

# EXPANDING IMMERSIVE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES IN FIELD COURSES AND COLLABORATION

**TOTAL AWARDED: \$5,000 FUNDED MATERIALS: 17 BIG AGNES ANVIL HORN 30 SLEEPING BAGS PURPOSE: ENHANCE COMC/JCMI FIELD COURSE OPPORTUNITIES**

## INTRODUCTION

Material and technology resources for higher education classrooms do more than just alleviate the financial barrier of entry for student participation (although this is a significant reason to support and fund such items). They expand the realm of possibilities and opportunities faculty are able to conceptualize and offer to students across specific and various disciplines, incentivizing course deployment innovation, university and external collaboration, and more closely and intensely engaging students with both professional and personal formative experiences.

Funding for this proposal helped secure 17 high quality sleeping bag systems for students participating in several field-based media production courses that utilize the natural and backcountry environments as the classroom. This funding, in tandem with an affiliated proposal, built a mobile student basecamp for an assortment of classroom experiences, including the award-winning Adventure Media program, among others. The following areas of educational deployment and development emphasize the sizable impact of this material resource supported and will continue to support for many years to come.

## LOWER FINANCIAL & MATERIAL BARRIER OF ENTRY

- Pandemic-caused limited supply of materials from traditional/typical partners like the TTU Outdoor Pursuits Center is alleviated for programs.
- Support students with financial limitations, a significant barrier to study away and study abroad opportunities (see Keene, 2022).

## ENHANCE PROGRAMMATIC EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

- Materials acquired implemented in three significant and outreach-oriented field programs in Creative Media Industries major since Spring 2022: CMI 4313, Adventure Media; PHOT 4300/CMI 4301, Photography & Interactive Storytelling at TTU Junction Maymester; and PHOT 4301/CMI 4301, Travel and Tourism Documentary Production-Great Plains Project. A total of 49 students and five individual courses have benefitted from funded materials over the course of 32 total days of field work.
- Materials aid facilitating real world field production environments that courses replicate for students.
- Access to and use of materials encourage student leadership, cooperation, organization/responsibility, and self-sufficiency by incentivizing ownership over resources that enhance the class/production experience.
- Materials help more deeply immerse students in relevant professional context and environments that go beyond the curriculum for any one course/program.
- Materials bolster availability and initiatives for continued and additional field coursework in relevant major(s). Simply put, having more means we can do more with our field-based student programming.

## EXPAND FACULTY & PARTNER COLLABORATIONS

- Access to funded materials makes more possible the conceptualization and activation of future programming with university and outside partners interested in immersive, service, and outreach-related educational opportunities.
  - Current courses in CMI (Adventure Media and the Photography and Interactive Storytelling at TTU Junction) will continue to use materials (numbering 35 students).
  - A new Creative Media Industries study abroad program to Iceland will benefit from materials in Summer 2023 (numbering 17 students).
  - Two interdisciplinary Honors College proposals are currently being drafted that would cover a potential four semesters of field programming for upwards of 125 students.
  - Unique internship and practicum opportunities are being explored and embraced by external partners to the university in areas of outdoor recreation, travel, sustainability and conservation media production, natural resources management and outreach, and others where backcountry resources are useful in facilitating place-based learning.

## ADDRESS HIGH IMPACT LEARNING INITIATIVE

- Material support further facilitates TTU Presidential initiative to ensure each undergraduate at the university has access to and participates in at least one transformative learning experience by the time they graduate.
- Material incentive to innovate and expand the classroom beyond Lubbock and campus is made more possible with resources that enable faculty and students' concept of what the classroom can look like to an evolving higher education institution and its constituencies.



## STUDENT VOICES



"The non-traditional courses offered through the College of Media and Communication are a transformative learning experience found nowhere else in higher education. Being a part of Adventure Media and the Great Plains Project has changed the trajectory of my life and it would not have been possible without access to the class equipment. This grant eliminated the financial barrier that would have otherwise prevented my participation in these programs. The experiential learning opportunities in the College of Media and Communication would not be accessible for many students, myself included, without access to this outdoor recreation gear. Having reliable camping gear to come back to at the end of a hard day made these challenging experiences much more enjoyable. Hands-on learning can be a financial burden for students paying for their own education but now these experiences do not have to be exclusive to those who can afford to buy all of the required equipment."

• Katie Perkins, Creative Media Industries and Natural Resources Management, TrUE Undergraduate Researcher, Brenham, Texas



"I never imagined myself to be in a position to pursue an outdoor and travel career making documentaries before entering the transformative programs provided by Drs. Foster and Keene. Growing up in the "barrio", as my Tia would call it, no one could ever imagine becoming anything other than a mechanic or lunch lady without the major assistance of financial aid. Just having the access to what can seem like normal equipment, such as tents or sleeping bags, lowers the financial barrier for someone like me where significant sacrifice to daily life is necessary to pursue a dream career."

• Michael Ortiz, Creative Media Industries, San Antonio, Texas



"In all the immersive programs I have had the privilege to be a part of, one concept remains true. That is, learning to appreciate nature comes from experiencing nature firsthand. From cowboy camping under a blood moon along the Devils River, to pitching a tent in northern Nebraska where the corn grows tall – these are moments that will stand the test of time, as they were truly lived."

• Hannah Hudgens, Agricultural Communications and Creative Media Industries, Lubbock, Texas

## FACULTY VOICE

"Having resources of any kind to support field-based, immersive education for the creative media discipline is significantly appreciated. From lowering financial and material barriers of entry into these challenging, hands-on programs, to stoking and incentivizing a fire for developing new courses and student-aimed programs that are increasingly more interdisciplinary in nature, support structures like these, even if it is for a small number of sleeping bags and shelters, goes a very long way in creating the type of learning environments we at Texas Tech should be proud to host and continue to offer!"

• Jerod Foster, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Practice, Journalism & Creative Media Industries, College of Media & Communication



CHECK OUT THE ADVENTURE MEDIA'S CLASS PROJECT ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUTDOOR RECREATION AND MENTAL HEALTH. THIS PROGRAM WAS ONE OF THREE THAT UTILIZED RESOURCES MADE POSSIBLE BY THIS GRANT THIS YEAR.