

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Presidential Faculty/Student Collaboration and Publication Grant

Deadline February 26th

Please print and complete this checklist and attach it as the cover page of your grant application. For more information about Presidential Faculty/Student Collaboration and Publication grants, please see <http://gustavus.edu/facdev/GrantOpportunities/PresidentialGrant.php>.

Faculty information

Name: Kate Knutson Dept: Political Science
Email: knutson@gustavus.edu Rank: Assistant Professor

Student Information

Name: Jacqueline Schwerm Year: Junior
Email: jschwerm@gustavus.edu Major: Political Science & Communication Studies

Checklist

Project Details

- ☒ Brief description of the proposed project including its collaborative nature
- ☒ Clear statement of anticipated outcomes
- ☒ Likely placement for publication or performances
- ☒ Anticipated research completion date

Participant Details

- ☒ Names and brief biographies of all participants
- ☒ Explanation of how this project fits into the career of the faculty
- ☒ Explanation of how this project fits into the educational trajectory of the student
(include year of graduation; student eligibility is limited to full-time returning students)
- ☒ Presidential Budget Proposal Form attached as last page of application
- ☒ Nine (9) copies of completed application (including this checklist) to be submitted to the John S. Kendall Center for Engaged Learning (SSC 119)

**If successful, my proposal can be used as an example to assist future faculty applications.
This decision will not in any way influence the evaluation of my application.**

Yes / No (please circle one)

Presidential Faculty/Student Collaboration Grant Proposal

Interfaith Advocacy: Minnesota's Joint Religious Legislative Coalition

Dr. Kate Knutson and Jackie Schwerm '11

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Kate and Jackie share an interest in the study of religion and politics. Kate's interest developed as a graduate student when she studied how the participation of religious advocacy groups impacted the way in which the mass media frame debates over public policies. Jackie's interest developed in several of her courses at Gustavus in which she was able to focus on the role religion plays in mass and individual level political behavior in the U.S. Our proposed project for the summer of 2010 draws upon this shared interest in religion and politics through study of a religious advocacy group in Minnesota to understand the political activity and consequence of religious advocacy groups in American politics.

Minnesota's Joint Religious Legislative Coalition (JRLC) is an interfaith advocacy group active in a wide range of state policy debates including welfare reform, healthcare, human rights, and economic justice. Governed by representatives from the Minnesota Catholic Conference, the Minnesota Council of Churches, the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas, and the Islamic Center of Minnesota, the JRLC represents a broad range of Minnesota residents. The JRLC has historical significance as well. Founded in 1971, it was the nation's first interfaith lobbying group. Today the group maintains an active research agenda, issuing briefs on major issues facing Minnesota, and works to mobilize members through the JRLC Legislative Network and the Interfaith Children's Advocacy Network (iCAN).

The prevalence of religious beliefs among the American public as evidenced by mass surveys and the increased visibility of religious groups in political debates indicates the importance of studying the presence and influence of religious groups, such as the JRLC. Religious advocacy groups are organized groups of citizens with policy interests that result from a shared set of religious and political beliefs. These groups are an important presence in American political life, because they "potentially represent non-elite, broad constituencies and offer the prospect of articulating previously underrepresented values and concerns of many citizens" (Hertzke, 1988:14). These groups may take the form of a lobbying office of a religious denomination, a coalition of religious organizations or denominations (like the JRLC) or a research organization. Religious groups may also be issue-based and comprised of individual citizen members or they may simply be a religious organization or movement that has a mailing list rather than official members.

A growing body of research specifically addresses the role of religious advocacy groups in the political process (Ebersole, 1951; Adams, 1970; Hertzke, 1988; Dillon, 1995; Hofrenning, 1995; Yamane, 1999; Olson, 2002). Some scholars of religious groups point to successes enjoyed by religious advocacy groups in electoral politics (Adams, 1970; Rozell & Wilcox, 1995, 1997; Green, Rozell, & Wilcox, 2004) and policy debates (Hertzke, 1988; Wood & Davis, 1991). These studies of religious group lobbying are helpful in that they demonstrate that religious groups actively attempt to shape public policy and they begin to categorize the ways in which these groups differ in success and strategy from non-religious groups. However, these studies

are inconclusive regarding the ultimate effect of religious advocacy groups on the political process and on American democracy, more generally.

