

Faculty Proposals for McGregor Summer Research Fellows – Summer 2009

Don DeGraaf and Cynthia Slagter – Off Campus Programs/Spanish Department
Understanding the Long Term Impact of Calvin's Off Campus Semesters

Mark Fackler – Communication Arts and Sciences Department
Media and Peace in East Africa: Case Study and Call to Action

Brian Fuller – Communication Arts and Sciences Department
Camera Obscura - preproduction and planning

Craig Hanson – Art and Art History Department
Print Collections in Seventeenth-Century England

Beth Macauley – Communication Arts Sciences Department
Documenting the Effectiveness of Equine-Assisted Therapy

Edward Miller – Spanish Department
The Afro-Hispanic Newspapers of Argentina and Uruguay: 1820-1899

Debra Rienstra – English Department
**Calvin Writers Recommend: A Resource to Support Student Publication of Poetry, Short
Fiction, and Creative Nonfiction**

Kurt Schaefer, Steve McMullen and Becky Haney – Business/Economics Department
The Impact of Homework in Elementary Schools (Steve McMullen)
Ministry and Pay: Does fair compensation help or hinder ministry? (Becky Haney)
**Worship, Worldview and Way-of-life: Modeling spiritual formation from denominational
survey data (Kurt Schaefer)**

Judith Vander Woude – Communication Arts Sciences Department
Improving Children's Language and Literacy skills

Julie Walton – HPERDS Department
Christian Practice to Pedagogy: Breaking Bread in an Introductory Nutrition Course

Don DeGraaf and Cynthia Slagter – Off Campus Programs/Spanish Department
Understanding the Long Term Impact of Calvin's Off Campus Semesters

Project Abstract: The last 20 years has seen an explosion of semester abroad programs sponsored by colleges and universities in the USA as well as at Calvin. In promoting these experiences a number of life changing benefits have been touted. Despite these many claims, few empirical studies have examined the long-term impacts on students studying abroad (Dwyer, 2004). To begin to address this void in the research, SAGE (Study Abroad for Global Engagement) has initiated a study to examine the long-term personal, professional and social capital (civic engagement) outcomes associated with study abroad experiences. The purpose of this study is to adapt the SAGE study and examine the long-term impacts of participating in an off campus semester program at Calvin.

Student Contributions:

- Assisting in identifying the sample for the study (tracking down addresses, calling potential subjects and asking them to be involved in the study);
- Conducting interviews;
- Transcribing interviews;
- Analyzing data (assisting in the searching for common themes);
- Assisting in the writing of one to two articles -- Additional time may be spent here during the fall semester, if the student is interested.
- Assisting in presenting the results at a regional and/or national conference.

Overall benefits to the student

This project will offer a student an opportunity to work closely with professors from two different disciplines in an interdisciplinary study. The student will be involved in all aspects of designing and implementing a research study as well as presenting and writing up the results of this study. Students will also have the opportunity to examine the importance and potential of Calvin's off campus programs to make a difference in the lives of students and our communities.

Student Qualifications:

- Good social skills (able to communicate with subjects both face to face and over the phone)
- Good organizational skills
- Self directed once given a task to complete
- Good computer skills (i.e. word processing, willingness to learn new computer programs – e.g. Nvivo)

Mark Fackler – Communication Arts and Sciences Department
Media and Peace in East Africa: Case Study and Call to Action

Project Abstract: Violence erupted in Kenya following national elections in December 2007. Two political parties and their respective candidates claimed victory in a rigged election (worldwide opinion). For weeks in early 2008, gangs supported by party leaders on both sides burned and killed. Kenya's press (radio, television, newspapers) eventually came together to call both sides to negotiation. This study traces that process and asks, What could media leaders have done earlier, better, more persuasively? The McGregor Fellow will meet these leaders and help assess Kenyan media culture.

