

To: ICES
From: Dr. Denise E. Williams
Assistant Professor
College of Management, Metropolitan State University
Re: Submission to Community Engaged Scholarship Grant
Date: November 14, 2016

I respectfully submit this application for consideration of the Community Engaged Scholarship for \$2,000 as this community engagement proposal is consistent with: the missions of Metropolitan State University and ICES; the nature & purpose of the grant RFP; targeted impactful contribution in both programs and sustainability outcomes for community partner and stakeholder, WomenVenture; providing value added empowerment from Metropolitan State University through research and entrepreneurship education input for capacity building of a diverse target audience; and in the 3 page maximum RFP requirement. The additional pages are informational Appendices. Statements of support from WomenVenture Program Director, Gertrude Matemba-Mutasa and College of Management Dean, Dr. Kat Lui are attached.

The title of the community-engaged scholarship project:

Women Entrepreneurship: Empowering Training, Measurement, Launch, & Sustainability

The lead faculty member's name, contact information, and department and college affiliation.

Dr. Denise E. Williams, Assistant Professor: College of Management, Metropolitan State University
Email: denise.williams@metrostate.edu Phone: 612-659-7259

Executive Summary & Project Description

Since fall 2015, Metropolitan State University, COM has been investigating and engaging with the Twin Cities entrepreneurship ecosystem as we represent a strategic opportunity and asset in the areas of: curriculum, programs, community engagement resources, and research. Additionally, we have developed the "Women Innovators and Entrepreneurial Leaders Development (WIELD) Initiative" in particular support of the underserved: women, veterans, and minorities with entrepreneurship capacity building programs and intentional collaborations.

The attached proposal delivers a unique value added research instrument to the current training programs of WomenVenture (community women entrepreneurship training agency with 30 year track record) which are scheduled for January through June 2017. We will provide a pre and post research evaluation measuring 14 skills and traits of entrepreneurial thinking called the "Entrepreneurial Mindset Profile (EMP)". This is a nationally vetted instrument designed by Eckard College and supported by the United States Association of Small Business Enterprise which serves to enhance the entrepreneurial education process through benchmarking the capacity of learning participants and reinforcing what areas to include in the training process. Further, we will utilize these measurements to provide feedback on the effectiveness of training executed. Dr. Denise E. Williams, is currently the only certified facilitator in the state of Minnesota and can provide this asset and relevant interpretations to community stakeholders which impact the quality of training as well as the impact on participants. The EMP instrument would be added to the WomenVenture's "Guided Business Plan" which is a 17 week training series and potentially to their other main product training session "Get Ready" which is a 1-3 day program. We are targeting a total of 40 women during the pilot program period for both pre and post survey measures. This pilot will measure the impact of the training and growth at the end of the intervention as well as serve as potential evidence in support of future funding and sustainability.

Community Stakeholder/Partner: WomenVenture

For more than three decades, WomenVenture has provided women of all ages, cultures, races and income levels with the tools and resources to achieve economic success through small business ownership. Their mission is to help women attain economic self-sufficiency through the creation and growth of profitable and sustainable businesses. A predominant focus of their client base match Metropolitan State University student profile of the underserved and women of color. WomenVenture provides on-going training to women interested in entrepreneurship as a career path. They have developed many of their programs through federal grants; however, the opportunity for measurement of their effectiveness as well as more guidance on individual characteristics and entrepreneurial proclivities of their participants would strengthen their program and viability as an organization. GUIDED Business Plan™ is an in-depth course designed with serious entrepreneurs in mind. It is a multi-session series that covers all of the critical components of creating and fine-tuning a business plan that will take you from launch to expansion and beyond. You will get started by creating your executive summary, and then learn about legal compliance, marketing, financials, human resources, operations and sales. Bonus free resources include lab nights with support from classmates and experts, and two 1:1 consulting sessions to ensure your progress.

