Bringing the Faraway to our Front Door: Raising Awareness of the Refugee Crisis Through Immigrant and Refugee Communities in Greensboro

Amount Requested ($8,000 maximum): $4,000

Categories
- Global Opportunities Clusters/Learning Communities

Student Learning Outcome Intended
- **Goal 1:** Develop globally competent knowledge:
  - Explain historical, political, scientific, cultural, or socioeconomic interconnections between the US and the rest of the world.
  - Analyze the dynamics of global transactions as applied to a problem important to their field.
- **Goal 2:** Cultivate intercultural competencies:
  - Analyze a single issue from multiple perspectives.
- **Goal 3:** Foster globally competent citizenship:
  - Demonstrate a sense of global interconnections and interdependencies.
  - Identify obligations to people situated both inside and outside their own national borders.
  - Describe a social problem requiring collective remedies that transcend national borders.
  - Identify some of the ethical and moral questions that underlie a given transaction between countries.

Summary of the Project

Representing two different colleges and three disciplines within Appalachian State, we are interdisciplinary faculty who teach students in Educational Leadership, Educational Media, and Social Work. To better serve the needs of their students, in the summer of 2016, the four faculty proposing this grant participated in a QEP-funded week-long institute to learn to develop study-away programs for Appalachian State students called "Thematic Interdisciplinary, Global Learning Study Away Program Model Development." The faculty gained knowledge of domestic off-campus (or study-away) programs. From this work, the faculty came together to collaborate on developing a domestic off-campus program for their students centered around working with organizations that serve refugee populations relocating in Greensboro, NC. The first phase of this project is to raise awareness of the refugee experience in our local area.

According to Bauman, Soerens and Smeir (2016), the refugee crisis is arguably the greatest geopolitical issue of our time. Wars have decimated communities, displacing thousands of people as refugees cross borders in fear of their lives in the hopes of settling in new countries and spaces to create better lives in foreign lands. Settling in new communities and cultures presents challenges that are difficult to navigate for both refugees and for host communities. The reception the refugees face in these new countries has been met with mixed feelings that run the gamut from warm welcome efforts and integration to downright suspicion, xenophobia, rage, and nativism.

Many have largely understood the plight of refugees from the media as something that happens in foreign lands and never as something that could happen in our own communities. We have read reports of Syrian refugees being settled in Europe notably Germany, France, the UK. Never have we thought that these refugees could be settled in our own backyard, yet many of these refugees have relocated to many places in the United States and Canada.

In North Carolina, many Syrian and other refugees have been resettled in Greensboro, NC, which
is a lucky opportunity for our students and faculty. Learning from these organizations could provide a convenient opportunity for our students at Appalachian State to avoid a study away in Europe or the Middle East to learn from the refugees at a local level. In particular, it would help students to meet the QEP’s student learning objectives, in particular, helping them to “develop globally competent knowledge” and to “foster globally competent citizenship” (http://qep.Appalachian State.edu/grants). In order to set up the initial stages of potential study-away experiences for Appalachian State students, however, it’s vital for the faculty to build and to maintain a learning community as well as connections to the organizations and with the refugees themselves.

This proposal is intended to create a reading group, speaker series, and open forum centering around the current refugee crisis and how it manifesting locally in Greensboro. This reading group and series will also build connections with the organizations helping to relocate refugees in our local area, connections which would be vital for any future study-away experiences that Appalachian State faculty could plan for their students.

**Goal of Project**

In the summer of 2016, the faculty proposing this grant participated in a workshop funded by the QEP that focused on how to create sustainable study-away experiences for university students. During this workshop, we came together to develop a study-away experience for Appalachian State students to work with organizations helping these refugees. In our discussions, however, the proposers of this project came to realize that there is a necessary first step of building knowledge and awareness before taking on the larger task of developing a rich and engaging study away experience for our students.

To that end, the primary goal of this project is to bring awareness of the refugee crisis to the Appalachian State campus. We would do this through a reading group, speaker series, and open forum including reflective explorations of the Appalachian State students and their own privilege in attempting to understand the refugee crisis.

