



Sunday, December 3, 2017

To: Sponsorship and Donor Relations Team
From: Drew J. Scheler

Dear Katie, Danielle, and Abby:

I write to provide an evaluation of your work thus far this semester, following the guidelines negotiated on 10/18/17. I'm happy to say that, by any measure, your work this semester was exemplary. Your contributions helped ensure that our month-long #givingtuesday campaign raised an estimated \$3,464 for Friends of the Community Gardens—as well as over \$6000 in estimated sponsorships and a significant range of secondary benefits. Congratulations on a job well done, and thank you for your labor.

Per our agreement, I have requested that Bethany and Cheryl provide a letter evaluating your contributions to FCG's fundraising efforts, focused mostly on the *practical* benefits they received from this sponsorship packet. I will thus restrict myself to evaluating the *academic* integrity of your work in three distinct areas: your ability to think in sophisticated ways about audience, your ability to collaborate, and your volunteerism.

Audience: Your project put your team right on the forefront of negotiating the particular complexities of audience that we faced. You did so quickly, flexibly, and impactfully. At the very beginning of this project, in particular, your team put together a proposal to secure the project's largest and most meaningful donation from Waseda Farms Market. In your proposal, you were able to both justify the value of community gardening and link it to Waseda's own agenda. Through that process, you pitched the "ask" appropriately to this corporate entity, and learned about the values and needs of corporate sponsors in the process. This learning—your reflections on this initial action—surely allowed your team to create a sponsorship packet that directly addressed the needs of both corporate and individual donors. The result is a document that accurately and effectively addresses two very distinct audiences. In doing so, finally, you used the rhetorical resources at your disposal effectively. I remain *especially* impressed by the cover letter to this packet, which adapts the problem framing, problem-and-solution technique without remaining a slave to it. Excellent work.

Collaboration: Your team’s ability to collaborate was stunning. I rarely see this level of collaboration in my own professional work, though I know that when such collaboration appears the work always benefits from it. Reviewing our conversation at Luna,—that is, my research!—I believe that your team’s internal collaboration benefitted from letting the work be just that: “the work.” That is, I didn’t get the sense at any point that anyone on your team tried to assert personal ownership over the writing, and instead kept the best interests of the document itself in mind. That mindset, I think, allowed you to collaborate even further, allowing both myself and Beth to contribute to and coordinate your writing. One obvious way I saw this was in your ability to create work that Beth could use for design—which, I know from personal experience, is tricky. Less obvious is how you opened up spaces for our team to contribute to the overall shape of the sponsorship packet. I, for example, was able to flag my \$1-into-\$4.74 stat as a guiding principle of your pitch, mostly because you recorded your brainstorming so clearly in the comments. Also, we all love your names for the giving levels, especially “cornucopia”; that idea, I think, was at least partly shaped by the Visioning Team’s #growbettertogether mission. In sum, your work was guided by *participation*—one of the three pillars of action research, which I see (with Stoecker) as of a way of living responsibly than as a research methodology.

Volunteerism: Your team finished the core of its written work early, passing the ball on to others quickly. However, all three of you stepped up and volunteered further labor for his project. Katie, your presence (and Charlotte’s) was crucial for the success of our pitch to Carol. Abby, I was really impressed with your work with Mack to promote the student raffle on the evening of 11/20. Danielle, I appreciate how you stepped up at the last minute to help out with event coordination when everyone else in the class couldn’t (or was too tired to!). As I mentioned in class, such work breaks down the walls of the classroom and helped our collective project meaningfully serve our community partner. Academically speaking, I see this volunteerism as directly redistributing structures of power (see Mitchell on Moodle). That is, you three didn’t rest on your privilege—your ability to fade into the background, which is legitimated by the bureaucracy of classroom structures. Instead, you helped destabilize those structures and engaged directly in serving an organization that needed your work. Thank you.

In sum, your work was not only practically effective, as the FCG’s letter will show. It was also conducted with real academic integrity. I’m impressed by your dedication to, and engagement with this work. I couldn’t be prouder of what you accomplished.

Sincerely,
Drew J. Scheler
Lead Editor, ENGL 306