

**Assessment Grants for Academic Departments and Programs:  
Department/Program Application**

**Department/Program:** Center for Experiential Learning

**Name and email address of individual submitting this application:** Pat Smith (smithp)

**Project title:** Assessment of Student Learning through CEL Programs

**Project start and end dates:** Jan. – May 2009

**Fiscal year of anticipated expenditures:** 2009 (June 1, 2008 – May 31, 2009)

**Description of proposed project**

- 1. Project purposes: What specific academic decisions, curriculum features, pedagogical practices, or other aspects of the department's academic program do you hope to illuminate with the assessment data you will analyze or collect? Which intended learning outcome(s) in your department or program will this project address?**

The over all purpose of this project is to move the CEL into the next phase of implementation of a CEL-wide assessment program. In spring 2008, the entire staff contributed to refinement of CEL ILO'S. At that time, there were many questions about how we would gather assessment data and how that data would drive decision-making. A CEL assessment team has begun to address these questions and will use the assessment grant to develop a half-day retreat to share what we've learned with the entire CEL staff.

This project will illustrate data gathering techniques relevant to several pedagogical approaches to our work, how tools for data-gathering can promote student learning in CEL activities, and the types of academic decisions that were made because of our assessment efforts.

In particular, the CEL assessment team will highlight how they have integrated assessment into five different types of initiatives: an academic program with CEL embedded in its structure (Media Studies), a CEL course-based collaboration (I Want To Help People), an academic internship summer program (Leaders for Social Change), academic internships in general, and a CEL workshop (Identifying Vocational Interests). We will discuss a variety of data-gathering activities, adaptations that were made to make data gathering a learning tool, what worked well and what could be changed. Additionally, we will share decisions that were made to promote greater student learning through each initiative.

Because the initiatives we chosen for our beginning efforts at assessment addressed different primary purposes, a variety of the CEL ILO's will be highlighted.

- Students will demonstrate self-awareness of their values, interests, skills and abilities (through I Want To Help People, the Identifying Vocational Interests workshop, Leaders for Social Change)
- Students will demonstrate the ability to integrate vocational direction with their academic and experiential learning (through Media Studies)
- Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze the complexity of societal problems and strategies for promoting social change (through Leaders for Social Change).

- Students will demonstrate a capacity to make valuable contributions within organizations that address social or public issues (through Leaders for Social Change).

**2. Data sources: What existing assessment data will you examine, or what new data do you hope to collect, and how?**

The data shared in the retreat will be newly gathered data, collected beginning in summer of 2008.

Data sources:

- Leaders for Social Change, Summer 2008. The assessment strategy involved several components: pre and post rating of self-awareness related to personal goals for the program, knowledge survey question, and final reflection paper evaluated with newly developed rubric.
- I Want To Help People, Winter 2009. Assessment of both first and final drafts Vocational Mission Statements using newly developed rubric.
- Identifying Vocational Interests, Winter 2009. Assessment strategy not yet determined.
- Media Studies, Spring 2009. Assessment of resume, Digital Portfolio, and reflective essay using newly developed rubrics.
- Academic Internships, Spring 2009. Assessment strategy not yet determined.

**3. Principal activities: Who will do what and when?**

At a May retreat, the CEL assessment team – Pat Smith, Kirsten Cahoon, Nate Jacobi, Sandy Malecha – will present the assessment strategies implemented with their particular initiatives, involving the entire CEL staff in a discussion of their methodological approach, what was learned, the strengths and disadvantages of both the approach and the specific data-gathering techniques, and finally what programmatic decisions were/will be made due to the assessment results. We will also spend some dedicated time on development of rubrics as both an assessment and a learning tool.

**4. Budget request: What expenses will you incur in the course of this project? Please indicate below (maximum of \$500): \$486.95**

<i>Item or activity</i>	<i>Anticipated cost</i>
Book: Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campuses, Huba & Freed, 5 copies @ \$41.39 each	\$206.95
Mt. Olivet Retreat Center: pro-rated cost for half of day that will be directed at assessment activities	\$280.00

**5. Institutional significance: Which goal(s) for department/program assessment grants will this project advance, and in what ways? (See “What do we hope to accomplish?” in the invitation to apply for funding.)**

The primary goal for this project is to improve student learning through participation in CEL initiatives. As an academic program of the college, it is imperative that the CEL can demonstrate that we contribute to overall student learning in specific ways. Until now, our evidence has been anecdotal. Commitment to a CEL assessment “program” is necessary to advance our knowledge of how the CEL can use assessment data to ensure student learning. However, the CEL staff needs to develop expertise in order to make assessment an integral part of our program. This project will increase the comfort-level and knowledge base of CEL staff.

***Department/program commitments:*** Our assessment efforts are important and need to be communicated beyond our departments. In addition, our practices must follow procedures that protect human subjects. By submitting this application for a Department Assessment Grant, the department agrees to the following three points:

- We give permission for this application and subsequent reports to be posted on the St. Olaf Assessment website.
- We will observe College policies for the protection of human subjects if we collect assessment data directly from our students (<http://www.stolaf.edu/academics/irb/>).
- We will submit a report on our activities and findings to the Evaluation and Assessment staff of the Office of Institutional Research and Evaluation ([ea-staff@stolaf.edu](mailto:ea-staff@stolaf.edu)) within one month of the end date of our project (or by June 15 for projects ending May 31).

  X   *We agree to the practices described in the three points above (check to indicate agreement)*