

## 2023-2024 Improvement Grants

**Project Title:** Center for Arts Entrepreneurship

**Project Lead:** Sarah Off, Assistant Professor of Music and Director of the Center for Arts Entrepreneurship

**Project Team:** Samuel Dong Saul, Assistant Professor of Graphic Design, Studio & Foundations Coordinator; Rand Harmon, Associate Professor of Theatre Studies & Arts Entrepreneurship

This project will focus on three main strategies:

1. Entrepreneurial Events – providing students with opportunities to develop their creative identity and artistic vision and effectively communicate through personal branding and messaging. These experiences help students gain the necessary knowledge to support a successful, sustainable career in the arts through workshops and presentations on topics such as arts marketing, artist and project management, creative programming, arts non-profit work, finance, etc.
2. Curriculum Development – supporting and expanding existing programs at the College of Performing and Visual Arts including the Arts Entrepreneurship Certificate and Music Business degree program.
3. Personalized, One-on-One Guidance for Students – offering mentorship with faculty, staff, and community artist-entrepreneurs; arranging internship experiences with world-class arts organizations and businesses to provide valuable stepping-stones from college to career.

Project goals include the following:

- Engage in research of best practices of other arts entrepreneurship centers to better inform decisions about our offerings and approaches.
- Expand our internship program to provide more career building opportunities for our students.
- Continue to offer access to personalized, one-on-one guidance in arts entrepreneurship for our students. Expand this program to include arts entrepreneurs from the Northern Colorado community through a formalized mentorship program. By providing this mentorship we can personalize education for each student and help to close equity gaps.
- Continue to provide workshop and guest speaker events to help our students explore new paradigms and skills to sustain a competitive edge in a rapidly changing arts industry.
- Increase our presence and visibility as a source of arts entrepreneurship knowledge, mentorship and opportunity through more effective student outreach and marketing. By increasing this visibility and access for students, the Center for Arts Entrepreneurship can increase a sense of belonging and connection for our performing and visual arts students.

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**Project Title:** English 123: College Research Paper

**Project Lead:** Tara Wood, Associate Professor of English and Writing Program Administrator

This project will align with the UNC funding priority of “redesign[ing] one or more high DFW or gateway course(s) to improve student outcomes. In Spring 2024, the English Department’s writing program will conduct a pilot study on delivery modality and course size to evaluate student learning, student engagement, and enrollment trends with ENG 123. The study is part of a larger effort to revise and improve the curriculum, learning, and student persistence in this course.

Three interventions will be implemented as part of the pilot:

1. Course caps of 20 students for five sections (the usual cap is 25);
2. Alternate delivery modalities (three sections will be offered in a fully asynchronous online modality); and
3. Revised curriculum rollout.

To fully gauge the effectiveness of this project, the following study variables will be monitored:

- o DFW rates
- o Enrollment trends (fill pacing and rate)
- o Direct assessment of student learning outcomes via course-embedded assessment
- o Student engagement survey (administered in week 10 across all sections of 123)

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**Project Title:** Faculty Learning Community: 33 Strategies Study  
**Project Lead:** Kelly Langley Cook, Lecturer, Department of History

The 33 Strategies study will equip faculty with evidence-based strategies that cater to the unique needs of first year and first-generation students. The book study can empower instructors to create more inclusive and equitable learning environments. Secondly, the implementation of practices derived from the book can foster improvements in curricular design and inclusive teaching practices, enhancing the overall educational experience for students. Increased faculty engagement with the material will enhance in- and out-of-class faculty/student interactions, promoting a greater sense of belonging and connection to academic majors among students.

This project involves two main components: (tier one) faculty members will read, discuss, and study the book 33 Simple Strategies for Faculty: A Week-by-Week Resource for Teaching First-Year and First-Generation Students by Lisa M. Nunn, and (tier two) they will create a plan to implement several of the book's strategies in their own classrooms. Additionally, they will collect data before and after implementing these strategies and write a brief report summarizing their findings. The project lead will facilitate monthly book discussions, with options for in person or virtual participation, with a final evaluation to be completed by May 2024. By using a comprehensive approach, the project will align with UNC's commitment to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion, students first, and empowering inclusivity in Rowing not Drifting as well as ultimately having the goal of retention for both faculty and students. Based on the project outcomes, a second session may be sponsored in the future.

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**Project Title:** NHS Learning Assistant Program Pilot  
**Project Leads:** Susan Keenan, NHS Associate Dean for Student Success, and Jennifer Avena, Assistant Professor of Biology

Learning Assistants (LAs) work with their Lead Faculty to transform courses by creating environments in class in which students can interact with one another, engage in collaborative problem-solving, and articulate and defend their ideas. LAs support student engagement and learning, promote a sense of community in the classroom, and provide a unique student perspective. In addition, LAs are a valuable part of the instructional team and can provide feedback and insight into course design.

