**2016 Maple Scholars Projects**

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iPad Research

**Maple Scholars Proposal for Summer 2016**

**Comparing the Goshen College iPad Experience to Other iPad Programs**

**Erin Milanese, Learning Technologies**

**Description:**

This past August, the beginning of the 2015/16 academic year, first-year students were given an iPad as part of the New Student Days check-in process – the fourth cohort of first-years to take part in this tradition. The four year anniversary of the iPad program is a significant milestone as close to 100% of traditional undergraduate students now possess an iPad. It also marks the culmination of the pilot phase of the program, and a transition to long-term thinking about the program and how and if it should continue.

Throughout the iPad program’s existence at Goshen College, data has been collected on iPad use, including surveys of favorite applications, interviews with faculty on how iPads have impacted the classroom, and the bi-annual National Survey of Student Engagement on the Impact of Technology. However, one important piece of the research remains: how has our iPad experience compared to colleges & universities with similar programs? This project will begin to answer that question.

The Scholar will start by reviewing the data compiled on our own iPad program, in order to understand how the current research question fits within the larger project. A list of colleges and universities with similar iPad programs will be developed by the student, and any information, assessments, and reports available on those programs will be collected. Finally, the Scholar will compare the findings to the research and findings of our own program. As we determine the future of the GC iPad program, the research and analysis done by the Scholar will be of great importance to the institution.

**Background expected:**

It is NOT expected that the student be a technology savant! However, an interest in educational technology and learning more about the iPad program at Goshen College would be beneficial. Strong research skills and a willingness to contact students, faculty, and administrators at other schools is necessary. Students from any discipline may apply.

**Anticipated Results:**

The ultimate goal of this project is to provide the college with important comparative information as we decide the future of the iPad program. The Scholar will collect and analyze a large amount of data that will be compiled into a report that can be shared with Goshen College faculty and administration.

Expectations: I work daytime hours and expect the Scholar to be available to meet with me several times a week. Though the research is primarily done online, and can be completed from any location, a portion of this project is connecting with employees at other colleges and universities, and that work must be done during normal business hours.

Peace Breaks Out

**Maple Scholars Proposal for Summer 2016**

**How Computer Code can teach Cooperative Decision-Making**

**Jeanette L Shown, Computing Science**

**Description**

In modern terms, as human play has evolved into the 21st century, a strong component of play is found in digital-computer games. Although we know the games are not in a sense "reality", they have a real narrative, regardless of their base simplicity.

Johan Huizinga in his landmark book, *Homo Ludens: a study of the play element in culture*, concisely observes that "culture arises in and out of play".

All computer code is authored by human beings; all humans are a part of the culture which arises in and out of play. Our narratives are interwoven in the code of digital games. We can agree that books and their narratives have impacted the world, so too, it is with games. Games teach us how we interact with each other, what "sportsmanship" is and what the lack of it does to the human condition.

The United States military uses both face to face roleplaying and computer simulations to teach soldiers how to act in combatant and non-combatant situations, quite successfully.

Can a computer game create an environment of cooperative decision-making? Robert Axelrod wrote in his book, *The Evolution of Cooperation*, "Under what conditions will cooperation emerge in a world of egotists without a central authority?"

Computer tournaments have been held to test outcomes to this question. One computer program, "TIT FOR TAT", by Professor Anatol Rapoport of the University of Toronto, developed the simplest, but the best program for this type of tournament.

In this proposed iteration, "Peace Breaks Out", we will take the "TIT FOR TAT" game and improve upon it, with possible collaboration with David Housman who is proposing a Maple Scholars project on Game Theory.

**Background Expected:**

The student participant should have the ability to program algorithms, to be open to learning how to expand from those programmed algorithms into a graphical user interface for a web-based game using Gamemaker©. The student will also need to research prisoner-dilemma like conflicts to create a historical narrative which will guide the creation of the web-based game or mobile game application.

**Anticipated Results:**

Development of a conflict resolution game which illustrates how cooperative techniques can resolve prisoner-dilemma like conflicts and if time is present, to create a second level where conflicts are created that the player must solve in a cooperative manner. The deliverable will be a web-based and/or a mobile application that will teach players conflict resolution skills.

