

## **Faculty and Staff Diversity Mini-Grant Final Report**

**Project title:** Digital Animation and Game Design (DAGD) Peer Mentor Program

**Grant Recipients:** Jocelyn Goheen, Director of Student Services, Extended & International Operations

**Date Project Started:** Spring and Fall 2015 Semesters

**Amount of Money Funded by the Mini-Grant** \$2,800.00

### **1. How was the grant used to address a diversity or inclusion related goal?**

The Digital Animation and Game Design (DAGD) Peer Mentor Program is a program that addresses section 4 of the Diversity Plan to *“create environment for student learning that are inclusive of and sensitive to a diverse student population.”* Students enrolled into the DAGD Program at the Grand Rapids campus face a very different non-traditional college experience than a student entering a traditional main campus environment or program. The DAGD students face many challenges without having various social and academic activities planned to help them feel part of the overall university community and being without access to various student service traditionally offered at a main campus. The mentor in the program is charged with being a positive role model, to assist their mentee with the transition of being a student in the DAGD program and to help become socially and academically acclimated with attending the Ferris State University Grand Rapids campus.

During the first year of the program, various events with guest speakers were held from Frostburn Studios, YETI CGI, Steelcase, Dart Frog Creative and Think Chromatic and workshops which included Resume and Interviewing Tricks and Tips, Stress, Anxiety and Depression, and Test Anxiety. In addition, activities such as board and video game nights and a trip to Craig’s Cruisers helped the mentors and mentees get to know each

other on a social level. These events and activities helped foster diversity, inclusion and collaboration.

**2. Describe the audience that was impacted by the grant's implementation. Provide quantitative data, if available.**

The DAGD Peer Mentor Program consists of sophomore, junior and senior DAGD student volunteers (Mentors) who serve as positive role models to help with the academic success of first-year or transfer DAGD students (Mentees). The program is located at the Grand Rapids campus only. The program had a very successful first year with 49 students total participating out of around 180 active students in the DAGD program. The audience impacted was much broader when many of the events were offered by the program because they were opened up for all Ferris Grand Rapids student to attend.

The DAGD Peer Mentor Program brought various industry and program alumni in as guest speakers to discuss topics such as *Do's and Don'ts with Creating Artwork and Presenting Yourself Professionally* and *Tool Development/Gamification*. One example of the positive impact of offering the DAGD Peer Mentor program was after one of the industry guest speaker events one of the mentees of the program received a mentor internship to gain work experience within his degree major.

In addition to the DAGD students being involved with the peer mentor program, DAGD faculty and Ferris Grand Rapids staff were involved with planning and events. This positive and sometimes first connection to Ferris through the program between the Mentor and Mentees students and the DAGD faculty and Ferris Grand Rapids staff help give the students a contact to communicate with for questions and concerns.

**3. Grant recipients are required to provide a short narrative that details the specific efforts each of the collaborators made to the implementation of the grant.**

The DAGD Peer Mentor Faculty Coordinator, **Marty Lier** assisted the

program each semester by matching up the Mentors and Mentees, and conveying the expectations of the program and what it takes to be a Mentor or Mentee in the program. Professor Lier was available to both the Mentees and Mentors for questions, helping in setting up goals and expectations for the semester and facilitating various events and guest speakers appearances. The DAGD faculty, **David Baker**, **Andrew Smith**, **Nick Pattison** and **Jacob Pollak** and administration, **Tracy Hilty** and **Glen Okonoski** also provided support for the program and the events and guest speakers.

The Ferris State University Grand Rapids student service team comprised of Student Services Representative staff members, **Amanda Mitchell** and **Sara Salet**, and Financial Aid Officer, **Lindsay Young** who assisted in disseminating the programs applications and expectations, answering any questions from the student regarding the program, and helping facilitate and chaperone various social and academic events.

I would like to thank **Michele Albright**, Coordinator of Career Services and Volunteer Center, Ferris Center for Leadership, Activities and Career Services (CLACS) and **Chris Richmond**, PhD, LMFT University Counselor Ferris Birkam Health Center, Personal Counting Services for presenting on various topics in career services and overall mental health.

There were various Ferris State University Digital Animation and Game Design and Digital Media Software Engineering alumni and industry partners who were gracious to come in and guest speaker on various topics. Thank you **Kyle Bourcier** (Dart Frog Creative), **Kyle Dhyne** (Steelcase), **Josh Freaney** (YETI CGI), **Chris Allers** (YETI CGI), **Ward Makielski** (YETI CGI), **Jay Hoelscher** (Think Chromatic), **Kalila Kolberg** (DAGD Alumni), and **James O'Brien** (Frostburn Studios).

