Investment Fund for Core Needs (IFCN)
Entry #120

A. PROPOSAL SUMMARY

Title: Leading-edge Classroom Technology for Engagement and Skill Building of Generation Z Students

Project Lead Name: **Lerong He**
                             Department of Business Administration
Project Lead email address: lhe@brockport.edu

Amount Requested: $35168.17

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Name of Sponsor 1:   Joy Bhadury
                          Business Administration & Economics

Name of Sponsor 2:

Name of Sponsor 3:

A-1. Description of the Initiative

Business schools around the world rely heavily on multi-use classrooms set up as regular classrooms with computers. These flipped classrooms enable instructors to design their courses as computer based courses to facilitate development of students' technology literacy, digital literacy, information literacy, and strengthen their analytical skills. Such a design will enhance students' learning experiences and are known to be most suitable for Generation Z and millennium students. Unfortunately, Brockport does not possess sufficient information technology resources for these highly-demanded student experiences.

The proposed initiative will renovate our existing business lab located in Hartwell 105 modeled more than 20 years ago and turn it into a state of the art high-tech classroom to give students more exposure to computer programs widely used in the business world. Having a cutting-edge computer lab would also enable faculty to use this facility for a variety of other purposes such as a behavioral research lab, a simulation lab, and a finance lab. It will also be an eye-catcher to prospective students attending a campus tour. In addition, a leading-edge business lab will provide a facilitating and inviting learning environment for our to-be launched hybrid MBA program.

The newly designed lab would help overcome some major problems of the current business lab where outdated equipment interferes with teaching and learning and the floor configuration hinders interaction between faculty and students. For example, the podium is not equipped with or connected to video/audio devices. The 20-year old projector is placed in a cart instead of ceiling mounted. Computers and monitors block the sight between instructor and students and create difficulty for effective classroom supervision and communication. The current table arrangement also makes it quite

a struggle for instructors to approach students who need assistance with their computer work. Moreover, the elongated rectangle shape of the room impedes students sitting in the last couple of rows from clearly hearing the instructor and reading from the project screen. The proper functioning of the lab is also impaired by wrecked chairs that post unnecessary hazards to our students. Additionally, the room is currently designed to accommodate only 34 desktops, which makes it impossible for instructors with more than 34 students to hold their sessions in the business lab. Consequently they have to change their course delivery modes, which might negatively affect desired student learning outcomes. Finally, the department chair often has to cap classes with intensive lab usage at 33 or 34 in spite of higher student demand.

With the installation of new furniture and new equipment and reconfiguration of the floor plan (as elaborated in the appendix), the renovated business lab would increase the classroom capacity from 34 to 40, and the number of wheel chair accessible tables from 1 to 2, so as to better accommodate student needs. It will also solve the above-mentioned communication problem to allow better classroom instruction and interactions. The renovation will equip instructors with better classroom technology to design their computer-based courses and provide enhanced learning environment for students.

A-2. Impact Statement: What change will this project deliver in the short term? What are the expected longer term impacts?

In the short term, the renovation will immediately benefit our students by providing them better learning environment. For example, students sitting in the back row can now hear more clearly with the installation of a microphone in the lab and read better from the projector screens with floorplan reconfiguration. The redesign will also create two aisles in the lab and make it much easier for instructors to approach individual students to assist their computer work. In addition, the renovation will facilitate instructors' course designs and enhance their teaching experience. For instance, instructors teaching a class with more than 34 students (but fewer than 40) can now design their courses as computer-based to offer students more opportunities to conduct guided computer and internet research, enhance their exposure to essential computer programs, such as Microsoft Office products, Enterprise Resource Planning Software, accounting and management information system software, and business analytic software. All will facilitate the development of our students' technology literacy, digital literacy, information literacy, strengthen their analytical skills, and pave the way for their future career success after graduation. From the practical point of view, it will also allow the department chair to slightly increase caps of computer-intensive courses and to better accommodate student demand without adding additional sessions.