**Additional Information:**

I have managed teams in the software industry as well as in classroom settings for over 15 years. In game development companies, I led teams to render games from the concept going to completion. Currently, I have students from Systems Analysis working with the Elkhart County Parks Department to create a web-based reservation system for their facilities.

Game Theory

**Maple Scholars Proposal for Summer 2016**

**Game Theoretic Models of Power, Cooperation, and Fair Allocation**

**David Housman, Mathematics**

**Description:**

The first veto by a United States President was against a bill apportioning congressional representatives to states. The United Nations Security Council passes measures by simple majority but five permanent members can veto any measure. Some European parliaments have representatives assigned based on votes for a political party. Some New York State county councils have members with weighted votes because they represent different numbers of constituents. How can voting power be defined and distributed fairly in these types of situations?

Under what circumstances will self-interested individuals cooperate with other self-interested individuals? This is a central question underlying attempts by scholars to understand how cooperative behavior has evolved in humans and other organisms. One model that has been extensively studied has been repeated play of the two-player Prisoners’ Dilemma game. How can this work be extended to other situations and more players?

By collaborating, several cities can save money on upgrading their water treatment facilities. What is a fair way of allocating the savings? Several people have inherited an estate, but they differ in their opinions about the worth of each item in the estate. What is a fair way of allocating the estate? Different sportswriters have different rankings for college football teams. What is a fair way of melding these different opinions into a single ranking? In these situations, do the agents involved have incentives for stating their true costs, valuations, or rankings?

Game theory is the mathematical study of situations of conflict and/or cooperation. In this research, students develop a mathematical model of a situation, define fairness properties or rules of engagement, suggest solution concepts, determine solutions for their specific situation, and/or provide appropriate interpretations. Students may extend, modify, or rely on previous work done by students or results found in the mathematics, economics, biology, and political science literature, or students may begin with a totally new situation, model, properties, rules, or methods.

Jeanette Shown is proposing a Maple Scholars project to create an interactive web based game, which illustrates how "Peace Breaks Out." Depending upon the interest of the student interested in researching game theory, there is a potential for collaboration with Jeanette’s project.

**Background Expected:**

A student participant should have the ability to read, critique, and write mathematical proofs. For some research areas, the student participant should have the ability to write computer programs to explore possibilities. I am fairly flexible about when and where students work; however, I do expect full-time effort: 40-plus hours per week and no other commitments.

**Anticipated Results:**

Development of new mathematical results communicated via a written report, which may be submitted to a journal for publication, and an oral presentation at one or more professional meetings.

Goshen Spotlight

**Maple Scholars Proposal for Summer 2016**

**Goshen Spotlight Documentary**

**Kyle Hufford, Communication Department**

**Description:**

BACKGROUND

The Goshen Spotlight project would not only combine multiple communication disciplines but also provide a service and benefit to our local. This project doubled the visitors to the Goshen Commons site in 2013. In 2014 we partnered with the Elkhart Truth where these stories gained even more attention and exposure in our local community. Over the last three years we have learned what works and what doesn’t in our process to capture these stories. In 2015 we expanded our scope and diversity within our community to reach areas we had not before.

After having the experiences of this project for the last three years it has become clear that a slight change in the scope could refresh the project and offer a variety of experiences for the student(s) involved.

One fact remains over the course of the projects, there are an endless amount of heartwarming and intriguing stories in Goshen.

PROJECT SCOPE

I am proposing for this summer to research and create a long form single topic documentary. This is a departure from the last three years in format and focus. We will research topics prior to the summer and choose a story that is both uniquely Goshen and one that has received little attention up to this point. A long form documentary will allow the student to focus on one topic for the summer term and be immersed in the research and telling of a singular story. This will be a departure from the multiple story approach of the last three years. The length of the documentary will be between 20 and 40 minutes.

UNIQUE CREATIVE OPPORTUNITY

Local news outlets like Goshen News and the local TV stations are good at representing the current news of the day. However, they don't always have the resources or interest in covering the stories of our community. This project would attempt to highlight a story that few have heard before and at the same time contribute to the discipline of documentary storytelling. No other organization is creating long form video packages focused on our local Goshen community.

