

## I. Project Details

### *A. Brief description of the proposed project including its collaborative nature*

#### 1. WHERE WE'VE COME FROM

Late in the fall of 2007, Dave Newell, then acting director of the Community Service Center (CSC), contacted me about becoming part of an extensive, multi-year collaboration between Gustavus and the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota (SFA). The CSC has arranged a number of interesting connections for the SFA with Gustavus faculty, staff, and students, including collaborations with courses taught by Bruce Johnson in Economics and Management and Lisa Heldke in Philosophy. That spring, I engaged in extensive conversations with the leaders of the SFA (Mary Jo Forbord, Jerry Ford, and Anne Borgendale) with the goal of developing a collaborative project with my Video Representation course scheduled in the fall. We had high hopes for a joint video project, but the logistics of this plan proved too daunting, and we decided to shelf the idea in hopes of a better opportunity.

During the fall of 2008, I renewed contact with the SFA to discuss prospects for a new plan. With the Presidential Collaboration Grant in mind, I suggested a summer project. That semester I had discovered several talented young video makers on campus and felt very confident that any one of them would make an outstanding collaborator. The SFA expressed enthusiasm at the prospect and planning quickly began to take shape. In discussing project concept, goals, and logistics, the SFA and I soon realized that a video project for the summer of 2009 was not only feasible but also very timely for the current needs of the organization. To get the project underway, I have been working throughout the year to procure the equipment to produce such a project and have secured most of the (very costly) matériel needed for a professional-quality documentary-style video production. With the resources in place and a strong pool of student collaborators from which to draw, this project is ready to commence. We are all eager to begin the intense and involved process of making a movie.

#### 2. WHERE WE'RE GOING

The mission of the project, the plan for its execution, and the goals for its use and distribution have been clearly delineated. First and foremost, the project will be an extension of the vision put forth by the SFA, which is to support "the development and enhancement of sustainable farming systems through innovation, demonstration, education, and farmer-to-farmer networking." Unspoken in that mission statement, but inherent in its values, are broader issues related to environmental and economic justice, diversity awareness, grassroots activism, energy policy, quality of life, and democracy writ large. The invitation to join their Facebook group makes the case by extending a hand to "those that eat (and care about quality food), that use energy (and care about where and how it is produced), that drink water (and care about how clean it is), and care about supporting rural communities (and the people that live there, including farmers)." Although we don't know exactly what the film will look like, we know very well what we want it to do. To these ends, we would like to produce a documentary video that gives consideration to the concerns of the SFA, and demonstrates the central role that sustainable agricultural practices play in the broader web of sustainable social practices.

Specifically, the video project is designed to address several critical issues:

- a. **Explain the philosophy of sustainability that undergirds sustainable farming practices.** One important component of the production will be a kind of primer for sustainable farming and its interconnections with a range of sustainable practices. The film will include a discussion of the risks linked to unsustainable practices as well as expert testimony on the benefits of sustainable practices.
- b. **Offer a glimpse of farming that renders it less alien to non-farmers.** The SFA is deeply committed to developing food citizens, people who have become sensitive to the sources of their food, the ethics of food production, and the interconnections between food and greater society. In any given society, only a small segment of the population will be food producers; however, all members will be food consumers. The SFA sees a brighter future for farmers, for non-farmers, and for the planet if people move beyond a mere consumption model to a more engaged approach to our food.
- c. **Describe some of the risks to the global food supply. Various factors threaten the health of our food and the system that supplies it, ranging from destructive farming practices to an increasing detachment of people from their food sources.** All pose threats to sustainable farming and the farmers who practice it. This documentary will increase awareness of these problems and the difficulties faced in the industry today.
- d. **Illustrate the future of sustainable farming and encourage grassroots participation in sustainable practices.** Despite the deep challenges, many signs suggest a bright future for sustainable farming. Whether it be the fresh application of agricultural science to preserve valuable land quality, the increasing demand for organic and local food supplies, the proliferation of backyard urban farms, or the greenhorn movement of twenty-something city slickers who are giving up their subway commutes for the farming lifestyle, this is a vibrant moment in the history of farming. The SFA wants to capture this moment and communicate the hopeful message to the world while encouraging people to take an active role in helping realize our common goal of a safe, just, clean, sustainable food supply.

