

BANNAN GRANT PROPOSAL COVER PAGE	Date:	March 28, 2010
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1.	Proposal Title	Contemplatives in Action: SCU Student-Researchers Conduct Intervention Focus Groups with Disadvantaged Youth					
2.	Name of Applicant	Laura Robinson					
3.	Phone	x4509 or 818-395-5638	E-Mail	lrobinson@scu.edu			
	Fax						
4.	Type of Grant (check one)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bannan Grant	<input type="checkbox"/> Dialog & Design Grant				
5.	Required: Provide your 4-6 letter department or program ID. This is not a fund number. (i.e. ECON for Economics Department; LACLNC for Law Clinic)						
	Department/Program ID	SOCI					
	Contact Person	Sandra Chiaramonte		Extension	x2794		
6.	If your department does not provide administrative assistance to manage grants, we will provide assistance. Will you be in need of assistance to manage your grant?				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
7.	Total cost of proposed project:			\$	4976.36		
8.	Amount requested from the Ignatian Center: (<i>*Funding in any amount towards the project would be greatly appreciated.</i>)			\$	4976.36		
9.	Amount requested from other sources, if any (please list):			\$	0		
10.	Please briefly explain what will happen to this project if you do not receive funding from the Ignatian Center:						
Without funding from the Ignatian Center it is very unlikely that I will be able to undertake the research. My key contacts are retiring or leaving my partner schools making this fall my last opportunity to carry out this research and provide an immersion experience for SCU students to conduct intervention focus groups with a minimum of 100 socio-economically disadvantaged youth. Funding in any amount would be greatly appreciated.							
Department Chair or Supervisor Approval		Laura Nichols		Please see email.		4/13/10	
		Name (type/print)		Signature		Date	

Submit all proposals to: Theresa Ladrigan-Whelpley, Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education, Sobrato Hall, Room 34, Santa Clara University, 500 El Camino Real, Santa Clara, CA 95053-0454. tladriganwhelpley@scu.edu
Electronic **copies** of proposals via email are encouraged.

BANNAN GRANT PROPOSED BUDGET	Date: March 28, 2010
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Proposal Title	Contemplatives in Action: SCU Student-Researchers Conduct Intervention Focus Groups with Disadvantaged Youth
Name of Applicant	Laura Robinson

I estimate that I will spend the requested funds as follows:

<u>Primary Account</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>	
SUPPLY	Office, lab, instruction supplies	\$	295
PHONE	Telephone charges	\$	--
REPROD	Copying, printing	\$	285
MAIL	Postage, mailing, fax charges	\$	160
BSTRVL	Domestic transport, lodging, meals for SCU student fieldwork and for WASC Conference	\$	2166.36
INTRVL	Foreign transport, lodging, meals	\$	250
SPCEVT	Food, room charges for special event	\$	325
CONTRS	Guest speaker honoraria, research subject fees, professional services	\$	--
MISC	Publications, subscriptions, membership dues	\$	410
STFSAL	Staff salaries	\$	--
SWAGE	Student wages	\$	1000
FACSAL	Faculty salary	\$	--
BENEXP	Benefit expenses for students	\$	85
	TOTAL	\$	4976.36

****Please Note:** In the event that this grant is awarded, your department is responsible for any associated overdrafts.

BANNAN GRANT PROPOSAL EVALUATION FORM	Date:	March 28, 2010
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Proposal Title	Contemplatives in Action: SCU Student-Researchers Conduct Intervention Focus Groups with Disadvantaged Youth		
Name of Applicant	Laura Robinson		
Phone	x4509 or 818-395-5638	Email	lrobinson@scu.edu
Part I:	<i>(To be completed for submission along with your original grant proposal.)</i> List the intended outcomes for this project: (use additional pages if necessary)		

Overview of Project Outcomes

(Please see proposal for more detailed information.)