Student Contributions:

- Four weeks (July) in Kenya collecting interview data and documents related to media coverage of post-election violence. McGregor Fellow will work alongside former journalist and media scholar Dr. Levi Obonyo (Daystar University, Nairobi), a Daystar student research assistant, and Prof Fackler in a team of four. We will arrange and record interviews with media and NGO leaders in Nairobi, transcribe, assess using NVivo, and create a scholarly paper to present in August 2010 at the national meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Denver.
- While in Kenya, McGregor Fellow may travel to game parks or other interesting sites during "time off." Included in the *scheduled activities* is a trip to rural western Kenya where Prof Fackler and wife Ann conduct development work with a community of Maasai Christians near Kilgoris. McGregor Fellow will have a most unique experience with this colorful and animated community, with opportunities to use skills in teaching, orphan care, health, agricultural, business, and sport.
- Before departure, McGregor Fellow will read Kenyan history and online newspapers for current life and culture, and become good with NVivo software.

Student Qualifications:

Essentials:

Eager to know a new culture
Capable of meeting people in business settings
Adaptable to rustic settings (no running water, no elec)
Durable through unfamiliar terrain, foods, and transport
Male
Savvy with learning new software
Quick to adapt to changing situations

Desirables:

Interest in mass media and their impact on culture
Acquaintance with qualitative research methods
Team player
Good writing skills
Able to get along with a wide variety of people and age groups
Photographic eye and skill

Brian Fuller – Communication Arts and Sciences Department
Camera Obscura - preproduction and planning

Project Abstract: For 30 years, Jim Southerland has combined printmaking technology with the centuries-old camera obscura (an optical device/photography predecessor used by painters to improve perspective). His personally-engineered apparatus first took fine arts to children of depressed Appalachian areas.

An appreciation of Southerland's device, process, and philosophy, my half-hour film requires travel to at least three international locations. Parts of the film may be rotoscoped to simulate the appearance of obscura images.

A McGregor recipient would aid in the film's pre-production research with a focus on grant writing to support a shooting budget of between \$35K and \$50K.

Student Contributions:

Grant search and writing

- Scour various foundation databases for possible donor organizations matches.
- Fill out grant applications.

Research into the history of the *camera obscura*.

- Historical – trace the development of the device from its origins in Asia and the Middle East to the present
- Philosophical/Religious – the device has been imagined by philosophers since the 9th century and thought, at times during its history to have religious and philosophical significance and implication.
- Technical – how does the device work?
- Images and artifacts - What museums or private collectors house working [antique or reconstructed] models of the device? Where are images made by the device available? What are the copyright issues governing the inclusion these images and artifacts in a film?
- Experts – Who are experts in the field who might be interviewed for a film about the *camera obscura*?

Exhibition Planning

- In what venues might such a film be shown?
- What festivals offer the film its best chance of selection and award?
- What are the entry requirements of those outlets?

Budgeting - Plan logistics and cost for film crew traveling to international shooting locations.

Media Production - prepare and distribute promotional materials which might include

- a trailer (edited from footage shot November 2008)
- a website.

Student Qualifications:

- organized and self-motivated
- polite and articulate self-presentation
- strong research skills
- knowledge of the filmmaking enterprise
- video editing, preferably familiar with Avid software
- web design

Craig Hanson – Art and Art History Department
Print Collections in Seventeenth-Century England

Project Abstract:

In 1662 John Evelyn published *_Sculptura_*, a book that, despite its name, tackled the subject of prints. In fact, it is often regarded as the first attempt at a history of European printmaking (the title comes from the idea of cutting plates for print production). I'm currently working on producing an annotated, illustrated edition of the text (and perhaps an exhibition as well). The finished book should be a useful resource not only for establishing an early modern account of what mattered in terms of prints but also for thinking about the larger issue of seventeenth-century collections and taste.