### 3. HOW WE'LL GET THERE

The production of this documentary will span several months (though not necessarily in consecutive order) and a number of locations. There will be two distinct phases: field production (shooting) and post production (editing). These stages will have some overlap, but we anticipate having the bulk of shooting complete before we begin significant editing.

The first stage, field production, will include live farm shoots; interviews with farmers, agricultural experts, and legislators; visits to campus farms in the area; and time at conferences and festivals sponsored by the SFA. The SFA will organize interviews and farm visits with willing members of the organization from different parts of the state. One of the live farm shoots will take place in Howard Lake, Minnesota on the farm of Jerry Ford and his family, who have graciously agreed to host us on two different occasions for multiple days of filming. These visits will provide deep access to a working sustainable farm and the experts who run it: Jerry, his wife Marianne, and Marianne's father, who has been passing down his knowledge of sustainable

farming to the next generation. Other farmers have expressed interest in participating, and the SFA has a powerful network of interested parties that will prove invaluable in gathering information and footage. Other likely sites include the working campus farm at St. Olaf College, the University of Minnesota College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resources Sciences, the Garlic Festival in Hutchinson, the SFA headquarters in Starbuck, and our own Gustavus campus, where we will be hosting the SFA's Youth Sustainability Confab (and where the SFA is helping to get our own campus farm on its feet).

The second stage, post production, will take place almost exclusively on campus so that we can make use of the considerable editing resources. This intensive stage will yield a rough cut of the production by the end of the summer but will likely require occasional work stretching into the fall semester.

This project offers a grand opportunity for collaboration with my student partner. To begin, the type and quality of field production required for this kind of documentary demands a multi-person crew, but certain aspects (such as the on-the-fly farm shoots) constrain the size of such a crew. In addition, the editing process will be far more efficient with two editors at work but risks becoming convoluted with any more. The two collaborators will be deeply interdependent, and each must be fully capable of carrying a heavy portion of the work at any given moment. For these reasons, I am particularly thrilled that Ethan Marxhausen has agreed to collaborate with me on this project. He has been working in TV and video for several years, developing a deep and varied portfolio and demonstrating a very strong capacity to work both independently and in concert.

As the advisor to GAC TV, an organization to which Ethan has made very strong contributions, I have been able to see his work in process and closely examine the results. I have also spoken with those who work closely with him, and each commends his skill and dedication with glowing language. He is comfortable at center stage, producing his own TV segments from beginning to end, as he is working behind the scenes helping less experienced members of the group bring their projects to air. His colleagues speak fondly of his patience and mentoring capabilities. I am certain that Ethan can take up any of the many varied and complex tasks necessary for the completion of this project, and our roles will likely be very fluid, changing from day to day depending on the needs of the situation. I will not hesitate to turn the director's role over to Ethan on some of our field shoots and trust his judgment in making executive editing decisions. Ethan's technical skills, work habits, and general savvy have opened the door to a true collaboration. While I know that he will learn and grow enormously through this project, his abilities and dedication will provide a new range of opportunities for my own growth as well.

#### *B. Clear statement of anticipated outcomes*

Our goal for this project is the full, finished version of a short-form documentary video, approximately 60 minutes in length. We intend to achieve a semi-professional standard of production, in line with other small-scale independent documentaries that have found an enormous following of late. Perhaps beyond the specific scope of this grant but certainly related to its outcome, I hope to work with the SFA to secure an additional grant for the development of an educational curriculum connected to the video. The target for such a curriculum is still being

formed, but the aims will include the development of food citizenship and knowledge of sustainable practices of various kinds, perhaps with the secondary goal of generating interest for a new generation of farmers.

### *C. Likely placement for publication or performances*

The possibilities here range from dead-certain outlets to long-shot but hopeful opportunities.

