Global Classrooms:
Developing Internet Platforms for Interdisciplinary and Combined Class-Research Networks

A Collaborative Endeavor of the University of South Florida and the University of Exeter

A Proposal Submitted for the GLOBAL ACADEMIC PARTNERS (GAP) Program for Innovations in Collaborative Research, Teaching and Creative Activities

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December 21, 2009

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Summary

A collaborative team from the University of South Florida and the University of Exeter will develop an Internet platform that will fuse a "global classroom" concept with an international student research network. Thus the platform will involve multiple, interdisciplinary faculty teaching on a given theme, and globally distributed students would aid in the research of that same theme. In addition to distance learning capabilities, the Internet platform would serve as a portal for the continual uploading of new research. The portal will include, inter alia, collaboration tools, networking and information technology for conferencing, modeling, analysis and visualization of data. The USF-Exeter team will then test this platform across a class on global climate change and its human impacts; and a second class on international security issues. Funding under this proposal will facilitate the collaboration—from concept and design of the platform, to the structuring and content of the course syllabi. This will include travel of Dr. Jonathan Githens-Mazer and Mr. Robert Lambert from University of Exeter's Department of Politics and the Exeter Centre for Ethno-Political Studies to Florida for one week's engagement, and for Professor Jacobson, Department of Sociology at USF, for two weeks at the University of Exeter. During the respective visits, the team will advance additional faculty linkages at the respective universities, and they will liaison the international student programs of the respective universities.

Description and Expected Outcomes of the Project

The dramatic changes in teaching technologies have been used in a variety of ways, notably through the online delivery of classes. But the development of these technologies can be exploited in ways that implicate not just the delivery, but also how we conceive the form of interaction between faculty and students, between faculty themselves, and the distinction between teaching and research. By developing a internet platform with different text, video, modeling and visualization utilities, we can develop a dynamic environment where the interaction between faculty and students is dialogic; where faculty across disciplines communicate in transdisciplinary ways; where the students as well as faculty becomes part of a broader research network; where the exchange is globalized; and where classes through the platform can be cumulative, where the accumulated knowledge generated from one class rebounds to the next class—a rolling teaching/research project, as it were, in time and space.

This proposal builds on a past federally funded project—in excess of $300,000--directed by this PI on global climate change. The project required that the PI develop an Internet platform for Internet exchange, including chat, video, visualization technologies, newsletters, a integrated library of data, readings and newsfeeds, and the use of other Internet utilities for facilitating interdisciplinaty interaction. The project generated a network of scholars from ten universities—Stanford, Berkeley, University of Washington, UCSB, NYU, University of Florida, UCSD, ASU, Princeton, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison—from disparate fields, including climate science, sociology, political science, economics, agricultural sciences, medicine, urban planning,
public health, geography, among others. This successful project, which generated and examined scenarios on the impact of global climate change on humanity and on the resilience of institutions, drew on innovative techniques for fusing diverse knowledge on common problems. The project furthermore generated a model for integrating cross-disciplinary knowledge in order to assess different scenarios on climate change and human impacts. The study informed a major federal government assessment, presented to Congress, in this regard.

The PI proposes to draw on this experience and expand it further, together with the co-PIs from Exeter, to develop the “global classroom” concept. The concept here is to build on such a platform—initially to take up to five faculty from multiple disciplines, from USF and from the University of Exeter—to teach a class of students (either at the advanced undergraduate and/or at the graduate level) who are distributed globally. They will come from the two universities (and could include students from additional universities) and are located not just in Florida and in Exeter but in countries abroad. In this regard they will mostly be associated in study abroad programs of the universities or in related programs (USF has an arrangement with the Peace Corps, for example, through Civil Engineering and Public Health, with plans to expand to other schools and departments). The class can be for registration purposes be treated like online classes, with students credit hours going to their own departments. Foreign students could be added, depending on the registration mechanisms of the respective universities (USF and Exeter).