Student Contributions:

- Compiling biographies of early modern European artists
- Summarizing scholarly articles
- Formal analysis of prints (ideally some background in printmaking)
- Basic attribution skills
- Tracing provenance of particular prints through various collections
- Organizing and managing files of individual artists
- Small amounts of translation

Student Qualifications:

- Strong grasp of art historical foundations, particularly ArtH 101, ArtH 102, and at least one course covering the period from 1500 to 1800. Ideally, the student will have also had ArtH 397
- Familiarity with major art historical research tools
- Strong communication skills generally, particularly in terms of writing
- Excellent organizational skills
- Self-motivated
- Attentive to details
- Ideally some background in studio printmaking
- Basic proficiency in Latin, French, German, or Dutch (ideal but not essential)

Beth Macauley – Communication Arts Sciences Department
Documenting the Effectiveness of Equine-Assisted Therapy

Project Abstract: The purpose of this study is to document through film and formal testing how well equine-assisted therapy (hippotherapy) works for children and adults with speech and language disorders. Persons referred for speech therapy will participate in equine-assisted therapy for 6-8 weeks and their sessions will be captured on film. The footage will be edited to document single session improvements as well as overall results. Pre and post-testing will include respiratory measurements and expressive and receptive language tasks. The equine therapy sessions will take place at CHUM Therapy in Mason, MI and at the Cheff Center in Augusta, MI.

Student Contributions:

Scoring & Analyzing Tests
Pre and Post-Testing
Filming Sessions
Editing Film

Student Qualifications:

Essential Qualifications

- Degree in media production or experience in film making and editing
- Major in speech-language pathology or experience working with children with disabilities
- Own transportation and ability to travel outside Grand Rapids three days per week.
- No history of allergies to horses, animal hair, or hay

Desirable Qualifications

- Ability to work both independently and within a team
- Responsible, mature, desire to learn
- Attention to detail, organized
- Good writing ability, sense of humor

Edward Miller – Spanish Department
The Afro-Hispanic Newspapers of Argentina and Uruguay: 1820-1899

Project Abstract:

The primary focus of the McGregor Fellow will be the compilation of literature (poetry, short stories and essays) published in the major Afro-Argentine and Afro-Uruguayan newspapers from 1825-1900. The fellow and I will focus our time on the major newspapers, those that had a life of one, or more years, but will also include material from those newspapers that were published for less than a year. There are a number of works that talk about the existence of the black press in Argentina and Uruguay, but there are no works that have compiled the literature contained in these works, or evaluated their importance and contribution to an understanding of Argentine and Uruguayan literature. George Andrews, Richard Jackson and Marvin Lewis in their studies of Afro-Hispanic literature and societies confirmed the existence and importance of these newspapers published by black Argentines during the early part of the nineteenth century. They pointed out in their studies how the black newspapers were associated with the “Societies,” or “Associations” that existed in Buenos Aires and Montevideo during the years 1820-1875, but they only mention the existence of literature in the newspapers. According to them the purpose of the newspapers was to inform members about what was going on in their communities. The McGregor Fellow and I will demonstrate that these newspapers also gave a voice to a segment of the Argentine and Uruguayan populations that felt that their voices had been silenced, or were being ignored. Our main purpose is to give the silenced a voice, to reproduce their literary works so that they can be read and evaluated by students and scholars of Hispanic Literature.

Student Contributions:

The primary work of the McGregor Fellow will be cataloging the poems, short stories and essays. It will mean reading through all the digital camera scans that I have gotten over the last five years and typing them into word documents, so that they can be categorized later. If I am able to go to Argentina and Uruguay during the summer I will finish cataloging and typing the literary and cultural texts in the fall of 2009. A **McGregor Fellow** will allow me to get started on this aspect of the work before my sabbatical leave in January.

I have over 1500 entries that need to be looked at, then cataloged and evaluated, so there will be plenty of work for the Fellow to do during the summer. I will also have them do some of the background reading that will be used in the introduction of the eventual work.

They will also get to do some of the bibliographic work that needs to be done on the authors, texts and the periods.

