

## MINI GRANT PROJECT SUMMARY

Please complete the project summary and return the completed form to April Snyder, Associate Administrator for the Institute on the Environment at [aprilsnyder@umn.edu](mailto:aprilsnyder@umn.edu). Paper copies will not be accepted. Please also attach any photos, publications, brochures, event agendas or other materials that were a result of the mini grant summary.

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| <b>Date of Report Submission:</b>   | April 13, 2015   |
| <b>Project PI &amp; Dept/School</b> | Dennis R. Falk, Department of Social Work (Duluth); College of Education and Human Services Professions                    |
| <b>Project Title:</b>               | Enhancing Interdisciplinary Resources for Teaching and Learning about Sustainability at the University of Minnesota Duluth |
| <b>Grant Amount \$:</b>             | \$2,750  |

### Project Context & Purpose

*Please include the original project purpose statement and revise for any changes that occurred in the project after the start date with a short explanation of the changes.*

The current project builds on past activities to meet the need for additional coursework on sustainability at UMD. Selected interdisciplinary sub-groups from the Course Design for Sustainability group will engage in the following activities:

1. Develop a generic course syllabus for a cross-disciplinary course on sustainability;
2. Create an online repository of syllabi for courses on sustainability, both at UMD and from across the country (and perhaps beyond);
3. Create an online repository of teaching and learning activities focused on sustainability, including community-based service learning opportunities;
4. Create an online repository of Internet-based, media, print, and community and campus expert resources for learning about sustainability;
5. Identify and purchase print and media resources that could support UMD's efforts to teach and learn about sustainability more effectively;
6. Consult with the Institute on the Environment (IonE) and other colleagues from across the University of Minnesota system to accomplish the activities listed above.

The purpose of this project is to enhancing interdisciplinary resources for teaching and learning about sustainability at the University of Minnesota Duluth.

## Work Completed

*Please provide a summary of the work that was completed for the mini grant project.*

### The work completed

1. A new generic course syllabus for a cross-disciplinary course on sustainability was developed (see attachment);
2. An online repository of syllabi for courses on sustainability was created (can be found at <https://umsustain.wp.d.umn.edu/education-and-research/sustainability-education-toolkit/course-syllabi/>).
3. An online repository of teaching and learning activities focused on sustainability was created (can be found at <https://umsustain.wp.d.umn.edu/education-and-research/sustainability-education-toolkit/teaching-and-learning-activities/>).
4. An online repository of Internet-based, media, print, and community and campus expert resources for learning about sustainability was created (can be found at: <https://umsustain.wp.d.umn.edu/education-and-research/sustainability-education-toolkit/learning-resources/>). Additional resources more appropriate for faculty/staff development can be found at: <https://umsustain.wp.d.umn.edu/education-and-research/sustainability-education-toolkit/facultystaff-development/>.
5. Print and media resources that could support UMD's efforts to teach and learn about sustainability more effectively were identified and obtained (see attached sheet).
6. Many colleagues from across the University of Minnesota system were consulted to accomplish the activities listed above. See Partnerships & Collaboration section below for specific information about colleagues consulted.

## Partnerships & Collaborations

*Please provide a summary of the project personnel, partnerships and collaborations that worked directly on the project or were started as a direct result of the mini grant project.*

Brian Bluhm, UMD Graduate student, served as a graduate assistant on this project. Brian had previously worked in the UMD Office of Sustainability and has studied environmental education as part of his graduate program. Because of this knowledge of sustainability, he was able to very efficiently identify and assemble relevant resources.

Bryan French, Sustainability Programs Coordinator in the UMD Office of Sustainability, assisted with the design of the sustainability education toolkit website. He also created the website with no out-of-pocket expense, which meant that website development costs did not exist.

Mindy Granley, Director of the UMD Office of Sustainability, was consulted on many aspects of this project. Her expertise was very helpful in identifying resources and website design for the sustainability education toolkit.

Martha Eberhardt, UMD Reference Librarian, assisted in ordering books on sustainability through library funds, which meant that grant funding did not need to be used for obtaining materials on sustainability.

Individual interviews with numerous UMD faculty and staff members were completed. I interviewed twelve faculty and staff for this project, including the following individuals:

- Geoffrey Bell, Management Studies, Labovitz School of Business and Economics
- Mindy Granley, Coordinator, Office of Sustainability, UMD Facilities Management
- David Syring, Sociology/Anthropology, College of Liberal Arts
- Michelle Hargrave, UMD Office of Civic Engagement
- Ken Gilbertson, Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, College of Education and Human Service Professions
- Steven Sternberg, Chemical Engineering, Swenson College of Science and Engineering
- LeAne Rutherford, UMD Instructional Development Service

Each individual was asked the questions on the enclosed interview schedule.

Members of the Course Design for Sustainability group were involved in all aspects of the project. This group included over 20 UMD faculty and staff who met about six times during this project. This group was asked to share teaching and learning ideas and resources related to sustainability, which were then integrated into the sustainability education toolkit. The group spent about an hour at one meeting identifying key elements of a general course on sustainability, including course objectives, topics, teaching and learning activities, and sources of information.

People across the University system were also consulted. I was able to talk with members of the Academy of Distinguished Teachers and its retreat in September, 2014. In particular, it was very helpful to talk with Dan Svedarski of the Crookston campus. While participating as an Internationalization Fellow with the Global Program and Strategy Alliance, I was exposed to global topics and teaching and learning strategies that were also relevant to sustainability.

## Project Outcomes & Impacts

*Please provide a summary of the outcomes and /or impacts of the mini grant project including future plans for the project.*

### Outcomes and impacts of the project

1. As part of this project, I developed a generic syllabus for introductory sustainability course. This syllabus integrated ideas from many faculty and staff members from across campus. The course has not been proposed for approval by relevant campus groups because I am working with a group that may develop a first year experience course that is built around sustainability topics.
2. A major outcome of this project was the development of the “Sustainability Education Toolkit” This toolkit is intended for use by faculty and staff for teaching and learning about sustainability. It collected relevant syllabi, teaching and learning activities, and learning and faculty development resources into an integrated whole. The toolkit can be found at <http://z.umn.edu/sustainabilitytoolkit>
3. A number of books on sustainability were obtained through and are now housed in the UMD Library. A list of these books is attached to this report.

### Future plans for the project

1. I am currently starting to work with faculty members from all five departments in the UMD College of Education and Human Service Profession to develop a first year experience course. This course will include significant content on sustainability as well as include student success content required of all new UMD students.
2. If the first year experience course is not sufficiently focused on sustainability, I will work with others to develop a Liberal Education course that focuses directly on sustainability and meets the Liberal Education requirement for a course on a sustainability topic
3. While exploring resources related to sustainability, I discovered the process of digital storytelling that is used extensively by two faculty members in Sociology and Anthropology. I would like to work with these faculty members and their students to develop digital stories about UMD and community sustainability activities.
4. I would like to work with others to expand and update the “Sustainability Education Toolkit.” This activity will involved identifying additional teaching and learning activities, along with resources for students, faculty, and staff.