**Background expected:**

The Maple Scholar student would need to meet the following requirements: (1) Have taken DMP I & II or the transferred credit equivalence. (2) Be at least a second year student. (3) Have interest in journalism and story telling (4) Ability to work well with others in group settings and also be a self motivator. (5) Have a US drivers license.

**Anticipated Results:**

SCHOLARLY BENEFIT

The discipline of journalism has seen tremendous changes and shifts in the last 10 years. Goshen Commons itself is an effort to provide a different kind of journalism in an alternative format. Convergence is becoming more and more important in the field of communication. We would like to answer a few questions such as;

1. What unique untold stories are in our community?
2. Why have these stories not been told?
3. What about these stories will relate to an audience?
4. How do we tell a story that connects and is interesting?

INTERDISCIPLINARY BENEFITS

This project will give both the professor and the student interdisciplinary experiences within the field of Communication. Opportunities to use one area of study in another are always encouraged in our field because they all relate to each other so well.

The major interdisciplinary benefit is the research and qualitative study that goes into every story. As we saw in 2015, for every story gathered there is an opportunity for the student to learn and research a topic they never approached before. In turn their work educates the public on their story’s topic.

STUDENT BENEFIT

In addition to a lot of the benefits already mentioned the student would get to practically implement theories learned in classes. Our media student will also leave the project with portfolio material to use for jobs or internships.

GOSHEN COLLEGE BENEFIT

Goshen College will gain more community exposure and good PR as Goshen Commons becomes more popular. It is also possible that if a process is developed and in place for Goshen Commons to have video content that this can be continued after this project is over.

PROJECT EXPECTATIONS

The student is expected to have a completed documentary by the end of the Maple Scholars term. This includes all research, production, post production and audio.

PROJECT FEASIBILITY

Each week will have goals and milestones to hit in order to complete the project in time. A full story outline will be finished prior to the start of Maple Scholars in order to get a jump on research and filming. This also gives us time during the week to implement an evaluation process so we can improve on our workflow and style. Expectation would be 30hrs a week on the assigned video. Some of this time is going to be in the evenings and weekends.

Stop-Motion Animation

**Maple Scholars Proposal for Summer 2016**

**Exploring Basic Stop-Motion Animation**

**Randy Horst | Art Department**

**Description**

This proposal is about exploring a new artistic medium. Many of the newest developments in 2-dimensional visual art are in the area of video. Traditional 2-dimensional artists—painters and drawers —have been most interested in exploring the Stop-Motion Animation approach to creating videos. The reasons for this are obvious—stop-motion allows the artist to utilize the artistic skills they already possess. The artist constructs a single image with traditional 2-dimensional media, with digital painting or vector graphics software, or arranges a composition with manikins or objects, and then photographs the composition. Repeating this process with minor changes to the composition creates a series of images that, when combined using software, can create an animation. The Goshen College Art Department is not currently engaged in this artform.

I am proposing a Maple Scholar project where a student and myself would explore the current software, hardware, and production options for creating Stop-Motion. My goal is not to create a new class in Stop-Motion Animation, but explore the most cost-effect and production-effect method to introduce Stop-Motion Animation to an existing class(es). With the creation of the new computer lab in VA22, some of the hardware resources are already in place to make Stop-Motion Animation a new feature of our program.

The student will spend approximately the first third of the project 1) familiarizing themselves with examples of Stop-Motion Animations, with special attention given to artists that have created animations as part of their artistic output (ex. William Kentridge), 2) researching and exploring the software, hardware, and commercially available support options for Stop-Motion Animations, and 3) researching the developmental steps involved in creating an animation. A specific list of issues will be provided to help guide this research. During the second two thirds of the project, informed by their research, the student will develop and create at least one Stop-Motion Animation to ‘test run’ and refine the process. This will include developing animation concepts and storyboards, as well as creating the images for the animation.