**Relationship to Global Learning - Student Learning Outcomes**

Develop globally competent knowledge: Through the reading groups, the students and faculty will be scaffolded into the major issues in the global refugee crisis. The speakers series will provide students with first-hand accounts from people who work one-on-one with the refugees, which will expand the students’ knowledge base about this crisis.

Cultivate intercultural competencies: The reading group will build a perspective of understanding and compassion for those who are affected by the refugee crisis. The meetings between the faculty and the members of the organizations will foster deeper understandings of the refugee crisis from a local and international perspective as will the speaker series for Appalachian State students and faculty at large.

Foster globally competent citizenship: We are mobilizing individual and collective awareness of what it means to be citizen of the world by analyzing a key issue of humanity that affects the world today. Through focusing on refugees in our own local area, we are hoping students will identify with the people in these issues to help the students to become problem solvers on a more global scale. The speaker series and open forum will help Appalachian State students to develop an awareness of how they are global citizens who can make a difference even in their local area.
Description of Project Actions and Goals

In North Carolina, many of the refugees have been resettled in Greensboro, NC, which is a lucky opportunity for our students and faculty. It's against this backdrop that we established contacts with four organizations that help settle refugees in Greensboro. Their task is to settle 600 refugees by the end of the year. What an opportunity to serve others and what an opportunity for our students to be able to assist and work with refugees.

Our goal is to give the students access and exposure to refugee communities so that they experience different contexts and perspectives about life and hopefully broaden their understandings about the scope and magnitude of the refugee crises in the world. It will also help students formulate new identities as global players and citizens in world affairs. The awareness that the reading group and speaker series would provide a liminal state in which students will emerge with heightened levels of consciousness about global issues in light of the refugee crisis, for example understanding the impact of international treaties, food distribution, geographical borders and identity etc.

To do this work, we are asking for funding for the first part of a two-phase plan for raising awareness for faculty and students and for building connections with the organizations who serve the refugees in Greensboro. The first phase is the creation of reading groups centered around seminal books that would help to build knowledge and awareness about the refugee crisis in general. The two books are Patrick Kingsley’s The New Odyssey: The Story of the Twenty-first Century Refugee Crisis, which is a chronicle of refugee experiences in 17 countries. The second book is Stephen Bauman and others’ Seeking Refuge: On the Shores of Global Refugee Crisis, which is a practical explanation of the refugee crisis from three experts from World Relief that asks questions: Who are the refugees and other displaced peoples?; What are the real risks and benefits of receiving them? and How do we balance compassion and security? These reading groups would be open to interested faculty, staff, students, and the guests from the organizations. These books will be offered as supplementary readings in some grant faculty courses, namely the Communities courses for graduates and undergraduates and in one Curriculum and Instruction course (CI2350 -- Critical Media Literacy as Civic Engagement). The reading groups could be offered as extra credit. Also, we will work with faculty teaching courses in Social Foundations in Leadership and Educational Studies and other courses in Curriculum and Instruction, to integrate part of these texts and/or the speakers into their courses.

The second phase is to establish collaborations with four organizations that serve refugees in Greensboro: World Relief of High Point and Winston-Salem, Church World Services, Elimu Empowerment’s Learning Center, and Newcomers School. All of these organizations work with refugees, mostly families who are being relocated to Greensboro. The four faculty would travel to each of the four organizations, spending a full day at each organization to do participant observations and to establish relationships between faculty and the organizations, giving us a lens through which to view their work with the refugees and to identify potential learning opportunities could be available to our students in future domestic off-campus experiences. We would also loan digital cameras and audio recorders to the organizations that they could document their work with refugees, with their permission, to showcase during the speaker series.