The teaching will be conducted through various formats: through synchronous live conferencing; through prepared videos or audio presentations received asynchronously; through paper (or other media) exercises; through ongoing chat groups and blogs; and through the use of Internet utilities for combining interdisciplinary knowledge. (An example is online spreadsheets designing for collating, combining and analyzing interdisciplinary work on common problems; I can forward an example from the previous project, then a unique and still highly innovative approach). The actual format will be a function of the faculty decisions—but must include a component that involves multiple faculty and students to work synchronously for the most effective interdisciplinary exchange and development. Furthermore, the students themselves, as well as the faculty, will conduct research.

Under this proposal, the faculty of the two universities will conduct two “global classrooms,” in order to test and develop this framework—one on global climate change’s human impacts, and the second on international security issues. In these classes, the students will undertake research in their respective locales, in different global locations, on geographic-specific dimensions of global climate change. To take the first case, of global climate change: it may regard climate science as it pertains locally, or public health implications; it may be a study of how resilient local and national institutions are in order to respond to climate effects; or it could be a study of local politics and preparedness for global climate change, including legal dimensions. There is of course a range of issues that would be pertinent, depending on the design of the faculty. Coordinated and directed, the research could prove tremendously valuable, for the class, for future classes, and for broader knowledge on the topic. The research
becomes longitudinal, as well global, as it becomes conducted from class-to-class, year-to-year.

As such it also becomes a propitious platform both in terms of pedagogy and substantively for research projects—a relatively cheap framework for conducting research. For the students, it becomes an excellent basis for senior and honors theses and, at the graduate level, for theses and dissertations. It is also can prove to be an invaluable way of generating grant proposals.

Thus the global classroom platform provides a number of distinct, innovative advantages. In sum:

- It facilitates a global network of exchange, involving both scholars and students
- It creates a community of scholars and student that through their interdisciplinarity generate thinking that more closely corresponds to global complexity of the targeted issues. In other words, the artificial stovepiping is broken and a diversity of expertise, methodologies and concepts can be brought to bear, and collaborative work is foregrounded.
- It is an "always on" network to consult regarding short or medium term issues with fast, timely turnaround, for faculty and students.
- It serves as both a class and a research network.
- It draws on diverse expertise not only on an individual basis, but also in the collective pooling and ongoing interrogation of issues. It becomes a palpable, "living" experience of interdisciplinary and collaborative work.
- The network-platform can generate questions and concerns from the students for the faculty, rather than a unidirectional process of faculty to students; it becomes truly collaborative between the faculty and students, as well as between the faculty themselves.
- The platform will develop a library of materials, including news reports and commentaries, policy papers, data and select academic papers that will provide a single portal for accessing the most critical materials. The student and faculty research becomes part of this "library," and will exist for future iterations of the class. Thus the class becomes a link in a cumulative chain of teaching and research
- Applications on the platform (as well as the professors) will proactively bring to the attention of faculty and students through postings, news items or commentaries of relevance to the class. (A simple example is newsfeeds.)
- Unlike relying on a single researcher, a collaborative mechanism such as this one provides an inbuilt, self-correcting peer review process.
- It promises efficiency in cost, as each new class will build on the infrastructure of the previous classes, including field notes, articles, data, videos, and teaching aids.
- The platform will provide a basis for including additional partner universities in the future.

In addition to developing an innovative, cutting-edge platform for teaching/research, what is here termed a global classroom, this project address a number of USF strategic
initiatives. These includes promoting integrated interdisciplinary research; a global approach both in structure and in content; global literacy of our students; a "problem solving" approach to issues that are both global and local in import; innovative research and, notably, through the global classrooms on global climate change, it will contribute to USF's sustainability initiative.

Activities Under the Proposed Grant

Mutual visits will facilitate meeting faculty at each other's universities, deepening ties and facilitating collaboration. Dr. Githens-Mazer and Mr. Lambert will visit the USF campus for one week in late January/early February, and Professor Jacobson will visit the University of Exeter in May, on completion of our Spring semester. These meetings will involve the following activities:

- Working with IT specialists on the respective campuses, the USF-Exeter will work on developing and customizing an Internet platform and portal, including, inter alia, collaboration tools, networking and information technology for conferencing, modeling, analysis and visualization of data.
- Meeting with faculty, across different disciplines, on the respective campuses who could collaborate on the global classroom.
- Developing appropriate syllabi for two pilot classes on global climate change and human impacts, considering both technical and substantive considerations.
- Coordinate with USF World and international programs at USF, and the respective faculty chairs and colleges, and with the equivalent programs at Exeter, to address the different curriculum and class registration considerations, including drawing on students on study abroad, credit hours allocation and related administrative matters.

