

MSU INVESTMENT PROPOSAL FOR INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES

PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

Title	Social Science Research Lab	Request Date	December 15, 2011
Department	Political Science	Email	shanahan@montana.edu
Requestor	Professor Shanahan	Phone	994-5167

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Core Themes and Objectives (check all that apply)

1. Educate Students

- 1a. Our graduates will have achieved mastery in their major disciplines
- 1b. Our graduates will become active citizens and leaders
- 1c. Our graduates will have a multicultural and global perspective
- 1d. Our graduates will understand the ways that knowledge & art are created and applied in a variety of disciplines
- 1e. Our graduates are prepared for careers in their field
- 1f. We will provide increased access to our educational programs
- 1g. Communities and external stake holders benefit from broadly defined education partnerships with MSU

2. Create Knowledge and Art

- 2a. Students, faculty, and staff will create knowledge and art that is communicated widely

3. Serve Communities

- 3a. We help meet a fundamental need of the citizens of Montana by providing degree programs for our students
- 3b. We help meet the educational needs of the citizens of Montana by providing a wide range of educational opportunities to a variety of students
- 3c. Our students, faculty, staff, and administrators reach out to engage and serve communities
- 3d. Our students, faculty, staff, and administrator reach in to build the university community

4. Integrate Learning, Discovery, and Engagement

- 4a. Each graduate will have had experiences that integrate learning, discovery and engagement
- 4b. Outreach activities will educate students and address the needs of the communities we serve
- 4c. Students, faculty, and staff will create knowledge and art that addresses societal needs
- 4d. MSU is a community that will be characterized by synergy within and across disciplines, roles and functions.

5. Stewardship

- 5a. The public trusts the institution to operate openly and use resources wisely
- 5b. The faculty and staff are well-qualified and supported
- 5c. MSU will support Native American students, programs, and communities
- 5d. MSU will be an inclusive community, supporting and encouraging diversity
- 5e. Our publicly provided resources are used efficiently and effectively
- 5f. Natural resources are used efficiently and sustainably
- 5g. MSU nurtures a culture of resource conservation and ecological literacy among students, faculty and staff
- 5h. Our physical infrastructure (e.g., building, equipment, open spaces) will be well-maintained and useful

INSITUATIONAL BENEFIT

Campuses Bozeman Billings Havre Great Falls FSTS Extension MAES

Cross Depts Please List: Psychology and Business (Marketing and Management)

TIMEFRAME

Proposed Dates Start: either Fall 2012 or Spring 2013 End: either Spring 2015 or Fall 2015

COST AND REQUIREMENTS

Funding Type	One-Time (\$)	Multi-Year (\$)			Base (\$)	FTE
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Personnel (w/benefits)		\$ 9,490	\$0	\$0		\$0
Materials & Supplies		\$500	\$500	\$500		
Travel		\$0	\$0	\$0		
Contracted Services		\$0	\$0	\$0		
Capital		\$85,696	\$0	\$0		
Other Operations		\$0	\$6,596	\$6,596		
TOTAL		\$95,686	\$7,096	\$7,096	\$0	\$0

Please comment, if necessary, regarding cost and requirements.

Budget Details for a Social Science Research Lab at Montana State University

*Dean Lutz has already identified space for the lab in Wilson Hall.

*This budget reflects:

- (a) one year start-up costs for survey equipment, training, and faculty time to implement and coordinate (course buy-out, which is 1/10th of salary for internal funding + benefits).
- (b) two years of operational costs. In future years, these costs will be covered through social science grants dollars and revenues from external entities to conduct surveys.

*The lab is designed to have 10 stations and 1 supervisor station.

- (a) Each station (in a cubicle) is equipped with phone survey, Internet survey, and mail survey equipment, software for the surveys, and software for data management of both quantitative and qualitative data.
- (b) Ten stations were determined to be the minimum number, as this will enable a survey with 1500 successful respondents to be completed in a three week period to ensure reliability of sample responses.

Year 1 are one-time "Capital" expenditures for 10 stations and 1 supervisor station:

Equipment & Materials/Supplies	Software	CATI training	Operational costs	Personnel
computers \$36,300	phone survey \$16,000	on-campus phone survey training for all interested faculty \$4,500	phone lines	one course release to implement lab
survey scanner \$7,500	SPSS \$3,740			
phones/ internet \$8,745	NVivo9 \$1,000			
furniture \$6,000	Survey Monkey \$250			
ink, paper etc \$500	Microsoft Office \$650			
subtotal \$59,045	subtotal \$21,595	subtotal \$4,500	subtotal \$1,056	subtotal \$9,490
Year 1 TOTAL \$95,686				

Year 2 and 3 costs are costs for materials and supplies, software license renewal, and phone lines. We are requesting this funding to give us time to secure revenues for the lab.