The JRLC also represents a relatively understudied aspect of religious advocacy groups: the religious left. Religious advocacy groups on the left tend to believe in and emphasize “broad moral principles” that are very close to secular, progressive, liberal ideals (Hertzke, 1998:181). “Peace and justice” are two of the most common principles advocated by liberal religious advocacy groups (Olson, 2002:55). These ideals manifest themselves through work on “human rights at home and abroad, working to preserve the environment, questioning U.S. use of military force, and [...] fighting for the disadvantaged” (Olson, 2002:55). Observers of the religious left note that these groups have not been particularly successful in terms of reaching their desired policy goals—especially in recent years (Hofrenning, 1995).

We propose to use the Presidential Faculty-Student Collaboration Grant to support comprehensive research of the JRLC in an attempt to understand the political influence of this religious advocacy group.¹ Our goal is to produce data for a book-length manuscript appropriate for use in undergraduate courses on interest groups, religion and politics, state and local politics, and American government. We will take a multi-method approach to our research, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative sources of information. We plan to conduct in-depth interviews with group leaders, executive board members, and individual members. In addition, we plan to conduct an analysis of the group’s legislative and media strategies. Finally, we hope to do a lot of, what Political Scientist Richard Fenno called, “soaking and poking”—spending time observing the group at work (Fenno, 1990). We plan to attend meetings and community events, and to immerse ourselves in the life of the group.

Our goal in employing these diverse research methods is to gain a complete picture of the organization and to illuminate the ways in which the JRLC works to influence Minnesota politics. We have three broad sets of research questions that guide our work. First, how does the JRLC conceptualize and operationalize its interfaith identity. How does the religious identity of the group affect its abilities to recruit and mobilize potential members? How does the group balance the tensions inherent in maintaining an interfaith identity? Second, to what extent is the JRLC successful? How does the group define success? What strategies does the group employ in an attempt to influence the political process? How does the group use communication and political strategies to reach political goals? Third, what are the implications for the work of the JRLC on the democratic process? To what extent should religious groups play a role in the public square? Can a public interest group, like the JRLC, provide an effective counterweight to the influence of special interest groups like big business in the political process? These questions reflect many broader questions raised in the interest group literature, which focuses on group formation, mobilization, and influence.

COLLABORATIVE NATURE OF THE PROJECT

Given Jackie’s exposure to diverse research methods in political science and her extensive background in religion and politics, the research we undertake will be truly collaborative. Our research involves three primary techniques: content analysis, interviews, and observation, and

¹ We have already submitted our proposal to the Institutional Review Board, and expect to receive approval because the work deals with adult participants in an advocacy organization and does not involve particularly sensitive information.

both collaborators will participate in all three of these data-collection methods. Some of our time during the period covered by the grant will be spent on campus. We will use this time to collect documents for the content analysis that are available on-line and to analyze these documents. We hope to make two to three trips to the cities each week to conduct interviews and observe the activities of the group. The first two to three interviews will be conducted jointly, but once both collaborators are comfortable with the format of the interviews and the questions, we will conduct interviews independently so as to reach more group members and leaders. Remaining time on campus will be spent transcribing interviews and observation notes. Finally, we hope to spend the last one or two weeks of the summer reflecting on and analyzing the data we have collected and drafting outlines for one or two substantive chapters.

PROJECT TIMELINE

February-May 2010

- Background research on JRLC

- Collect and read group publications (press releases, policy statements, etc) (J&K)

- Collect and read newspaper coverage of the group (J&K)

- Attend group events including:

- March 25-Day on the Hill (lobbying day) (J&K)

- Initial conversations with group leaders (K)

- Write draft literature review (K)

June-July 2010

- Interviews with group leaders and members (J&K)

- Observation in JRLC office (J&K)

- Continue collecting group writings and news coverage (J&K)

- Draft chapter outline (K)

August-December 2010

- Draft chapters (K with J's help)

February-May 2011

- Draft chapters (K)

- Solicit feedback through Senior Seminar students, Midwest Political Science Association conference (K)

June 2011-December 2011

- Finalize manuscript and send to publishers (K)

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

This research project is a result of a five-year "Goldilocks" search for just the right book to use in my (Kate's) Senior Seminar on Interest Groups. Each year I set out to find a good case study on an advocacy group that merges theory with an interesting narrative to supplement our other course texts. I have managed to find a handful, but most are overly theoretical and dry, on one extreme, or are completely devoid of theory, on the other. All are much longer than I would like. Ideally, I was looking for a supplemental case study text like the ones that are available in abundance for classes on Congress or American Politics. Books like *From Inspiration to Legislation: How an Idea Becomes a Bill* by Amy E. Black or *Freshman Orientation: House*

Style and Home Style by Edward I. Sidlow provide the perfect balance of interesting case study mixed with just the right amount of theory and discipline-specific concepts.

