

CPTA Statement of Intent – Student Name

February 4, 2020

Student Name
Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
College of Education
University of Missouri

Graduate Professional Council
University of Missouri

Graduate Professional Council:

Thank you for the wonderful opportunity to apply for a travel award for graduate student presenters. I am writing this letter to seek funding for the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) annual conference on March 28 – April 1 in Austin, Texas. A paper I submitted with two MU faculty members has been accepted as a session at the conference, and I will be the main presenter. I am also assisting with a pre-conference workshop.

Our session, entitled “Identifying the Value of Students as Diversity Peer Educators” examines the University of Missouri Diversity Peer Educator (MU DPE) program, a student organization that trains undergraduate students in a social justice framework and prepares them to offer diversity education to their peers. We worked with MU DPE to assess the impact of the program on the students who participate as peer educators. The session was developed using qualitative data collected through focus groups, interviews, and document analysis. We hope that this research will help MU assess its own program and also provide scaffolding for other institutions who would like to implement or improve the implementation of their own peer education programs. I have been a part of this project since its conception; I helped draft the research proposal, participated in data collection, transcription and analysis, and developed the workshop. I believe this work makes an excellent contribution to the needs of current higher education institutions and a diverse study body. I hope to use feedback from the session to prepare a paper for publication.

In addition to the paper session, I am assisting Dr. Michael Williams and Dr. Dorimé-Williams in a NASPA pre-conference workshop on Sunday, March 29. The workshop provides the student affairs community with tools to move away from punitive implementation of assessment and instead consider data within a social justice frame in order to create assessment more aligned with an institution’s espoused values of equity and inclusion. This is especially timely, given the current need for more inclusive programming on university campuses.

The NASPA conference is the largest student affairs meeting in the United States and the conference is competitive. Presenting a session and assisting with a pre-conference workshop as a graduate student is a wonderful opportunity to develop rapport with practitioners in student affairs as well as build a professional reputation in my area of interest. Moreover, unlike academic conferences, NASPA provides an opportunity to do longer sessions that are more interactive in nature. This would help me develop skills in communicating my research to practitioners and bridge the gap between academia and praxis. It

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also provides me with experience that would be useful if I decide to pursue an administrative position post-graduation.

Our research not only has a positive impact on the student affairs community, it also speaks to creating a more inclusive institutional environment at the University of Missouri. Presenting at NASPA is an opportunity to promote a positive representation of MU as an institution that supports research and development responsive to student needs. More attention is needed on the valuable role that peer education and socially just assessment play in creating safe environments for students to thrive.

Attending and presenting research at NASPA will allow me to develop essential skills for becoming a strong scholar-practitioner in the field of higher education. Funding would allow me to pursue this opportunity without incurring financial hardship and encourage me to continue a rigorous research agenda in the future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

X

Student Signature