PROPOSAL SCOPE

Describe the Proposal

We are proposing an investment in a **Montana State University Social Science Research Lab** in order to (1) better position social science faculty to secure external funding (Core Themes 2a and 5b), (2) integrate a broader array of students in the experience of data collection, analysis, and reporting (Core Theme 1d), (3) build partnerships with external entities in Montana (Core Themes 3c and 4b), and (4) provide opportunities for integrated research and learning across disciplines (Core Theme 4d). When hiring natural and physical scientists, it is common to negotiate the space and equipment for a research lab; by comparison, this investment proposal is extraordinarily cost-effective because this lab would provide infrastructure for a number of social science faculty members (early interest shown by political science, psychology, faculty in the College of Business). There has been support for the idea of this lab, as evidenced by Dean Lutz having a space already identified. Investment in this lab would have broad impacts and far-reaching benefits (see next section) and cuts across all the Core Themes via particular objectives (discussed below).

The Proposal for a Social Science Research Lab

What is a Social Science Research Lab and what is needed in the lab? The “subject” studied in a social science lab is humans. At a variety of scales, from an array of social science disciplines, with a wide range of research questions, we study human attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. The main activity in the lab would be survey data collection (phone, internet, and mail). As such, it would comprise of 10 stations and 1 supervisor station. Each station is set up with equipment to conduct phone surveys (with Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing or CATI), internet surveys (Survey Monkey), and mail (survey scanner or reader) surveys. Each station also has data management software into which the survey data is compiled. These stations are housed in cubicles to reduce noise when conducting phone surveys. The number of stations was determined given a calculation of how much time is needed to complete enough calls to secure 1500 successful respondents to establish reliability. Beyond survey research, the lab will also be equipped to analyze qualitative data on 2 of the computers (with the ability to expand this option if demand exceeds availability).

Why is a Social Science Research Lab necessary beyond office computers and campus computer labs?

While some social scientists need no more than their office computers, this lab would be equipped with resources that do not exist on campus (i.e., CATI). Second, it is imperative by Institutional Review Board standards that data be secured and a lab would provide necessary data security. As a part of NIH and NSF funding, for example, accountability includes data management and security plans. Finally, having such a central location will engender cross-disciplinary discussions and work and ultimately build a stronger sense of community and identity for the social sciences.

What are some proposed research areas requiring a Social Science Research Lab? Several departments at MSU (e.g., political science, psychology, marketing, management, sociology, and nursing) have research interests that require the proposed lab to conduct surveys. Specifically, the faculty in the Department of Political Science are seeking funding for a Project on Sustainable Democracy. A key component of the project is to conduct a survey on trust, efficacy and political engagement in the Rocky Mountain Region with the goal of developing a set of longitudinal data. The proposed survey seeks to examine the dynamic interactions of the causes of the recent decline in trust and efficacy in America’s political institutions and to evaluate competing claims concerning the impact of campaign spending on trust, efficacy, and involvement. These are critical data to accrue over time, and we would be a leading institution to so. Additionally, Professor Shanahan’s work in interdisciplinary research with other natural science faculty on both the MSU and University of Montana campuses would employ such a lab to assess a) exurban values of natural amenities and their relationship to sustainable property management behaviors and b) assessment of community vulnerability and resilience tipping points. Professor Parker in the Department of Political Science would assess national opinion regarding Congress. Professors in Psychology (according to correspondence with Dr. Moore and faculty) and the College of Business (according to correspondence with Dr. Dana and faculty) also are active in survey research and indicate an active interest in the development of a centralized social science research lab at Montana State University.

How the Social Science Research Lab addresses MSU’s Core Themes

Why would a Social Science Research Lab help faculty secure external funding? External funding opportunities in the social sciences are not only fewer than the physical and natural sciences, the dollar amounts for those that are available are smaller. As such, having this infrastructure enables faculty to be institutionally well-supported (Core Theme 5b) to apply for external funding and expend the already minimal budget allotted on funding students and summer salary. External funding will provide more avenues for faculty to create knowledge through data production and analysis in the lab (Core Theme 2a).

How does this lab benefit students? After faculty receive CATI training, we will, in turn, hold training sessions for students as projects arise. This could occur in a methods classroom or with a targeted group of students interested in research opportunities. Ideally, students would receive pay for their work from external funding sources and, in turn, be invited by faculty to analyze and present findings (Core Theme 1d).

