Bringing Theory to Practice Grant
Final Report
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3. Project Synthesis:
   Engaged learning—the bridging of rigorous classroom instruction and relevant
   community-centered experiences—is recognized nationally as a high impact practice in
   undergraduate education. The University of Michigan’s Engaged Pedagogy Initiative
   (EPI) is a joint project of Arts of Citizenship Program (artsofcitizenship.umich.edu), a
   program of the Rackham School of Graduate Studies, and the Center for Engaged
   Academic Learning (CEAL: www.lsa.umich.edu/ceal), a program of the College of
   Literature, Science and the Arts. The EPI supports the University of Michigan’s
   commitment to engaged and community-based learning by providing training in the
   design and implementation of community-based learning courses for graduate students
   interested in incorporating engaged pedagogy into their career goals and professional
   skills.

   Arts of Citizenship’s participation in the EPI emerges from its dual commitment to the
   professional development of graduate students and to building sustainable community-
   campus partnerships. Its programming helps graduate students develop skill sets valued
   in the academic job market, in the non-tenure-track “alt-academic” sector, and in the non-
   profit, policy and government sectors. Through Arts of Citizenship, graduate students
   have expressed the need for enhanced teacher training and professional development
   programming focused on community-centered pedagogy. The Center for Engaged
   Academic Learning’s mission to support, enhance, and generate new engaged learning
   opportunities for undergraduate students is similarly grounded on the principle of
   reciprocity and mutual benefit for students and partnering communities.

   In the EPI’s first year, twelve graduate students from 10 disciplines (selected from a pool
   of 31 applicants) completed the program. The graduate students received training in a
   variety of topics including foundations of engaged pedagogy, authentic campus-
   community partnerships, and the use of reflective pedagogies to enhance student place-
   based learning. In addition, the EPI Fellows benefitted from: 1) one-on-one course
   design consultations with faculty members affiliated with CEAL and Arts of Citizenship;
   2) a training session with community partners with significant experience working with
   student volunteers; 3) opportunities to workshop their ideas for engaged courses with
   undergraduate members of CEAL’s Student Advisory Group on Engagement (SAGE).
   Overall, the program helped the 12 EPI Fellows complete a course proposal and syllabus
   of their own design which reflected a strong foundation in the theories and best practices
of place-based engaged learning, the ethics and logistics of community-partnerships and the pedagogical complexities of designing and teaching engaged courses.

4. Project Changes:
The EPI’s goals have remained consistent throughout the grant period. Over the course of the 2014-15 academic year, the 12 EPI fellows attended eight workshops on different aspects of engaged pedagogy, from foundations of engaged pedagogy, working with community partners to engaged course design, and reflection and evaluation. Each fellow concluded the year by completing a course proposal and syllabus for an engaged course of their own design. In designing the EPI’s pilot year, the project leadership, Matthew Countryman from Arts of Citizenship and Denise Galarza-Sepulveda from CEAL, instituted four changes from the initial project proposal.

1) Perhaps the most innovative aspect of the EPI experience was the opportunity the graduate student fellows had to workshop their course plans with members of CEAL’s Student Advisory Group on Engagement (SAGE). Each SAGE member was nominated by a faculty member and selected based on her/his experiences with different types of engaged learning. Four members of SAGE participated in a panel discussion and small group feedback session which offered the EPI Fellows a range of perspectives on how to insure that engaged courses provide students with a positive learning and emotional experience even as they challenge most students to move outside their comfort zone.

2) Instead of inviting an outside speaker to serve as the keynote speaker at the end-of-fellowship-year symposium, the symposium consisted of four thematic panel—“Motivations for Doing Community-Based Pedagogy”; "Building Awareness, Enacting Change"; "The Role of Instructor in Student Reflection"; "Inclusion, Access and Translation”—in which the fellows themselves made presentations on aspects of engaged pedagogy. The symposium concluded with a panel discussion of the career arc of the engaged pedagogue with presentations from three alums from the University of Michigan Graduate School: James Dator, Assistant Professor of History at Goucher College, Katie Richards-Shuster, Associate Professor in the UofM School of Social Work and Coordinator of UofM’s undergraduate minor in Community Action and Social Change, and Laura Schram, Academic Program Office for Humanities Initiatives in the Rackham Graduate School.

3) We contracted with the Program Evaluation Group of the University of Michigan School of Social Work’s Curtis Center Program Evaluation Group (CC-PEG; ssw.umich.edu/offices/curtis-center/program-evaluation), to develop a comprehensive evaluation program for the EPI. The Curtis Center’s staff developed a comprehensive pre- and post-evaluation program for the EPI. In addition to conducting pre-, midterm, and post-program surveys of the EPI fellows, the Curtis Center staff provided crucial assistance during the summer of 2014 in the development of a logic model and curriculum for the fellowship program.
4) By revising plans for the symposium and program evaluation, we were able to offer the 12 fellows a stipend for completing the program. Given that the fellows received no course credit for participating in the program, we believe that the stipend was essential recompense for the amount of time they devoted to the program over the course of the year and the amount of work that they put into the design of their proposed courses as well as the symposium.

