2014 Final Report
Planning and Curriculum Innovation for Public Affairs

For the advancement of the Public Affairs Mission across Missouri State University

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II. Proposal Title: Using the power of social influence and impact of entertainment to provide a broader cultural awareness and increase empathy in students of Communication Sciences and Disorders.

III. Summary of Original Proposal: This project proposed to use the social influence and impact of entertainment to provide students access to a broader cultural knowledge base by establishing a small library of theatrically released films relevant to professionals in the field of healthcare, and more especially when possible, communication disorders specifically. Students were to write reflections based on specifics aspects of the films.

IV. Outcomes of the Work: Students’ reflections were very positive in response to the assignment and consistently evidenced the assignment’s contribution to new insights. Comments affirmed increased awareness of value differences among individuals and cultures and of the need to place client goals in the forefront of clinical decision making; the importance of including families and providing counseling and education to family members; that everyone has challenges; that preconceived notions that “Americans share the same cultural identity” were “challenged.” A favorite comment stated, “This film challenges me to believe that a diagnosis does not have to be a definition of your capabilities.” Although the initial goal was for this assignment to expand Cultural Competence, the reflection papers indicated that students’ Ethical Self-Awareness was increased. Some comments suggested that core beliefs were challenged as they considered ethical issues conflicts and dilemmas through the various dramatic conflicts in some of the films.

V. Describe how your project moves the goals of the grant forward/ How Does Your Work Align and Move Forward the Goals of the Grant

   a. create greater clarity for faculty and staff with regard to the public affairs mission by creating a community of practice dedicated to the teaching and learning of the mission.

   Participation in this group effort has afforded me an opportunity to gain feedback and support in honing projects to better enhance understanding of how the public affairs mission can be implemented through a variety of projects and assignments across
different colleges and majors. The toolkit collection is a good idea, but making sure faculty and staff know about it is important and may be a challenge.

b. collect a body of student work that will provide qualitative and quantitative data for research on the effectiveness of current practices in dissemination of the Public Affairs Mission

Selections from student reflections based on the films they chose to see in order to expand their Cultural Competence were easily collected to support the effectiveness of the assignment/project and to acknowledge students’ understanding and integration of the Cultural Competence pillar of the Public Affairs Mission. The grant will make subsequent assignments more accessible for students by enabling an in-house library to be established and hopefully encourage them to take advantage of seeing more films of this nature.

c. utilize faculty and staff knowledge to collect conceptual work, a knowledge base, and ideas for the purpose of augmenting the Public Affairs Toolkit

The assignment and rubric, as well as samples of student work were provided to be included in the Public Affairs Toolkit. The contributions of qualitative data to the greater Quality Initiative Project provide faculty and staff an opportunity to consider and refine the projects for future assignments in other areas. This activity encouraged all faculty and staff to provide input regarding materials for the library.

d. develop a community of practice around questions related to the teaching of public affairs, to continue the work of the Quality Initiative Project, and develop ideas for the university related to the teaching of public affairs.

This participant attended meetings and participated in discussions to support the projects of other members. Interactions were positive and relations across campus were expanded in the effort to increase student learning in regard to the Public Affairs Mission.

VI. Next Steps and Plans for Dissemination: There is an intention to host a department “movie night” with talk back for faculty and students to expand on the cultural awareness issues relevant to the professions in Communication Sciences and Disorders that these films can generate. It is hoped that this activity will contribute not only to the knowledge and understanding of the students, but foster stronger bonds between students and faculty thus contribute positively to student retention. Films will be available for other faculty for their courses as appropriate. A presentation at a Showcase on Teaching of the various assignments might be a good idea.