Project goal is consistent with RFP requirements:

1. ***Advance Metropolitan State University's mission:*** In addition to meeting the call for partnership with community stakeholders which is essential to the mission, this project additionally delivers “innovative student-centered programs that enable students from diverse backgrounds achieve their educational goals”.
2. ***Contribute to social justice, equity, inclusion:*** Self-employment is a major career choice and social justice opportunity for women, and diverse stakeholders. In fact, the national SBA statistics report that women and minorities are the strongest level of business start-ups nationally; however, their sustainability and revenue generation are narrow. This project will assist with providing more information about “the entrepreneurial mindset” and what interventions can build it.
3. ***Build sustainable relationships:*** This project is designed as a pilot. With an effective result for this pilot, we will be able to continue to access the opportunities for engagement of this EMP instrument and relevant support into other program areas for WomenVenture or to continue to seek funding for more testing in this same program.
4. ***Support Improvements to quality of life within local communities:*** By understanding where training participants start in their process in both the traits and skills necessary for effective entrepreneurship, the quality of the learning experience is heightened. It can contribute to the building of self-efficacy which is one of the major components of the entrepreneurial mindset competency.

A description of how project activities address key RFP requirements:

Guideline 1-Community early involvement: I have met with the Executive Director and Program Manager to design this program in its conceptual stages to ensure that the project is in alignment with their goals and objectives. We both see the value to their brand and program design by adding the research and empirical component to this training process. I will pursue a collaborative co-authored article concerning the implications and collaborative efforts. As women entrepreneurship is one of my significant research streams, we are in alignment from a mutual interest standpoint.

Guideline 2-Real Influence: This project and training is 100% in WomenVenture control. The research instrument results will enhance their training effort, participant information, & help to deliver more measureable outcomes.

Guideline 3- Community benefit: **I anticipate opportunities for on-going research and potential joint submissions to relevant community and entrepreneurship oriented conferences and publications. The addition of quantitative data to entrepreneurial training instructional design process will be a benefit.**

Guideline 4-Participation: **Once again, this is a WomenVenture program and Metropolitan State University is the supporting partner. Dr. Williams will provide the reports from the EMP documents as well as work with their leadership to translate the relevance and application.**

Guideline 5-Productive partnerships:**This project is designed as a pilot with tremendous upside for future additional support, funding and engagement with other mutual partners such as SCORE.**

Guideline 6-Empowered community members: **We will be in a position to discuss how to integrate future training implications and engage research as well as analysis after this pilot.**

A timeline for design, implementation and reporting of findings

It is important to note that the training of women entrepreneurs is initiated in January 2017. The EMP instrument processing includes the release of licenses, payment for licenses, survey taking, and facilitator input are time sensitive but in keeping with the RFP guidelines. I may be able to negotiate for the ability for participants to take the survey prior to payment being received. However, payment will be required before actual reports for analysis will be provided to Dr. Williams. Therefore, the transfer and availability of awarded funds (if applicable) will require understanding of the process prior to the end of the semester to ensure smooth operations.

ACTION ITEM	TIME TABLE
Submit project proposal to IRB ;confirm research instrument design	Week of 11/14
Confirm IRB approval	Week of 12/5
Secure approval to proceed; submit license requests	Week of 12/12
Invoice received; submit to financial management (COM office manager); confirm January training cohort; announce research link to participants	Week of 12/19
New year/research reminder email to participants	Week of 12/26
EMP Profile open for participants (survey #1)	Week of 1/2/2017-1/9/2017
Certified facilitator review of reports	Week of 1/9/2017
WomenVenture training initiated	Saturday 1/14/2017
Training completed; participants take Survey #2	Saturday 6/3/2017
Evaluation process/results	Week of 6/5/2017

A budget itemizing all reimbursable expenses, with a statement identifying the stage of the work for which you are requesting support.

Entrepreneurial Mindset Profile Instrument Investment: \$2,000

- **40 participants in pilot (consists of two simultaneous cohorts of 20 participants/training course)**
- **\$25 license fee per participant; assumes two accesses for pre and post/participant or \$50/participant**
- **Note: we estimate a \$500 stipend for a student support; however, we will seek an alternative source of funding given the cap on the Community Engagement grant**

Evidence of substantial community involvement in the design, funding, implementation or direct benefits of the project.