By the Summer of 2010 we anticipate developing grant proposals to support the platform; global research networks; and research proposals that will be built on the collaborative teaching/research network-platform. Proposals will be directed at supporting the platform itself and at the substantive topics, broadening the pool of possible funders. Such funding targets will include the following bodies with pertinent programs: the Spencer Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, the Ford Foundation, NSF initiatives on interdisciplinary research and on new research technologies.

The penultimate activity will be the trial teaching of the class itself, ideally starting in Fall 2010. The class will provide an opportunity to see what works most effectively, and what needs to be amended or added, both technically and substantively, in the global classroom platform. We anticipate this will be a process that evolves over two classes, with a ongoing evaluation. Once fine-tuned, we will disseminate the results of this endeavor through seminars for faculty at each of the universities and through publication.
BUDGET

David Jacobson
Flight: Tampa-London (round trip May-June 2010) $1,100
Car rental (two weeks) 960
Room and board (two weeks) 3,654

Jonathan Githens-Mazer and Robert Lambert
Flight: London-Tampa (round trip/February 2010/ two tickets) $2,200
Car rental (one week) 466
Room and Board (one week x 2) 1,750
TOTAL $10,130

Budget Justification

Airfares are based on published rates, as of November 30, 2009.

Car rental is based on cheapest available in the respective countries, as of November 30, 2009. Gasoline costs will be borne by PI and co-PIs, or covered through other sources. Car rental is the cheapest available ground transportation when all travel is factored in.

Room and board based on US State Department per diem rates in the case of Exeter; and on a local per diem of $100 hotel plus $25 per day per diem for meals.

The $130 difference between the $10,000 requested under this proposal and the budgeted amount will be borne by the PIs.
ABBREVIATED CURRICULUM VITA

DAVID JACOBSON

Present Position:
Professor, Department of Sociology, University of South Florida

Professional and Academic Appointments and Activities:
Visiting Researcher, CERI-Sciences Po, Paris, Summers 2009-2014

Education:
London School of Economics, MSc., Sociology, 1983.
Hebrew University of Jerusalem, B.A., Sociology and International Relations, 1982.

Professional Experience:
Director, Global Climate Change, Human Impacts and Security Network, 2007-2009
*Interdisciplinary network from the academy to inform policy on global warming, its human impacts and related issues*

Professor, The School of Global Studies, Arizona State University, 2004-2009

Director, School of Global Studies, Arizona State University, 2004-2007

Chair, Steering Committee, Designing the School of Global Studies, Arizona State University, 2003-2004

Professor, Department of Sociology, Arizona State University, 2003-2005

Associate Professor, Arizona State University, 1998-2003

Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, 1998-1999
Visiting Fellow

Assistant Professor, Arizona State University, 1992-1998

Leonard Davis Institute of International Relations, Jerusalem, 1991-1992
Visiting Fellow

Selected Books:


Selected Articles and chapters:


David Jacobson and Galya Ruffer, “Courts Across Borders: The Implications of Judicial Agency for Human Rights and

**Selected Grants:**

2009 Minerva Research Initiative, “Mapping the Diffusion and Influence of Counter-Radical Muslim Discourse,” (senior investigator with P.I. Mark Woodward, Hasan Davaolu and Sani Umar; and three additional investigators), $5.8 million

2009 Ford Foundation, “Interfaith Dialogues and the Secular,” (Co-P.I. with Linell Cady, P.I.), $100,000


**Organized Conferences and Workshops (selected)**

Principal Organizer, Conference of National Network on Global Climate Change and Human Impacts, Seattle, September 28-29, 2007.

Principal Organizer, Workshop on Scenarios of Global Climate Change and its Human Impacts, University of California, Santa Barbara, May 18-19, 2006.

