**Sample Successful WSU Program Assessment Grant Proposal**

*Used with permission of Jule Thomas, primary contact for the proposal/award.*

(Please note that the proposal form has been revised since this sample was submitted.)

**WSU Program Assessment Grant (AY18-19)**

**Program Assessment Grant Goals and Parameters:**

To promote best practices in program-level assessment of student learning outcomes, the Office of the Provost invites Wayne State University faculty and staff to submit proposals to improve their program’s assessment efforts. One-time funds are available to assist in the piloting, creation, or significant revision of a program’s assessment instruments or process, or to obtain professional development in program assessment.

Priority goes to proposals with multiple participants that introduce innovative or experimental approaches to direct assessment or improved practice in student learning outcomes assessment at the program level, especially those that might serve as models for other programs. Both academic and student services programs are eligible to apply.

Up to five program assessment grants for a maximum of $3000 each will be awarded in the AY18-19 grant year. Acceptable uses of funds include:

1. Professional development (e.g., books, fees for webinars, conference attendance, invited speakers)
2. Course release time/buy-out
3. Salary (for RA, student assistant, faculty, staff) 4. Piloting of tools (e.g., commercial tests).

No more than one project per department/unit will be funded in a given grant year. Four years must elapse before a grantee-program may apply for further funding through this program.

Grantees must be WSU employees in an academic or student services program that participates in annual program assessment for the duration of the grant period (September 1, 2018 through August 31, 2019).

All expenses must adhere to the WSU expense policies and procedures (see Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual). **Please note that funds will not be renewed beyond the grant period.**

**Proposal Process:**

Complete the form below and submit by email to the WSU Director of Assessment and co-chair of the University Assessment Council, Cathy Barrette (c.barrette@wayne.edu), **by May 15, 2018.** Proposals will be reviewed by the University Assessment Council and additional faculty volunteers using the rubric posted online at https://wayne.edu/assessment/. Reviewing the rubric prior to submitting a proposal is highly encouraged.

Programs will be notified of a decision by **August 15, 2018**.

**Grant Requirements:**

*Submit all information to WSU Director of Assessment and co-chair of the University Assessment Council, Cathy Barrette (c.barrette@wayne.edu).*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Due date** | **Activity** |
| February 1, 2019 | Submit a 1-2 page midpoint report of progress. |
| August 31, 2019 | All grant activities must be complete. |
| September 30, 2019 | Submit a final report of all grant-related activities. The report will be publically posted on the WSU Assessment website. |
| September 30, 2019 | At least one member of the project team must coordinate with the WSU Director of Assessment, Cathy Barrette (c.barrette@wayne.edu) to schedule a public presentation of the work accomplished with the grant. |
| April 30, 2020 | Last possible day to give the public presentation. |

NB: Grant funds will be disbursed in two stages: initial funds (2/3 of award) and final funds (1/3 of award). ***Final disbursement of funds will only be made once the midterm report, final report, and public presentation are complete. Funds will be forfeited after April 30, 2020.***

**Support for the proposal process:**

Consultants are available to help applicants develop an appropriate proposal. Contact the WSU Director of Assessment and co-chair of the University Assessment Council, Cathy Barrette (c.barrette@wayne.edu), with requests and any questions.

# WSU Program Assessment Grant: Proposal Form

**Project title: *Wayne State University Writing Center tutees: Who uses the center, who does not, and how does use impact students’ academic success***

**Contact person: Jule Thomas**

**Role/Position: Head Researcher; Senior Lecturer/Writing Center Director**

**Email: au1145@wayne.edu**

**Phone: (313\_ 577-2544; (330) 978-9324**

**Department/Unit: English Department**

**Program name: WRT Zone**

**Participating colleagues/collaborators:**

**Experience with assessment (for primary contact and each colleague/collaborator):** Jule Thomas: 8 years experience with assessment of curriculum (ENG 1010, 1020, 3010) leading to re-design of learning objectives, learning outcomes, and curriculum. Assessment included portfolio assessment focused upon demonstration of a particular learning outcome, thin-slicing assessment of research proposals, and directed content analysis of student writing. I have also conducted conventional and directed content analysis of students’ demonstration of discipline-specific genre conventions during an IRB approved teaching research project using Dedoose, a cross-platform web application used for mixed-method research. Finally, I annually assess the WRT Zone’s student demographics and use for assessment of student needs, training, and material development. Data was collected using Campus Labs online surveys and analysis tools. Data collected has resulted in grants for tutoring hours, Graduate tutors, an ESL tutor, and the creation of the WRT Zone totaling $200,000.000.