**Background Expected**

This project is suitable for current sophomore, junior, or senior students interested in exploring Stop-Motion Animation. The student should have some experience with personal digital media (such as using iPads for taking photographs and/or video), with paint and/or drawing software (particularly for iPods and iPads), iMovie, GarageBand, and/or basic digital photography. The ideal student will also have some traditional studio training in drawing or painting.

**Anticipated Results**

The student will be researching Stop-Motion Animation and selecting the most cost-effective and production-effective method appropriate for Goshen College students and art classes. This information will be shared during the weekly colloquia meetings. Once a method(s) has been selected, the student will create at least one Stop-Motion Animation guided by their research as well as trial and error. Progress on creating this/these animations will also be shared at the weekly colloquia meetings. The completed animation(s) will be shared at the program finale activities.

Digital Humanities

**Maple Scholars Proposal for Summer 2016**

**Exploring Digital Humanities and Creating Digital Archives**

**Ann Hostetler, English Department**

**Description:**

Digital humanities is a new and exciting field growing out of the intersection between computer science and traditional humanities disciplines, particularly with regard to archives, research, and information access. The field is by nature interdisciplinary, bringing traditional humanities research questions, techniques and values to digital media, while also using new digital concepts and structures to rethink and organize traditional humanities fields.

**This project will have three components:**

1) Researching key work that is being done currently in digital media and creating a resource that can inform future English Department scholarship and preparation of students for career fields, but also to create a resource to share across disciplines, particularly with the library, the computer science department, the history department, and other department invested in research and archival work. This will include both library and digital research, as well as visits to the Notre Dame library, which has a brand new center for digital humanities, and interviewing people in the field. We hope to discover the kinds of career pathways and careers opening up in this field as well. Potentially, this networking will position the Maple Scholar for further exploration of careers in this area.

2) Using the research to inform a plan to digitize the nearly 40 years’ worth of work created by the English Department’s unique publishing program through Broadside and Pinchpenny Press. What is the best way to do this? What kinds of resources will be accessible and searchable? What do we keep? What do we throw away? What will go in a physical archive? We will also use the research to shape the future of the publishing program, exploring how digital media can compliment what we are already doing.

3) Fostering paths for further collaboration between different entities at the college. For instance, this research could also benefit the Mennonite Historical Library, the Mennonite Archives, and other researchers on campus. The hope is to plan a series of conversations with representatives of interested departments and entities to create a base for future interdisciplinary work. Maple Scholars is an ideal place to start this conversation, as it is already an interdisciplinary forum of committed students.

Student Project: The student will settle on a research project of their choice to grow out of exploration in this field.

**Background expected:**

The successful applicant will be a strong writer with college writing and research experience (should have completed Expository Writing and the Goshen Seminar) and possess some knowledge of computer systems and databases, or be willing to learn. The student should also be a self-starter and capable of independent work. I will offer mentoring and supervision, but the student will also need to take initiative in creating their own research project and providing input concerning the larger questions of the project. The student can be from any year in the college if they have the requisite experience.

**Anticipated Results:**

This project should lead to:

1. The Maple Scholar’s original research project.
2. A plan for digitization of the English Department’s Broadside and Pinchpenny archives.
3. Creation of a resource for Goshen Faculty and students to develop their own work in the area of digital humanities. This could take the form of a Web Page or, a Google Doc that could be turned into a Web Page.
4. A plan for the wise use of digital media in the future of the English Department publishing program.
5. Establishing a network of faculty and staff at Goshen College who can continue to converse about and develop collaboration to further digital humanities at GC.
6. A clearer idea of possible careers in digital humanities and ways to prepare students for them.
7. If the Maple Scholar has computer literacy in this area, the exploration of various platforms for digital Humanities will be a part of the project. In this case, we hope to come up with a list of platforms and software that could be purchased with further work in this area in mind.