WomenVenture has an outstanding track record for training and support of this target audience as evidenced by their over 30 years in business and the number of their clients who launch businesses and complete their training programs. There is currently not available to our community the ability to measure “Entrepreneurial Mindset” nor the empirical assessment and impact of entrepreneurship training. This tool and addition to their current program will build a stronger ability for them to serve their clients and the community. They have quality leadership as well as mentorship provided through their programs historically.

APPENDIX A

A1: Metropolitan State University Mission

Metropolitan State University is a comprehensive urban university committed to meeting the higher education needs of the Twin Cities and greater metropolitan population.

The university will provide accessible, high-quality liberal arts, professional, and graduate education to the citizens and communities of the metropolitan area, with continued emphasis on underserved groups, including adults and communities of color.

Within the context of lifelong learning, the university will build on its national reputation for innovative student-centered programs that enable students from diverse backgrounds achieve their educational goals.

The university is committed to academic excellence and community partnerships through curriculum, teaching, scholarship and services designed to support an urban mission.

A2: Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship

Metropolitan State University's Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship (ICES) provides a central home for the university's scholarship of engagement, which has earned regional and national recognition. ICES recognizes the relationship between academic excellence and community engagement and focuses on ways that teaching, research and service are enriched by community and university collaboration.

The Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship fosters social transformation and civic responsibility by facilitating opportunities to connect student-centered learning with the challenges and opportunities of urban communities, deepening the campus culture of community engagement, addressing mutually-defined interests and building on the capacities of local communities.

Engaged Campus

Metropolitan State University has long prided itself on being a community-based institution of higher education. In recent years, the university has developed a regional and national reputation for its community partnerships' programs organized through departments or through the Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship, that connect faculty, staff, students, and alumni to community-based organizations and agencies.

The mission and vision statements for the university clearly indicate the value and importance Metropolitan State places on civic engagement through service and community-based learning. The mission statement includes: The University is committed to academic excellence and community partnerships through curriculum, teaching, scholarship, and services designed to support an urban mission. And the vision for the university states: The faculty, staff, and students of Metropolitan State will reflect the area's rich diversity and will demonstrate an unwavering commitment to civic engagement.

GUIDED BUSINESS PLAN™ SERIES*

* Prerequisite : You must successfully complete WomenVenture's Getting Ready course to be eligible to apply for GUIDED Business Plan™ enrollment.

GUIDED Business Plan™ is an in-depth course designed with serious entrepreneurs in mind. It is a multi-session series that covers all of the critical components of creating and fine-tuning a business plan that will take you from launch to expansion and beyond. You will get started by creating your executive summary, and then learn about legal compliance, marketing, financials, human resources, operations and sales. Bonus free resources include lab nights with support from classmates and experts, and two 1:1 consulting sessions to ensure your progress.

Throughout the series, you will form a cohort with other entrepreneurs in your class. After 4 months of intense work together, you will celebrate the success of your completed business plans!

MODULE 1

-
- **Orientation Session** - At this mandatory session, you will receive class requirements, logistics and the tools you will need to create your business plan. (Please note: this orientation may be shorter than regular sessions)
 - **Session 1: Executive Summary** - When you are presenting your business concept to a potential funder or investor, a pitch-perfect executive summary is required. In this session, you will craft a summary that will get your business plan read and your foot in the door.
 - **Session 2: Company Background** - During this session you will develop the basic facts about your company, explore your industry and the position of your business within that industry. You will learn about legal compliance considerations.
 - **Session 3: Industry and Competition** - This session will guide you to identify your competitors and your competitive advantage. You will also learn to use the SWOT model to profile your business and devise strategies for success.
 - **Lab: Legal Entity/Issues**
 - **Session 4: Marketing (part 1)** - Knowing your audience is critical. You will identify the target market for your business—who they are, what they do, where they spend their time and money. You will determine how you are going to reach them and the problem your business solves that others may not.
 - **Session 5: Marketing (part 2)** - Once you've identified who you want to reach, you will determine how to image and position your business, and what tools are best for doing so.
 - **Session 6: Online Marketing** - To be competitive in today's business world, you will need an in-depth understanding of online marketing tools. In this session, you will learn more about social media and email marketing, and the current online tools for planning, reporting and analysis.
 - **Lab: Marketing**