Thus, the ultimate goal of this project is a book-length manuscript (to be completed during Kate's anticipated sabbatical in 2011-2012) to be marketed to publishers who publish similar types of supplemental case studies. In particular, the Real Politics in America Series published by Pearson-Prentice Hall is our primary target. According to the series description, "the books in this series bridge the gap between academic scholarship and the popular demand for knowledge about politics...The goal of the series is to convey the best contemporary political science research has to offer in ways that will engage individuals who want to know about real politics in America." The series currently features a number of titles focused on a variety of topics in American politics, but none provide a case study of an interest group and few focus on state-level politics. Thus, this project would be an ideal addition to the series. Other publication options include the Critical Topics in American Government Series published by McGraw-Hill, the Dilemmas in American Politics Series published by Westview, or CQ Press.

We anticipate that the book will be appealing to professors teaching undergraduate courses on interest groups, religion and politics, and state and local politics, and might also be appropriate in an introductory American politics course. Our goal will be to tell the story of this particularly interesting group, while rooting it in the academic literature on interest groups and religion and politics. We aim to do this in a way that is both accessible and interesting to undergraduates.

As the project emerged out of a desire to find an appropriate case study text for my U.S. Interest Groups senior seminar, I hope to have a draft ready in time to use in the spring of 2011, when I next offer the course. Jackie will likely be a student in this class and it will be an ideal opportunity to gain valuable feedback on the draft as well as to ensure that it meets the goal of providing an appropriate mix of interesting narrative and interest group theory. In the senior seminar, students engage in an original research project that culminates in the writing of a senior thesis. I am very excited about the possibility of using a draft of this project in the class because it will give the students a glimpse into how the research process works for political scientists. The students will have an opportunity to see first-hand what goes into the writing of an academic book, and they will play a role in shaping the final product. They can then use that experience of engaging with a text in their own research and writing process as they consider audience, use of evidence, structure, and word choice.

PROJECT RELEVANCE TO FUTURE CAREER GOALS

Kate Knutson has four goals for this project. First, I hope to use this summer of research to collect data for the book project I plan to complete during my anticipated sabbatical leave in 2011-2012. Spending a summer collecting data (plus additional research this spring and fall) will allow me ample time to complete the manuscript during my sabbatical year. Second, I hope to write a high quality book that will fill a hole in the current textbook market and that I can use in my future classes. Third, I am passionate about continuing to work collaboratively with students. I have worked with several students in past years, coauthoring two conference papers with two separate students and coauthoring a journal article with a student. I enjoy helping students explore a side of political science that most are unfamiliar with and I particularly look forward to working closely with Jackie to see if this is a career path she might enjoy following in the future. When I started to conceptualize this project, Jackie was the first and only student who came to mind. Jackie and I share many of the same academic interests in religion and politics

and I was impressed with Jackie's natural inclination to the material we covered in Analyzing Politics (our methodology course). I know this will be a truly collaborative undertaking because Jackie is exceptionally prepared for this work, both in terms of her interests and her methodological skills. My passion for working collaboratively with students on research projects stems from my own experience as an undergraduate. I had the opportunity to work with one of my college professors on a project that turned into a conference paper. It was a transformative experience for me as I discovered my interest in academic research and writing. It has been my goal at Gustavus to continue mentoring relationships by bringing students into my own research projects and involving them in all stages of the work, from data collection, to writing, to presentation. Finally, I hope to use this research to build connections with local advocacy groups for possible service learning opportunities and internships. Many Gustavus students have an interest in religion and politics and the relationships I build with representatives from the JRLC and will be useful for these students. Being relatively new to Minnesota (going on five years), I am always looking for ways to create these types of connections that will allow me to better serve my students.

Jackie Schwerm hopes to go to graduate school or law school. In law school I would focus on Constitutional Law. I am especially interested in the First Amendment and an eventual goal would be to work for the ACLU or a similar organization. If I go to graduate school, I would like to focus my studies on religion and politics, and possibly earn a doctorate and eventually teach in the field of religion and politics. This research experience will provide me with an opportunity to use the research skills I have acquired during my time at Gustavus and to explore the process of academic research as I make my decision regarding my future career goals. I will complete my senior thesis in the spring of 2011 and plan to apply for the honors major, which would involve independent research in the fall of 2010. This opportunity would provide me with research experience that I can draw upon for my own thesis research, which will be on the topic of religion and politics.

PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES

Kate Knutson is an Assistant Professor of Political Science and teaches courses focused on American politics such as U.S. Government and Politics, Congress, the Presidency, Public Policy, and Interest Groups. She also occasionally teaches the Political Science department's research methodology course, Analyzing Politics, as well as FTS and January Term classes. Broadly speaking, Kate's academic interests include interest groups, political communication, public policy, and religion and politics. Kate has authored several articles and chapters in edited volumes, all of which focus on the role of religious interest groups in American politics. Articles include "Sharing the Faith: The Building of Successful Media Strategies by Liberal and Conservative Religious Advocacy Groups" (*Journal of Communication and Religion*, forthcoming, coauthored with Mikka McCracken '09), "Breaking the Chains? Constraint and the Political Rhetoric of Religious Interest Groups" (*Politics and Religion*, forthcoming), "The Underrepresentation of Liberal Christians: Mobilization Strategies of Religious Interest Groups" (*Social Science Journal*, 2006). Book chapters include "Religion and Public Policy" (Forthcoming), "Women, Religion, and the American Presidency" (2008), and "Same-Sex Marriage: The Impact of Religiously-Motivated Political Action on Public Policy" (2007).

Jackie Schwerm is a junior political science and communication studies double major. While taking classes in both these departments, as well as in the history department, she has taken many opportunities to explore a topic of great interest to her: religion and politics. In the political

science department she took U.S. Government and Politics, which touched on the issue of religion and politics through court cases. She took Political Parties and Elections, which discussed how certain religious groups impact elections as well as how religion plays a role in vote choice. She continued this interest by taking Religion and Politics in America, which expanded her interest in this field. During January 2009, she traveled to Washington D.C. where the class met with leaders of a religious organization and discussed their lobbying techniques. In her history class, American Lives, Jackie focused much of her writing on how Abraham Lincoln employed religion into his politics. Jackie just completed Argumentation and Debate, a communication studies course. For her first big project in the course she focused on the role of religion in politics and the issue of prayer in school. She also took Rhetorical Criticism where she conducted a semester long critique of a speech by John F. Kennedy about his religion and his politics. In the spring Jackie will be taking State and Local Government and hopes to gain greater insight into how religion plays a role at the state and local level as well. Jackie just completed Analyzing Politics, a research based political science class. Through this class, she learned how to conduct research in the field of political science. Jackie became much more familiar with the library, as well as different research techniques, such as interviews, observations, statistical analysis, and survey research. This will prove extremely beneficial to her for this project. As her coursework indicates, Jackie is uniquely prepared to undertake a research project such as this one in terms of her substantive knowledge, her methodological skills, and her interest in religion and politics.

WORKS CITED

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BUDGET INFORMATION

Faculty Stipend (\$300 per week, up to \$2,400)

Student Summer Stipend (\$400 per week, up to \$3,200)

Student Summer Campus Housing (\$XXX per week, up to 8 weeks)

ITEM		AMOUNT
Equipment (e.g., transcription machine, camera, cassette recorder – but not to include computer hardware)		\$75
1: Foot pedal for transcription machine	Cost: \$75	
2:	Cost:	
3:	Cost:	
Materials (e.g., books, printing, software, lab supplies)		\$100.00
1: Photocopying	Cost: 100.00	
2:	Cost:	
3:	Cost:	
Travel Costs (cannot include conference travel, see http://gustavus.edu/finance/travel.php for allowable travel expenses)		\$ 1035.00
Airfare:		1035.00
Mileage: Number of miles <u>1104</u> @ \$0.50/mile (15 site visits)		
Lodging:		
Meals:		
Stipends & Housing		\$5,950.00
Faculty Stipend	\$300 per week, up to \$2,400	2,400.00
Student Summer Stipend	\$400 per week, up to \$3,200	3,200.00
Student Summer Campus Housing	\$43.75 per week, up to 8 weeks, \$350	350.00
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$7160.00
AMOUNT REQUESTED		\$7160.00

Have you applied for, or received funding from, another source to help support this project? No

Funding Source:

Amount: 0

Please explain how the Presidential will be used in addition to the other funding.