100+ High School Focus Group Participants Will:

Receive free educational CDs with over 300 resources for postgraduation success

Take part in focus groups in which they:

- Define and evaluate their educational and vocational goals
- Learn about the resources they need to pursue their postgraduation plans
- Discuss linkages between aspirations and social support networks
- Recognize their peers as resources
- Recognize their own social networks as resources

Take part in pre & post-focus group evaluations to measure impact of focus groups

SCU Student-Researchers Will:

Participate in contemplative exercises to examine their own vocational and aspirational journeys

Receive training in conducting focus groups and preparing research materials

Conduct focus groups with a minimum of 100 disadvantaged high school students

Teach high school students about resources to pursue their postgraduation plans

Collect data on linkages between aspirations and social support networks

Engage in public speaking and meet with educators at the high school

Take part in pre & post-focus group evaluations to assess value of immersion research

Bring their experiences and data back to the classroom in Sociology 121 and Sociology 199

Receive training to analyze data to produce scholarly publications and presentations

Publish their research in *The Silicon Valley Notebook*

If invited, publish their research in *explore Magazine*

Present their research at the Western Departments of Anthropology & Sociology Undergraduate Research Conference

Together Laura Robinson and SCU Student-Researchers Will:

Organize reception at W.D.A.S. Conference honoring the Ignatian Center's contribution

Invite SCU alumni & participating educators attend student presentations and reception honoring the Ignatian Center's contribution

Laura Robinson Will:

Attend the *ISA World Congress* to inform the project & present preliminary analysis

Present research from the project at professional meetings

Publish research from the project in journal articles and a book manuscript

Pending approval of your grant, Parts II & III are to be completed at the end of your grant period

Proposal Budget				
Account Number	Fund	Dept ID	Program	Activity

Part II: Briefly describe the actual measurable outcomes of this project and the assessment tools you used: (use additional pages if necessary)

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Part III: Describe any other outcomes of your project.

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“After talking with my focus group leader and the team, it made me consider going to SCU! They are role models of the type of person I would like to be, and if there’s something great at SCU, I want to have it too!”

--Robert¹ Graduating Senior in Intervention Focus Group

“It opened my eyes so that I saw that I can do what I want. It made me rethink what I want to do.”

--Maria Graduating Senior in Intervention Focus Group

“Whenever I got down applying for colleges and it all seemed so hard, my church youth group kept me going. When I wanted to give up, they’d say, ‘Don’t give up. You can do it.’”

-- Sergio Graduating Senior in Intervention Focus Group

“I had been learning about schools like this high school in my classes and about students who were lacking resources for school and jobs and didn’t have the resources to continue their education. What this experience was for me was reality. I wasn’t reading in a textbook. I was experiencing this first hand. I was both emotionally and mentally affected by this experience. I left determined that I as an individual...can do something to help these students...this opportunity gave the students a feeling of confidence [so that] they can pursue their goals and dreams.”

--Rebecca Fox-Bivona, SCU Class of 2010

Project Title: *Contemplatives in Action:*

SCU Student-Researchers Conduct Intervention Focus Groups with Disadvantaged Youth

Laura Robinson, SCU Department of Sociology

Statement of the Problem:

The proposed Bannan Grant combines intellectual inquiry with focus groups designed to promote social justice. SCU student-researchers will engage in immersion research by conducting intervention focus groups with disadvantaged high school students in an agricultural belt of California. The immersion research experience will benefit both the high school students and train SCU student-researchers as *contemplatives in action*. The SCU student-researchers will prepare for the focus groups through contemplative exercises in which they evaluate their own journey from high school to college in order to give presentations at the high school. Those SCU student-researchers who are first-generation college students or who have worked their way through college can serve as powerful role models for the high school students, providing vivid illustrations of success and overcoming challenges in pursuit of goals. The SCU student-researchers will also distribute a free educational CD containing over 300 resources critical to post-graduation career and educational planning. Most important, in tandem with the presentations and CD distribution, SCU student-researchers will conduct intervention focus groups in which they invite high school students to 1) define and evaluate their educational and vocational goals, 2) learn about resources to pursue postgraduation plans, and 3) discuss linkages between aspirations and social support networks. By taking part in these activities, the SCU student-researchers will *help fashion a more just and humane world* following the example set by Ignatius of Loyola. After the focus groups, SCU student-researchers will bring their experiences back to the Santa Clara community in three ways 1) analysis of the data in Sociology 121 and Sociology 199, 2) presentation at the *Western Departments of Anthropology & Sociology Undergraduate Research Conference*, and 3) student publication of *The Silicon Valley Notebook* and (if invited) *explore Magazine*.