In the long run, the updated lab may become a new flagship educational facility for the business school and the college. It will put us on parity with other business schools in the region and enable us to better attract potential students in our undergraduate business programs and the graduate accounting program. We hope we could not only increase the overall enrollment number in these programs but also improve quality of admitted student. In addition, the renovated business lab will also enable us to provide better instructions for students in our hybrid MBA program, which is set to launch in Fall 2018. It will facilitate the recruitment of MBA students where student demands on school facility and technology infrastructure tend to be higher and the competition among peer schools is more intense.

Finally, the school is in the process of developing some continuous education programs to provide training for working professionals. Our preliminary market analysis indicates that the demand seems to concentrate on the business analytic and accounting fields. Both areas however impose high requirements on technology infrastructure and are hard to be implemented in a traditional classroom setting. Making the lab revitalization a reality will thus build a solid foundation for more revenue generating activities down the road, which we believe will be more than enough to recoup the initial investment costs.

B. STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

B-1. To be a Great College at which to Learn

The renovation will immediately benefit our students by providing them better learning environment. For example, students sitting in the back row can now hear more clearly with the installation of a microphone in the lab and read better from the projector screens with floor-plan reconfiguration. The redesign will also create two aisles in the lab and make it much easier for instructors to approach individual students to assist their computer work. In addition, the renovation will facilitate instructors' course designs. For instance, instructors teaching a class with more than 34 students can now design their courses as computer-based to offer students more opportunities to conduct guided computer and internet research, enhance their exposure to essential computer programs, and consequently develop their technology literacy, digital literacy, information literacy, and strengthen their analytical skills as well. The renovated business lab will also enable the school to provide better instructions for students in our hybrid MBA program, which is set to launch in Fall 2018. It will facilitate the recruitment of MBA students where student demands on school facility and technology infrastructure tend to be higher and the competition among peer schools is more intense.

B-2. To be a College engaged with its Community

The renovated lab could serve as a gathering place for our alumni, a high-tech lecturing room for invited guest speakers. It would also enable our faculty to better guide students to conduct service learning and engaged learning projects by working with local businesses and non-for-profit organizations. In addition, the renovation will increase the attractiveness of our to-be-launched hybrid MBA program targeting at working professionals in the region, which would significantly expand our alumni networks and increase our connections with the local business community. Moreover, the school is in the process of developing new continuous education programs to provide training for working professionals in the region. Our preliminary market analysis indicates that the demand seems to concentrate on the business analytic and accounting fields. Both areas however impose high requirements on technology infrastructure and are hard to be implemented in a traditional classroom setting. Making the lab revitalization a reality will thus enable us to launch these new programs, which would further strengthen our connection and contribution to the local business community.

B-3. To be a Sustainable Institution for the 21st Century

We are educating generation Z students and soon millennium students. A business lab modeled 20 years ago is insufficient to provide up-to-date technology tool for our changing student bodies. A sustainable institution not only means being green, but also means being current. Dr. Bernard Robin has stated in his article "Digital Storytelling: A Powerful Technology Tool for the 21st Century Classroom" that "the

combination of powerful, yet affordable technology hardware and software meshes perfectly with the needs of many of today's classrooms, where the focus is on providing students with the skills they will need to thrive in increasingly media-varied environment." Mishra and Koehler have likewise advocated in their 2006 article "Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge" on the importance of integrating technology with content knowledge so as to better meet demands of new generation students. Overall, we believe an updated business lab will be able to keep the school and the college at parity with our regional and national higher education competitors and to better prepare our students for successful 21st century business careers.