#### **4. What is your overall assessment of the project's impact on the Ferris community? How did this impact compare to what you expected?**

The goals and intended outcomes of the DAGD Peer Mentor Program were the following: 1) Provide first-year, transfer and struggling DAGD students

(Mentees) with a positive peer role model (Mentor); 2) Provide experienced DAGD upperclassman students (Mentors) with a leadership role and opportunity; and 3) Help incoming first year, transfer and struggling students academically and socially by establishing an academic plan and schedule, and achieving short and long term goals and outcomes. I believe all goals were achieved and successful throughout the DAGD Peer Mentor Program. Not all paired Mentors and Mentees connected as well as others, but overall there was a positive response from all participants.

The program offered events with industry, DAGD alumni, Ferris CLACS office and Ferris Personal Counseling Office and all events were not as successful as expected. Many of the students are working full-time and going to school full-time, so offering the events at a time when all students are available was a challenge. Some events, especially bringing in industry guest speakers were more successful and resulted in real life advice and real world contacts in the gaming and digital animation industry.

Surveys were administered at the end of spring and fall 2015 semesters. After each semester, improvements to the program were made from student feedback. For example, the students asked for designated open times for mentors and mentees to meet weekly and a room was reserved for that purpose. The DAGD students and faculty provided very positive feedback, with comments such as:

*"I really enjoyed when we have upper classman or those who are successful come talk to us about what is going to come next."*

*"I loved my mentor and fellow mentees!"*

*"This was a wonderful program. I hope it keeps thriving. Thank you."*

*"Can't wait to help out again next semester."*

*"My mentees were wonderful and we had a lot of fun."*

*"I loved Jay Hoelscher and the DAGD alumni that came in to talk."*

*"I had a great experience and look forward to next semester."*

*"I had a good time. It was nice to meet people."*

The overall impact of the program was more successful for the overall DAGD student community than expected. The Diversity and Inclusion mini-grant gave the program the jump start it needed to gain momentum and popularity within the DAGD student body and the **DAGD Peer Mentor Program** is still continuing even after the grant.

**5. Present a final budget including all funds received and spent related to the project, with special focus on the funds received via the Diversity Mini-grant.**

Item	Diversity Mini-Grant Funds	Funding from other sources	Charges	Left of Budget	Itemization of Changes
Stipend		\$800.00			
Honoraria (Incentives such as gift cards to University Bookstore, Food Court, and etc.)	\$500.00		\$460.00	\$40.00	\$20.00 (3/24/15 Gift Card YETI CGI Guest Speakers); \$40.00 (3/25/15 Gift Cards for Guest Speakers for SP15) \$400.00 (12/14/15 F15 Incentive Gift Cards Kendall/Ferris Bookstore)
Travel (travel cost to events outside of campus and for guest speakers from main campus)	\$300.00			\$300.00	
Food (food for kick-offs, workshops, study sessions, and end of year banquets)	\$1,000.00		\$837.96	\$162.04	\$210.00 (SP15 Kick-Off Lunch) \$16.97 (2/24/15 Food Guest Speaker); \$10.49 (3/24/15 Food Guest Speakers) \$262.50 (F15 Kick-Off Lunch); \$35.73 (10/14/15 Food Guest Speaker); \$4.99 (10/30/15 Food Guest Speaker); \$40.76 (11/20/15 Food Guest Speaker); \$256.52 (12/18/15 Food End of F15 Game Night)
Printing & Duplicating (printing of flyers, certificates and etc.)	\$100.00			\$100.00	
Supplies & Postage (supplies such as plates, napkins, cups, and etc.)	\$100.00		\$8.98	\$91.02	\$8.98 (12/2 Plates & Napkins for End of F15 Game Night)
Other - Group Events (group events such as Craig's Cruisers, Video Game)	\$800.00		\$599.60	\$200.40	\$299.80 (Craig's Cruisers Spring 15); \$299.80 (Craig's Cruisers Fall 15 Mid-Term)

Arcade, etc.)					
	\$2,800.00	\$800.00	\$1,906.54	\$893.46	

**Primary Grant Recipient's Signature:** *Jocelyn Goheen*

**Date:** March 8, 2016