In addition to seeking to promote social justice, the focus groups will yield valuable data for research examining the role of religious networks in fostering and building aspirations among underprivileged youth. The research will eventuate in scholarly publications and presentations at professional meetings. The data will be used to examine the questions: What is the role of religious networks in fostering and building aspirations among underprivileged youth? How do youth rely on social support from religious networks (Christian youth groups, Jewish Saturday school meetings, LDS ward youth conferences, etc.) to overcome challenges in reaching their career and educational goals? These questions are prompted by the compelling data that has emerged in focus groups conducted with SCU students in conjunction with my research on digital inequality.

When asked, “What helps you succeed when times are hard?” high school students repeatedly reference religious networks as being a critical support system helping them to achieve their goals. In Raul’s words: “My

brother is in prison. I knew I was going down the same road. I knew that I had to get new friends...now my church gives me that support—now I know that I can go to junior college--that I can make it.” For Sergio, “Whenever I got down applying for colleges and it all seemed so hard, my church youth group kept me going. When I wanted to give up, they’d say, ‘Don’t give up. You can do it.’” Yet others like Stephanie relate: “People close to me—mostly in my church—would tell me that there was a plan for me. That if I kept working hard a way would open.” Students’ repeated references to religious networks are *completely unprompted*. Yet, even in the absence of any reference to religion in the focus group questions, the salience of religious networks to these high school students stands out and, therefore, demands further scrutiny through additional research.

The repetition of references to religious networks vis-à-vis aspirations indicates the importance of further inquiry. In examining the positive benefits that youth derive from engagement in religious networks as they pursue their educational and vocational goals, the research will begin to fill a gap in the literature. Although scholars such as Putnam have examined religious networks, and others such as Trinitapoli and Vaisey have explored youth engagement in religion, very little attention has been paid to the role that religious networks play in creating a supportive social environment in which underprivileged youth feel capable of achieving their goals.² The time is ripe for academic inquiry into the positive benefits created by religious networks. This importance of religious experience in social change has been targeted as one of the research priorities in the upcoming the ISA World Congress of Sociology: “Sociology is about to get rid of the assumption that modernization necessarily leads to secularization. Religion is no longer seen as an obstacle to progress and modernity. This leads to an increased interest in...religion and the dynamics of religious experience and its articulation.”³

Methods & Reflection:

The project integrates scholarly inquiry on religious networks with focus groups designed to promote social change. SCU student-researchers will conduct focus groups with a minimum of 100 disadvantaged high school students during which they will distribute free CDs with over 300 resources for post-graduation success. SCU student-researchers will complete contemplative exercises in which they evaluate their own journeys from high school to college to prepare presentations and dialogue with the focus group participants. The SCU student-researchers will conduct focus groups in which they invite the high school students to 1) define and evaluate their educational and vocational goals, 2) learn about resources to pursue postgraduation plans, and 3) discuss linkages between aspirations and social support networks. Pre- and post-focus group evaluations will be conducted with the high school students to measure impact of the focus groups on aspirations, as well as with the SCU student-researchers to assess the value of the immersion research and its efficacy in instilling contemplative leadership.

The focus groups conducted on digital inequality illustrate the vital importance of providing this experience to underprivileged youth. In their post-focus group evaluations, the high school students describe being inspired by the SCU student-researchers. Robert explains: “After talking with my focus group leader and the team, it made me consider going to SCU! They are role models of the type of person I would like to be, and if there’s something great at SCU, I want to have it too!” According to Maria, “It opened my eyes so that I saw that I can do what I want. It made me rethink what I want to do.” For many, the focus group experience acts as a critical spur to rethink their goals. In Alicia’s opinion: “It caused me to evaluate my life and answer questions I’d never given much thought to before.” For Felix, “It made me reconsider my choices. I didn’t push myself hard enough and the focus group made me want to work harder for my goals.”

