Title: Improving Communication Skills and Promoting Iowa State

Submitted by
Entomology Graduate Student Organization
Department of Entomology

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

A. Description and intended purpose for all project expenditures and identify expenditures from College Pool funds.

The Department of Entomology has 31 graduate and 13 undergraduate students who are highly active with their classes and extracurricular activities such as outreach. Funding from this proposal would be used to purchase a high-quality laptop for the Department of Entomology students so they can have the necessary equipment to give PowerPoint presentations in classes and conduct outreach programs.

A high-quality laptop is needed by the students in the Entomology department for the following reasons:

- **Student presentations.** Students need excellent communication skills in order to be marketable in today’s job market. One of the key ways students develop these skills is by giving oral presentations during their tenure at Iowa State University. Currently, many courses require the students to give in-class presentations. The format in which a student delivers these presentations is limited to the hardware available. Unfortunately, this is very limited for the majority of students. If a student wants to give a high-quality PowerPoint presentation they need to hunt for an available computer and projector and hope one is available. They have the option of using overheads or handouts but students need to be computer literate and proficient in presentation software to be competitive. The department already has a portable video projector (NEC LT-155, $3950) that students are welcome to use; however, there is not a departmental laptop available for students to use. Therefore, the video projector that we do have is not being used to its full potential.

- **Outreach programs.** The students in the Department of Entomology are very active in providing outreach to the community. Graduate students frequently give presentations about their research to growers and other stakeholders at master gardener programs, field days, professional society meetings, etc. Undergraduate students are also active in outreach through internships, work with the Insect Zoo, VEISHEA, and presentations given at professional meetings. When students perform these outreach programs, they are promoting the university and increasing the visibility of our department and the university as a whole. Having all the equipment necessary to give high-quality PowerPoint presentations would increase both the number and quality of these outreach programs.

- **Lectures given by teaching assistants.** All PhD students and most master’s students serve as a teaching assistant during their tenure at Iowa State University. The proposed laptop could be used in conjunction with the existing departmental video projector for lectures given by TAs in classrooms where computer equipment is not available. In this way, the proposed laptop would be servicing many undergraduate students who take classes that have Entomology graduate student TAs.
Integration with Existing Facilities and Computer Systems

The proposed laptop would be housed in the main office of the Department of Entomology, 10 Insectary. It would be checked out by students as needed for class presentations and outreach programs. As mentioned earlier, the department currently owns a NEC LT-155 portable video projector ($3950) that would be made available to students to use in concert with the proposed laptop.

Role of students in Initiation of Proposal

This proposal was initiated and written by the graduate students in the Department of Entomology. This proposal is important to graduate and undergraduate students because class presentations are an important part of our education, and as professionals we need to be able to communicate well, including being able to communicate our research results with stakeholders and the general public.

B. Describe specifically how the proposed facilities or services will be made available to students

1. Specify the hours when the facility or service will be available for general student use

The new laptop would be available for checkout during normal working hours (8:00 AM to 5:00 PM) daily, Monday-Friday. The computer could be checked out during these hours and if the program it is needed for was not during these hours, it could be checked back in the next day (or if the program is on the weekend, the laptop could be checked out over that time period). Paperwork verifying the class or outreach program the computer is to be used for must be presented to the department secretary at the time of checkout to prevent misuse of the computer (personal use, etc…).

2. Identify the number of students that will be able to work simultaneously during these hours.

Since there is only one laptop in this proposal, only one student or group of students doing a presentation would be able to use the computer at a time (potentially, more than one student could use the computer in a single class period). Other students, faculty, community members, and university stakeholders could also be present in the room during a presentation.

3. Identify the number of student population(s) that should benefit from the proposal. Estimate the number of students to be served.

There are currently 31 graduate students and 13 undergraduates in the entomology department. These students would all need to use the laptop at least once at some point during the completion of their degrees either for practice presentations, presentations for required seminar classes, program of study committee meetings, or
their exit research seminar. In addition to benefiting students here on campus, the proposed laptop would benefit many students and community members outside the university, including important stakeholders for the university (such as master gardeners, farmers, policy makers, and other special interest groups that invest highly in the university).

4. If the proposal involves development of an innovative model, indicate how this model will be disseminated to others in the university.

Having a student-owned laptop and video projector available to students in our department at all times would be an innovative use of the equipment since it will promote enhanced communication skills among the students and increase the amount of outreach conducted because the equipment would be easy for students to access. With this technology available, students would be more likely to give high-quality PowerPoint presentations in class and for outreach; consequently, those listening to these student presentations would be left with a better impression of the technology offered at ISU.

C. If the proposed project requires special new technologies, describe how these requirements will be met.

No additional requirements.

D. Identify university facilities that would be needed for the proposed project. Specify the building(s) and room numbers. A scaled sketch of the floor plan showing the location of equipment should be appended.

The laptop would be housed in the main office of the Department of Entomology, 10 Insectary, under the supervision of the departmental secretary, Kelly Kyle and the departmental Computer Coordinator John VanDyk.

SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE

Support for recurring costs will not be supported; identify the anticipated costs and explain how these costs will be met this year and in the future years.

The Department of Entomology would provide support and maintenance costs for the laptop. The departmental Computer Coordinator, John VanDyk, would be responsible for overseeing instruction on maintenance and use of this new equipment.
Table 1. Full Itemized Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hardware</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer – Dell Latitude C610 Laptop</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$2,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USB Zip drive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEC LT-155 portable video projector</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$3,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided by Department of Entomology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Request</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$2,350</strong></td>
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Table 2. Minimum Feasible Itemized Budget

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