The purpose of this request for a summer teaching grant is to develop a course that will be proposed as a new GUR for students at Western Washington University (WWU). The course will focus on developing and understanding of how one's volunteer efforts (locally, nationally, and globally) must be motivated from a desire to work in solidarity with the individuals and/or communities and/or nations rather than being motivated from a desire to provide charity. This course will promote WWU's mission to engage students in active learning, enhance the Human Services Program curriculum by serving as a pre-introductory course for the program, and expand the expertise of the applicant by providing an opportunity to develop and implement a new GUR course for freshmen and sophomores at WWU.

**Will this activity expand the applicant's expertise as a teacher?**

Although I have been teaching at WWU for over 20 years, this particular project will, indeed, expand my expertise as a teacher. During my time in the Human Service Program, I have taught upper division classes which consisted of 20-30 students. In addition, these classes tend to be seminar style in that they are filled with rich discussions about the material we are covering. In the development of this new GUR course, I will learn how to engage a larger number of students in the classroom in addition to finding that balance between a didactic style and an interactive style.

Similarly, I have interwoven service learning projects in many of my classes throughout my years on this campus. I have had, however, the luxury of working with students on one project at a time. The new course that I will be proposing will involve multiple projects with a variety of nonprofit organizations throughout Whatcom County. I have already been in conversation with Tim Costello, from WWU's Service Learning Center, to assess how I might utilize this resource.

**Will it enhance the applicant's professional development in other ways?**

This will be the first time I have undertaken the task of developing a course from its inception. I realize that many of my colleagues here at WWU have been actively engaged in course creation for a number of years. As I listen to their stories, I get inspired to join the ranks of course innovators. Furthermore, once the new course is developed I will have the opportunity of assessing the outcome and actively engage in the course improvement process. Although I continually engage in the improvement process with my current classes, this project will provide me with the opportunity to participate in the evolution and refinement of a new course.

**Will this activity enhance specific courses, the program, or departmental curriculum?**

This project will enhance the Human Services Program curriculum in that it will serve as a pre-introductory course. Currently, our Introduction to Human Services (HSP 302) focuses on the conceptual foundation of human services with an emphasis on history, current theoretical models, and ethical considerations for the profession. The focus of the new GUR course will differ from the HSP 302 course in that it will singularly examine the concept of service or helping. Furthermore, HSP 302 is typically taken by students who have already been accepted into the major or students who are wanting to be accepted. Since HSP 302 is not a GUR, it is rarely taken by non-majors.

**Will the activity enhance student learning and better serve students, the department, and the university?**

This project will enhance student learning while simultaneously serving the University as a whole. The reasoning behind this relates to WWU's desire to actively engage students in learning, critical
thinking, and societal problem solving. The course being developed focuses on deconstructing our understanding of what it means to serve or help others. While in this course, students will learn that in order to effectively serve others we must work ‘alongside’ those we seek to help rather than handing out charity. Leonard (2006) states this clearly when he discusses the distinction between charity and solidarity. Charity, he explains, “means coming in and helping somebody with little or no regard for what that person...wants or how they want to get it” (p. 9). It’s more of a top down process. “Solidarity, on the other hand, is about working with somebody to identify what it is that the people that are being helped need and want, along with how they want to get it” (p. 9). Students who take this GUR course, not matter which major they ultimately choose, will use this learning and knowledge throughout their personal and professional lives.

Additionally, this new GUR will serve the department as well as freshmen and sophomores at WWU. Until recently, the Department of Human Services and Rehabilitation has not had a GUR course offered here at WWU. Over the years it has become clear to the faculty who teach in the Human Services Program that students are frequently unaware that WWU offers this major on our campus. By offering a GUR course that closely connects with the content of the Human Services curriculum, we will be providing an opportunity to students to explore a potential major during their freshman and sophomore year. This will serve students in that they will be able to make a more informed decision when deciding on a major, and it will serve our program by increasing the visibility of our major across campus.

**Will students benefit significantly from the proposal results?**

This course will not only demonstrate to students how to deconstruct ideas and concepts that are imbedded in U. S. culture, but will also demonstrate how to rebuild a deconstructed concept. To me, this is critical thinking at its finest. Those of us in academia who understand the importance of critical thinking and incorporate it into our courses often forget to engage students in the rebuilding process of what has been deconstructed. So the answer to this question is yes, the students will significantly benefit from the proposal results.

**Does the activity promote the mission of the department, college or university?**

As stated above, this new course development project is in line with WWU’s vision statement, which states that “Western will build a stronger Washington by being an international leader in active learning, critical thinking, and societal problem solving.” This course will engage students in active learning through service learning projects, develop students’ critical thinking by guiding them through the process of deconstructing the concept of service, and provide an opportunity for students to examine societal problems through the lens of solidarity rather than charity.

In turn, this project supports the mission of the college as well as the department. Among other things, the Woodring College of Education is committed to developing “collaborative partnerships that promote the learning and well-being of individuals, families and the community.” During the past four+ decades, our College, our Department, and our Program has developed strong partnerships with nonprofit organization and schools in surrounding communities. It is anticipated that these partnerships will strengthen as more WWU students engage in meaningful service learning projects that promote a collaborative approach to community service and community engagement.
Selected Bibliography


McKnight,J., & Kretzman, J.P. (1993). Building communities from the inside out: A path toward funding and mobilizing a community’s assets. Chicago: ACTA Publications. Rutgers University Press.