Faculty Mini-Grant Program

The SU Faculty Mini-Grant Program provides awards up to $2,500 to encourage faculty to develop research, scholarly or creative programs that provide the potential for sustained professional development and extramural support. It is intended to support faculty in areas that traditionally have difficulty securing funding to increase their research and scholarly activities output. The following is an overview of this year’s awardees.

How Does My Tan Look?: Understanding the Influence of Peer and Expert Source in Comparative Tanning Risk Perception Among College Students

Vinita Agarwal, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Communication Arts

Recognizing that findings suggest awareness of the risks associated with tanning lamps does not lessen use among college students, Agarwal is exploring the influence of messaging on these behaviors.

Agarwal proposes to demonstrate the influence of comparative risk and message source type (peer or authority) on tanning behaviors. There is a gap in understanding of how a comparative risk message source (peer or authority) influences tanning behavior decisions among young adult women. Understanding the contribution of message source in the context of comparative risk perception is important because the greater contribution of comparative risk presentation as compared to absolute risk information presentation has been demonstrated for areas such as breast cancer risk assessment.

This research investigates the influence of source on tanning lamp use messages as well as the contribution of comparative risk in tanning message design. Because of the greater influence of peer sources in this age group, it is hypothesized that a message coming from a peer source—particularly one that targets beliefs of attractiveness and healthy appearance as an outcome of tanning—might be more persuasive than the same message coming from an authoritative source.

Changing Literacy Skills: What Readers Need Today

Laurie Andes, Ed.D.
Professor, Teacher Education

Andes considers, given the present rate of change in the types of literacy materials and media available to readers today, what literacy skills are needed by current readers? What are the most effective teaching strategies that should be employed by literacy professionals today?

An examination of 19th and 20th century literacy materials reveals that the approaches to teaching literacy skills have remained fairly consistent over the last 200 years in the United States. Many of the teaching strategies, adapted from those used in the United Kingdom in the 18th century, can be found in classrooms today.

In contrast, 21st century literacy activities include reading e-books, evaluating and using Web sources, and writing for and with multicultural team members. Andes explores what literacy skills are needed by literate individuals to enable these modern activities. Data collected by teacher candidates in the University’s May Literacy Center on children’s digital literacy skills serve as a baseline for this and further investigations.

Mixing Messages and Methods: Examining News Content From News Publications on Facebook and Twitter

Jennifer Cox, M.A.
Assistant Professor, Communication Arts

Cox examines Twitter and Facebook postings from a random sample of five U.S. daily newspapers focused on local coverage during a two-week period to determine what types of stories get posted on the social media sites, what news topics and values those stories possess, and at what time the stories are published to find out whether certain types of stories get published at certain times more than others.

Cox anticipates Facebook will feature more lifestyle, user-friendly and oddity stories that attract attention; whereas, news organizations will use Twitter more for breaking crime, political and other forms of hard news. She also anticipates lengthier issues-based stories will come out in the morning when workers are just beginning their day; whereas, event-based stories will appear in the afternoon when the events occur and when workers are thinking about their weekend and evening plans.

If news content differs across social media platforms and throughout the day, readers are left without valuable pieces of information. Twitter and Facebook allow people to share information within communities faster, which could lead to emphasis of some issues over others and even misinformation.

Who’s On First: A Case Study of Internal Communication in a Growing Non-Profit Organization

Lori DeWitt, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Communication Arts

As a human communications scholar, DeWitt has an interest in the communication systems of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs). She proposes a comprehensive case study assessment of the internal communication structures of the Salisbury-based Hope and Life Outreach (HALO), a local NPO that serves the area homeless population.

HALO has grown rapidly and now provides over 70,000 meals a year to the area’s homeless. It also operates a day center for education and training services, a shelter for homeless women and children, and a thrift store. HALO employs a staff of four and relies on over 700 volunteers. This rapid growth has made a huge impact on the homeless community, but the number of volunteers has become difficult to manage and successful communication structures are needed to further growth.

