

**APPLICATION CHECKLIST**  
**Research, Scholarship, and Creativity Grant**

**Deadline March 15<sup>th</sup> (or following Monday if a weekend)**

Please print and complete this checklist and attach it as the cover page of your grant application.

For more information about RSC grants, please see  
<http://gustavus.edu/facdev/GrantOpportunities/RSCGrant.php>

**Faculty information**

Name:     Martin Lang     Dept:     Communication Studies    

Email:     mlang3@gac.edu     Rank:     Assistant Professor    

**Checklist**

- ☐ **Description of previous projects (and outcomes) funded by RSC grants**
- ☐ **Complete project description, including separate statements of:**
  - 1. **Purpose.** What are the intellectual, conceptual, or artistic issues? How does your work fit into other endeavors being done in this field?
  - 2. **Feasibility.** What qualifications do you bring to this project? What have you done/will you do to prepare for this project? What is the time period, i.e. summer, summer and academic year, academic year only? Is the work's scope commensurate with the time period of the project?
  - 3. **Project Design.** This should include a specific description of the project design and activities, including location, staff, schedules or itineraries, and desired outcomes.
- ☐ **RSC Budget Proposal Form attached as last page of application**
- ☐ **Nine (9) copies of completed application and budget (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)**

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

This funding will serve as a critical supplement to the startup funds provided by the Provost's Office at the time of my tenure-track hire in January this year. The \$3500 in startup funds will allow for the purchase of the major components of my video production equipment (the camera itself and the hard drive video storage unit). Several additional components need to be acquired before the camera kit will be functional for field production. In discussions during my interview, Dean Maguire indicated that the Provost's office would be able to provide a significant portion of that kit cost (the \$3500 mentioned above) but that the balance would need to be procured through other sources and in relation to specific project-oriented goals. At that time she indicated the RSC grant opportunity might be the right avenue to pursue. As I now have designs on a particular project to which to apply these funds, it seems the right moment to apply. It should be noted that these components will have life far beyond this single project, so this single grant will effectively support more than one video-related endeavors over the next several years.

**BUDGET PROPOSAL FORM**  
**Research, Scholarship, and Creativity Grant**

ITEM		AMOUNT
<b>Equipment (not to include computer hardware)</b>		\$
1: field production gear	Cost: \$518	\$1467 (please see itemized budget, attached)
2: sound equipment	Cost: \$949	
3:	Cost:	
<b>Materials</b>		\$
1:	Cost:	
2:	Cost:	
3:	Cost:	
<b>Personnel</b> (check the faculty book white pages for recommended rates)		\$
1:		
2:		
<b>Travel Costs</b>		\$
Airfare:		
Mileage: Number of miles @ \$0.505/mile		
<b>Lodging</b>		\$
Number of days @ \$ /day		
<b>Other Expenses</b> (check the faculty book white pages for excluded items)		\$
1:	Cost:	
2:	Cost:	
3:	Cost:	
<b>Faculty Stipend</b> (\$500 professor; \$600 associate professor; \$700 assistant professor)		\$ 700
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		\$ 2167
<b>AMOUNT REQUESTED</b> (not to exceed \$1500 + stipend commensurate with rank)		\$ 2167

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

Funding Source: New tenure-track hire startup funds (Office of the Provost)

Amount: \$3500

**RSC grant proposal, itemized budget for Martin Lang**

camera battery	Panasonic	CGAD54SE/1B	\$150
external microphone	Audio-Technica	AT875R	\$200
tripod, head	Bogen	3126	\$73
tripod, legs	Bogen	055xdb	\$129
camera case	Pelican	PC 1550Y	\$111
equipment dolly	Clipper	902E	\$55
wireless lavalier microphone, UHF	Azden	200ULT	\$600
microphone boompole	K-Tek	KE-69CC	\$149
Total			\$1,467

To: Members of the Faculty Development Committee  
From: Martin Lang  
Re: RSC Grant Proposal, addendum

March 17, 2008

Dear Members,

Please find attached the elaboration on my RSC grant proposal form. Because I could not track down the model of a successful proposal that also dealt with a primarily creative work, I struggled somewhat to know what format and types evidence would be appropriate. I hope you will give it your full consideration, despite its shortcomings.

### **1. Purpose**

The final outcome of the project for which I seek support is a short form (~60 minute) documentary video examining homelessness in rural settings. Though the video will address the issues in a way that can be generalized to similar geographic regions, this video will focus on communities near to the St. Peter/Mankato area.

The goals of this project (and their related issues) can be divided into two distinct categories. The first I will classify as “content goals.” Content issues relate to the particular messages/themes of the video itself. The overarching content goal of the documentary will be to bring constructive representation and visibility to a group of people in rural communities who struggle with the unique and largely invisible problems linked to rural homelessness. I shall to work closely with rural homeless people, advocacy groups and government organizations to determine the specific combination of themes appropriate for the overall content goal, but possible themes include the following: rural vs. urban homelessness, paths to rural homelessness, challenges of rural homelessness, avenues of support, misconceptions and stigma, impact on family, impact on physical health, impact on mental health, role of advocates, role of government (local, state, federal), role of community.