Clare Russell: 5 years experience with college curricular assessment and 2 years experience with marketing research and assessment. As a graduate teaching assistant I have designed multiple writing courses at different institutions using outcomes-based design strategies. I also assisted in piloting and assessing first-year writing curricula focused on student retention at WSU, and at the University of New Mexico. The UNM Stretch and Studio Composition Program which I helped to design was recognized nationally in 2016 for its success at improving pass rates within the writing program, as well as overall student retention rates. This academic year I helped design and pilot a similar program at WSU with Dr. Amy

Latawiec. We are currently awaiting assessment and will present our assessment data at the Conference for Writing Program Administration this summer. As a graduate student in business I designed surveys to evaluate consumer preferences, interpreted the data for clients using SPSS, and advised company management on best strategies for increasing customer satisfaction and sales.

|  |
| --- |
| Ruth Boeder: 2 years experience in curriculum assessment and program management in WSU English Department; 5 years’ experience assessment of academic support unit instructional programming and services (library units at Concordia University, Ann Arbor and Morgan State University, Baltimore). As Assistant Director of Composition in AY 16/17, I served as the Project Manager for the English Department’s research committee as they replicated and extended their use of a new method for writing assessment. I also assembled quantitative and qualitative measurements of the performance of various units within the Composition Program and authored memos and white papers to report this information. I have also served as a member of the Assessment Committee from AY 16/17 to present, as we assessed student learning and report this to campus stakeholders. Within my past library work, I created and assessed programming and instructional materials for library units, creating my own data instruments as well as working with reports from various campus software systems to best measure both the use and the impact of our services. My current dissertation study (approved by WSU’s IRB) is a project to assess the pedagogy and performance of secondary research in first-year writing courses.    Sarah Primeau: 3 years experience with curricular/program assessment. As a member of the WSU English Department’s Composition Research Committee, I have participated in three major assessment projects and contributed to two articles on our mixed-methods program assessment. The first article describes how we adapted thin-slice methods for writing assessment and is forthcoming in the *Journal of Writing Assessment*, and the second article describes how we revised our norming process to improve inter-rater reliability and has been accepted to an edited collection. As the Assistant Director of Composition this year (AY 1718), I used thin-slice methods to prepare the data set for our assessment of the English 1020 electronic portfolios, and this summer I will analyze our quantitative and qualitative data and continue writing a guide to thin-slice assessment procedures that can be distributed to other writing programs. I also served on the English 1010 task force as we researched a new course model and designed an assessment of student learning in two pilot sections. As part of the task force, I contributed to our white paper, recruited students for the study, administered our surveys, and I am currently compiling our data into spreadsheets that will be analyzed by the full task force.    James Lee is the systems integrator for WSU’s Division of Computing and Information Technology and the core developer of WAMS. While not part of the data collection and analysis, James will aid research members in developing a WAMS system and report log for the tracking and logging student use and demographics. |
| **Reason for proposal:** [*What is the current state of learning outcomes assessment in your program? What needs improvement with respect to program-level learning outcomes assessment practices or instruments? What factors or conditions have contributed to the area(s) needing improvement?*]  The WRT Zone is in need of a more systematic and broad-reaching assessment of student use and needs. While we collect student data, this collection does not allow the center to make correlations between students who do and do not use the center, demographics of student use, the courses for which students use the center, the writing needs of students, and students’ academic success when using the center. A WSU program grant would allow the center, and members of the research team, to develop a research design and methodology for analysis that would allow for evaluation of our students’ needs, development of educational and tutoring support, and published research of our findings.  Currently, the WRT Zone uses online appointment forms in order to collect student demographics, course, and purpose/needs for writing support. We use campus labs for distribution of our surveys. However, tutors often fail to request completion of the form or students forget to fill out the form entirely. Additionally, the data we collect is not easily used for assessment of our students needs, courses students are enrolled in, and student success when utilizing our services. Further, assessment of whether or not multiple tutoring sessions lead to higher levels of success in a course, as well as completion of a degree, is impossible with our current assessment instrument. Therefore, while we have a log of overall student demographics and appointment totals, these numbers mean very little if not connected to student success and possibility of completion. This becomes increasingly problematic when coupled with our growing need for budget increases for staff, tutors, and technology support.  Additionally, we assume that our tutoring pedagogy and development of supplement materials meets the needs of the students who come to our center. However, recent writing center research has suggested that writing centers might be missing the mark when it comes to tutoring best practices for the students who request writing support (Salem, 2016; Rendleman, 2013). Research suggests that writing centers assess users and non-users in order to determine if the tutoring practices implemented do in fact respond to the unique needs of students who utilize the center. Therefore, assessment of student use and non-use, course for which students request help, and one-time or ongoing use will allow our writing center to either maintain or revise our current tutoring practices and development of supplemental materials. Finally, we are in need of a more systematic assessment system that will respond to upcoming program assessment protocols that will require student support programs to provide clear evidence of their impact in order to obtain and secure funding. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Proposed actions:** [*What steps will you take to improve your program’s outcomes assessment practices or instruments if you receive funding? Be as specific as you can about the link between needed improvement(s) and your proposed actions.*]    We plan on implementing WSU’s WAMS scheduling system where students’ demographics, use of services, coursework, grades, and completion of degree(s) can be collected in order to find correlations between students’ use of our center and their academic success. We plan on working with James Lee, who designed and runs WAMS in order to customize the program to fit our unique needs.    Next, we plan on developing a customized COGNOS report where students’ demographics, STARS reports, coursework, and use of services can be mined in order to find important correlations and trends. We plan on using our research assistant for development of data mining techniques for collection of variable for analysis. Data mining is a new statistical approach to analysis where “unknowns” can be sorted. Data mining allows researchers to sort through large complex datasets, and find meaningful relationships among variables. From there, we will work with our research assistant to conduct Chi-Squared Automatic Interaction Detection (CHAID ) analysis to find interactions among variables. To do so, we will need to purchase SPSS, a statistical analysis program, with the add on of CHAID.    The research assistant will train and aid research members in CHAID analysis. CHAID analysis allows the researcher to load the SPSS program with a library of variables. Students’ use of the WRT Zone’s services will be linked to pre-determined variables such their SAT scores, academic grades, course history, demographics, etc.). The ideal scenario for a CHAID analysis is to have multiple variables – the more the better. Because this is data-mining, where unknowns are welcome, the key is not to be selective when building the library, and not to assume that one already knows which variables are relevant and which are not. Once our research assistant helps research members to create a “library” of variables, the CHAID algorithm will move through all of the variables methodically and select significant variables of both users and non-users. Where a human researcher might intuitively consider some variables more important than others, CHAID does not make these types of judgements. If SAT scores turned out to be the most powerful variable for use of the WRT Zone, then that’s what the program will choose. But if students’ current coursework were stronger, then coursework would be the most powerful variable for use of the WRT Zone.    Collection and analysis of this new data by research members and our research assistant will provide our center with an assessment of student use and student needs. This data will not only provide us with a clear picture of our impact on students’ academic progress, it will also provide members with findings we can use to request additional funding for needed services. However, findings will also impact our own tutoring best practices. If we find that the majority of students who request our services have low SAT scores, are taking remedial courses, and are currently struggling in their courses, then our tutoring approaches will need to shift in order to meet those very specific student needs. If our findings show that students come to our center for help with writing in specific courses, then development of manuals and tutor training will aid in better supporting students working in specific genres. And finally, this analysis and assessment of which students *do* use the center will also provide us with information about which students *do not* use the center. Such findings would provide important information about the writing center’s position in the university and students’ perceptions of the center. It would lead to further analysis of why students are not using the center and how we might create new and better ways of talking with students about our services. It might also help us shape our services to make them appealing to students who don’t currently visit. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Expert support needed:** [*What assistance, if any, do you need from experts in assessment or in other areas to carry out your actions and improve your assessment practices or instruments? Examples might include survey, test, or activity design support, statistical analysis, etc.*]    All members, except for the research assistant, have limited to no knowledge of SPSS and statistical analysis of CHAID. Therefore we would request support learning and using SPSS for our data mining and CHAID analysis and assessment. |
| **Funding Request:** [*Please provide an itemized budget. Add comments to explain expenditures as needed.*    $270.000 SPSS with CHAID decision tree analysis    $80.00 ($20 x 4 users) SPSS Master Class: Online Tutorial    $80.00 ($20 x 4 users) SPSS For Research: Online Tutorial    $2,520 Research Assistant for data collection and assessment (6 hours per week at $14 per hour for 30 weeks)-research assistant with benefits) |
| **Timeline, Responsible parties:** [*For each proposed action, specify a target completion date and the names of individuals responsible for completing the action.*]     * Pilot of WAMS scheduling system; May 2018-August 2018; Jule Thomas * Development and creation of COGNOS data report and pilot; May 2018-August 2018; Jule Thomas, Ruth Boeder, Clare Russell, Sarah Primeau * Online SPSS tutorials; May 2018-August 2018; Jule Thomas, Ruth Boeder, Clare Russell, Sarah Primeau * Hire of Research Assistant; August 2018; Jule Thomas * Full implementation of WAMS and COGNOS; September 2018; Jule Thomas |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ● | Collection and initial analysis of data; September-November 2018; Jule Thomas, Research Assistant, Ruth Boeder, Clare Russell, Sarah Primeau |
| ● | Mid-year assessment of data and trends; December 2018; Jule Thomas, Research Assistant, Ruth Boeder, Clare Russell, Sarah Primeau |
| ● | Report of Progress; February 1st, 2019; Jule Thomas |
| ● | Use of findings for development of tutor training and supplemental support; January  2019-April 2019; Jule Thomas, Research Assistant, Ruth Boeder, Clare Russell, Sarah Primeau |
| ● | Collection and further analysis of data; January 2019-April 2019; Jule Thomas, Research Assistant, Ruth Boeder, Clare Russell, Sarah Primeau |
| ● | End-year assessment of data and trends; April 2019; Jule Thomas, Research Assistant, Ruth Boeder, Clare Russell, Sarah Primeau |
| ● | Use of findings for tutor training, material development, and marketing strategies for student use and access; May 2019-July 2019; Jule Thomas, Ruth Boeder, Clare Russell, Sarah Primeau |
| ● | Use of findings for publication in The Writing Center Journal; May 2019-August 2019; Jule Thomas, Research Assistant, Ruth Boeder, Clare Russell, Sarah Primeau |
| ● | Completion of grant activities; August 31st, 2019 |
| ● | Coordination with Cathy Barrette for poster presentation, September 30, 2019; Jule Thomas |
| ● | Public Presentation; January 2020; Jule Thomas, Research Assistant, Ruth Boeder, Clare Russell, Sarah Primeau |

