Women's Giving Circle Grant

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Organizational Information

Summary of Student Social Services
Student Social Services’ mission is to provide students with interventions, education, and access to resources which empower them to address barriers relative to academic progress and personal success. An innovative approach to student support services that is centered on a social work model and theoretical base is used. Students must have support in areas of their life that contribute to their overall safety, well-being, and stability so that they can meet their academic and personal goals. Student Social Services achieves this through the following services: case management, public assistance support, housing counseling, food assistance, resource connection, and faculty/staff consultation.

Student Social Services also serves as a field placement site for social work practicum students through the St. Louis Field Education Collaborative. This program provides bachelors and masters level social work students with a two semester on-site learning experience at a social service agency or department.

Program highlights
During the 2016-2017 academic year, Student Social Services provided on-going case management to 103 students in need. 71% of the students served were women. We supplied 290 snack packs to students and awarded 89 hot meals to students struggling with hunger. We helped 84 students remain housed or secure housing if homeless. We also piloted an on-campus food pantry and created a utility assistance program.

Student Social Services also provided practicum placements for three UMSL social work students this year. To date, 100% of these students have secured employment in the field or have applied and been accepted to graduate school.

Campus Partnerships
Student Social Services addresses student support from a systems approach and has working relationships and collaborative partnerships with a multitude of campus and community resources. Our most significant partnerships are with Residential Life, Sodexo, Financial Aid, the Veterans Center, Student Retention Services, and Counseling Services. These partnerships allow us to work with students holistically and strategically.

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We also have a strong partnership with the UMSL School of Social Work. As a field placement site, we provide social work students a unique opportunity to develop skills necessary to translate social work theory to serve in a critical role within higher education. The School of Social Work provides Student Social Services with evaluation assistance, marketing of positions, field instructor support and professional development, and assistance with supporting practicum students once placed. It is also important to note that women currently represent 85% of UMSL School of Social Work students.

**Purpose of the Grant**

This grant is proposing a program that will provide female social work students with financial support to complete their field practicum placement with Student Social Services.

Across colleges and universities there is a rapidly growing need for professional social workers to provide support to students. Since women represent the majority of social workers, this is a tremendous opportunity for women to take the lead in this new and innovative field. In light of the ever present earnings gap in the United States – coupled with the increased competition for jobs – it is imperative that we are providing women with the skills and professional development necessary to be leaders in new careers paths. It is therefore critical that we support and encourage women that are interested in higher education social work practice.

The practicum field placement will provide targeted skill development, exposure to social theory and practice within the higher education field, access to other women in leadership through campus and alumni events, and one-on-one mentoring and guidance. A practicum with Student Social Services places students at the forefront of the field.

**Goals:**

- Increase rates of higher level job placement for female social workers
- Increase social work students’ skills in higher education case management
- Increase exposure to personal leadership opportunities and experiences for women in social work

**Objectives:**

- Provide professional mentoring and access to professional development
- Provide a rich and engaged learning experience centered on leadership and empowerment
- Provide targeted skill development opportunities and hands-on experiences
- Provide financial incentive to choose placement with Student Social Services

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Target population
The target population for this proposal is female, undergraduate, social work students who are interested in, or preparing for a career in higher education social work/case management.

Timeline
May & June: Interview practicum applicants, review learning agreements to include leadership and professional empowerment components
July: Practicum student confirmation
Aug – April: 570 hours completed
Oct & March: School of Social Work site visits and evaluation
May: Graduation

Benefits
This program will directly benefit two women in the UMSL School of Social Work. A grant of $2000 would provide financial support to two practicum students as they fulfill the program’s requirements. Students are required to complete a two-semester practicum totaling 570 hours each, yet the practicum is typically unpaid. Students completing their practicums often have to decrease their wage earning hours in order to complete practicum hours. Having financial support and incentive to choose this practicum placement will position these women to be leaders in the growing field of social work in higher education.

This program also benefits Student Social Services by allowing the office to be competitive with other well-known practicum sites in St. Louis. It will interest prospective students that will have to apply and interview for positions. This will allow for a more selective process that will yield a high quality student for placement and service.

Lastly, the proposal benefits the UMSL students that are served by the office of Student Social Services. Having engaged, eager, and committed practicum students will increase the service and program quality of Student Social Services. Students who are served by the office benefit from quality case management, assistance, and interventions to persist to the next semester.

Publicize
Information about practicum opportunities and the proposed scholarship would be communicated to prospective students though the School of Social Work Practicum Fair and seminar meetings, emails to social work students, and on the Student Social Work website under Field Placement.

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Evaluation

Evaluation of practicum students is conducted in an on-going and structured process. Students begin their practicum with an extensive learning agreement that is created in collaboration with the student, School of Social Work, and the practicum site supervisor. Practice activities and experiences are documented to monitor progress in skill development. The School of Social Work facilitates two site visits that include evaluation of progress. In addition to the learning agreement, the goals of this proposal would be measured by practicum students’ participation and involvement in campus and community leadership opportunities (i.e. Women’s Leadership Institute), as well as graduation from their program, job placement, and or graduate school admission.

Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Practicum student scholarship ($1000 per student)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing materials</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership training/workshops fees</td>
<td>$100</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2200</strong></td>
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*Budget Narrative*

The practicum scholarships will be provided to two undergraduate social work students completing their practicum in Student Social Services during the fall and spring semesters of the 2017-2016 academic year. Social work students will apply and interview for the practicum position and will be provided field supervision by Student Social Services and field instruction by the UMSL School of Social Work Field Education Office. Each practicum student will be awarded a $500 scholarship at the beginning of each of the two semesters.

Marketing materials will be used for supplies needed to participate in the UMSL School of Social Work Practicum Fair in order to provide information to prospective students and also support the School of Social Work’s event.

Leadership training/workshop fees will cover any costs associated with providing the practicum students access to professional and self-empowering opportunities.

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