Applicant: Barbara M. Hopkins

Position: Faculty Assistant to Dean Janice B. Walker, College of Arts and Sciences

Title: MENTORING WOMEN IN THE SCIENCES

PROPOSAL FOR WOX GRANT
MENTORING WOMEN IN THE SCIENCES

Amount requested: $3350

Abstract: For the past fifteen years, Xavier has been fortunate to receive grants from the Clare Boothe Luce Foundation to support women majoring in Chemistry, Computer Science, and Physics. This proposal will bring graduates who were Clare Boothe Luce Scholars back to campus to interact with current Clare Boothe Luce Scholars and other women in the majors supported by the Clare Boothe Luce Program. These graduates through a seminar presentation and informal interactions will share their professional experiences with current Xavier students. A second aspect of the grant will establish a means for online mentoring of current Xavier students by former Clare Boothe Luce scholars. Success of the program will be evaluated through a survey of students as well as through anticipated new relationships formed between Clare Boothe Luce Scholars from the past and current Xavier students.

Signature

Janice B. Walker

Janice B. Walker, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Budget

Chemistry Former CBL Scholar (TBD)
  Speaker Travel $500
  Speaker Lodging $200
  Gift for Speaker $50

Computer Science Former CBL Scholar (TBD)
  Speaker Travel $500
  Speaker Lodging $200
  Gift for Speaker $50

Physics Former CBL Scholar (TBD)
  Speaker Travel $500
  Speaker Lodging $200
  Gift for Speaker $50

Dinner for Past and Present CBL Scholars $350

Three Student Coordinators
  Salary $750

Total Requested $3350

Budget Justification

As described in the narrative an important aspect of this proposal is the informal interaction that will occur between the former and current Clare Boothe Luce scholars. The dinner for the three former Clare Boothe Luce Scholars and the current six scholars as well as three women faculty from the represented departments will provide this opportunity.

Three student coordinators (one a current computer science major, one a current physics major, and one a current chemistry major all CBL scholars) will assist with the planning of the seminar and will be responsible for making travel arrangements for the speakers and advertising the event. They will also be responsible for setting up online contacts between former CBL scholars (those attending the program as well as those not attending) and current women majors from Chemistry, Computer Science, and Physics for mentoring relationships. They will maintain the website for these contacts.
For the past fifteen years, the University and specifically the College of Arts and Sciences have been fortunate to receive grant money from the Clare Boothe Luce Foundation for support of female majors in Chemistry, Computer Science, and Physics. One of the goals of the Clare Boothe Luce Foundation is to provide such funding as an encouragement for women in fields in which they are under-represented to pursue graduate studies in these disciplines. It is the hope of the Foundation that, as they pursue their chosen careers, these Clare Boothe Luce scholars, as they are designated, will serve as role models and mentors for younger women considering study in chemistry, computer science, and physics. There is a need for such role models since nationally, only nineteen percent of the doctorates awarded annually in computer science are to women and similarly twenty percent of physics doctorates are to women. Although chemistry fairs somewhat better than the other two disciplines, recent data shows that only 35.7% of all doctorates in chemistry are awarded to women.

Grants from the Clare Booth Luce Foundation have provided a variety of support to Xavier students. All of the grants that Xavier has received have paid completely for the tuition of the Clare Boothe Luce scholars during their junior and senior years and have provided travel expenses to at least one professional meeting in the area of interest of the scholars. In addition, some years the grants have paid for books, provided stipends for summer research, and have provided a housing stipend both during the academic year and in the summer. The Clare Boothe Luce Foundation has specified each time that Xavier has applied for a grant how the money must be used. Noticeably absent from the items for which money can be used is any type of follow-up after the scholars have graduated as a means for them to provide mentorship for current Clare Boothe Luce Scholars or other female students. Xavier recipients of the grants have pursued a variety of careers after graduating from Xavier. Most have attended graduate school and are either still in graduate school, in postdoctoral positions, or have careers as college professors, research chemists, and statisticians. As such this group of twelve women could provide a valuable resource as mentors for current Xavier students. Our proposal will enable us to use this resource by connecting the alumnae who were Clare Boothe Luce Scholars with the present group of six scholars and with other female chemistry, computer science, and physics students.

Our program will bring three of the graduated Clare Boothe Luce scholars (one from chemistry, one from computer science, and one from physics) back to campus to present a seminar together to our current (male and female) majors. During the talk they will discuss their experiences during graduate school and the path followed to their current career if applicable. After the talk there will be time for informal interactions with all the students with refreshments provided by the three departments. Later the same day, the speakers and our current Clare Boothe Luce Scholars will have dinner for further discussion among this group. In addition in order to connect our current students with the other graduates who were Clare Boothe Luce Scholars, we will set up a means for communication between all the former scholars and our current students for mentoring. It will be the responsibility of three of our undergraduate scholars to contact the previous scholars to establish this link and to set up an appropriate means of communication. This
could be done through a webpage on the College of Arts and Sciences home page or through a secure Facebook or Linkedin account.

This project enhances the mission and purpose of the Women of Excellence (WOX) Giving Circle and furthers the mission of Xavier University in a number of ways. Consistent with Xavier's mission of preparing students intellectually, spiritually, and morally, mentoring of female students should help them find fulfilling careers through which they can live the Xavier mission. The students and alumnae who participate are also more likely to become members of the Women of Excellence Giving Circle, since they will have directly benefitted from the project.

The WOX Giving Circle will be recognized in all aspects of the project. Along with making arrangements for the seminar and website link, publicizing the work of the Giving Circle will be one of the primary jobs of the student coordinators. The WOX Giving Circle will be actively featured as the supporter of the seminar presentation and a link to its webpage will be a permanent part of the mentoring website.

The project is expected to have broad impact. All majors, approximately one hundred students, of the departments, both male and female, will benefit from the seminar. Additionally, female majors will benefit from the opportunity to interact more directly with the speakers about their career experiences. Faculty will benefit by becoming reacquainted with the alumnae, enabling greater communication and collaboration between the two groups. Finally, the University and the WOX Giving Circle should each benefit as more awareness of this program will likely result in greater participation and support from the alumnae who were Clare Boothe Luce scholars as they progress through their professional careers.

The success of the project will be evaluated in a number of ways, both quantitative and qualitative. All female students attending the seminar will be surveyed to determine the significance of the material presented to them. Sometimes hearing the story of one successful women scientist is enough to inspire a questioning younger student to pursue a similar career. Even more important, however, will be the long-term and less measurable aspects of the project. Among these, it is hoped that this project will result in current students, especially the Clare Boothe Luce scholars, being provided with experiences that will enable them to make educated decisions concerning their futures, so that they will find suitable careers which are compatible with their life goals. Additionally, it is expected that this program will increase the interactions between the departments and their alumnae, opening doors for future collaborations with these former students. Finally, the efforts to publicize the funding source of the project will expose a significantly large group of future alumnae to the work of the Women of Excellence Giving Circle which may result in their future support of the Giving Circle.