Record Digitalization

**Maple Scholars Proposal for Summer 2016**

**Digitalization and Content Analysis of *The Record* Newspaper**

**Duane Stoltzfus – Communication**

**Eric Bradley – Good Library**

**Description:**

Since its earliest days as the Elkhart Institute to today, Goshen College has been served by a campus newspaper. *The Goshen College Record*, just like the community it represents, has taken on various shapes and sizes through time and presents one of the clearest windows through which to view the Goshen College story. While *The Record’s* current issues appear online, the vast majority of its back issues remain available only through a visit to the Mennonite Historical Library or *The Record’s* offices. Furthermore, finding information in *The Record* today is just as difficult as it was in 1964 when GC student Donald Kurtz lamented “the greatest throwback in my work was the lack of an index of the paper, necessitating an immense amount of work for the relatively little found.”[1] This project seeks to incorporate current technologies in the digital humanities to make back issues of *The Record* available online and developed as a research tool for electronic analysis.

In the summer of 2014, we initiated this project with Kolton Nay as the Maple Scholar. In the course of that summer, he digitized nine years of copies of The Record. The research carried out that summer is already bearing fruit. On the Good Library’s site, one can conduct searches for words, phrases and topics in issues that have already been digitized. Nay, a senior, was able to use technological skills, programming languages, history, mathematics, and linguistics to digitize the past issues of The Record and conduct a gender study analysis of the texts.

Once again, we propose that the selected student(s) will scan volumes of *The Record* based on her or his own research interest. Examples include GC student attitudes during times of war and how have they shifted over time and op-ed / perspective contributions of women compared with men over time. As issues are scanned, the student(s) will take the opportunity to perform a content analysis of the material and develop basic metadata for each issue. Once scanned, the student(s) will convert the digital content to readable text through optical character recognition software. This completed digital content and metadata will then be inserted by the student into collection management software to allow viewing and searching ability online. The student(s) will conclude the project by preparing his or her findings into an article for publication.

**Background expected:**

This project provides an opportunity for students to begin creative work, as many of the specialized tasks involved with digitizing will be taught during the project. The interdisciplinary nature of this project allows students of any subject background to apply.

**Anticipated Results:**

This project will result in one of the first digitized student newspapers of a Mennonite or Anabaptist related college. To date, only Eastern Mennonite University’s *Weather Vane* is digitized. Havingboth of these publications digitized will allow for cross examination of content. This content will be of value to individuals in a wide variety of disciplines and to both local and external audiences. Examples include a GC sociology student finding value studying past student perceptions of a particular campus issue and a genealogist discovering writings of a great grandparent. The completed content analysis will provide further insight into the story of Goshen College as well as provide opportunities for additional electronic analyses in the future. For example, Andrew Torget and Jon Christiensen have used digitized newspapers in Texas to map language patterns.[2]

[1] Donald Kurtz, “A Short History of the Goshen College Record” (History 412 Seminar, Goshen College, 1964), Mennonite Historical Library.

[2] Andrew Torget and Jon Christensen, “Building New Windows into Digitized Newspapers,” *Journal of Digital Humanities* 1, no. 3 (October 1, 2012), <http://journalofdigitalhumanities.org/1-3/building-new-windows-into-digitized-newspapers-by-andrew-torget-and-jon-christensen/>.

GC Bystander Education

**Maple Scholars Proposal for Summer 2016**

**The GC Bystander Approach to Sexual Assault Education & Prevention: PIN Evaluation and Program Development**

**Kendra L. Yoder, PhD, MSW**

**Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work**

**Beth Martin Birky, PhD**

**Department of English & Women’s and Gender Studies**

**Description:**

In August of 2015, the Prevention and Intervention Network (PIN) launched its first campus educational training event. PIN represents the efforts of a small interdisciplinary team of faculty, administrators and students committed to providing training and education to the Goshen College campus about the role of bystanders in reducing the risk of sexual assault on campus and in the broader Goshen community. This collaboration began in January of 2015, when Launa Rohrer (VP of Student Life) and Kendra Yoder began a dialogue with a group of committed student activist/scholars about creating a group of peer educators that could provide skill training and resource information for the campus community about sexual assault prevention and response. This dialogue also emerged in a time of growing awareness and concern about Title IX campus accountability and the distinct institutional changes and challenges facing Goshen College support resources. As a result of this dialogue, in March of 2015, Yoder and a group of seven GC students attended a training entitled, Bringing in the Bystander, a program developed by the University of New Hampshire Prevention Innovations group. This training and resource opportunity was made possible by the generous support of Student Life, Student Senate and Women’s and Gender Studies funding. The group returned to campus with skills, resources and a vision for how they would implement programming the following academic year to the GC community.