Equally important, through the focus groups students *redefine their peers as resources* and recognize the importance of their own social networks. Miguel explains, “The best parts of the focus group were the questions asked and being able to talk about our futures with our peers.” Abigail articulates, “I got to learn things about other students that I never thought I would.” Eva concurs, “Being in the focus groups demonstrated that I have the potential to succeed--that there are people out there who will help me make it happen.” As SCU student-researcher Bianca summarizes, “By being in a focus group these students [are] able to hear about goals and plans that their peers have...they are able to inspire and motivate each other to succeed.”

Furthermore, in presenting their own life experiences to the high school students, the SCU student-researchers critically reflect on their own life journeys. In so doing, they realize their potential to effect positive social change. As Bianca McNeil reflects, “I felt like I had really accomplished something and was able to utilize all of the skills we have learned over the years. Even though I am from the area we did research in, I was still able to learn so much about the students’ struggles and triumphs.” Eleni Ellenikiotis explains, “...creating and maintaining rapport and dialogue with the students influenced my perspective on education, youth, and technology as well as

social reproduction and familial structure. I truly believe this experience was all-encompassing in that it gave me the unique opportunity to apply all I'd learned. Furthermore, I so much appreciate the interaction with the students and teachers...It was inspiring to both speak with the students and hear their stories, as well as talk with the teachers whose insights, generosity, creativity, and authenticity were inspiring." The experience can also transform SCU student-researchers' own vocational goals. After taking part in the intervention focus groups, Rebecca Fox-Bivona is now considering graduate work in educational counseling for disadvantaged youth; she evaluated her experience: "I was both emotionally and mentally affected by this experience. I left determined that I as an individual...can do something to help these students...this opportunity gave the students a feeling of confidence [so that] they can pursue their goals and dreams."

Upon returning to Santa Clara, the SCU student-researchers will share their experiences with the Santa Clara community through research, publication, and public speaking. They will analyze the data in Sociology 121 and Sociology 199, present their research in a session in the *Western Departments of Anthropology & Sociology Undergraduate Research Conference*, and publish *The Silicon Valley Notebook* and (if invited) *explore Magazine*. At the same time, I will analyze the rich empirical data from the focus groups to examine the importance of religious networks in fostering and sustaining youths' aspirations with an eye to writing peer-reviewed scholarly publications and to giving presentations at professional meetings.

Timetable and Outcomes by Quarter 2010-2011

Summer & Fall Quarters 2010: Intervention Focus Groups

SCU student-researchers participate in contemplative exercises to prepare for dialogue and presentations
SCU student-researchers prepare presentations for focus group participants and are trained for focus groups
SCU student-researchers prepare focus group materials and educational CDs for high school students
SCU student-researchers conduct intervention focus groups with a minimum of 100 high school students
*In their evaluations of the focus groups, high school students said that the focus groups and free CDs are needed the fall *before* college applications are due so that they may consider applying to four-year colleges and private universities like Santa Clara University.

Pre & Post-focus group evaluations with high school students to measure impact of focus groups
Pre & Post-focus group evaluations with SCU student-researchers to assess value of immersion research

Summer & Fall Quarters 2010: Research and Data Analysis

I attend the *ISA World Congress* to inform the project & present preliminary analysis
SCU student-researchers share experiences with other students in Sociology 121
SCU student-researchers in Sociology 121 treat and analyze data from focus groups

Winter Quarter 2011: Dissemination of Research via Student Publications

SCU student-researchers write up data in student publication of *The Silicon Valley Notebook* in Sociology 199
If invited, SCU student-researchers write up their experiences in *explore Magazine*
SCU student-researchers submit to *West. Dept. of Anthropology & Sociology Undergraduate Research Conference*
Spring Quarter 2011: Western Departments of Anthropology & Sociology Undergraduate Research Conference
SCU student-researchers organize reception at WASC honoring the Ignatian Center's contribution
SCU student-researchers present research at the WASC Conference

SCU alumni & participating educators attend student panel and reception honoring the Ignatian Center's contribution
Spring Quarter 2011 and Beyond

I submit research from the project to professional meetings and write up journal articles and book manuscript

Relevance to Past and Future Teaching and Research

The proposed research examines several themes key to my overarching teaching agenda. I have had the pleasure of teaching 8 courses at Santa Clara in which social inequality and social reproduction are central themes: 2 sections of the *Sociology Research Practicum*, 2 sections of *Computers, Internet, and Society*; 3 sections of *Business, Technology, and Society*, and 1 section of the *Professionalization Workshop* in which students will analyze the data and produce original research in the form of article-length treatments of the dataset.

