me two or three times that amount of time to pass them all.) Evaluation of my accumulated issues continues.

F136 "Writing Your Passions: Forbidden Topics"
Titillating as the title of this session was, our GRCC English department entourage attended this session first and foremost to champion and support our colleague Maryann Lesert and her forthcoming novel, \textit{Base Ten}. While there was one speaker whose featured text actually involved sex, the "forbidden topic" seems to have been the challenge of writing what you do \textit{not} know, rather than what you do. For Lesert, this required considerable research of physics before her astronaut character could comport herself credibly. For another woman speaker, it was to create a credible male character from a different continent, different culture, different social stratum from herself. In short, research can itself lead to creativity as one departs from the familiar and personal for discovery.

F156 "Poetry of Resilience"
A poetry reading, and my favorite session of the weekend. I almost suspended breathing for the duration of Brian Turner's reading—work I knew—and Kwame Dawes's reading, whose work I did not know. Dawes's delivery was very musical, and when he did actually break into song in a gospel baritone in one of his poems, it took me a line or two to realize he'd made that distinction. Riveting. David Cope has characterized this presentation well in his summary; I'll hook my finger through his belt loop and let his thoughts carry me the rest of the way.

Evening out: \textbf{Eugene O'Neill, Desires Under the Elms}, Goodman Theater
A stunning production starring Brian Dennehy. I think I was as captivated by the set as by the story—more evidence of how the human imagination is capable of making sense out of non sense.
1. First of all, I would not drop everything I’ve been doing or planned to do just because I had a weekend away in a given semester. (I would be more likely to change horses in the middle of the stream, as it were, as a result of what I perceive to be my students’ immediate needs—which I anticipate less and less well as they arrive less and less well prepared to do the work I expect them to do.) However, exposure to the variety of conference sessions I attended certainly leaves me with more ideas of how to address their interests in writing (sessions F142 and R183), and F115 and F136 certainly provide additional considerations for EN 101 and EN 102, wherein students reflect upon their own experiences and values and then open themselves to the wider application of the familiar.

2. I think the conference reaffirmed that I am on the right track, and have been.

3. See #2.

4. I’m sort of trailing along behind David Cope in this regard. He seems at the forefront of self-promotions. I expect that we will make some kind of presentation next fall (October) at our annual department learning day off campus at Meijer Gardens.

5. I teach writing. That’s all I teach. Furthermore, I continue to try to enhance my professional skills as a writer (doing, not just talking about doing, as it were) with regular workshops and other types of exposure to the reflections and ideas of others in the writing community. The AWP is one of the most widely respected conferences in the world for writers and writing programs. Where would you like me to begin? Laurie Chesley didn’t seem to think there was any reason for you all to question the legitimacy of this conference, or my attendance at it.

6. See number 5.