

Women of Excellence Giving Circle Grant Application

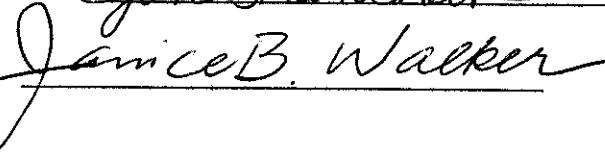
Career Road Trips to the Real World

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Supervisor – Mrs. Jennifer Franchak

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jen Franchak". The signature is written over a horizontal line.

Dean – Dr. Janice Walker

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janice B. Walker". The signature is written over a horizontal line.

Career Road Trips to the Real World

Amount of Request: \$3425.00

Abstract:

All too often students find themselves limited by their preconceived notions about what they “should do” with their degree after graduation. While juggling coursework, co-curricular activities, and job obligations, students are left with little time to explore future career options- particularly options that require additional, creative exploration. The proposed project seeks to fill this gap in exploration by sponsoring students to participate in a “Career Road Trip” to visit local job sites. This program will allow students not only to see their majors being used in numerous ways and in different industries, but will also give students ample opportunities to connect, network, and socialize with alumni (as well as their peers) during a 2-day excursion during the fall break to multiple local sites. The “Road Trip,” combined with additional lead-in and follow-up programs will challenge students to explore the full field of career options available to them.

Budget:

Career Road Trips to the Real World

Preliminary expenses:

Business cards (x 35 students)	\$100
Business card holders	\$350

Day One:

Charter bus	\$1000
Gasoline	\$50
Lunch (35 students x \$10)	\$350
Networking night for 50 people (35 students, 15 mentors/employers)	\$175

Day Two:

Charter bus	\$1000
Gasoline	\$50
Lunch	\$350

Total expenses: \$3425

Program Description

The Xavier University mission is “to serve society by forming students intellectually, morally and spiritually, with rigor and compassion, toward lives of solidarity, service and success.” The proposed project directly speaks to this mission by striving to adequately prepare students to continue seeking their goals through their career. Furthermore, as part of the institution’s commitment to *cura personalis* (“care for the whole person”), we are obliged to support students in reflecting about their strengths and how those passions are translated into the work they choose to pursue. This project specifically seeks to increase student interest and participation in internship and mentoring programs by creating a new, creative “Career Road Trip” component to the career discernment process. This program will give students the tools and resources necessary to be prepared upon graduation by connecting them to alumni and mentors who will share a variety of information regarding internships and mentoring.

Current internship employers and mentors will be solicited to host a group of 35 students for one hour. Each site will be asked to share one or more of the following during that time:

- An overview about the company/organization and mission
- Internship and/or career opportunities for liberal arts students at their place of employment
- A tour of the facility
- Elements of success as well as trends in their industry
- Q&A session with alumnae, current employees and/or interns
- Informal networking opportunity
- Job shadowing opportunities
- Human Resources roundtable discussion with small groups of students

To prepare students for this program, I will provide them with a short description of the company/organization as well as an agenda for each site visit. Students will be asked to dress professionally for each of the visits and tips on how to do so will be shared. In addition, students will be asked to prepare questions for their site visits and will be coached on how to effectively network.

- Road Trip Day 1: Students will convene on campus and have lunch before visiting four to five employers around the greater Cincinnati area. A charter bus is being requested to allow students to build community with one another and share their thoughts and experiences as we travel from site to site. After the last site visit has concluded, we’ll arrive back onto campus for the evening’s networking reception. Various employers as well as mentors recruited through the Women of Excellence, the primary organization that supports and recruits individuals to the Xavier University Mentoring Program, will be on hand to speak with students. This reception will provide students the opportunity to ask in-depth questions with regards to various experiential opportunities and learn more about mentoring opportunities as well. Having representatives from Women of Excellence Mentoring Subcommittee present will show students the degree to which this organization advocates for the success of all students at Xavier.
- Road Trip Day 2: We will travel out of town to Dayton to conduct at least 2 additional employer sites. Afterwards, we will arrive back onto campus. Over lunch we will discuss as a group what was learned from each of the site visits. Sharing reflections formally and informally throughout this program is an important component as it is one way for them to become empowered learners. This information was documented in the 2006 teleconference entitled The Forgotten Student: Understanding and Supporting Sophomores. A portion of this program addressed the fact that students are flustered when they are asked to think about what they want to do with their degree. Students that have a solid foundation to support them during their sophomore year tend to excel due to this support and the confidence gained from their relationships. Therefore, this exploration and reflective exercise is important for students as they will understand they have relationships with peers who have a similar academic background, as well as a vast network of supporters from alumni, mentors, and Career Services staff met during this program. It is hoped that as a result of this program, students will:

Proposal for WOX Grant

1. Take ownership in their future by participating in internships and/or mentoring at Xavier.
2. Be equipped to make informed decisions (about majors, careers, personal relationships, etc.) which overall aids students in being reflective and critical thinkers.

By encouraging students to form personal connections with alumni and mentors in their career fields of interest and giving them the opportunity to experience these careers in a hands-on environment, students will be more invested in both their academic areas of study and where these studies may lead.

Target Audience

Sophomore liberal arts students (defined here as any non-business major)

Reviewing student utilization rates from the past academic year, the number of sophomores that came into the Career Services Center for internship appointments during the 2008-2009 school year was at 32%, while the number of sophomore students participating in the Xavier University Mentoring program was 37%. In order for students to be successful and have a competitive edge amongst their peers here at Xavier as well as at other institutions, it is of utmost importance that students pursue internships and mentoring opportunities. Unlike many business students who are able to see their majors translate to the working world, many liberal arts students are unaware of the ways in which their major can be used for internship and career opportunities. This program seeks to engage liberal arts students to open their realm of possibilities in a unique way.

Objectives and Evaluation

The program will be evaluated through quantitative and qualitative means. Students interested in this program will be asked to complete an application indicating what insights they hope to gain through their participation. Additionally, an evaluation will be distributed in a pre/post-test format prior to and after the "Career Road Trip" to ascertain knowledge gained. Appropriate survey questions will be developed to address these learning outcomes. In addition, qualitative feedback will be collected through a brief essay prompt for participants and will likely be more reflective in nature. The desired impact from students' participation is threefold: improved career/major decision making skills; connections to the Career Services Center early on during their collegiate career; and the opportunity to learn about internship and mentoring opportunities which ultimately leads to more engaged students who are likely to be retained at Xavier.

A collaborative grant was written last year by Kim Powers Hoyt in Athletic Advising, Dr. Jennifer Wies- Director of the Women's Center and me. We were awarded the NCAA CHAMPS/Life Skills grant to begin a pilot for this program in March 2010 with a limited scope of just 14 sophomore female students. With the Women of Excellence Giving Circle grant, I hope to open this program to more students who wish to participate. Results from this program will be shared through various means: Xavier's portal system, passive informational campaigns surrounding Internship Week 2010, as well as a report to Dean Walker and Dean Meyers. I hope to present my findings to the Midwest Cooperative Education Internship Association, which is being hosted in Cincinnati this October. I am more than willing to share my findings at a Women of Excellence meeting as well.

References

The Forgotten Student: Understanding and Supporting Sophomores. Marcia Baxter Magolda, Rajesh N. Bellani, Edward K. Chan. 2006. DVD. National Resource Center Publications, 2006.

Wies, J., Powers Hoyt, K., and Kilgore, B. "*Cultivating Career Exploration for Undergraduate Women.*" NCAA CHAMPS/Life Skills Grant. 2009.