

**Ferris State University**  
**Faculty and Staff Diversity Mini-Grant Application**

**I. Identification**

Name of Primary Applicant: Carol Rewers, Ph.D.

Members of Team: Laura Dix, Ph.D.  
Sharon George, Ph.D. Educational Counselor  
Carri Griffis, COB Sec.  
Stacey Issette, Advancement Officer  
Karen Ottobre, COB Sec.  
Barbara Renne, COB Internship Coordinator

Department or Unit: College of Business, Management Department

Campus Address: 119 South St., BUS 341  
Big Rapids, MI. 49307

Telephone: (231) 591-2447

E-mail address: rewersc@ferris.edu

**II. Event Title (25 words or less)**

**The “Torch” Program**

The overall goal of this pilot program, entitled “**The Torch Program**” is to improve student retention and graduation rates within the College of Business by assigning designated mentors to new students within the College of Business who will “intrusively” advise and encourage students starting from the student’s freshman semester through graduation. The designated mentors will encourage students to take advantage of career counseling, academic support services, participate in extracurricular activities and workshops, and encourage students to develop and utilize a variety of resources and networks. The Torch Program will also collaborate with other resources on campus including: The SCHOLAR Program, FSUS 100 course program, College of Business Internship Coordinator, College of Business Advancement Officer, Academic Advisors, Campus RSO’s, Career Services, University Diversity Office, Office of Disability Services, College of Business Alumni, and Representatives of the Big Rapids Community.

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**III. Specific core value, strategic initiative, or goal related to diversity that the event will address. (See the University Strategic Plan and the Diversity Plan)**

**Core Values:** Collaboration, Diversity, Excellence, Learning, and Opportunity

**FSU Strategic Initiatives:** 2.1, 2.2, 2.6, 2.7, 5.2, and 5.5

**FSU Diversity Plan:** 4.E: Develop a ... plan to improve student retention and graduation

**IV. Abstract (150-200 word, use additional paper if necessary). If the application is approved the abstract will be posted on the Diversity and Inclusion Office website.**

The COB Pre-Business program was developed for students wishing to study business but not sure of which major to pursue. It was also developed for students that did not meet the minimum criteria for a specific business program. There are guidelines associated with pre-business; however, students may enroll in business courses while working on grades and acclimating to the institution.

Many pre-business participants are first-generation college students that lack exposure to university services, the business world, and career opportunities available to them because of educational

success. Some of our students are academically underprepared for the university experience. The Torch Program is being initiated for these students because we believe they tend to fall through the cracks and are at risk of being unsuccessful in our learning environment. As we know, FSU offers many services for underprepared students. This program is not meant to take the place of current offerings. We believe some of our pre-business students need additional guidance and “intrusive” advising to utilize the available services. We believe these students will benefit through out-of-class contact which can also be provided by trained mentors in the business field. Specific business-oriented events will also be planned for the student participants.

## **V. Event Narrative**

### **a. The conceptual framework that explains how the event will augment Ferris’s long-term commitment to diversity and inclusion.**

The College of Business “Torch Program” was conceptually built upon the “Intrusive Advising” research and programs instituted at similar colleges/universities. The best example of why this type of pilot program is needed and should be supported, were heard from actual FSU student testimonials that were told during the recent Faculty Center for Teaching & Learning 2011 Faculty Week – “Retention Summit” session entitled, “Student Panel Discussion: Factors and Conditions that Inspire Us to Persist Toward Graduation”. A common theme heard in these student testimonials, was the importance of faculty and staff advisors and mentors.

The following excerpt, written by Jennifer Varney succinctly describes the conceptual frame work and research surround “intrusive advising” and how it differs from traditional advising.

#### *“Why Intrusive Advising?”*

Intrusive Advising involves intentional contact with students with the goal of developing a caring and beneficial relationship that leads to increased academic motivation and persistence. Research literature on student retention suggests that contact with a significant person within an institution of higher education is a crucial factor in a student’s decision to remain in college (Heisserer & Parette, 2002). Habley (1994) tells us that academic advising is the only structured activity on the campus in which all students have the opportunity for on-going, one-to-one interaction with a concerned representative of the institution (p. 10). Therefore, advisors often are the people best suited to make important student connections. When advisors make connections and show interest in students, they can become the reason a student decides to stay in school. In addition, contacting students in a preventative mode may help them anticipate problems and learn problem-solving skills and strategies (Upcraft & Kramer, 1995).