1. **Pioneer Public Television.** Mary Jo Forbord of the SFA has developed very strong connections with the people at Pioneer Public Television (PPT), the public TV outlet serving western and southwestern Minnesota, as well as parts of Iowa and the Dakotas. She has high confidence that PPT will be very interested in programming such as this, and we will gear our production with their format in mind. We will be shooting in high definition, and the digital TV changeover has created an enormous demand for HD programming at public TV stations. PPT may be only the beginning, of course, as many of Minnesota's public TV stations share programming in order to cut costs. If PPT decides to air our work, the odds are in our favor that it will also appear on other stations in Minnesota and throughout the region.
2. **SFA conferences, festivals, and events.** The SFA will be able use this video in various ways connected to the organization, including screenings at their well-established festivals and conferences, special screenings to serve as outreach to new communities, and on their website as an engaging form of self-promotion.
3. **A multi-campus tour of regional colleges.** I would like to work with Ethan and the SFA to arrange a campus tour of the movie to schools throughout the Midwest. Resources will dictate the scope of such a tour, but even without in-person visits, we will be able to send a copy of the movie to campuses for screening events they can organize on their own.
4. **Entry into film festivals.** Our goal is enter the documentary in a regional and topic-specific national film festivals. Possible candidates include the Farming Film Fest (Chatham, NY), the Food and Farming Film Festival (Berkeley, CA), Media that Matters Film Festival (traveling), and the Rural Route Film Festival (New York, NY).

### *D. Anticipated research completion date*

We expect the bulk of field production to be complete by mid-summer, with the heaviest editing work complete by mid- to late-August. Editing work will continue in smaller doses throughout the fall 2010 term. Our absolute deadline is mid-February, as the SFA will present a full, polished product at their 19th annual Sustainable Farming Conference. I anticipate Ethan's role to diminish somewhat once the semester begins in deference to his school work, but I plan to keep him as involved in the project as possible without compromising his other studies.

## **II. Participant Details**

*A. Names and brief biographies of all participants*

ETHAN MARXHAUSEN

I'm a freshman student here at Gustavus. I'm still an undeclared major but I on majoring have taken plan on double majoring in English and either Communication Studies or Political Science. I was homeschooled up until my junior year of high school, and in my junior and senior years I was a PSEO student at Century College in White Bear Lake. I feel very blessed that I have received the education that I have. I believe it has both nurtured and challenged me, and it has given me all kinds of great opportunities for my knowledge and interests to grow and mature. I am a National Merit Scholar semifinalist and a Gustavus Presidential Scholarship recipient. I have been interested in the art of film and visual communication for as long as I can remember, and I'm looking forward to further exploring and pursuing that interest during my time as a college student. As a PSEO student, I have taken several college level Video and Film classes that have equipped me to work with many different types of video production projects at a semi-professional level. I am certified to use equipment at the Suburban Community Cable access station in White Bear Lake, MN, MN, and I have worked on several independent video productions on my own time. Also, as a Christian, I want to use my education and talents to contribute to something greater than my own good; to glorify God and contribute to the betterment of others whenever possible.

MARTIN LANG

Though only in my first year of a tenure-track hire, I have a rich history with Gustavus. I graduated from Gustavus in 1995 and went on to complete a M.A. and PhD at the University of Minnesota in Rhetorical and Media Studies. I returned to Gustavus in 2005 on a renewing term hire position and began teaching courses in Media Studies and Gender Studies. I was hired on a tenure-track line at the beginning of the 2008–2009 academic year. My research has centered on the influence of media upon identity in its various iterations: gender, sexuality, race, and class, among others. I have made a number of presentations at regional and national conferences and will be submitting my first article for publication to reviewers this spring. I have also engaged in creative scholarship, creating a short documentary to help connect senior citizens in Blaine, Minnesota to the services of the Mary Ann Young senior center in their area. The video is used by the senior center as a promotional tool much longer history with Gustavus. I graduated in 1995 before pursuing my M.A. and PhD. at the University of Minnesota in Rhetorical and Media Studies. I returned to Gustavus in 2005 on a renewing term hire position and began teaching courses in Media Studies and Gender Studies. I was hired on a tenure-track line at the beginning of the 2008–2009 academic year. My research has centered on the influence of media upon identity in its various iterations: gender, sexuality, race, class, etc. I have made a number of presentations at regional and national conferences and will be pushing my first article for publication out to reviewers this Spring. I have also engaged in creative scholarship, creating a short documentary to help connect senior citizens in Blaine, MN to the services of the Mary Ann Young senior center in their area. The video is used by the Senior Center as a promotional tool and has aired on public access television in the northern suburbs of the Twin Cities.