The NHS Pilot will include the three essential elements of the LA model: Practice, weekly prep meetings, and a pedagogy course for LAs. In addition, LA-student interactions will be incorporated during required portions of the course on a regular, weekly basis (about 2 hours per week), providing opportunities for all students to interact with LAs on a regular basis and 60-80% of LA's time will be spent working with students to facilitate group learning, with an LA: student ratio of 1:15-1:40, depending on course context.

The LA pilot will be implemented in six courses offered by five academic units in the college. These courses are generally introductory courses in the major with large enrollments and double-digit DFW rates.

**Faculty Participants and Courses:**

Jennifer Avena (BIO 110)  
Corina Brown (CHEM 281)  
Sharon Bywater-Reyes (GEOL 100)  
Hanna Glick (CSD 487)  
Mariana Lazarova (AST 100)  
Melissa Weinrich (CHEM 112)

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**Project Title:** Natural and Physical Sciences LAC Course Alignment Pilot

**Project Lead:** Chad Bebee, Director of Assessment

The purpose of this pilot project is to improve student outcomes in natural and physical sciences general education courses. The Liberal Arts Council will implement a new direct assessment plan beginning in Academic Year 2023-2024, beginning with Natural and Physical Science courses. This pilot project will assist the Office of Assessment in developing a structured process for LAC faculty to align course syllabi and assessments to the [LAC Student Learning Outcomes](#). Participating faculty will work individually with the Director of Assessment to develop an action plan tailored to the course and its current alignment to the LAC Learning Outcomes. Faculty will also participate in 2-3 group sessions to discuss common issues and strategies, including an orientation to the project.

Participating faculty will be responsible for completing the following activities:

1. Develop an action plan for their course alignment project
2. Develop a common syllabus that could be adopted by the academic unit for use by other instructors in the future (with customization options based on instructor preferences)
3. Develop at least one assignment/assessment that could be used to assess the LAC learning outcomes for the Natural and Physical Sciences
4. Participate in regular meetings with the Assessment Director and larger group
5. Provide an evaluation of the project at the end of the pilot

**Faculty Participants and Courses:**

Marian Hamilton and Britney Kyle – ANT 130/ANT 130L  
Mariana Lazarova – AST 109  
Sharon Bywater-Reyes – ESCI-200

Graham Baird – GEOL 100

Terea Higgins and Byron Straw – SCI 266

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**Project Title:** Promoting Science Communication and Public Scholarship Among UNC Undergraduates Through Qualitative Field Techniques and Podcasts

**Project Leads:** Karen Barton, Professor, and Jess Salo, Chair and Associate Professor, Geography, GIS, and Sustainability

**Project Team:** Meg du Bray, Assistant Professor, Geography, GIS, and Sustainability, Frankie Logan, Marcus Garvey Cultural Center Student Employee, janine weaver-douglas, Director, Marcus Garvey Cultural Center and Interim Executive Director, Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

This project aims to pilot a new strategy for (1) increasing undergraduate participation in faculty-led research while (2) promoting a sense of belonging among Department of Geography, GIS, and Sustainability students and adjacent fields across campus. The project will expand upon the department's robust field studies program and build upon students' qualitative field skills including storytelling and public facing scholarship. Currently, DoGGS has four field classes or workshops slated for 2023-2024 including (1) Bears in the Park Workshop (August 2023, a second in 2024), (2) Field Studies on the Mississippi River (March 2024), (3) Arctic Frontiers Conference in Tromso (January 2024), and (4) Field Studies at the US Borderlands (tentative: May 2024).

This project supports growing the field courses and workshops in a way that provides students with chances to organize, conduct, and broadcast field interviews. We believe that this would give our students important science communication skills as they move forward in their careers, while also developing a sense of community and solidarity while working in these remote environments toward the common goal of a podcast "deliverable." The ultimate objective for some of these classes will be to produce "public-facing scholarship" that can be accessed not only by peers but community members. Barton currently hosts a non-UNC podcast called "Geographies of Hope, Disaster, & Resilience" at the LINC Library Innovation Center in downtown Greeley, and she wishes to expand this program into academic field environments. Students will receive training in Adobe Audition and Rodecaster at LINC in Greeley, and will be encouraged to take Dr. Meg du Bray's Qualitative Methods course in preparation for this field research. We know that community-engaged fieldwork is well received by UNC students, and we believe that storytelling and science communication skills will provide one more opportunity to prepare them for careers in environmental studies or public policy.