DeWitt is observing City Union Mission in Kansas City, MO, an established organization that has achieved many of the goals to which HALO aspires. She is conducting a thorough communication audit of HALO and developing a clear assessment of their internal communication processes and identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses.
Opting Out on the Bill: Voluntary Adequacy Funding in Maryland

Maida Finch, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Education Specialties

Finch is researching the following questions: What have been the implications of Maryland’s 2002 voluntary push for adequate and equitable funding in K-12 education? How do outcomes differ for districts that provided an equitable education as opposed to those who did not? and How has state equity been impacted as a result of the decisions in some districts to not increase funding to the “adequate” level?

To answer these questions, she is collecting data on the “net local appropriation” and the “maintenance of effort” for each of Maryland’s 24 districts from 1992-2012. Finch also is including district-level information on student achievement, demographic statistics, enrollment and student-teacher ratios. These data are supplemented with qualitative material on Maryland’s state assessments. She is constructing a database that consolidates this information and permits statistical analyses to answer her research questions.

By investigating a voluntary school reform policy, it allows Finch to make an initial exploration of the generalizability of research on court-mandated reforms. Do the principles of adequacy and equity provoke similar results in Maryland? Does a voluntary policy produce different results in terms of equalizing school finance?

A Multi-Cultural Comparison of an End-of-Life Decision-Making Educational Intervention

Katherine Hinderer, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Nursing

Hinderer is exploring the effects of an advanced care planning (ACP) educational intervention on knowledge, attitudes and advanced directive (AD) completion rates in community-dwelling adults from different cultural backgrounds.

Specifically, she aims to explore the effect of ACP education on knowledge, attitudes and AD completion rates in community-dwelling adults in the community that Salisbury University serves and to study the effects of ACP education on knowledge, attitudes and AD completion rates in Chinese-American community-dwelling adults.

Hinderer’s study is intended to build on pilot work conducted in 2011 and 2013. Feasibility studies have been conducted in both community-dwelling adults in the community SU serves and in a group of Chinese-Americans. This proposal moves the project forward in several ways. It supports an additional educational offering and study that would directly benefit residents of the local community by providing funding necessary to offer another seminar. She proposes to use pilot findings to improve upon the format of the original project and explore a population who has not been widely studied in regard to ACP: Chinese-Americans.

Genes, Behavior and Evolution: In Two Species of Frogs

Kim Hunter, Ph.D.
Professor, Biological Sciences

Hunter is examining how two signal components interact to influence mate choice in two species, the spring peeper (Pseudacris crucifer) and túngara frog (Physalaemus pustulosus). Comparing the two promises to provide a deeper understanding of how signal combinations are perceived by individual receivers and how this generates selection for signal diversity.

Specifically, Hunter’s goal is to understand how the call and vocal sac interact as a complex signal to influence female mate choice. For humans, watching a speaker’s lips in noisy environments improves speech comprehension. She hypothesizes that a similar process may be occurring in frogs.

She is examining how individual signal components (audio + visual) are weighted in each species. Hunter is determining how females of each species respond to isolated acoustic signals, visual signals and variations of these in composite. In addition, she is collecting genetic samples from both males and females of mated pairs for microsatellite analysis. Individual microsatellite data is compared to male signal value (measures of vocal properties) and with female mate choice in experiments in the behavioral experiments.

Vascular Dysfunction in Animal Models of Muscular Dystrophy

Victor Miriel, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Biological Sciences

In view of the paucity of data regarding the role of the dystroglycan complex in vascular physiology and pathophysiology, Miriel is determining the extent and location of vascular dysfunction in animal models of muscular dystrophy by studying isolated vascular segments in vitro.

Muscular dystrophy is a family of diseases caused by mutations in genes encoding proteins that form the dystroglycan complex and lead to skeletal and cardiac muscle dysfunction. While mutations in the dystrophin gene lead to the most common forms of muscular dystrophy, mutations in genes encoding other proteins of the dystroglycan complex can lead to other forms of muscular dystrophy. The skeletal muscle and cardiac muscle pathologies associated with these mutations are well documented, but more recently it has become appreciated that components of the dystrophin-glycoprotein complex are expressed in vascular smooth muscle and the vascular endothelium found in blood vessels.

