

TUSCULUM COLLEGE

ESTABLISHED 1794

May 27, 2016

The Niswonger Foundation
Attn: Dr. Nancy Dishner, Executive Vice President
16 Gilland Street
P.O. Box 5112
Greeneville, TN 37743

Dr. Dishner,

Tusculum College deeply appreciates the Niswonger Foundation's financial support of the Professionalism for Leadership Initiative. This initiative has had a profound impact on the Tusculum community to the point where there numerous successes which demonstrate the benefit this initiative has had on our students, faculty, and staff.

Prior to the 2015-2016 fiscal year, Tusculum focused primarily on implementing the Initiative through curricular activities by enabling and encouraging our faculty to make professionalism a core objective of student learning. However, due to the graciousness of the Foundation in allowing Tusculum to carry over grant surpluses from previous funding years, the 2015-2016 fiscal year saw exponential growth of the Initiative. Adding to the successes of the curricular aspects of the Initiative, this fiscal year saw new co-curricular programs, opportunities for greater student engagement, and increased professional expectations from students by faculty and staff. As a result of these increased activities, Tusculum has experienced several successes, examples of which are:

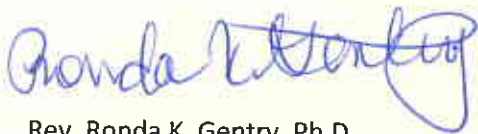
- First-year students create written Road Maps to Success where they set goals for themselves, which are reinforced through Appreciative Advising. These personal goals help students persist and reach graduation, thus improving retention and graduation rates.
- Tusculum has made Professionalism an integral part of the College's Quality Enhancement Program (QEP) by stating that all students will participate in at least four Professionalism activities outside of the classroom by the time they reach graduation.
- Students have better behavior in the Cafeteria, an improvement so drastic that the manager of Sodexo noted the change.
- Upperclassmen are receiving recognition of their professionalism skills by being sent to conferences and student leadership institutes where they are able to put those skills into practice.
- Faculty and staff have received additional training, which exposes them to best practices in their disciplines. By implementing these best-practices faculty and staff are expecting a greater level of professionalism from students. The students are meeting, and often exceeding, these expectations.

CENTER FOR CIVIC ADVANCEMENT P.O. BOX 5041 GREENEVILLE, TN 37743
PHONE (423) 636-7372 FAX (423) 636-7327 www.tusculum.edu/cca

The Niswonger Foundation's grant funding of the Professionalism for Leadership Initiative, has been most impactful during the 2015-2016 fiscal year. A 2015-2016 comprehensive accounting of the Professionalism for Leadership Initiative, as well as a detailed narrative of the Initiative's goals, successes, and vision is respectfully submitted with this letter.

Tusculum College is appreciative of the multiple ways in which the Niswonger Foundation supports the institution. The Foundation continues to shape the future of Tusculum College, leaving a great impact and ensuring that our graduates become the best in their professional fields and in their communities. However, as this funding cycle comes to a close, we recognize that the work begun in the Professionalism for Leadership initiative is not yet complete. We expect and desire for this program to continue so that the terms professionalism and Tusculum graduate are synonymous. While we recognize and respect that the Niswonger Foundation has other funding priorities for the coming fiscal year, Tusculum would appreciate consideration of future funding for the Professionalism for Leadership Initiative to enable the good work that has begun to continue uninterrupted in coming years. Thank you again.

Respectfully,



Rev. Ronda K. Gentry, Ph.D.
Director, Center for Civic Advancement



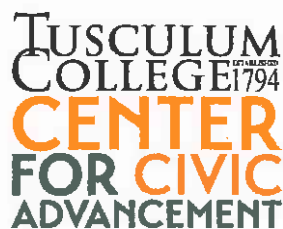
**Annual Report to the
Niswonger Foundation**

**Professionalism for
Leadership Grant**

**TUSCULUM
COLLEGE**
ESTABLISHED 1794



2015-16 Fiscal Year



Annual Report

Professionalism for Leadership Initiative

2015-2016

During the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the Professionalism for Leadership Initiative built upon the program designed and implemented between years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. In 2015-2016 the Professionalism for Leadership Initiative focused on deepening the impact of the initiative on students, faculty, and staff seeking to ensure that the entire Tusculum community is focused on producing professionally prepared students and graduates. In 2015-2016 the three goals for this initiative were to provide students with opportunities to learn professional skills; to provide students with opportunities to practice and recognition of their professional skills; and to ensure that College processes emphasize the use of professional skills and practices. When these goals are reached, the result is that students will encounter the professionalism initiative in their coursework, extra-curricular activities, and interactions with College offices.