The video will primarily (though certainly not exclusively) target audiences in rural communities where homelessness has gone largely unacknowledged. In this way, it can be seen as having an advocacy role of sorts in that it is designed to raise awareness of an ongoing social ill in hopes of inspiring informed intervention.

However, this “problem-solution” model risks generalizing the homeless population, particularly the rural homeless, as downtrodden and helpless, in need of “salvation.” Such an approach fails to recognize the fact that some “homeless” people have exercised agency in choosing (to various degrees) a lifestyle many might deem “homeless.” To counter this effect, I have the additional goal of portraying a wide spectrum of “homeless” situations and the conditions that surround them, including the potential that this might be a situation of choice for some.

The second distinct category of goals I will classify as “process goals.” These relate less to the specific representations offered in the documentary and more to the process involved in actually creating it. Foremost, I see the production process as a significant opportunity to refine existing relations and forge new relations among myself, the College, advocacy organizations, government officials, and members of the community (in its various iterations). In my research and my pedagogy, I am deeply committed to C. Wright Mills’ admonishment that academics “help build and...strengthen self-cultivating publics,” communities inhabited by free and rational individuals who possess the knowledge necessary to give them an effective voice in those decisions that might affect them.

While the documentary itself holds the potential to pass on such knowledge, the process of *making* the video (research conducted through the various organizations, interviews with various stakeholders, heightening awareness among the various entities to the ideas and concerns of the others, developing working relationships between myself and all the affected groups) holds even more potential for benefit in the long term. In my experience, the high-profile nature of video production and its concrete, easily-accessible outcome (in the form of an actual movie) has the ability to spark interest and energy in ways that my research conducted via traditional methods has not. In this way, the very production of the documentary may help to form new avenues of communication and collaboration with potentially long-term implications.

As an example, I have had conversations with a Communication Studies major who has been a intern with the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless (MCH), based in the Twin Cities. Through her, I have discovered that that organization would like to forge stronger relations with related organizations in rural parts of the state but has been unable to do so for lack of resources. (Many of these partners, such as the Minnesota Valley Action Council [MVAC], are not directly affiliated with MCH, nor are they strictly focused on homelessness, but they do cooperate on some initiatives.) This documentary, and its production, could provide a conduit for greater cooperation between these organizations. At the very least, I (and, by proxy, the College) will develop the kind of relations with both these organizations that may serve as the foundation for ongoing collaboration well into the future.

## **2. Feasibility**

Documentary production is a fairly new addition to my independent scholarly/creative work, but I have co-produced one other short-form documentary, in 2005. That video offers an optimistic inside look at the active life of senior citizens in community-based “senior centers,” taking the people of the Mary Ann Young Senior Center in Blaine, MN as its cast. The film has been run on Blaine’s public access cable network and used as promotional material by the staff at the Center.

Preparation for the proposed project has already begun, as I have initiated my own research agenda and begun some preliminary work in establishing contacts with key figures, including state and local government officials and members of advocacy organizations.

For full fruition of the homelessness documentary, I estimate four major stages spanning approximately one year each. The first stage—the stage linked to this proposal—will involve basic background research and heavy reliance on interviews with “official sources” to provide me a broad base of knowledge on the topic (see “Project Design” for details). Much of the work for this stage will be completed over the summer of 2008, with significant supplemental work done throughout the academic year of 08-09.

The second stage will involve broadening the scope of these official source interviews as well as beginning to gather interviews with members of the rural homeless community. I expect the interviews at this stage to be of low intensity, likely conducted in the relatively secure and neutral environment of shelters, aid offices and the like.

These first two stages build to the most difficult third stage, which will be characterized by intensive interviews and field shoots with different homeless persons in their everyday environments. This stage is held until late in the process so that I have had time to forge relations with likely participants. This should enable a fuller collaboration with the subjects of the film, providing the strongest opportunity to give voice to their interests and concerns.

The fourth stage, likely the longest, will consist of editing the material into its final form.

I am confident that stage one can be completed in the one year span I have estimated, though work related to expert interviews will certainly carry on throughout the other stages.

### **3. Project Design**

In addition to my own research with traditional (newspapers, journals, etc.) and nontraditional (other documentary films, creative work by homeless people) sources, I will conduct recorded interviews with government officials, leadership in advocacy organizations, and academics. These interviews serve four functions:

1. provide video material for the documentary;
2. develop relationships with key people in the field;
3. enhance my understanding of critical issues;
4. lay groundwork for earning the trust of members of the rural homeless community who might elect to participate in the film.

Interviews will be conducted in agencies actively involved in issues related to homelessness such as MCH, MVAC, Red Cross, Salvation Army and others from the Metro area and communities in and around the Mankato area. I will also conduct interviews with government officials and civic leaders at the local, state and national levels.

Likely outcomes of the first stage of production include several hours of high-quality video footage, a strong base of knowledge regarding the unique issues related to rural homelessness (vital to carrying the project forward), and the establishment of positive working relationships with key officials in southeastern Minnesota and the Twin Cities. Long-term outcomes (linked to this proposal only indirectly) include the production and distribution of a short form documentary, organized screening and discussion of this documentary within affected communities (schools, churches, council meetings, etc.), and the establishment of productive relations among myself, the College and the various parties who collaborate on the production.

Thank you very much for your time. Please let me know if I can answer any question you may have.

Martin Lang  
Communication Studies