Intrusive Advising differs from the more traditional prescriptive and developmental models of advising because advisors are not only helpful and encouraging of students, but they proactively make the initial contact with students...a pre-emptive strike, of sorts. Most students know they have an advisor but may be unaware of how and when they are able to contact the advisor or what the advisor can help them accomplish. Heisserer and Parette (2002) observe that “the only variable that has a direct effect on student persistence is the quality of a relationship with a significant member of the college community” (p. 72). Thus the advisor is often the person best suited to form a significant relationship with the student. At-risk students, in particular, may benefit greatly from the intrusive approach as they may not be aware of how to move forward when unexpected situations arise. “  
(Varney, 2005)

The **“Torch Program”** supports Ferris State University’s long-term commitment to diversity and inclusion based on the following university strategic goals and Torch program information as described in the follow paragraphs.

### **Ferris State University Strategic Goal 2:**

a. Ferris State University seeks to “develop a university community where all are valued, welcomed, and informed” by “develop(ing) and implement(ing) a plan to enhance retention,” (SG 2.7) help “sustain...Ferris State University’s Diversity Plan”, (SG 2.1) “enhance the quality of...internal responsiveness” (SG 2.2) to student needs, and by “enhance(ing) the sharing of information among the University community” (SG 2.6).

#### **Support of SG 2.7:**

The College of Business **“Torch Program”** is designed to help freshman students from day one through their entire college career while at Ferris. This structured program will give freshmen students the opportunity to participate in career exploration activities, prepare a portfolio, create a resume’, participate in sessions on networking effectively, and learn about various interviewing techniques. In the student’s sophomore year, participants will be introduced to our Executive Mentor program and have the opportunity to pair up with an Executive from the business community. During their junior year, participates will participate in effective internship search strategies, participate in career/job fairs, and be encouraged to join RSO’s and community events. During the participant’s senior year, events will focus on identifying effective job searches, evaluating job offers, completing graduation requirements, and activities designed to transitioning the student into their professional career.

#### **Support of SG 2.1:**

The overall goal of this pilot program is to determine whether such intrusive advising and structured program improves student retention and graduation rates as compared to “historical” FSU rates and those of a College of Business “control group”.

#### **Support of SG 2.2:**

Educational counselors and designated advisors will “proactively” track Torch program participants to improve the “internal responsiveness” of meeting student needs. According to Holmes (2011), proactive or “intrusive” advising tends to work for the following reasons:

- Students who know that an academic advisor will contact them are more motivated to keep up with their work.
- Financial worries, which account for a large percentage of student attrition are of less concern to students who are advised and helped to fill out their applications.
- Intrusive advising provides the necessary nexus to make connections to the university retention services
- Referrals to needed student services, along with the ongoing attention which informs students that someone at the University cares about them, are the major contributions of intrusive advising.

#### **Support of SG 2.6:**

### **Ferris State University Strategic Goal 5:**

a. Ferris State University seeks to “develop and implement strategies for increasing collaboration among divisions, colleges, programs and student organizations” (SG 5.2) and “inform, support, and

educate students about higher education, its processes (i.e. financial aid), career possibilities, and Ferris” (SG 5.5).

**Support of SG 5.2:**

The Torch Program will collaborate with other programs and resources available on campus, including: The SCHOLAR Program, FSUS 100 course program, College of Business Internship Coordinator, College of Business Advancement Officer, Academic Advisors, Career Services , Campus RSO’s, University Diversity Office, Office of Disability Services, etc. - for the purpose of increasing student retention and graduation rates.

The Business Professional Torch program is designed to help students from day one through their entire college career. This structured program will give freshmen students the opportunity to participate in career exploration activities, prepare a portfolio, create a resume’, participate in sessions on networking effectively, and learn about various interviewing techniques. In the student’s sophomore year, they will be introduced to our Executive Mentor program and have the opportunity to pair up with an Executive from the business community. During their junior year, participants will participate in effective internship search strategies, participate in career/job fairs, and encouraged to join RSO’s and community events. During the participant’s senior year, events will focus on identifying effective job searches, evaluating job offers, completing graduation requirements, and activities designed to transitioning the student into their professional career.

**Support of SG 5.5:**

The College of Business Educational Counselor and Administrative Staff will identify a group of approximately 30 incoming freshman that fit the criteria for inclusion in the Torch Program. In particular, students will be drawn from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, at risk academically and/or social-economically. The student and parents will receive a letter explaining the pilot program and seeking their voluntary participation. Student who agree to participate in the College of Business Professional “Torch Program” will participate in the typical incoming freshman orientation program and activities in addition meeting and participating in additional planned program events (refer to the attached Torch – “Passport”) and intrusive advising follow up.

**b. The goals and intended outcome(s) of the event.**

The College of Business “Torch Program” committee is in the process of securing University and College of Business Freshman Student retention and graduation rates. We plan to compare the “current” retention rates, with the pilot program’s student retention rates to identify whether the “Torch’s” structured program and intrusive advising strategy is having a positive impact on COB/University student retention rates.