Student Qualifications:

- Knowledge of Spanish, advanced level a minimum
- Superior reading ability, since students will be reading poems and prose, and then evaluating the works read
- ability to write annotations of the works uncovered in Spanish
- able to work alone, self-motivated and task orientated

Debra Rienstra – English Department

Calvin Writers Recommend: A Resource to Support Student Publication of Poetry, Short Fiction, and Creative Nonfiction

Project Abstract:

The goal of this project is to develop a web resource that would assist student writers at Calvin College (and perhaps other colleges) in identifying promising venues in which to develop and publish their original creative writing. This resource will be similar to Writers Market products, except that it will be tailored specifically for student writers. Given the Christian commitments of our students, the website will also highlight publication venues that call specifically for submissions engaging matters of faith. The project will involve extensive reading as well as discussion and judgment about the purposes of publication, the various categories of publication venues, and the role of faith in the current creative writing scene.

Student Contributions:

- reading strategically through *Writers Market* and related resources to pinpoint potential publication venues
- surveying English department faculty to further identify potential publication venues
- researching these venues by reading about them and reading a representative sample of issues
- searching the web for further venues not identified in *WM* or by faculty
- developing a standard pattern for communicating information about these publication venues
- describing eloquently and succinctly the types of creative work each venue seeks (including samples)
- developing “value-added” information for each venue (such as information about Calvin faculty or alumni who have published there)
- working with a college IT staff to develop a web format for the resource
- populating the website with information about the venues identified and researched
- developing a brief “how-to” section to give students a basic tutorial in submission etiquette
- developing a calendar of appropriate contests student writers might enter
- developing a list of appropriate workshop opportunities for student writers
- setting up the resource so that future students can extend it (perhaps as part of a course assignment)

Student Qualifications:

The successful candidate will have these qualifications:

- a strong interest in creative writing, preferably as an experienced writer himself or herself
- basic ability with web design software (Dreamweaver) and the ability to learn quickly
- strong organizational skills and an eye for detail
- a keen perception for distinctions among genres and styles
- the ability to describe writing perceptively and clearly
- savvy, creative internet searching skills
- persistence and initiative
- enthusiasm for creative collaboration with faculty members and web designers

Kurt Schaefer, Steve McMullen and Becky Haney – Business/Economics Department

- 1. The Impact of Homework in Elementary Schools (Steve McMullen)**
- 2. Ministry and Pay: Does fair compensation help or hinder ministry? (Becky Haney)**
- 3. Worship, Worldview and Way-of-life: Modeling spiritual formation from denominational survey data (Kurt Schaefer)**

Project Abstract:

1. There has been much debate about the optimal amount of homework that should be assigned to elementary school students, and there have been many high profile complaints that too much homework is being assigned to young children. Most recent research on the impact of homework, however, indicates that the benefits of devoting time to homework for middle and high school students are very high. This project will use advanced econometric methods to investigate whether elementary students receive a high return on homework time, similar to older students, or a much smaller benefit.
2. This project will gather data about church-staff compensation schemes, explore the differences among these schemes across various faith traditions, and investigate the relationship between compensation scheme and the nature of ministry. Do egalitarian compensation arrangements lead to inefficiency, or do they allow for the “hidden work” of ministry that “merit-pay” schemes might jeopardize? Some Christian denominations have more egalitarian compensation than others, but the effect of compensation arrangements on excellence in ministry is unknown. This project also relates ministerial performance to the norms, theologically-based expectations/cultures and rules of the communities in which ministers work.
3. This project explores the relationships among worship (the structure, content and affect of congregation gatherings), worldview (the beliefs and convictions that congregants actually hold) and way-of-life (the practical decisions, political opinions, and other lifestyle choices of congregants) by modeling congregation-formation in a spatial Hotelling framework, then estimating the resulting models using data from national denominational surveys. Example questions: Does a more sacramental or traditional worship service tend congregants toward a more communal view of social responsibilities? Do those potential opinions translate into action? Do more “seeker-friendly” worship gatherings encourage faster changes in congregants’ worldviews and lifestyle choices? Are those changes more or less profound than in other settings?

Student Contributions:

(in order of importance)

- Collecting data on compensation schemes
- Exploring and cleaning data, and defining key variables
- Reading & reviewing the appropriate literature
- Learning appropriate econometric techniques, including programming in Stata and NVivo
- Comparing different econometric specifications/models
- Summarizing results and remaining issues in writing
- Drinking tea and discussing the project

Student Qualifications:

- Completed Econ 221, 343 or equivalent statistics training, and preferably econ 329 and/or 335.