How does this lab build partnerships with external entities? With the course release, part of the lead faculty's responsibilities the first semester would be to establish an Advisory Board to develop a list of external entities to contact and build a web site describing the Social Science Research Lab survey capabilities. The Advisory Board will, in turn, make connections with public entities and NGOs in the state to discuss opportunities for these groups to address their research or opinion/attitude questions (Core Theme 3c and 4b) through the Social Science Research Lab. Providing such a service would bring in revenue to support the operating costs of the lab as well as provide services at minimal cost to external entities (we are, after all, not-for-profit and hence less expensive).

How would the Social Science Research Lab integrate research and learning across disciplines? Through initiatives emanating out of the VP for Research's office and the Institute of the Ecosystem, MSU has intentionally fostered interdisciplinary research. The Social Science Research Lab would enable more social scientists to participate in interdisciplinary work by having the infrastructure to conduct evaluations to measure broader impacts on such proposals. Students from different disciplines would have the opportunity to work side-by-side in data collection, thus breaking down some disciplinary barriers.

PROPOSAL SCOPE

Describe the broader impacts and benefits of this proposal

The broader impacts of the installation of a Social Science Research Lab will be felt at many scales.

First, more social science undergraduate and graduate students will have hands-on experience with data collection and analyses.

Second, social science faculty will be able to address a broader range of research questions due to the research capacity with the Social Science Research Lab. It will also be a recruiting “plus.”

Third, MSU faculty and external entities (both within the state and other entities proposing research in the Greater Yellowstone Area) will have opportunities for building partnerships and research relevancy through stronger networking over the Social Science Research Lab.

Fourth, interdisciplinary work is fostered at a higher rate with this infrastructure in place. More social scientists will have the ability to collaborate with natural and physical scientists at both the intellectual merit and broader impacts levels.

The benefits are also at multiple scales.

First, students will gain in tangible research skills that they will bring out into their communities, workplaces, and/or advanced studies.

Second, social science faculty and students will have a stronger identify and higher level of cohesion.

Third, the Social Science Research Lab will help to bridge gaps in the creation of knowledge between research conducted here on campus and that conducted in the community.

Fourth, MSU is better positioned to be successful in securing external grant funding in the social sciences, an effort that is already in motion out of the VP for Research’s office with the hiring of a consultant.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Implementation Plan *(Please describe with timelines)*

Year 1

- meet with interested MSU faculty to make equipment decisions
- identify and secure commitment for core Social Science Research Lab Faculty Advisory Committee
- with faculty, develop a list of external entities to contact and make a plan to do so
- purchase equipment
- coordinate the installation of equipment
- faculty training for CATI
- with Advisory Committee input, develop web page, lab schedule, student training curriculum, assessment tool(s) and a cost schedule

Year 2

- when a survey project is identified, deliver training to students
- continue efforts to contact external entities
- manage revenues for the lab
- assess progress and report to the Dean

Year 3

- when a survey project is identified, deliver training to students
- continue efforts to contact external entities
- manage revenues for the lab
- assess progress and report to the Dean

Assessment Plan *(Please describe with indicators)*

Objective 1. Increases in Social Science faculty securing external funding

Indicator 1a: Increases in the number of research projects proposed include use of the lab

Indicator 1b: Increases in the number of research projects funded externally include use of the lab

Objective 2. Increases in students engaged in social science research

Indicator 2a: Increases in the number of students in the lab

Indicator 2b: Increases in the number of hours students spend in the lab

Objective 3. Increases in social science faculty engaging in interdisciplinary work via Social Science Lab work

Indicator 3a: Increases in the number of interdisciplinary proposals that include the use of the lab

Indicator 3b: Increases in the number of funded interdisciplinary proposals that include the use of the lab

Objective 4. The Social Science Research Lab becomes self-sustaining

Indicator 4a: Revenues increase enough to support the operating costs of the lab

Objective 5. The Social Science Research Lab has strong buy-in from a number of social science faculty

Indicator 5a: Positive trends in results of on-going interviews/surveys with faculty and students using the lab to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement

If Assessed objectives are not met in the timeframe outlined, what is the plan to sunset this proposal?

The Social Science Research Lab Advisory Board will convene to determine if we can meet these objectives given more time. The yearly operating costs are not enormous; as such, if we have made progress and need more time, we may seek institutional support. If the whole project fails, then the equipment and space will be turned over the MSU.

Social Science Res. Lab

Political
Science

SIGNATURES					
Department Head (please print)		Signature (required)			Date
Linda Young Political Science		Linda Young			Dec 22, 2011
Dept Head Priority (please circle one): Very High High Medium Low Very Low					
Dean/Director (please print)		Signature (required)			Date
Paula Lutz		Paula Lutz			1-3-12
Dean/Director Priority (please circle one): Very High High Medium Low Very Low					
Executive/VP (please print)		Signatures (required)			Date
Executive/VP Priority (please circle one): Very High High Medium Low Very Low					