|  |
| --- |
| **Assessment of project impact:** [*Identify the metrics by which you will know actions have been carried out and have achieved results.*]     * Research members and research assistant will implement WAMS scheduling system AY 2018-2019; * Research members and research assistant will develop a COGNOS reports provide tracking student demographics, usage, and writing needs AY 2018-2019; * Research members and research assistant will use data collection methods for collection of student demographics, usage, and writing needs AY 2018-2019; * Research members and research assistant will use CHAID analysis of student demographics, usage, and writing needs for assessment of current tutoring best practices and supplemental materials AY 2018-2019; * Research members and research assistant will use findings of CHAID analysis in order to assess established pedagogical tutoring approaches and supplemental materials and suggests areas that need re-evaluation and re-design AY 2018-2019; * Research members and research assistant will use findings of CHAID analysis in order to identify needs (reading, research, or writing) where a student most needs assistance AY 2018-2019; * Research members and research assistant will use findings to develop workshops on writing support unique to our student demographics utilizing our center AY 20192020; * Research members and research assistant will use findings to target non-users and encourage use of center through promotional materials and orientations. AY 20192020. |
| **Supervisor support:** Please attach a signed letter of support from the appropriate chair/unit head/supervisor stating that he/she is aware of the project, approves of the plan, is willing to provide necessary support, and affirms that the project proposer(s) is/are able to carry out the project in the established timeline. |