Several groups have postulated that alterations in the dystroglycan complex may explain the abnormal vascular responses reported. Some studies have suggested that vascular dysfunction contributes to the cardiac and skeletal muscle dysfunction seen in muscular dystrophy; however, few of these studies actually tested vascular function.
INTERNAL GRANT FUNDING

Data Collection and Archival Research at the University of the West Indies - St. Augustine for a Book Chapter and Proposal

Darrell Newton, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Communication Arts

Newton has been asked to contribute to an anthology for Oxford University Press on BBC radio and its influence upon musical genre and audience reactions. He is writing about Caribbean transnational radio broadcasting by the BBC, focusing upon musical styling. The anthology’s co-editors propose to bring together 12 different points of view about music and radio, using the BBC as a point of departure.

Newton is researching at the University of the West Indies - St. Augustine, which recently was awarded the sound and written archives from the BBC’s Caribbean Service. This new information includes a series of contemporary transnational radio broadcasts, notably the Calling the Caribbean programs (1939-2011) that featured musical interludes, letters read by West Indian troops to families in the islands and social commentary.

Newton is examining programming and printed documentation that relates to programming decisions, schedules for radio shows and broadcast scripts. This material will help to inform their ultimate impact upon well over five million West Indian listeners.

Newton is also using portions of his research for his Calling the Caribbean: BBC West Indian Radio book proposal.

Body Encounters and Affective Ties Between the Naval Officer Eduardo Massera and Marta Lynch During the Argentinean Military Dictatorship

Corinne Pubill, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Modern Languages and Intercultural Studies

At the 2013 Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association Conference, Pubill explores the representations of affective ties in Marta Lynch’s novel Informe bajo Llave (Locked Down Report) as they are shaped by the context of political violence and repression.

Pubill concentrates on Lynch’s last novel Informe bajo Llave, written in 1983 — two years before her suicide. This novel emphasizes the psychological, as well as the physical violence, perpetrated by Admiral Massera during the Argentinean military dictatorship. Informe bajo Llave stands out, thanks to a discourse based on the abuse of power through violence and sexuality, to form part of the direct testimony of Argentina’s collective memory that positions Lynch’s work at the center of current critical debate.

Pubill demonstrates that the character of Adela personifies the destiny of a whole nation where the construction of the country, by way of being a masculine project, rules out female intervention and does not allow another way out except in death, uniting themselves to the fate of an entire generation of intellectuals and people with progressive ideas for Argentina in the ’70s and early ’80s.

Building Inclusive Communities Through Peaceful Play: Strategies for Resolution to Conflict in Sport

Dean M. Ravizza, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Health and Sport Sciences

Ravizza explores the inherent opportunities in sport to empower key stakeholders in the Gulu and Kitgum districts of Northern Uganda to strategically respond to conflict within school and community-based youth sport programs. In doing so, his project tests strategies for resolution to conflict in sport and analyzes the timing and effectiveness of these strategies to promote more inclusive playing environments with the goal of transferring such strategies to conflicts of low intensity outside the sport setting.

More than five years since the ceasefire brokered between the government and the Lord’s Resistance Army, the focus of peace-building activity in the former conflict region of Northern Uganda has been on recovery. Despite concentrated efforts to rebuild communities, renew livelihood activities and tackle the root causes of conflict, low-intensity disputes still remain potent at the community level, creating a need to build local capacity to resolve conflict.

Ravizza’s project works with education and sports officials and NGOs to include training sport teachers, community coaches and youth in the implementation of conflict resolution strategies through a series of field-based workshops.

Warring with a Long-Distance Enemy: The Politics of Tamil Diaspora and the Sri Lankan State

Ignacyys Soosaipillai, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Conflict Analysis and Dispute Resolution

Soosaipillai studies the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora projects in the United Kingdom and the way the Sri Lankan state responds to these projects. The Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora has become very active in the West following the military defeat of the Liberation Tigers of the Tamil Eelam, the predominant militant group that spearheaded the violent struggle against the Sri Lankan state.

Soosaipillai’s research sheds light on the reasons and the way diaspora communities mobilize members of the community and carry out a political campaign against the government of the homeland, and the strategies government of the homeland use against a hostile diaspora. Tension between the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora and the Sri Lankan government has created serious law and order issues in the West. A better understanding of the issues may help deal with the conflict more effectively.