Goal 1: Provide Students with Opportunities to Learn Professional Skills

Tusculum recognizes the importance of students having a set of skills which will enable them to succeed professionally at Tusculum and post-graduation. Beginning in their freshman year, students will participate in events and activities which will help them develop this set of professional skills. These skills will then be honed and deepened throughout a student's subsequent years at Tusculum. Below are the skills taught with their corresponding events throughout the 2015-2016 fiscal year:

- **Résumé/C.V./Professional Portfolio Preparation:** As students seek internships and employment post-graduation it is essential that they have a professional cover letter and résumé/c.v./portfolio that emphasizes their academic and professional work to that point. Ms. Robin Lay, Director of the Office of Career Services, hosts resume writing workshops, provides opportunities for individualized resume review, and works with faculty in individual disciplines to help students create professional level resumes.
 - As a result of this work, Tusculum's Quality Enhancement Program (QEP), has a goal that 100% of programs will have a class in which students are required to produce a cover letter and résumé/c.v./portfolio by their senior year.
- **Appropriate Dress:** Students are often unaware of the appropriate dress for college events, interviews, internships, and their first jobs. In August an event titled "What Not to

Wear” was held during Orientation. During this event students learned how outfits that they thought would be appropriate for certain professional occasions were not, and they learned what simple changes they could make to their outfits to make them appropriate.

- As a result of this event the Center for Civic Advancement (CCA) recognized a need to provide students with access to free professional clothing. In response to this need the CCA has created a closet of professional clothing that students may access as needed. Donations are solicited from Tusculum faculty and staff as well as from the local community.
- **Meal Etiquette:** An important aspect of professionalism is the ability to interview or participate in meetings held over meals. Throughout 2015-2016 a series of eight etiquette dinners were held with over 250 student participants. Participants represented a cross-section of the Tusculum student population including freshmen, athletes, student leader groups, and GPS students. These dinners were led by Ann Woods of the Southwest Virginia - Northeast Tennessee Cotillion Association.
- These dinners have resulted in a change in student behavior. John Carter, General Manager, Tusculum College Sodexo Campus Services, has indicated a dramatic improvement in student behavior in the dining hall, which he attributes to the etiquette dinners.
 - Student leaders have taken what they have learned and have hosted their own formal dinners celebrating group accomplishments. For example, both the Business Club and the Bonner Leader Program each organized and held dinners marking the end of their year. These students felt empowered through their experiences at the Etiquette Dinners to hold their own professional events.
- **Social Media Presence:** College students live and breathe social media. On a daily basis they use Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, etc. However, students often fail to realize the impact their social media presence has on their professional lives. During the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the Office of Student Affairs held a session on “Social Media and Your Life.” During this session a guest speaker demonstrated through an interactive session the negative impact one social media post can have on a student’s job prospects.

In addition to learning how social media can negatively impact a student’s job prospects, the Director of the Office of Career Services held several sessions on how social media can help a student in their job search. These sessions titled, “Linkedin: How to start networking for your career,” helped students understand that social media can help students find jobs when used as a networking tool.

Both of these events have demonstrated to students a need to balance their social media presence and be aware of the positive and negative aspects of their use of social media.

- As a result of these sessions, many student organizations have created professional social media pages to represent both their organizations and Tusculum positively on campus. Examples of these pages (Facebook, Instagram) include: Tusculum

Manifesto (student voice of Tusculum), Tusculum Business Club, Tusculum Fishing Team, and the Tusculum Bonner Leaders.