*B. Explanation of how this project fits into the career of the faculty*

The project proposed in this application meshes with my career goals in two distinct ways.

1. PROMOTION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN MY SCHOLARSHIP AND PEDAGOGY

My teaching and research agendas have come to gravitate around the thinking of people like C. Wright Mills, the sociologist who famously argued for a model of "liberating education" that helped individuals "be given confidence in their own capacities to reason, and, by individual study and practice, to enlarge [that capacity's] scope and improve its quality." Mills also felt strongly that academics have an important role to play in the societies of which they are part, for they ought to "help build and strengthen self-cultivating publics"—communities able to recognize the link between the troubles people experience at the individual level and the issues at work at the social level in order to address the underlying problems. to "be given confidence in their own capacities to reason, and, by individual study and practice, to enlarge [that capacity's] scope and improve its quality." Mills also felt strongly that academics have an important role to play in the societies of which they are part, for they ought to "help build and strengthen self-cultivating publics"--communities able able to recognize the link between "troubles" people experience at the individual level and "issues" at work at the social level in order to address the underlying problems. Put another way, Mills promoted a kind of public scholarship whereby educators always bore in mind a responsibility to equip citizens for their task of contributing to a healthy democratic society.

Finding my own path to these goals has been a challenging, invigorating, and constantly evolving enterprise, but it has come to weigh heavily in both my teaching and my research. For example, when I redesigned the Video Representation course upon my arrival four years ago, I built it around the social justice project students create as the final assignment. Student work in groups to discern an issue in the community that might be improved with the kind of awareness the media can bring; in the case of the poverty film produced last year, the project contributed directly to recognizing the relationship between personal troubles and public issues. My other courses always include components of awareness as well, asking students to think critically about the link between important social concerns, the ideas they're meeting in class, and the work they do themselves on course assignments and beyond.

My research reflects the same motivation, offering analyses of media content and other cultural phenomena in order to understand how systemic institutional forces (i.e. media organizations, historical constructions of meaning, or techniques of news gathering) can influence people at an individual level. In my view, this work promotes the critical capacity necessary for citizens to take action on their own behalf and that of their communities. Though more limited in scale, my creative work thus far has followed a similar pattern will continue to do so by focusing on opportunities for members of a community to engage that community and make it a better place.

The SFA video project applies directly and indirectly to these different goals. Most clearly, the project offers a concrete instance of civic engagement by promoting the work of a local organization that has deep commitments to the welfare of our collective community. The SFA's dedication to Minnesota farmers goes without saying, but their mission extends to preserving quality of life for anybody invested in food, energy, or the environment. As the next iteration of my creative work, this video will contribute directly to the mission of the

SFA and more broadly to the goals they hold so dear: sustainability and justice.

Of course, taking part in a civic engagement campaign will pay dividends for my teaching by lending credibility to my claims and helping me to better see the process "in the flesh" as my students might experience it. With community-based assignments come a rash of new obstacles and opportunities that can never be predicted from the stable environment of my office. Experiencing these successes and failures in my own work will invariably help me better guide them to successful results in theirs.