The third phase is for the four faculty to organize a speaker series and open forum in which two members of each organization would be invited to participate in a panel discussion on our Appalachian State campus, which could include any recently resettled people, if possible. Before the speaker series, members of the organizations would visit with faculty courses and reading groups. The members of these organizations would be invited back during a potential Phase II to begin the initial stages of planning for our students to visit the organizations and the refugees they serve.
After the speaker series, there would be an open forum where Appalachian State students and faculty could discuss the issues further and brainstorm ways in which students could work toward problem solving this issue as informed, global citizens. During this open forum, there would be time for students to use the digital cameras and audio recorders to reflect on the issues and to commit to helping on this issue in some way. Also, during the open forum, faculty and students could organize to continue on the work of collecting school supplies, toiletries, and other needed supplies for refugee families to provide at least one concrete way for the students to contribute to efforts to help local refugees.

**Objectives of Project**

By the end of this readings groups and speaker series/open forum, students will be able to describe an increasing awareness of the refugee crisis.

- Students should have developed critical thinking skills and increased intercultural competence.
- Students should be able to apply their sensitivity to differences to other cultures.
- Students should be able to synthesize what they learned from the reading groups to the experiences of refugees discussed in the speaker series.
- Students will be able to create new worldviews.

**Any challenges you can foresee:**

We foresee some challenges in recruitment of faculty and students, but two of the grant faculty will offer the reading groups as part of their courses in Spring 2017, and other Leadership and Educational Studies will participate with their students as well.

**Feasibility of Project**

After attending the QEP-funded “Thematic Interdisciplinary, Global Learning Study Away Program Model Development”, the four faculty in this project were familiarized with off-campus study away experiences. As faculty coming from three different disciplines that offer expert knowledge in social issues and the people involved in those issues, the workshop provided us with the impetus to look at local issues in a new way together. We brainstormed, and as faculty in service-oriented disciplines, we were naturally drawn to the refugee crisis affecting our local communities. We are also aware that at the campus level there is very little awareness of the refugee crisis, and even less awareness, that their refugees in our local area. This created a sense of urgency on our part to come up with a way to raise awareness on campus and make collaborations with existing refugee communities. This is a need that we can no longer ignore.

This project is feasible. First, the faculty are heavily invested in this project. Second, we can make stronger connections with organizations that serve the refugees because the distance to the organizations is not far. Third, this project is a cost-effective way to raise awareness because the faculty and organization members do not have to travel to faraway lands to learn about the refugee crisis. It’s almost in our backyards, so to speak. We see potential impact of the collaborative work between faculty at Appalachian state, the members of the organizations, and students and faculty on campus.

**Aspects of collaboration and/or interdisciplinarity:**

- Ability to Serve as Model

We plan to do interdisciplinary research ourselves, and through the reading groups, speaker series, and open forum, we hope to mobilize other faculty to future research collaborations and
projects. We also hope to encourage faculty and students to create similar awareness building projects about the refugee crisis modeled around their own disciplines.

Institutional and Scholarly Contributions of the Project

In higher education today, interdisciplinary collaboration is encouraged. This grant will give us the opportunity to do collaborations both within the university and outside. We will be working with our partner organizations serving the refugee population in Greensboro with whom we hope to collaborate on research and on future off-campus study away projects with Appalachian State students.

This is a timely topic to be discussing with faculty, students, and members of the larger community. Interdisciplinary research should come out of this project, and Appalachian State can be a big player in representing this global issue from a local perspective. Our students will come out of Appalachian State informed and engaged and ready to serve as citizens of the world.

Aspects of Collaboration

We are four interdisciplinary faculty who are focusing on the refugee crisis in our local area from our disciplines. We are collaborating in various groups on campus including the Multicultural Office, students, faculty, and staff. Our goal is to mobilize consciousness on campus about the refugee crisis. We are going to do so through reading groups, visits with our partner organizations, and the speaker series/forum. Each involves collaboration with not only ourselves but also many stakeholders in the refugee crisis and with the university community.

At this point, we do not have any external support, but we see the potential of this project becoming a model for future collaborative projects and domestic off-campus experiences.