- **Civil Discourse:** Essential to professionalism is knowing how to interact within a group of people with whom you work but may not have much in common. At the beginning of each year the Office of Student Affairs trains student leaders in aspects of civil discourse. Training sessions include, among others: Conflict Management and Resolution, Sexual Assault Awareness, Civic Engagement, and Professional Communication. These trainings encourage student leaders to model civil discourse and interact with students in such a manner.
 - As a result students have developed a sense of respect and accountability for one another. This is seen in the ways students are coming together in small groups to hold discussions about topics which encourage diverse perspectives. These discussions, held civilly and professionally, demonstrate that students have learned the principles of civil discourse. For example, students have discussed feminism, interfaith relationships, and gender issues, among other topics.
- **Goal Attainment:** Students need to understand the importance of setting and attaining goals. A student's first encounter with goal setting at the collegiate level is choosing their major. During the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the Director of the Office of Career Services met with each Tusculum Experience Course (a first-year course required of new students) and walked students through the Woofound Career Assessment. This assessment helps students identify their skills and match them with majors and career opportunities. The idea is to help students identify and declare majors early in their college career and then work towards completing the goals associated with attaining that degree. With the results of the assessment, students create a written roadmap to graduation with specific goals. This roadmap is now a focus in the Tusculum Experience course, Tusculum's course designed specifically for new students. Realizing the goals associated with attaining a college degree creates a habit of setting and attaining goals throughout their lives, both professionally and personally.
 - Tusculum has set a goal that students will declare a major within the first eight weeks of their matriculation as a result of the need to ensure that students set goals early. This goal-setting will improve a student's chances to persist and graduate college,

Goal 2: Provide Students with Opportunities to Practice and Recognition of their Professional Skills

As students gain skills needed to live professional lives, Tusculum seeks to provide students with opportunities to use their learned skills. Additionally, the College seeks to recognize and reward students who embody professionalism by providing them with additional opportunities for professional development. Programs and events that meet this goal include:

- **Pioneers Certified Program:** The Director of the Office of Career Services has created a Pioneers Certified program. This program recognizes students as "certified" once they have met a series of requirements. These requirements, among others, include: a

reviewed résumé, participating in mock interviews, participating in networking events, and holding at least one internship in their field of study. Students who receive this certification will be considered the best of Tusculum's graduates. It will be a mark of distinction for Tusculum graduates.

- As a part of Tusculum's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) the number of students participating in the Pioneers Certified program will double over the next five years.
- **Job Treks:** After students have gained a number of professional skills, as determined by their faculty and by the Office of Career Services, they are invited to participate in Job Treks which connect them to businesses. These Job Treks help students understand how they can use their degree within an organization. There were two Job Treks held this year:
 - PWC (PriceWaterhouseCoopers), Atlanta: October 2015
 - Home Depot Headquarters, Atlanta: April 2016
- **Career Fairs:** Throughout the year the Office of Career Services either hosted or co-hosted numerous career fairs throughout the 2015-2016 to connect students with internships and jobs post-graduation. The following career fairs were held:
 - September 16 - Career Fair Tusculum, Greeneville campus
 - October 27 - Career Fair Tusculum, Knoxville Campus
 - February 25 - Interstate Career Fair (consortium of 16 colleges)
 - April 15 - Knoxville Area Career Fair (consortium of 11 colleges)
- **Brown Bag Lunch Series:** In cooperation with the School of Business, the CCA held a Brown Bag Lunch Series in Fall 2015. This series welcomed local non-profit agencies and small businesses to Tusculum for free educational seminars which focused on needs of these groups. Tusculum students participated in and helped to coordinate these events, giving them exposure to the level of professionalism required to host events. These events were held monthly September-December.
- **Student Leadership and Participation in Conferences:** Through the Professionalism for Leadership Initiative, students who have demonstrated that they practice professionalism are invited to participate in conferences. These conferences give them exposure to professional development opportunities beyond Tusculum. Examples of student participation in conferences include:
 - International Leadership Association's (ILA) Annual Global Conference - Barcelona, Spain, October 2015: Students had the opportunity to travel to Barcelona, Spain to volunteer with the ILA conference. While there, students had conversations with global experts in the field of leadership. Additionally, students were exposed to how leadership is practiced throughout the world, which expanded the student's worldview.
 - The 46th General Assembly of the Tennessee Intercollegiate State Legislature, Nashville, TN, December 2015 - Members of Tusculum's Student Government Association attended this event, with one member serving in the senate and one

member serving in the House of Representatives. Students gained experience in learning governmental procedure as well as learning how to use civil discourse in settings outside of the College.

