Provost's Learning Innovations Grant for Faculty
Request for Full Proposal
2000-2001

Please send your completed grant proposal (4 pages, plus attachments), one original and eleven copies, to
Linda Banford, 4000 Eastman
by 4:30 p.m.
Monday, March 6, 2000.
No handwritten proposals will be accepted.
Notification of awards will be made by Monday, April 17, 2000.

Project Title: Using the Internet Model for Teaching and Learning

Applicant(s):
Name: ____________
Department: Political Science
Telephone: 52064
College: Liberal Arts

Name: ____________
Department: ____________
Telephone: ____________
College: ____________

Name: ____________
Department: ____________
Telephone: ____________
College: ____________

Name: ____________
Department: ____________
Telephone: ____________
College: ____________
1) **Title and brief summary:** Using the Internet as a Hands-on-Model for Teaching and Learning in Political Parties and Voting.

This proposal is for a pilot project to demonstrate that the “hands-on-model” of teaching and learning, found in studio and performing arts courses, can be applied via the Internet to a course Political Parties and Voting. I propose to use the Web pages of both the major political parties and their candidates for President, and the New York Senatorial election for “learning-work-assignments.” With the upcoming elections, the Fall Quarter 2000 will be an appropriate time to for this pilot project. Use of the Internet will be modeled after the manner of studio and performing arts, as the major methodology of “hands-on” teaching and learning during Fall Quarter 2000.

2) **Targeted learners:** This pilot project is targeted primarily to third and fourth year minors in Political Science who are enrolled in the upper division course Political Parties and Voting. This course is normally offered twice a year, with twenty to thirty students in each section. Additional courses in political science where this method of teaching and learning can be useful, in whole or in part, are State and Local Government, and Legislative Process. Subject matter appropriate to each of these courses is increasingly found on the Internet.

3) **Anticipated impact:** I have long observed the high quality of the hands-on-model of teaching and learning in studio arts and performing arts courses, but not usually available in political science courses. I have long wondered how this level of might be achieved in political science courses. This proposal has it origin in a small Internet assignment regarding campaigns and fundraising in my fall 1999 Political Parties and Voting. Students in that class responded with energy, enthusiasm, imagination and the result was very high quality work. I anticipate that this project will formalize permanently, the
hands-on-method of instruction to increase and to regularize the energy, competency, and enthusiasm with which students participate in the course Political Parties and Voting. I also anticipate that this hands-on-method will increase student learning about this important part of American politics, so that later they may participate as more informed citizens in political practice. I further anticipate that this same or similar use of the Internet as a hands-on-model, will in large part become the model for several core courses in the proposed Public Policy program, as well as in the Department of Criminal Justice.

4) **Measuring and reporting:** I will use the winter quarter to evaluate how students responded in both sections of Political Parties and Voting. One measure I will use is the traditional student evaluations with additional relevant questions to gauge student response to this classroom method. As a second measure of evaluation, I will give copies of the student’s “work-learning-assignments” to colleagues in political science for their evaluation of the assignments and of the level of student accomplishment in meeting these assignments. I will write a report detailing the result of these two evaluation methods and of my own judgment of the success of this pilot project.

5) **Rationale:** Good teaching methodology should be demand driven rather than supply driven. We should not use the Internet simply because it is new technology, but because it is useful and fills a need that its new material and new methods can meet. In my judgment, the present skills and interests of students should give us serious pedagogical reasons to reconsider why we continue to teach political science as we have in the past. It is apparent that our students have considerable skills with the computer and with the Internet and declining skills in the traditional modes of reading and writing. As part of this reconsideration of the methodology of teaching and learning in political science, I propose to develop this “hands on model” to encourage students to place their computer
skills in the service of their liberal arts education in political science. I anticipate that this model will also be useful in Criminal Justice and areas of Public Policy.

a.) In university teaching as in other professions, the old ways die-hard; one member of the political Science department is engaged in distance learning, but to the best of my knowledge no one is using the Internet in the manner I propose. Use of the Internet, in the manner I propose, in the classroom will allow me to utilize my expertise, in a direct manner to assist students to realize their learning potential in this area of political science and of political practice.

b.) Political parties, campaigns, elections and voting are the areas of political science study and actual political practice, where “what works” routinely trumps ideology. The political parties, as well as all candidates for President, now have interactive Web sites, which geometrically become more sophisticated each campaign cycle. Candidates now routinely “encourage voters to check out at their Web page to learn more.” It is also increasingly apparent that the Internet will allow campaigns (national and statewide) to target very specific voting groups both for fund-raising and with campaign messages designed especially for them.

c.) At a minimum a project of this type will prove relevant to faculty in Political Science, Criminal Justice, and Public Policy. I anticipate that as my success in the classroom with this project becomes known, other faculty will wish to use this method where they deem it applicable. I also anticipate that as other faculty adopts this method, in whole or in part, they will also improve on it. What is required is awareness on the one hand, and on the other hand encouragement. Awareness will be supplied by my efforts, by a colloquium on this project, and by the final report, which I will distribute to interested faculty. Encouragement can be supplied by all the various inducements normally used in a university setting.
d.) I have been a College/University Professor of Political Science/Criminal Justice for thirty years, twenty-five years at RIT. I have a Ph.D. and have authored and edited several books and articles.

e.) I will share in a public colloquium, the Internet methods and assignments used. I will also share the evaluation by faculty of those assignments, and my own judgement of the success of the course. I will make the final report available to colleagues in political science, criminal justice, public policy and any other interested colleagues.

6) **Timetable:** I will begin working on this project over the summer to familiarize myself with the various campaign web sites and the means of navigating them. During the Fall Quarter 2000 I will teach two sections of Political Parties and Voting using, on a daily basis in class, the Internet and the *New York Times*. During the Winter Quarter 2000-01 I will analyze and report the results. The project including the final report will be completed by the end of the Winter Quarter or as soon as possible after Student Evaluations are returned.