Judith Vander Woude – Communication Arts Sciences Department
Improving Children's Language and Literacy skills

Project Abstract: This language and literacy research project aims to determine the success of a language and literacy intervention for second through fifth grade students who are below grade-level readers. In addition to conducting pre-and post-tests for each child, we will investigate the student characteristics that are positively associated with literacy achievement such as English language proficiency, home literacy environment, and the students' listening and oral language skills. Primary research tasks include administering pre- and post-tests in Spanish and English, transcribing Spanish and English story samples, reviewing school records, and conducting interviews with the students' parents.

Student Contributions:

The student and the professor will complete the following tasks for the research project:

1. Conduct literature search on the relationship between complex sentence development and literacy.
2. Conduct pre- and posttest language and literacy assessments of the children enrolled in the summer literacy intervention.
3. Conduct and analyze interviews of children's caregivers on family literacy practices.
4. Transcribe recorded English and Spanish conversational and narrative language samples.
5. Analyze the conversational language samples and compare results to a national database.
6. Perform statistical analyses to document the presence or absence of gains in literacy skills and to identify relationships among child characteristics and literacy growth.

Student Qualifications:

- * Conversational and written Spanish proficiency
- * Some prerequisite knowledge of oral language skills in school-aged children
- * Ability to establish rapport with children and parents
- * Excellent organization skills
- * Fastidious transcription abilities.
- * Ability to learn SPSS to analyze quantitative data

Julie Walton – HPERDS Department

Christian Practice to Pedagogy: Breaking Bread in an Introductory Nutrition Course

Project Abstract: An experimental teaching approach to a faith-based curriculum in an introductory Nutrition course was implemented in the fall of 2008. In brief, the project attempted to address ways in which a specific Christian practice might function in influencing how Christian educators think about and design teaching and learning. Specifically, the Christian practice of shared meals was used to frame a new recipe for teaching and learning. The intent was to create a classroom atmosphere of hospitality, sharing, and service. The acronym MEALS (mindful, expectant, accepting, loving, shared) was used to remind us of our dependence on God and each other in our common pursuit of knowledge. The course required intentional enactment: the instructor and students (n=63) shared meals in small groups for six weeks in dining halls, the campus coffeehouse, student and professor homes, local restaurants, college-owned Project Neighborhood homes, a church family night supper, and at a local meal ministry to the homeless. It was hypothesized that: 1) the intentional and intense focus on the metaphoric and real aspects of shared meals would result in significantly higher student engagement scores than those recorded in the latest NSSE report for Calvin College, and that the student's own individual engagement scores would trend higher from pre-post course; 2) student exams scores would improve compared to past years as a result of new pedagogical interventions and classroom work on engaged reading; and 3) standard college Course Evaluation faith integration measures and comments would demonstrate a growing understanding and appreciation of the countless ways food, in the ways it is produced, consumed, and shared links all people to the Creator and His creation.

Student Contributions:

- Data management and analysis (surveys, written comments, course outcomes)
- Read and discuss Professor Walton's present (and extensive) list of resources
- Search for additional resources that would have bearing on this topic
- Discuss and propose course improvements to be implemented Fall semester 2009
- Prepare outcomes as a presentation for the October 2009 Practices to Pedagogy conference at Calvin College
- Co-present the project w/Professor Walton October 2009

Student Qualifications:

- successful completion of a Nutrition course (e.g., HE 254)
- completion of a Speech course (e.g., CAS 101) preferred, not required
- excellent reading comprehension
- willingness to read a long list of Christian Practices literature
- fundamental library and internet research skills
- assertive enough to engage in ongoing discussions w/professor
- excellent computer skills
- willingness to learn the ropes of SPSS statistical package (professor will tutor)
- ability to work on his/her own without minute-by-minute oversight
- excellent writing skills
- rudimentary knowledge of desktop publishing; excellent working knowledge of PowerPoint
- public speaking skills