- Student Leadership Institute - Knoxville, TN, June 2016 - Students will be gathering with representatives from sixty other schools from across the country to learn leadership skills, which can be applied to their undergraduate and post-graduation work.

Goal 3: Ensure that College Processes Emphasize the Use of Professional Skills and Practices

Not only should students be immersed in the Professionalism for Leadership Initiative through their coursework and co-curricular activities, students should also be expected to act in a professional manner when interacting with College faculty, staff and their offices. To ensure that this occurs, College offices have begun making changes to policies to increase the level of professionalism expected of students. In some instances additional trainings for faculty and staff are needed to give them connection with best professional practices in their specific areas of responsibility.

The following procedures have been implemented to increase professionalism practices across campus. Some of these procedures include:

- **Use of Tusculum E-mail:** During the 2015-2016 fiscal year, Tusculum began enforcing a policy that all college communication must come to and from official Tusculum email. This requires students to communicate in a professional manner and teaches them what will be expected when they go into the workforce.
- **Appreciative Advising:** In August 2015, faculty and many staff members received training on Appreciative Advising from a consultant emphasizing intentional discussions between students and their advisors where students focus on academic and personal goals. This model of advising has been implemented by most advisors and will continue to be implemented through the coming fiscal year.

As procedures have begun to utilize professionalism principles, some offices on campus have indicated needing training to learn best professional practices in their areas. These trainings, begun spring 2016, will continue through June 30 and include:

- **Interfaith and Pluralism Conference:** Dr. Ronda Gentry, Director of the Center for Civic Advancement and Ms. Courtney Washburn, Program Coordinator of the Center for Civic Advancement attended the Interfaith and Pluralism conference hosted by the Presbyterian Church and the Interfaith Youth Corps. The purpose of this conference was to promote civil discourse among individuals of differing faith traditions. Lessons learned through this conference will be implemented in 2016-2017.
- **Student Retention Symposium:** In June 2016, a team from Tusculum will attend the Student Retention Symposium through the John N. Gardner Institute in Asheville, NC.

This symposium will equip team members with best professional practices in the areas of Learning Communities, Collaborative Communities, and Student Retention. Team members will learn how to better interact with students and their colleagues using professional skills, thus serving as leaders of professionalism on campus.

- **Title IX Training:** Title IX is the section of federal code which enforces equal treatment of the genders within higher education. Recently this code has focused on how colleges handle sexual assault and relationships between students on college campuses. Additional training is needed so staff can handle these issues in a highly professional manner and can train others on campus how to handle these situations professionally as well.

The Professionalism for Leadership Initiative has had a profound impact on Tusculum's students, faculty, and staff. Student behavior is improving as is evidenced by improved behavior in the dining hall and in fewer disciplinary hearings through the Office of Student Affairs. Additionally, students are being held to higher standards of professionalism through their interactions with the College. With the introduction of the Pioneers Certified program for engaged students, and the requirements of a cover letter and résumé/c.v./portfolio for all graduating students, Tusculum students will be better prepared for professional lives post-graduation.

In the same vein, the Professionalism for Leadership Initiative has made faculty and staff more consciences about implementing professionalism into their classes and into their daily work with students. This has improved the level of professionalism among Tusculum's faculty and staff, as well as our students. As we progress forward we expect the level of professionalism to increase as more faculty and staff implement professionalism into their practices.

Dollars Spent on Activities	
Meals - Etiquette Dinners	\$4,040.65
Contract Services	\$9,292.55
Consultants	\$1,500.00
Honorariums	\$1,464.40
Faculty/Staff/Student Travel	\$6,795.42
Total Spent During 2015-2016 Fiscal Year	\$23,093.02

While this grant cycle is ending, the Professionalism for Leadership Initiative will remain as an integral part of Tusculum's curriculum, extra-curricular activities, and institutional practices. However, we expect to continue to grow and deepen the impact of the Initiative within Tusculum by increasing the frequency of these efforts. We also expect to develop activities for both students which address the intersection of globalization and professionalism as well as discipline-specific professionalism requirements (e.g. nursing, education, the sciences, etc.). With these additions the Professionalism for Leadership Initiative will continue to impact Tusculum students, faculty, staff and alumni well into the future.