Soosaipillai is collecting primary data in the U.K. mainly through key informant interviews and through observation methods. He is paying particular attention to the operation of the Global Tamil Forum, which is one of the major Tamil organizations operating in the West.
The SU Foundation: 40 Years of Academic Support

By Jason E. Curtin ’98, Assistant Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations

This year, the Salisbury University Foundation, Inc. is celebrating its 40th anniversary. The mission of the Foundation, created in 1973, is “to accumulate funds, by gift and investment, and to foster, encourage and enrich the activities, educational programs, athletics and scholarships of Salisbury University.” Furthermore, it is the intent of the SU Foundation to promote, sponsor and carry out educational, scientific and charitable purposes and objectives for the benefit of SU and its students. Through the generosity of major benefactors, corporations and foundations, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, and friends, the SU Foundation is fulfilling its promise to the SU community.

Research and Scholarship Funds

When thinking about graduate studies and research and the SU Foundation’s contributions to these activities, it all starts with people: specifically our students, faculty and staff. Over the past 40 years, many donors have put their resources back into our students and research opportunities. One shining example is the Guerrieri Research Fund, which was established in 2000. It provides financial support for new science equipment purchases, scientific instrumentation, laboratory materials and, specifically, program support for undergraduate research, research grants, materials and fellowships.

Another example is the Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture. Through the generosity of one donor’s estate, the Robert Parker Fondes Research Fellowship was established. Its purpose is to support a fellowship(s) for research to be done at the Nabb Research Center for a scholar(s) studying Chesapeake history or some facet of Chesapeake culture. The scholar(s) should be pursuing or have obtained an advanced degree.

Graduate Fellows Program

Graduate education has become an important component of SU’s distinction, with the number of graduate students and programs steadily growing. In fall 2012, SU began offering its first doctoral degree, a Doctor of Nursing Practice. There is much demand for high-quality graduate students to help strengthen our research, scholarly and teaching activities. In order to attract high-achieving graduate students, funding opportunities need to be created that are competitive with our peers. To that end, SU and the SU Foundation have created the Salisbury University Graduate Fellows Program. This fellowship program is designed to attract high-quality applicants who intend to enroll full time in an SU graduate program and is open all United States citizens. It is granted based on a formal nomination and evaluation process supervised by the dean of graduate studies. Each award is $5,000 per year for up to two years.

SALISBURY UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION, INC.

Holloway Society Honors SU’s Legacy of Giving

The Holloway Society is a new SU Foundation giving society established to celebrate Salisbury University’s heritage and honor Founding President William J. Holloway by recognizing those who have made planned-gift provisions for the University. As we look to the future, there are a number of opportunities that can allow individuals to support research efforts and graduate education at SU. Members of the Holloway Society help build the Foundation’s endowment through tax-deductible gift arrangements. Planned giving opportunities include:

- **Bequest**
  A bequest is the simplest and most traditional way of giving through your will, either as a specific sum, a specific percentage of your estate, or the rest and remainder of your estate after debts, taxes, expenses and specific bequests to your heirs.

- **Charitable Gift Annuity**
  A charitable gift annuity is a simple contrast between you and the SU Foundation that offers a tax-advantaged way to provide for income during retirement. In the future, your gift will provide support for Salisbury’s mission. You can begin to receive income right away or at a predetermined future date. You also can decide when the income payments begin within a future time frame, determined when you make your gift. In any case, your income is taxed at a favorable blended rate.

- **Charitable Remainder Trust**
  A charitable remainder trust is created when you irrevocably transfer cash, securities or other property to a trustee, who may be yourself, the school, a bank or another individual. This trust provides you with income during your lifetime. Upon termination of the trust, the principal reverts to you or to members of your family, as you choose.

- **Charitable Lead Trust**
  A charitable lead trust provides for the payment of income to SU and/or charitable beneficiaries selected by you for a period of years. Upon the expiration of the trust, the remainder reverts to you or a beneficiary of the trust.

- **Other Planned-Giving Options**
  You might also consider naming the Salisbury University Foundation, Inc., a beneficiary of the remainder of a pension fund or an IRA; transferring ownership of a life insurance policy to the SU Foundation; or donating art, a home or other property to the school.

The SU Foundation staff hope you will include Salisbury University when you are considering your lifelong financial planning priorities and with it, a way to support your interest in graduate studies and research. If you would like to talk further about these opportunities, please contact me at 410-543-6176 or je curtin@salisbury.edu.

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