Since the original training, six additional students have joined the original group to complete a 25 hour bystander training during August 18-24, 2015. In addition to the intensive training prior to the beginning of school, this group continues to meet weekly for 1.5 hours to discuss the latest research, learn about campus & community resources, and plan for upcoming programs. One student educator has documented over 80 hours of reading, training and presenting as part of his PIN experience. By November 8, over 250 GC students, faculty and staff have been trained through this program including Leadership Training (for RA’S & MA’s), ICC classes, the Men’s basketball team, two off campus houses, and an invited training during the sexual assault awareness week. Additionally, this group planned and presented a fall convocation with Beth Martin Birky, the faculty advocate for sexual assault response, along with short invited presentations to the teaching faculty forum and the President’s Council about the importance of this programming. Additionally, these educators will host a four hour train-the-trainer event on November 21 to educate the general public and to recruit an additional contingent of committed students to replace those students departing the group for SST next semester. Additional programming and visioning is planned for the spring semester as this group continues to respond to the demand and interest on campus.

The GC PIN approach merges two well-supported areas of scholarship including the efficacy of peer education along with the bystander approach to addressing sexual assault prevention on college campuses (Banyard, Eckstein & Moynihan, 2010). It also stands to offer important contributions to this body of on-going research in terms of GC’s unique size and Christian/Anabaptist context, as well as the group’s interdisciplinary collaboration between faculty, administrators and students. In the spirit of this collaborative approach, Beth Martin Birky and Kendra Yoder would like to co-mentor a group of three to four students from within the student educator group. As mentors, we would offer a range of academic and professional expertise and experiences that would enrich our ability to think creatively about how to best proceed with developing campus resources and programming, along with interdisciplinary contributions to the scholarship. Maple Scholars stands as an opportunity to reflect upon this first year of programming, assess and evaluate our experiences, write and present our findings, and ultimately build and improve the program for the future.

**Background expected:**

Students participating in this particular Maple Scholars project will represent members of the on-going PIN student group trained in March, August or November of 2015. By selecting 3-4 of these already highly educated and trained students, it offers the Maple Scholars team the best opportunity for scholarship and programming outcomes, as it allows students to build on an already expansive set of readings, discussions and programming experiences that have or will happen this academic year on Goshen College’s campus.

**Anticipated Results:**

The Maple Scholars PIN team will be slated with the responsibilities of evaluating all of the 2015-2016 pre and post test data from programming, including a summary report highlighting the challenges, successes, and areas of growth that the group experienced over this year. The evaluation data will come from standardized pre and post test data collected throughout the academic year, as well as from focus groups and interviews with students and faculty involved in the training. Additionally, the PIN scholars will use the evaluation data to write a scholarly article to submit to at least two academic and professional journals. This paper will also provide the base for a minimum of two conference presentation proposals for the 2016-17 academic year. This group will also be responsible for researching and writing for possible grant monies to support attendance to these academic conferences, along with additional grant exploration for bringing in key speakers onto campus as well as the material and human resources needed to support the continuation of this program. Finally, this Maple scholar’s team will continue to develop the training and campus resources for the GC bystander trainings for the following year along with developing additional online and print survivor resources.

**Maple Scholars Proposal for Summer 2016**

**Short Title: A Compendium of Joban Resources**

**The Book of Job as Reflected in in Popular Culture:**

**From Antiquity to the Present**

**Paul Keim - Bible, Religion and Philosophy; Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures**

**Description:**

I was recently commissioned to write a commentary on the Book of Job for the Believers Church Bible Commentary series. One of the hallmarks of the series, highlighted in each volume, is a section called “the text in the life of the church.” In pursuing the ways in which the Book of Job has been received and used by believers and seekers, I am particularly interested in discovering how the book has been reflected in “popular” culture through the ages. Alongside scholarly treatments of the book and its themes, for which I have collected an extensive bibliography, I am turning my attention to the ways in which the cast of the Book of the Job has appeared in a variety of “popular” media – visual as well as verbal, over the centuries.