**c. A statement on how the event relates to the curriculum or a specific discipline, if appropriate.**

**d. A timeline:**

Pilot program designed to track incoming freshman retention and graduation rates over the next five (5) years with annual progress reports sent to the COB Dean.

**e. Description of the target audience, including the estimated number of participants.**

The College of Business Educational Counselor and Administrative Staff will identify a group of approximately 30 incoming freshman during the Fall of 2011 that fit the criteria for inclusion in the Torch Program.

**f. The expected impact that the event will have on Ferris.**

Increase in retention and graduation rates of COB students.

**g. A specific plan to assess the impact of the event on the University.**

Determine if there is an increase in retention and graduation rates of freshman cohort selected for this pilot program, as opposed to the control group.

**VI. Budget**

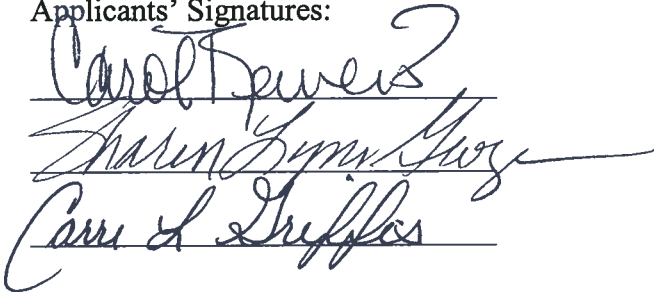
- a. Anticipated expenses (itemize and briefly explain). Refer to attached table.
- b. Funds anticipated from other sources. \$5,000 was allocated from CPTS Fund by COB Management Depart. Head to fund initial program activities.
- c. Total amount requested from Faculty and Staff Diversity Mini-Grant. Maximum (\$5,000)

**VII. Final Report**

A final report is required and it will appear on the Diversity Office's website. That report is due no later than three months after the funded activity. The final report should address:

- a: A self-evaluation
- b: Results of the event assessment
- c: Attendance figures
- d: Final budget

Applicants' Signatures:



Submission Date: 2-10-2012

Submit applications to Patty Terryn, Diversity and Inclusion Office, CSS 312. Review of applications will begin upon receipt and continue contingent on available funds.

Budget Overview			
	Requested Grant Funds	Funding from other sources	TOTAL BUDGET
<b>STIPEND</b>			
<b>HONORARIA:</b> 1) Sarah Mock, Director Executive Mentor and Internship Programs Xavier University- Williams College of Business. (Fall 2012) 2) Todd Zakrajsez, Ph.D. Executive Director of the Center for Faculty Excellence at the University of North Carolina. (Spring 2013) 3) Olie Malekzadeh – Dean College of Business, Kansas State University. *Depends on securing funds and speaker availability. Note: 2 speakers max. for Fall 2012 program, third person identified is an alternative choice.	<b>\$2,500-3,000</b>		
<b>TRAVEL</b>	<b>\$1000</b>		
<b>FOOD – Mentor Luncheon Fall 2012</b>	<b>\$400-500</b>		
<b>RENTALS</b>			
<b>PRINTING &amp; DUPLICATING</b> For “The Business Profession –Torch-College of Business” Student Program Booklet. Summer 2012	<b>\$500-600</b>		
<b>PROMOTION –</b>			
<b>SUPPLIES &amp; POSTAGE</b> Correspondence (mailings) to Students, Parents, and Mentors. Fall 2012 Supplies for student portfolios. Sp 2013	<b>\$200</b>		
<b>RESOURCE MATERIALS</b>			
<b>ASSESSMENT TOOLS -30X20</b>			
<b>OTHER</b>			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,600-5,300</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

## References:

Ferris State University. (2011). Ferris State University Diversity Plan 2008-2010. Available at:  
<http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/administration/president/diversityoffice//Plan/Diversityplan.pdf>

Ferris State University. (2011). Ferris State University Strategic Plan – Goals and Initiatives. Available at:  
[http://www.diversityweb.org/diversity\\_innovations/student\\_development/recruitment\\_retention\\_mentoring/intrusive\\_advising.cfm](http://www.diversityweb.org/diversity_innovations/student_development/recruitment_retention_mentoring/intrusive_advising.cfm)

Holmes, S. (2011). Student Recruitment, Retention, and Monitoring. Association of American Colleges and Universities. Diversity Web: An Interactive Resource Hub for Higher Ed. Available at  
[http://www.diversityweb.org/diversity\\_innovations/student\\_development/recruitment\\_retention\\_mentoring/intrusive\\_advising.cfm](http://www.diversityweb.org/diversity_innovations/student_development/recruitment_retention_mentoring/intrusive_advising.cfm)

Varney, J. (200). Intrusive Advising. National Academic Advising Association. Available at:  
[http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/AAT/NW30\\_3.htm#10](http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/AAT/NW30_3.htm#10)