

## I. Project Proposal

**Title of the Project:** Creative Nonfiction and the Community College Story

**Purpose of the Project:** The purpose is to improve my skills as a writer of creative nonfiction so that I can better tell the story of the community college. I also want to improve my skills as a writing teacher.

**Summary of the Project:** I will attend the Mid-Atlantic Creative Nonfiction Summer Writers' Conference in Baltimore on Aug. 10-15, 2005. At this conference, writers learn tips from experts and then work in small group critique sessions to improve their craft. There is also an opportunity to meet with editors.

After the conference, I will work with a mentor from the Creative Nonfiction Foundation in Pittsburgh (via phone, email, and paper mail) in an individualized course of ten sessions that involve specific reading and writing assignments, as well as detailed reviews of my work.

After the conference, I will work on incorporating what I have learned into the classroom. Specifically, I am interested in learning not only about effective techniques for establishing scenes, capturing dialogue, and finding the perfect descriptive details but also in the approaches taken in teaching these skills. I am also intrigued by the "pitch slam," a method in which the writer has sixty seconds to promote his or her idea. In the classroom, this might be an exciting approach for helping students to focus their essays.

Simultaneously, I will devote time to my own writing, this time with a newly critical eye. My ultimate goal is to write and submit for publication the following eight essays:

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Publication</b>	<b>Length of Manuscript</b>
Honors at the Community College	Newsweek Magazine's "My Turn" column	900 words
Teaching Loads	Chronicle of Higher Education's "The Two-Year Track" column	1300 words
Dual Enrollment	Phi Delta Kappan's "Point of View" column	1500 words
Access to the Baccalaureate	Community College Journal	1500 words
Community College 101 for High School Teachers	Education Week	1500 words
Confidence and the Community College Student Writer	Teachers & Writers Magazine	5000 words
The Dreams of My Students	Harvard Educational Review's "Voices Inside Schools" column	7500 words
What's Another Name for a Community College?	Teaching English in the Two-Year College	7500 words

**Need for the Project:** I'm at a critical point in my professional life--at least midway through, with a long teaching record behind me and the last five years devoted to expanding my writing career. I have published many articles and have gained respect for my research skills and dependability, but my writing itself has not grown in the way that I would like. I want to take it to the next level and would welcome the chance to work closely with writers I admire who can help guide me forward. I'm also ready to energize the way I teach writing.

But the need for this project is more than personal. I am frustrated at the public's failure to recognize the role of the two-year college. In South Carolina, we regularly hear high school teachers discourage the brightest students from wasting their time at a "tech school." One of my college's recruiters recently told those of us who teach in the transfer program that he found it nearly impossible to sell students on attending a two-year college if their ultimate goal is a baccalaureate. While I'm not suggesting that this is the place for everyone, I do feel strongly that community colleges have so much more to offer than most people realize, and I want to write about that for both specialized and general audiences. Convinced that the kind of writing that most deeply affects people is personal, I want to share over twenty years of stories about students who have defied the odds and blossomed here in ways that might not have been possible elsewhere. Of course, I'm not going to look at community colleges with rose-colored glasses, for I also see challenges that must be addressed. But I do feel strongly that there are stories to tell, and they're not being told nearly enough.

**Project Statement:** I wish to be considered for this award so I can become better at what I do. My students benefit from my experiences as a writer, and my efforts to become a better writer make me a more empathetic and informed teacher. The product of my work--essays about the community college experience--will help promote an understanding among educators and the general public about the vital role played by two-year colleges.

<b>Timeline:</b>	
Summer 2005	Attend writers' conference
Fall 2005	Participate in mentoring program
Spring 2006	Incorporate new strategies into writing classes.
Summer and Fall 2006	Write and submit eight essays

**Budget:**

\$2000	Writers' conference registration, lodging, and travel
\$2500	Mentoring program (10 sessions)
\$500	Paper, printer ink, reference books, magazines and journals, postage, phone calls