

GREATER COMMUNITY VIGNETTES – WINTER 2018  
RCR WORKSHOP  
Melanie Shell-Weiss and Kimberly McKee

**Training and Preparation #1:**

George is an undergraduate who has worked at a soup kitchen through his church and is excited to learn more about the problem of homelessness and experiences of homeless people. George enrolls in a community-based learning course that is focusing on homelessness in West Michigan. He proposes as his final research project that he interview homeless people in Grand Rapids.

## **Training and Preparation #2:**

Tom is teaching a community-based learning course that focused on homelessness in West Michigan. His previous research examined food deserts in Detroit and included interview-based work with community organizers and policymakers there. Tom has been at Grand Valley State University for one year now and, having finished up his research in Detroit, is looking to refocus his work to West Michigan. He looks forward to using this course as a way to connect with local community partners, policymakers, as well as engage more undergraduate students through community based research through this project.

### **Mutual Benefit Partnerships #1:**

Becky works with young people in the Grand Rapids Public School (GRPS) system. She is committed to addressing the school to prison pipeline. Her previous research included working with the Chicago Public School system on removing zero tolerance policies in high schools. Becky has published two books, that were well received by peers, and is now a tenured faculty member at GVSU. The GRPS has approached Becky through her Dean asking for support in conducting a study of zero tolerance policies in two local high schools. They want her to start immediately and be able to provide them data to set new policies and pursue grant funding in six months.

## **Mutual Benefit Partnerships #2:**

Chad directs a local youth organization that runs after school programs. He partnered with Lee, a tenured GVSU faculty member, previously to create mentoring opportunities between GVSU undergraduates and the middle school students in his after school program. Chad wants to see more of his students successfully enroll in college. Lee is excited about building pipelines to college for local young people, many of whom would be first generation college students. They are working to design a new program related to a new university funding opportunity that would provide scholarships to the students.

**Communication, Sharing Out, and Confidentiality #1**

Mary is a first year, tenure track faculty member who just completed her PhD in August and is beginning her work at GVSU. It is October and she is preparing her workload plan for the next calendar year, knowing that she needs to maintain a strong scholarly publishing record to be successful in her department. Mary's dissertation research in American Studies focused on local foodways and the proliferation of local breweries in the South. She is excited to be living and working near Grand Rapids and is already in conversation with several local breweries so that she can expand her work in order to write a national book.

## **Communication, Sharing Out, and Confidentiality #2**

Sophia directs a local nonprofit that provides in-home eldercare support for a small West Michigan community. She has been working with several faculty members at GVSU and their students on an oral history project about the history of that community. Many of the interviewees in that project have largely been drawn from Sophia's client base and their families. Everyone who participated in the project has signed an informed consent form that gifts the oral histories to the local public library's Genealogy Department. Because Sophia's nonprofit is supported largely by donations and grant funding – and because she and the local community are so thrilled about the success of this project – she has been approached by the mayor and several local business leaders about having copies of the oral histories provided for use in their establishments.

## **Compensation #1**

Bernie is an untenured faculty member in social work and is conducting research with families whose lives have been touched by the opioid epidemic. He is an experienced researcher, well-respected within his field, and has published extensively on addiction. Because many of the families with whom Bernie is working are living below the poverty line, or facing significant medical expenses, he believes strongly in the importance of compensating his study participants for their time. He recently discovered the funding he set aside for participants is no longer available. How should he proceed?

## **Compensation #2**

Xavier is continuing work with a local organization that works with first and second-generation Bhutanese immigrants. He and the director of the organization, Tim, met through a leadership training opportunity organized by the city mayor's office. Tim wants a new website to help his organization with outreach and promotion. Xavier teaches in business and has experience in teaching marketing and advertising, including social media design. Xavier proposes that as their course project for Fall semester, that his undergraduate students develop and create a new website and social media plan for Tim's organization. At the end of the semester, Tim appreciates the work that has been done by Xavier's students and his organization is using the website they designed. But Tim feels frustrated by the large number of hours he needed to explaining the mission, value, and purpose of the organization to students, reviewing drafts, and providing feedback.