**Background expected:**

The successful applicant will have a strong background knowledge of the Bible and the methodologies of literary and artistic interpretation that characterize biblical scholarship. The student will have a proven track record of research skills and an interest in art, art history, intercultural communication and interpretation. The student will have the ability to search for primary and secondary sources, to read them with comprehension, compile annotated bibliographies and engage in an informed discussion of the themes of the project with the professor. The successful applicant will be fully conversant with current tools of electronic data collection and presentation.

**Anticipated Results:**

The work of the project will tie directly into the work on the commentary. In particular, it will inform the two distinctive sections of this series, namely “The Text in Biblical Context” and “The Text in the Life of the Church.” The student will receive recognition and acknowledgement in the

published edition of the commentary.

***Reentry in Elkhart County***

**Maple Scholars Proposal for Summer 2016**

***Research and Model Development to Strengthen the Safety Net and Support Healthy Reentry for Formerly Incarcerated and Paroled Citizens of Elkhart County***

**Carolyn Schrock-Shenk,**

**Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies**

**Description:**

Across the United States some 10,000 people leave incarceration and reenter society every week. In addition, there is growing bipartisan recognition that recent mass incarceration is a serious failure of the US Criminal Justice System. Already this acknowledgement has begun to reduce sentences for non-violent offenses and will most likely continue to do so; increasing even more the number of people reentering our communities. This will compound what is already a severe problem facing our society. While massive amounts of money have been spent on convicting and imprisoning hundreds of thousands of people (often the poor or marginalized), very little public money is invested in helping people after they have served their sentences and are released back into our communities.This lack of investment plays a key role in recidivism. Currently most assistance for those struggling with reentry is rather piecemeal and provided by small, non-profit, often faith-based organizations poorly equipped to meet this large complex need.

While the needs in Elkhart County are not unusually different from other communities throughout the US., there is currently no agency in this area dedicated solely to addressing concerns of the recently released, or those on parole, to locate employment, safe and adequate housing, mental health, transportation, new life-skills and a support system. What Elkhart County does possess is a hundreds of individuals, social service agencies and churches that recognize the need and in a myriad of ways are doing remarkable things in an attempt to provide components of that safety net.

What is missing is a centralized, well-funded effort to provide structure and networking capacity for these efforts. Elkhart County Sheriff Brad Rogers and other concerned community members have imagined such a group, calling it the [Elkhart County Reentry Initiative](https://www.facebook.com/Elkhart-County-Reentry-Initiative-ECRI-326383307451253/). As part of this vision, they compiled a list of available resources in the community. At this point, however, it is no-one’s main responsibility to connect and maximize all of these efforts thereby decreasing the potential effectiveness of the entire re-entry process.

This project entails learning about existing Elkhart County efforts seeking to understand what is working and what is missing, and proposing best ways to synthesize and connect these programs in order to strengthen support for this fragile community of formerly incarcerated people. A key desired outcome is the creation of a model with staffing and resources that can become a common point of contact for those in need of these services and a clearinghouse for the various agencies working to support reentry. There are exemplary models around the country (such as one in Lancaster, PA) and there may be some travel involved to explore the exceptional ones.

**Background expected:**

This project would be ideal for a student (or students) interested in Sociology/Social Work or Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies. While knowledge of criminal justice, restorative justice and social service agencies would be helpful, the strengths of communication, community organizing, and organizational development are even more important.

**Anticipated Results:**

Primary components of the assignment are to:

* Understand the reentry needs through reading and interviews (of the recently released and perhaps some who have been re-incarcerated)
* Interview the numerous stakeholders in this community who are addressing reentry pieces
* Examine and understand the strengths and needs of the various agencies
* Explore the overlaps and gaps in the overall reentry process
* Research successful reentry programs in other communities, visiting when appropriate
* Develop/propose a model specific to Elkhart County

I would expect the student to work 5-8 hours a day with time off for lunch and breaks. *(Are there typical Maple Scholar expectations?)* The work will vary from Internet research to making appointments, visiting agencies, interviewing service providers and recently released persons, organizing data, brainstorming models, etc.