Organizer, Workshop on Developing Global Studies Programs, International Studies Association annual meeting, Honolulu, Hawaii, March 1-4, 2005 (by invitation only).

Co-organizer, Conference on American Elections and Foreign Policy, Joint conference of ASU’s School of Global Studies and the Council on Foreign Relations, in Tempe, October 13, 2004. *Conference participants include Dennis Ross; Roberto Suro; Senator Jon Kyl; Walter Russell Mead; and others.*


**Invited Presentations (selected—international followed by national):**


“Globalized Justice: The Implications for Human Rights and Democracy,” Department of Sociology, Haar Lecture in International Sociology, Princeton University, April 22, 2004

“Spaces of Identity: Gender, Immigration and the Evolution of the Nation-State,” Citizenship, Borders, and Gender:
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Cheryl L. Knott
Associate Dean,
CAS, Research & Scholarship
21st December 2009

Dear David,

I read with great interest the full proposal for our Global Partners proposal. The concept which you have led in developing, fusing the internet platform with an international student research network, is inspired and should lead to real and important developments, not only pedagogically, but also intellectually. I very much hope that we are able to obtain the necessary financial and institutional support to make this project work – and I support this effort wholeheartedly and very much look forward to participating in this work over the coming months and years.

What I find particularly inspiring about this project is the way that the effort to make technology work in pedagogical development has the potential to create tangible intellectual dividends. Our ability to bring together different teaching perspectives and styles, along with multiple disciplinary orientations and the varied range of perspectives of our students will bear substantial fruit in better understanding complex issues such as religious conflict and global climate change.

This proposal fits extremely well with my current research portfolio, and the development of our European Muslim Research Centre (EMRC) here at the University of Exeter. I believe that I would be able to make an important contribution to this project through our partnering to develop the course syllabi on these topics of mutual research interest. I will be able to give this project my full attention, and would relish the opportunity to help develop this approach and share my experiences with colleagues here at Exeter and at the University of South Florida so we can develop best practice for these kinds of endeavours in the future.

There is no doubt that 21st century research questions require 21st century strategies for teaching and learning. Religious conflict and global climate change are two issues which have clearly dominated the first decade of this century. These issues are bigger than single institutions and classrooms. The ability to use technological innovation to share knowledge, perspective and experience, between academics and students, can only serve to hone our ability to intellectually engage in relevant and meaningful ways. It also my belief that support for this effort on the part of our respective institutions, indicates their commitment to be globally relevant and excellent academic institutions.

Please do stay in touch as this exciting opportunity develops, and let me know what steps I can take from my end to help ensure every success.

Best Wishes,

Jonathan Githens-Mazer
Dr. Jonathan Githens-Mazer
Professor David Jacobson

21st December 2009

Dear Professor Jacobson

I have read with great interest the Global Partners Proposal – brought to my notice by Dr Jonathan Githens-Mazer. I found the proposed development of technologically innovative international teaching and academic interaction to be well thought out and interesting. The proposed work looks as though it significantly enhance our capacity for delivering teaching and learning to an international audience. Moreover, it would further strengthen the ties between our respective institutions.

I wish you and your team the best of luck. You have my assurance that Exeter is fully behind the proposal. I look forward to hearing about its development in due course.

Yours sincerely

Tim Dunne

Professor Tim Dunne

Head of School

School of the Humanities and Social Sciences (HuSS)
Fwd: Please read now: GAP proposal

Maralee Mayberry [mayberry@cas.usf.edu]

You forwarded this message on 12/21/2009 1:51 PM.

Sent: Monday, December 21, 2009 9:30 AM
To: Justice, Sandra; Jacobson, David

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: David Jacobson <djdjacobson@gmail.com>
Date: December 20, 2009 7:01:02 PM EST
To: "Mayberry, Maralee" <mayberry@cas.usf.edu>
Subject: Please read now: GAP proposal

Hi Maralee,

Could you please send an email approving the attached proposal by 1pm tomorrow, Monday? It needs your approval, and a signature from a dean (who do I speak to in that regard?). Sorry for the late request--I was working on this rather late, and working out the coordination with Exeter. The deadline is tomorrow, Monday.

Many thanks,
David