5. Future of the EPI:
CEAL and Arts of Citizenship have committed, with financial support from the Rackham School of Graduate Studies and the College of Literature, Science and the Arts, to continuing the EPI for at least the next two academic years. While we learned a great amount from being able to work with the initial class of EPI fellows over the course of an entire year, we have concluded that we will be better able to sustain a sense of momentum in the training program if we shorten the length of the fellowship to a single term while maintaining the same curriculum and number of meetings. The EPI will therefore enroll teams of 10 fellows for each of the next four terms beginning in the fall of 2015. In addition, CEAL has received funding from the LSA Dean’s Office to establish a course consulting program in which the graduate student alums of the EPI Fellows Program will be employed to serve as temporary course consultants to faculty members interested in adding an engagement component to one or more of their undergraduate courses.

6. Major Lessons (answers to questions A, B, C & D):
A: We have attached a draft report from the Program Evaluator on the strengths and weaknesses of the pilot year of the Engaged Pedagogy Institute. The most important indicator of the success of the program was the positive feedback we received from the 2014-15 fellows and their willingness to promote the program. As the report makes clear, we received extremely positive feedback regarding the content and structure of the EPI. Students were asked if they felt they had been introduced to the complexities of community-engaged learning, and if they would recommend the EPI to their peers. All participants responded that they “agreed” or “strongly agreed.” We were also able to glean that the students ranked the workshop discussions, the networking opportunities and the individual course consultations highest in terms of the concrete program benefits. At the same time, the students made clear that they would have liked to have had more opportunities to observe actual engaged classrooms and to talk with a range of professors who utilize engaged pedagogical techniques.

The most difficult challenge we continue to face is identifying opportunities for EPI fellows to implement their proposed engaged courses within the University of Michigan undergraduate curriculum. During the 2014-15 academic year, the Residential College (RC) was not able to offer a graduate student the opportunity to teach an engaged course as it had done the previous year. However, we are hopeful that the RC will be able advertise such an opportunity this coming fall for a course to be taught in the winter term 2016. In addition, we have a commitment from the Freshman Composition program to consider course proposals from EPI fellows who are eligible to teach in their program (graduate students from English, American Culture and Comparative Literature). Finally,
a number of engaged learning programs for undergraduates that utilize graduate students as teaching assistants are committed to consider applications from EPI fellows.

B: We have learned that providing graduate students with skill sets that enable them to take effective action based on their values while adding to their portfolio of marketable job skills for both the academic and nonacademic job markets can serve to buttress student well-being during the stressful years of graduate school.

C: Giving the EPI fellows the opportunity to receive feedback on their course proposals from undergraduates who are members of CEAL’s Student Advisory Group on Engagement. The SAGE members are experienced in and committed to engaged and community-based learning. Among the things that the fellows learn from interacting from the SAGE members is that engaged courses are emotionally as well as intellectually challenging as students grapple with social inequities as well as questions of their own personal values and life and career choices. The result is that the fellows learn that by being attentive to these issues of student well-being, particularly through the implementation of creative and interactive reflection exercises, they can make a positive contribution to their students’ intellectual and socio-economic development.

D: See answer #B above.

7. **Timeline:**
See the answer to question #5. As of June 2015, we have selected the 10 EPI fellows, from a pool of 18 graduate student applications, who will participate in the fall 2015 workshop series. In September, 2015, we will announce the application deadline for the winter-spring EPI workshop series.

8. **Budget Narrative:**
The attached 2014-15 budget for the EPI is based on the reception of two grants: $ from Bridging Theory to Practice and a $ matching grant from the University of Michigan’s President’s Office.

A. To date, all of expenditures ( ) have come from the BTtoP grant. They fall into the following categories:
   1) Graduate Student Research Assistant Salary & Benefits, $ 
   2) Program Evaluation, $ 
   3) Community Partner Honoraria, $ 
   4) Miscellaneous, $ 
   5) Hosting (including a symposium reception and end-of-year dinner for the fellows), $ 

B. The bulk of the funds from the matching grant ($ ) are to provide $ stipends to the 12 EPI Fellows who completed the program and will be disbursed once we have received the end-of-year evaluations from all 12 fellows. An additional payment of $ will also be made to the program evaluator, CC-PEG, once we receive a final
draft of the end-of-year assessment. Finally, we expect to spend an estimated $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for editing costs to produce a video of the end-of-year symposium.

C. Arts of Citizenship and the Center for Engaged Academic Learning provided the teaching staff, including both classroom time and curriculum development time, for the first-year of the EPI on an in-kind basis.

D. The remaining grant funds, which we expect to be about $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, will be dedicated to program costs for the second-year of the EPI.