

6 April, 1999

TO: Mike Sedore

FROM: Ali Pomponio

RE: TTP Project: Ethnographic Methods for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

I would like to apply for a Technology for Teaching Project (TTP) grant in order to develop a new course in anthropology and to upgrade significantly two already extant courses. The new course will be called Ethnographic Methods, and will utilize computer simulations and applications of various sorts (e.g., genealogies, handling ethnographic data in the field, descriptive linguistics). I plan to teach it at the 200 level in order to have a cohort of students take it *before* they go overseas (usually in the junior year). This new course will also be a contender as one of several methods courses on a menu for the proposed Global Studies major, from which students will choose a specified number (still being discussed in the Global Studies Advisory Board, of which I am a member). The extant courses are in linguistics: Language and Human Experience (Ant. 205, required of all majors and satisfies SO distribution at present) and Language and Culture (Ant. 304). I would like to incorporate the same descriptive linguistics program into both courses eventually, at different levels of depth according to their course numbers (e.g., the first acting as a prerequisite for the second). I will assess the degree to which incorporating descriptive linguistics into the methods course will be feasible as well. (NB: At present my courses are the only ones offered in linguistics regularly at SLU.)

The focus of this request, then, is to examine CD-Rom methodological approaches to teaching ethnographic data collection and analysis, and to explore new pedagogical approaches with them in the classroom.

I teach Ant. 205 regularly; I am planning to teach the 304 next spring. I would like to introduce the methods course next spring, too, or at the latest beginning in the Fall of 2000. In any case, the only time I have to work on such in-depth projects is over the summer. I therefore request funds for a **summer stipend**.

I will have to purchase some **software** programs to review their appropriateness for the methods course. I have sent email messages to some of my more computer-oriented colleagues who teach methods courses, asking for their advice. I have to date received information on three software programs: Shoebox, Yanomamo Online and Ethno-Quest. I bought Shoebox very cheaply already (\$6). It can be used both to handle ethnographic data and to compile dictionaries. It thus has all the fonts necessary to teach descriptive linguistics and ethnographic recording. Yanomamo Online uses brief ethnographic film clips of a famous group in an interactive program that enables students to observe and vicariously participate in the editing process of ethnographic film. It is available commercially and I am researching cost. Ethno-Quest is a simulated ethnographic fieldwork project, which I am trying to locate, so I have no information on cost. I would also like to take this opportunity to explore web-based information either locally or via

the internet. I am still contacting colleagues and will update this information as it becomes available. It is thus difficult to project a budget line here, but I guesstimate \$500.

Collaboration with student(s) will be essential both in the planning stages and the execution of the methods course. I am requesting money for **student assistance** in exploring and learning these software programs over the summer, to continue developing this knowledge through the Fall semester, and to help me implement these computer-based pedagogies in the Spring of 2000. Ideally, I will be able to identify a student at the sophomore or junior level who is preferably an anthropology major, and develop him/her over a reasonable period of time as a teaching assistant for the course. This would ensure continuity for me and for the students in the course. I realize, though, since so many of our students go overseas, that I might have to train more than one student by the time I actually teach the ethnographic methods course.

My rough estimate is 20 hr. per week over 10 weeks at the going rate for computer-literate student assistants for the summer (\$6.10/hr. at present in our department) or  $200 \times 6.10 = \$1220$ ). Assuming the same rough time estimate for each semester across an academic year, the total comes to \$3660 for the project over 12 months.

This project represents a major departure from my pedagogical approach to anthropology, and constitutes a ground-breaking initiative for the anthropology department. Most of us use the cc:mail and word processing functions of the computer, with occasional explorations into the internet. Celia Nyamweru and I are trained in SPSS, but we do not teach it. We are anticipating many changes in the next 5-15 years to keep up with and get ahead of technological applications and new pedagogies in anthropology. In 5-8 years, half the department will retire; 8 years after that, I will be the only present faculty member still working at St. Lawrence University. I expect most of those positions (at least 2 out of 3) will be replaced. Any new faculty member coming into our department will already be competent in these technologies and expect to utilize them in the classroom. In addition, the planned exodus of the Piskor Hall departments will have a direct impact on our future technology planning. The most recent administrative plan is to house Anthropology with Global Studies, History and Philosophy. My plans to have the ethnographic methods course count for GS credit will fit in well with the spatial arrangements we are planning in our new location. Moreover, one or more of the linguistics courses will also count for GS credit, but at this time I am not exactly sure which.

Given the wide range of software programs available, I would like to launch this project quickly and efficiently by requesting funds to invite one of my more computer-talented colleagues to campus in June as a **consultant**. David Lancy is an educational anthropologist whom I have known since 1978. His is one of the most creative pedagogical minds I have ever encountered. He has developed software, CD-Roms and web-site courses for his own students at Utah State University, and has given presentations on these projects internationally. He is willing to come here for a brief visit and do two presentations: one for CD-Rom software and one for constructing courses on the web. He is a very engaging speaker and dedicated teacher who is fluent in

anthropological as well as computer jargon. He has worked in Liberia and Papua New Guinea in projects that were multidisciplinary before the approach became popular. He would therefore have much to share with colleagues in several programs beside anthropology, for example education, sociology, and global studies.

He will be visiting family in Pittsburgh in the first week of June; if he comes here from Pittsburgh, the airfare will be much cheaper. I anticipate his visit will take two nights and one full day (e.g., in on Sunday afternoon, two presentations on Monday, out on Tuesday). I can host him in my home, thereby saving money for a hotel room. Mike Sedore recommended \$800 for an honorarium; the only other expense would be food, presumably to include at least one group dinner out and two lunches with varying numbers of colleagues.

I have had some experience with several different kinds of computer programs and software packages over the years, from the old Fortran to the new Shoebox program mentioned above. Working on computers does not come naturally to me, and therefore produces a moderate level of anxiety and a maximum level of labor intensity. In short, I have learned enough to know that the programs never work the way the manuals say they should. Any computer application I have ever used has taken at least twice as long as I had been told it would take to get running properly. When students start trying to use these new programs all kinds of unanticipated problems will arise. For this reason I am requesting in addition to a summer stipend, **release time/replacement** from teaching one course during the first semester of the ethnographic methods course. I am also factoring in the time it will take me to work with my teaching assistant to configure and implement the various software programs as needed, and to help him/her learn more teaching skills along the way. I anticipate many different changes in pedagogy once I actually see how the software is used by and works (or does not work) for students. The release time will thus enable me to create and maintain a flexible pedagogical model and pace for this course in which I can evaluate results and redirect as we go.

I also have a clear sense for what it takes to create and launch a new course. This methods course will be the 16<sup>th</sup> course I have developed and taught at St. Lawrence. Since I am also chairing the department I am carrying an overload of sorts already. In a small department such as ours, with four sub-fields and the entire globe to "cover," each individual course counts. Celia Nyamweru has recently announced her intention to team-teach a new multi-disciplinary course on Climatology during the targeted semester. Since climatology has nothing to do with humans, her participation in that course means we will be "down" one course at that time. The release time/replacement I propose for this project is therefore critical to the success of the Methods course and for my ability to launch it in the Spring of 2000.

**Budget Summary**

Summer Stipend (summer 1999)	\$ 2,000.
Software	500.
Student Assistant	3,660.
Consultant visit: Airfare (\$577) <sup>1</sup> ; Food (About \$200); Honorarium (\$800)	1,577.
Release time replacement (Spring 2000)	<u>2,500.</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10, 237.</b>

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<sup>1</sup> Airfare figure supplied by AAA St. Lawrence.