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.

Name:  __Keith St. Clair_________  Job Title/Department  _Social Science Professor_________

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Date of IIPD Award (insert year award was received):

October, 200__  March, 2008

Purpose of Grant:

__Faculty Development Seminar in Jordan and Jerusalem

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.

This seminar will have the most impact on PS 202 International Relations. Among other things, this course discusses the causes of conflict, terrorism, the United Nations, and economic development. This faculty seminar was directly relevant to all of these topics. In PS 202 we discuss how conflict can be caused by disputes over territory, ethnic divisions, and religious differences. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been described as all three. Over half of the population of Jordan is made up of Palestinian refugees from this conflict. Baqa, the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan, is supervised by the United Nations and I had a chance to visit it. I also saw Jordan’s version of free enterprise zones for purposes of economic development. This grant also gave me the opportunity to travel to the West Bank and personally witness the current relations with the state of Israel. I have pictures and stories to share with my students because of this trip.

Although I have been well read on this subject, this seminar greatly enhanced my knowledge of the status of Palestinians. I will be able to dedicate a much greater portion of my class discussion of world conflicts on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

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

Revised 7/107
Students are gaining my first hand accounts of life in Jordan and Palestine. In addition to Palestinian animosity to Israel, I experienced the social tensions between indigenous Jordanians and Palestinians. The Palestinians as a whole are better educated, urban, and are the driving force of the Jordanian economy. However, the indigenous Jordanians, or “East Bankers,” retain most of the key government security jobs. King Abdullah has made sure to marry a Palestinian in the hopes of bridging this rift, but Palestinians still complain of discrimination in certain jobs.

In the West Bank, much of Palestinian fear and resentment is directed, not towards the Israeli military so much as the armed Israeli settlers. I experienced this apprehension when settlers, answerable to no legal authority, walked past with their assault rifles. The tension in Hebron is specifically severe, where religious Muslims and Jews consider the Tomb of the Patriarchs, the burial place of Abraham, as holy ground. Israeli settlers are very aggressive in this traditional Palestinian town. In some cases, seizing homes that are literally right on top of Palestinian homes.

Although Jews, Muslims, and Christians live in close proximity in Jerusalem, there is very little interaction on the streets and neighborhoods are very segregated. Many secular Jews are moving out and ultra-orthodox Jews are moving in, which will only increase the tensions between the various communities.

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 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 seminars is a difficult task. What I have done is 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 in order 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 Office describing shared learning activities prior to applying for another IIPD grant, as required by IIPD Guidelines.

I am planning on giving presentations on Jordan and the Palestinians this year at GRCC. I also plan to give a presentation to the United Nations Association of Grand Rapids and possibly the World Affairs Council of West Michigan. In the past, I have done a promotional video for the GRCC Foundation stressing the importance of professional development grants like this. I would certainly be willing to do so again.

I have also spoken to Rotary Clubs on my travels. Sharing my photos and what I have learned has met with very positive feedback. I am frequently complimented on my presentations and how it is helpful to
bring these distant places to West Michigan. However, audiences are most interested in hearing about the people and their cultural differences with the US. This always leaves more of an impact than purely political and historical descriptions.

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

I am sharing my knowledge that I have gained with my department through scheduled presentations on campus. Video taped presentations of these talks will be broadcast on channel 28 promoting this college and the GRCC Foundation’s work. I am even open to speaking to other classes on campus.

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

I have always realized that teaching International Relations and Comparative Government requires the necessity to travel. My credibility in the classroom depends on it. Similarly, students wouldn’t think much of a nursing instructor who had not been to a hospital in years. My personal stories and photographs enhance my authority with my students and my colleagues.