2. REMAINING CURRENT IN TECHNOLOGY AND TECHNIQUES

The video production industry, like all technology-related fields, demands constant attention. There has been a particularly high degree of flux this past year as the TV industry prepares to shift to high definition technology. The impact has trickled down to very aspect of TV and film, and the changes are evident in camera, data storage, and software technology. Even without such high-profile catalysts, however, the terrain is constantly shifting. While I maintain an ongoing research campaign to stay in touch with the developments as they happen, book work cannot replace hands-on exposure. This project, and future video projects, will serve as a critical training device so that I can continue my creative work in this field and offer state-of-the-art training to the students in my classes.

*C. Explanation of how this project fits into the educational trajectory of the student*

One of the main reasons I chose to attend a liberal arts college was because I didn't want a college education that was focused entirely on one specific course of study. I want to take advantage of the full spectrum of courses and ideas that are offered here at Gustavus, and by doing so I hope to discover more about my own talents and interests. I also believe that my education shouldn't begin and stop with my coursework. I'm planning on applying for multiple internships, and I will be studying abroad for a semester next year. In addition to these great opportunities, I'm always on the lookout for any chances I get to expand my horizons and get involved in a project that will allow me to explore any possible interests or career paths I might have. I'm really excited to collaborate with Professor Lang on this project, I'm grateful for the opportunity, and I'm looking forward to the doors it will open for me down the road.

It's my dream to one day become a full-time screenwriter and filmmaker, but until that day comes I won't stop looking for other more (as my parents would say) realistic career goals. I love to write, and I'd love to pursue a career in creative writing, but I'm also interested in all types of creative and artistic expression, especially the art of film. Although I may never land a career as a big Hollywood producer or director, I plan on continuing to pursue my interest in film as an independent filmmaker, a film critic, or just a film lover. One of the reasons I am in love with the art of film is that I believe that it is the single most powerful means of creative expression that we have. A good film can change the way people think. It can communicate ideas more powerfully and more directly than the written word or a still image. As a relatively new art form, it still has a long way to go before it reaches the same kind of status that great literature or a masterpiece of painting has, but I feel that the next 50 years will be incredibly influential and instrumental in developing film into the kind of respectable and beautiful art form that it deserves to be. Because film is such a

powerful art form, I feel that it's a shame to make a film –fiction or non-fiction –that doesn't try to communicate an important idea in the hopes of instilling that idea into the minds of its audience. I don't know much about sustainable farming, but I'm looking forward to learning all about it, why it's important to us and why it's a way of life for the Minnesotans who practice it.



**Presidential Faculty/Student Collaboration Grant**  
**BUDGET INFORMATION**

Lang/Marxhausen Proposal (final version)

**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
<b>Equipment (e.g., transcription machine, camera, cassette recorder—but not to include computer hardware)</b>		<b>\$900.00</b>
1. camera equipment (focus adapter, zoom adapter, protective cover, UV filter)	Cost: \$900.00	
2		
<b>Materials (e.g., books, printing, software, lab supplies)</b>		<b>\$100.00</b>
1. books/copies for research	Cost: \$100	
2	Cost:	
3	Cost:	
<b>Travel Costs (cannot include conference travel, see <a href="http://gustavus.edu/finance/travel.php">http://gustavus.edu/finance/travel.php</a> for allowable travel expenses)</b>		<b>\$755.00</b>
Airfare:		
Mileage: Number of miles 500 @ \$0.55/mile		\$275
Lodging: 12 nights @ \$40/night		\$480.00
Meals:		
<b>Stipends &amp; Housing</b>		<b>\$5,950.00</b>
Faculty Stipend (\$300 per week, up to \$2,400)		2400
Student Summer Stipend (\$400 per week, up to \$3,200)		3200
Student Summer Campus Housing (\$43.75 per week, up to 8 weeks, \$350)		350
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>\$7,705.00</b>
<b>AMOUNT REQUESTED</b>		<b>\$6450</b>

Have you applied for, or received funding from, another source to help support this project?

Funding Source:

**The SFA has agreed to support this project with financial and in-kind (ie. meals, lodging) assistance to offset costs.**

**Amount: \$1000**