MODULE 2

*Note: In Module 2, the class divides into two groups based on business type (service-based business or retail/product business); you will participate in the sessions that are tailored to your business.

- **Session 7: Pricing, Sales and Costs** - You will examine your pricing structure, start-up costs and monthly expenses, and determine if your business is viable.
- **Session 8: Financial Statements** - You must build a solid financial foundation for your business in order to be profitable and sustainable. In this session, you will create financial statements and projections, and determine your profit margin.
- **Lab: Pricing and Startup Costs**
- **Session 9: Numbers and Profitability** - In this session, you will dig deeper into your company's profitability, explore funding sources and learn accounting basics.
- **Guided Checkpoint: 1:1 consulting with business expert**
- **Session 10: Accounting Basics** - In this session, you will be introduced to accounting terms and practices, and how you will use them to grow your business.
- **Session 11: Recordkeeping** - In development.
- **Lab: Finance**

MODULE 3

- **Session 12: Management and Personnel** - Enlisting the support of a solid team is critical for running a successful business. In this session, you will learn about the importance of job descriptions and the ins and outs of performance management.
- **Sessions 13: Operations** - Leading a successful small business requires effective systems to help you navigate day-to-day operations. In this session, you'll create a workflow and develop strategies to help your business run smoothly.
- **Session 14: Real Estate and Business Communications** - You will learn why the location of your business is so important and how to navigate the challenges of commercial real estate. This session also covers dos and don'ts for effective business communication.
- **Lab: Operations and Human Resources**
- **Session 15: Sales** - Developing sales strategies for your business will help ensure that you are meeting your revenue goals. In this session, you will hone your sales pitch and learn about sales lead generation.
- **Session 16: Wrap Up and Practice** - In this session, you will have the opportunity to dedicate protected time to the completion of your business plan and to rehearse your business pitch.
- **Session 17: Presentations** - You will give a presentation of your business plan to your supportive cohort members and presentation partners, followed by a celebratory graduation ceremony and of course--cake!
- **Ready to Launch: 1:1 feedback on business plan and next steps**

* *Prerequisite* : You must successfully complete WomenVenture's Getting Ready course to be eligible to apply for GUIDED Business Plan™ enrollment.

APPENDIX C: Entrepreneurial Mindset Profile

Personality Scales Definitions

Independence: the desire to work with a high degree of independence

Preference for Limited Structure: a preference for tasks and situations with little formal structure

Nonconformity: a preference for acting in unique ways; an interest in being perceived as unique

Risk Acceptance: a willingness to pursue an idea or a desired goal even when the probability of succeeding is low

Action Orientation: a tendency to show initiative, make decisions quickly, and feel impatient for results

Passion: a tendency to experience one's work as exciting and enjoyable rather than tedious and draining

Need to Achieve: the desire to achieve at a high level

Skill Scales

Future Focus: the ability to think beyond the immediate situation and plan for the future

Idea Generation: the ability to generate multiple and novel ideas, and to find multiple approaches for achieving goals

Execution: the ability to turn ideas into actionable plans; the ability to implement ideas well

Self-Confidence: a general belief in one's ability to leverage skills and talents to achieve important goals

Optimism: the ability to maintain a generally positive attitude about various aspects of one's life and the world

Persistence: the ability to bounce back quickly from disappointment, and to remain persistent in the face of setbacks

Interpersonal Sensitivity: a high level of sensitivity to and concern for the well-being of those with whom one works