Expected Results of the Project

We see the need to mobilize consciousness and understanding about pressing global issues on campus. Global citizenship requires understanding, tolerance, and acceptance of other cultures. We see this as an imperative for our students and faculty. We see the treatment of refugees on American soil as a social justice issue that requires an understanding of the dynamics of the refugee crisis both abroad and at home. We want students, faculty, and staff to come up with their own understandings and an awareness of their roles in the global context. Through the readings groups and speaker series, we expect to see those understandings to begin and to be enhanced with increased dialogue on campus and beyond.

The tangible deliverables will be:

- Reading groups on campus
- Pre- and post-surveys with reflection exercises
- Speaker series
- Open forum
- Collection of school supplies for the organizations
- Connections between faculty and members of the organizations
- On campus and off-campus collaborations

Assessment Plan

Phase I

1) Formation of an interdisciplinary team involving faculty from Leadership and Educational
Studies, Media Studies, and Social Work.

2) Identification of organizations who serve refugees in Greensboro who are willing to collaborate.

3) Identification of books for the reading groups.

4) Outline the format of the reading group meetings.

5) Recruit students, faculty, and staff for the reading groups.

6) Send out an online survey to determine meeting times and venues.

7) Send out a pre-survey about what students, faculty, and staff know about refugees to gauge baseline awareness and sensitivity to the refugee crisis.

8) Facilitate the reading groups.

9) Participants will complete a reflection exercise to demonstrate critical thinking skills and increased intercultural competence.

10) Participants will complete a post-survey to demonstrate an increasing awareness of the refugee crisis.

11) At the time of the speaker series, reading groups can follow up with questions for the speakers from the organizations to synthesize what students and faculty have learned from the reading groups.

**Phase II**

1) Identify the organizations serving refugees. -Completed

2) Online communication with the organizations to identify key members and to plan logistics of each visit.

3) Visit in four trips, one full-day per organization, including a training in how to use the digital cameras and audio recorders.

4) Follow-up online with organizations.

5) Collect the cameras and digital photos as well as audio data from the organizations before the speaker series and open forum.

**Phase III**

1) Identify speakers from the visits to the organizations.

2) Work with organizations to plan out the speaker series and open forum topics.

3) Identify faculty who would want the speakers to do guest lectures in their classrooms.

4) Contact the reading groups and set up sessions for the speakers to meet with them when they come to campus.

5) The Multicultural Office will be contacted to possibly collaborate in this series.

6) Contact speakers to arrange logistics for the visits and series.

7) Engage Campus Services to plan room and board for the guests in the speaker series.

8) Publicize the speaker series on campus.

9) Faculty will have speakers speak in their courses in at least 4 professors teaching undergraduate courses in Social Foundations, Curriculum and Instruction, and Social Work. These faculty will give credit to their students for attending the speaker series and forum.

10) The speakers will speak at a public speaker series open to Appalachian State faculty, staff, students, and local community to raise awareness and build new worldviews about the refugee crisis in our local area.

11) Following the speaker series, there will be an open forum where faculty and students can discuss how they can play an active, knowledgeable role in to help students see themselves as global citizens who work to solve global issues, such as the refugee crisis.

12) Using the digital cameras and audio recorders Appalachian State students will record their commitment to raising awareness to the refugee crisis on campus and beyond. These responses will be collected, and with permission, posted on the College of Education website and/or College newsletters.
13) As part of the speaker series, we will have boxes to collect school supplies for the refugee children served by the organizations (this will start in October and will be given to the speakers after their talk).

14) To demonstrate further commitment, faculty and students will make plans for an annual collection of school supplies, toiletries, and other needed supplies for the refugee families.