B-4. To be a Great College at which to Work

The newly designed lab would help overcome some major problems of the current business lab where outdated equipment interferes with teaching and learning and the floor configuration hinders interaction between faculty and students. For example, under the current design, computers and monitors block the sight between instructor and students and create difficulty for effective classroom supervision and communication. The current table arrangement also makes it quite a struggle for instructors to approach students who need assistance with their computer work. Additionally, the room is currently designed to accommodate only 34 desktops, which makes it impossible for instructors with more than 34 students to hold their sessions in the business lab. As a result, they have to change their course delivery modes and might to be able to achieve their desired student learning outcomes. The proposed renovation will create a better work environment for instructors to facilitate their classroom delivery. In addition, having a state of the art business lab will enable faculty to use this facility in a variety of other purposes such as a behavioral research lab, a simulation lab, and a finance lab, which could enhance their research productivity.

C. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND BUDGET

C-1. Identify the specific activities to be funded from the Investment Fund, estimated time-line for implementation, and for activities anticipated to be ongoing, plans for continued funding.

Item 1:   Computer tables

Item 1 Amount: $6820.03

Item 2:   Computer chairs

Item 2 Amount: $1184.4

Item 3:   Lectern

Item 3 Amount: $441.32

Item 4:   Furniture delivery and installation

Item 4 Amount: $1375

Item 5:   Projectors, screens, microphone, media control center, speakers

Item 5 Amount: $13320

Item 6:   Installation and programing charge from Academic Technology Support

Item 6 Amount: $$1,600.00

Item 7:   Eletrician parts, incuding outlets, service poles, connectors, etc.

Item 7 Amount: $$2,437.00

Item 8:   Six new Dell desktop computers and screens

Item 8 Amount: $$5,247.42

Item 9:   Telecommunication and IT materials, including data cable, communication box, switch, etc.

Item 9 Amount: $$7,453.00

Item 10:

Item 10 Amount: $

TOTAL EXPENSES, ALL ITEMS: $40168.17

Matching Fund: $5000

In-Kind Services: Provide FTE and name of personnel who have committed to in-kind services.
Dean Joy Bhadury has kindly agreed to support $5000 for 6 new desktop computers.

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D. ASSESSMENT PLAN:

D-1. What are the anticipated outcomes and specific measurements for success?
Assessable outcomes of this renovation would include but are not limited to 1) more courses held in the renovated computer lab; 2) more student credit hours earned through courses held in the renovated lab; 3) improved student learning outcomes in computer literacy and mastery of essential business software as reflected in our internal assessment results; 4) higher ratings and better satisfaction rates for technology infrastructure as reflected in business students' senior exit survey; 5) higher satisfaction rates among faculty on classroom technology as reflected in faculty survey; 6) increased undergraduate enrollment in business programs; 7) increased graduate enrollment in the M.S accounting program; 8) sufficient MBA enrollment to self-sustain the program; 9) the establishment of 1 or 2 continuous education programs in 3 years or so.

E. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

E-1. Please provide any additional information to assist in the review of the proposal, including why the initiative cannot be funded from divisional resources.

We are attaching a scaled floorplan that contrasts current lab configuration with the proposed new configuration for your information. Unfortunately, with an annual departmental budget of $8,300 that needs to cover other fundamental operation needs, we are unable to fund this renovation with departmental resource. The business school dean's office is generous enough to commit $5,000 funding to purchase 6 new computers for the renovated lab. We believe the payoff of this investment will be significant for the school and the college in terms of better student learning environment, improved student, faculty, and alumni satisfaction; enhanced attractiveness and competitiveness of our business programs, and increased student enrollment in existing and new undergraduate and graduate programs. Thank you for considering our proposal and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any additional questions.

Upload up to three supplemental files here (not required): [On file]

Signature of Project Lead: [on file]
Email: lhe@brockport.edu

Signatures of sponsors are on file in the Administration and Finance Division.

Sponsor 1 Comments: I fully support the proposal, as indicated by my promise to cost share up to $5,000 if funded. Joy Bhadury (Dean - SOBAE)

Sponsor 2 comments:

Sponsor 3 Comments:

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