Concerning my research, this project will enrich my work on social reproduction and inequality among disadvantaged youth by exploring linkages between religious networks and aspirations. This approach complements my previous work on digital inequality and aspirations, which I am presenting at the upcoming ISA World Congress of Sociology and the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting. My work in this area

has been peer-reviewed and presented at five additional conferences and invited talks (see below). My previous publications include 8 peer-reviewed articles and 5 book chapters. My work related to this project has been published in *Information, Communication, & Society*, *Re-public Re-Imagining Democracy*, as well as a co-authored book with MIT Press, a monograph, and book chapter.

Relevance to the Bannan Institute's Criteria for Funding

The project supports the University's strategic mission of "educating citizens and leaders of competence, conscience, and compassion,"⁴ as well as the Bannan criteria for funding, specifically the "*focus of the education of the whole person*" and the "*commitment to the faith that does justice in the world.*" Through the project, SCU students will be active participants in the Santa Clara experience as described by Ignacio Ellacuria, S.J.: "*We, as an intellectual community, must analyze causes, use imagination and creativity together to discover remedies...educate professionals with a conscience, who will be the immediate instruments of transformation...*"

Following the example set by Ignatius of Loyola to be "*contemplatives in action,*" the SCU student-researchers will engage in society to promote "*a more just and humane world.*" In serving others through the immersion research and focus groups, SCU student-researchers will address social injustice by opening aspirational windows to disadvantaged high school students. By bringing the data into the classroom in Sociology 121 and 199, the students will contribute to "*a pedagogy of engagement through immersion experience.*" Further, SCU student-researchers will bring their experiences back to the Santa Clara community to share what they have learned about "*the nature and causes of injustice as well as possible remedies through humanitarian assistance*" through publishing *The Silicon Valley Notebook* and presenting their research at the *Western Departments of Anthropology & Sociology Undergraduate Research Conference*.

Ultimately, this immersion experience will help "*prepare students to assume leadership roles in society*" and contribute to the SCU commitment to the Jesuit "*ideal of "humanitas, the aim of which is to cultivate persons engaged in a wide variety of occupations for service to humanity."*

At the same time, the scholarly inquiry that will result from the project is complementary to the Jesuit tradition that "*prizes the life of the mind, viewing it as a path to the integration of the intellectual and moral aspects of personal and social life*", as well as the Jesuit commitment to scholarly excellence.

Grants and Fellowships Received in Past Three Years

I am most appreciative to Santa Clara University for funding for my research on digital inequality and social reproduction through a *University Research Grant*, a *Faculty-Student Research Assistant Award*, and a *Center for Science, Technology and Society Research Grant*. Before coming to SCU, from the fall of 2006 through the spring of 2008, I held a postdoctoral fellowship funded by the MacArthur Foundation.

Publications and Results of Most Recent Internal Grants Completed

Thanks to funding from the FSRAP grant, University Research Grant, and Center for Science, Technology, and Society Research Grant, I trained a number of student-researchers: Jessica Talavera-Rauh, Anne Volmert, Bianca McNeil, Rebecca Fox-Bivona, Ryan Crane, and Eleni Ellenikiotis. These student-researchers took part in administering a survey to over 500 students in the United States and Argentina, developed a resource webpage, and created a resource CD with over 300 files. The CD was given to 120 students and educators. The website is being made available free of charge to the several thousand students attending the high schools where the research was conducted. In addition, three students (Bianca McNeil, Eleni Ellenikiotis, and Rebecca Fox-Bivona) conducted intervention focus groups on digital inequality, presented to students in classrooms, met with educators, and shared *The Silicon Valley Notebook*. Reflective pre- and post evaluations were conducted with both high school students and the SCU student-researchers. Finally, six students who examined the data in Sociology 121 presented their scholarly findings at the Pacific Sociological Association Annual Meeting.