**Time Line**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JULY 2016</th>
<th>Contact Possible Organizations for more information about their services</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUGUST 2016</td>
<td>Choose organizations to focus on</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCTOBER 2016</td>
<td>Planning for the reading groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2016</td>
<td>Planning for the visits to organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER 2016</td>
<td>Recruiting and Advertising for Reading Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>DECEMBER 2016</td>
<td>Pre-survey of Reading Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>DECEMBER 2016</td>
<td>Facilitate Reading Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>DECEMBER - JANUARY 2016</td>
<td>Communicating with organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>JANUARY - MARCH 2017</td>
<td>Visits to organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>JANUARY - MARCH 2017</td>
<td>Identify members from organizations to speak</td>
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<tr>
<td>JANUARY - MARCH 2017</td>
<td>Meet with Campus Services and Multicultural Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARCH - APRIL 2017</td>
<td>Advertise speaker series and open forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARCH OR APRIL 2017</td>
<td>Speaker Series and Open Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>APRIL 2017</td>
<td>Post-survey and reflections of reading groups</td>
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**Budget**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOOKS</th>
<th>The New Odyssey = $319.00</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seeking Refuge = $347.52</td>
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<td>= $1, 464.00</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACULTY STIPENDS FOR ORGANIZATION AND FACILITATION OF READING GROUPS AND SPEAKER SERIES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Digital Cameras</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audio Recorders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visits to the Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>MILEAGE TO AND FROM ORGANIZATIONS FOR FACULTY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Room and Board for Organization Speakers</td>
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<tr>
<td>MILEAGE TO AND FROM ORGANIZATIONS FOR SPEAKERS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conference and Camp Service Fee</td>
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**TOTAL**                                                                                   $8018.48

**Budget Narrative**

Expenditure-Costs-Narrative
• **Books**
  - The New Odyssey
    - 26.60 X 12 copies
    - 26.60 X 4 (for grant faculty)
    - 26.60 X 8 (for organization) = $319.00
    - To purchase copies of books for faculty, staff, and two members of each organization
  - Seeking Refuge
    - 10.86 X 32 copies
    - 10.86 X 4 (for grant faculty)
    - 10.86 X 20 (faculty, staff)
    - 10.86 X 8 (for organization members) = $347.52
    - To purchase copies of books for faculty, staff, and two members of each organization

• Faculty stipends for organization and facilitation of reading groups and speaker series
  - $366 per faculty member ($366 X 4 faculty) = $1,464.00
  - To be paid to each faculty for planning and executing the reading groups and speaker series

• **Digital Cameras**
  - 2 per organization 4 X 139.00 = $1,072.00
  - To be used by the organizations and/or refugee families (refugee adults); images could be used at speaker series; Appalachian State students will use these cameras during the open forum following the speaker series

• **Audio Recorders**
  - 1 per organization
    - 4 X 199.99 = $799.96
  - To be used by the organizations and/or refugee families (refugee adults); audio could be used at speaker series; Appalachian State students will use these audio recorders during the open forum following the speaker series

• **Visits to the organizations (room and board)**
  - 4 visits for 4 grant faculty
    - ($105.20 Subsistence rates per day X 4 visits X 4 faculty) = $1,683.20
  - This is travel for four grant faculty to visit each organization for a full-day

• **Mileage to and from organizations for faculty**
  - From Winston to Greensboro (70 miles roundtrip X 0.54) X 4 trips X 1 faculty
    - = $151.20
  - From Appstate to Greensboro (250 miles roundtrip X 0.34 per mileage X 4 trips X 3 faculty) = $1,020.00 = $1,071.20
  - This is for travel to and from the organizations
  - NOTE: One grant faculty member lives in Winston and will travel to and from Greensboro from Winston. The rest of the grant faculty will travel from the Appalachian State University area.

• **Room and Board for organization speakers**
  - 2 speakers from each organization
    - (105.20 X 8) = $841.60
    - This is travel for two speakers from each organization to travel to Appalachian State campus to give guest lectures, meet with reading groups, and to speak at the speaker series

• **Mileage to and from organizations for speakers**
  - From Greensboro to Appstate
(250 miles roundtrip X 0.34 X 4 speakers) = $340.00
This is mileage for the guest speakers from their organizations to Appstate for the speaker series

- Conference and Camp Service fee
  - 8 X $10 = $80.00-For support for the speaker series for rooms, catering, transportation, etc