These grants funded the research that I am presenting at ISA and ASA, as well as four other conferences (the International Studies Association Annual Convention, the Pacific Sociological Association Annual Meeting, the Southern Sociological Society, and the 2009 American Sociological Association Annual Meeting). In addition, I have organized panels on social inequality in the Information Age at both PSA and ASA and given an invited talk at the UC Berkeley Center for Globalization and Information Technology. The research has been quoted by two journalists Chris O'Brien from the *San Jose Mercury News' Silicon Beat* and Steve Giegerich of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. The research will eventuate in a book manuscript and a series of peer-reviewed articles.

Approval of Department Chair, Laura Nichols (Email):

It is my pleasure to support the grant request of Dr. Laura Robinson. In my mind Laura's work is a fantastic example of the teacher-scholar model in the Jesuit tradition. Laura has found a way to integrate her teaching and research by involving senior sociology majors in data collection, analysis, and distribution that both benefits our individual students and her research with under-resourced high schools. In addition, her work has had an applied impact that provides a great service to high schools in California. Her students have produced a website of resources as well as delivered CD's of resources to the high school. SCU students went back to the high school and talked to them about their experiences as college students and the findings of their research on the digital divide. Evaluations from the high school show that SCU student's visit has impacted the high school students' interest in attending college, especially SCU. Dr. Robinson combines rigorous intellectual inquiry in ways that have an impact on individuals and society.

Please let me know if I can provide information in support of Laura's proposal.

Sincerely, Laura Nichols

Itemized Budget and Explanation

The Bannan Grant will fund wages and travel costs for SCU student-researchers to conduct focus groups with at least 100 students, as well as to disseminate the results with the Santa Clara community and ISA. The project will culminate in spring of 2011 at the *Western Departments of Anthropology & Sociology Undergraduate Research Conference* on the SCU campus where current SCU students, SCU alumni, and participating educators will attend the conference to share in the students' presentations of their research and to take part in a reception honoring the Ignatian Center's contribution to the project.

Supplies, Photocopies, Mailing

Supplies: Name badges, markers, CDs, CD labels, CD cases, ink for labels, batteries, etc	295
Photocopies	285
Postage/ mailing/ fax charges	160

Travel

Lodging for SCU student-researchers: 3 night hotel at \$125 per night	375
Food and beverages at fieldsite: 3 days @ \$115	345
Transportation to fieldsite: 3 visits of 535.66 miles @ rate of \$.50/mile = \$267.84 per visit	803.52
Lodging for Bannan Grant participants at WASC Conference: 3 hotel rooms @ \$125 per night	375
Transportation to WASC Conference: 535.66 miles @ rate of .50/mile = \$267.84 per visit	267.84
Lodging: 2 nights hotel at \$125 per night ISA World Congress	250

Event: *Western Departments of Anthropology & Sociology Undergraduate Research Conference*

Reception Honoring Ignatian Center's Contribution	325
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Dues and Fees

WASC Registration for SCU students, alumni, and educators participating in Bannan Grant	180
ISA Fees	230

Wages and Benefits for SCU Student-Researchers

Student-researcher Wages	1000
Student-researcher Benefits	85
<i>Total Requested from the Ignatian Center</i>	<i>4976.36</i>

I would be very appreciative for any funding towards the project. Thank you for your consideration.

¹ Pseudonyms are used to protect respondents' anonymity.

² Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone* reveals the importance of religious networks in the development of social capital. Stephen Vaisey explores how youth from Generation Y or the Millennial Generation draw on social and religious networks. Jenny Trinitapoli's work examines the transformative experience of short term missions for youth. For references, please see: <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/about/faculty-staff-directory/robert-putnam>, <http://www.stephenvaisey.com/>, and <http://www.sociology.psu.edu/people/faculty/CV/Trinitapoli%202009.pdf>.

³ <http://www.isa-sociology.org/congress2010/priorities.htm>

⁴ For references in this section, please see <http://www.scu.edu/Jesuits/j15.html#ref3>.