THE COMMON GROUND ALLIANCE PROJECT
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Advancing Social Justice and Inclusion at the U of A

PROJECT DESCRIPTION & REQUESTED BUDGET

As an institution committed to the success of all students as highlighted in the University of Arizona’s (UA) strategic plan, this proposal for the Common Ground Alliance (CGA) project seeks to illuminate the actions that could be taken to position the UA as a campus that exemplifies the vision of inclusive excellence. CGA builds on the collaborative efforts of The UA Cultural Centers, LGBTQ Affairs, the Women’s Resource Center, and the Disability Resource Center to provide a comprehensive approach to helping students increase their multicultural awareness and their ability to address social justice inequalities.

In practice, CGA provides the opportunity for students to engage in critical conversations within each respective center and also creates space for students to collectively discuss ways to creative positive change on campus. The pinnacle of the CGA project is its ability to create a culture where students are able to show up as the most authentic versions of themselves by honoring individuality and various distinct experiences while simultaneously supporting the intersections of the cultural and resource centers to encourage holistic student success.

While administration works to meet the List of Demands issued by the Marginalized Students of the UA (MSUA) in spring 2016, the CGA Project can continue their impact on these students and the cultural and resource centers through the financial support of the SSFAB. The CGA Project will provide resources to administer campus wide events, provide intersectional collaborations, deliver an annual social justice retreat, and offer global learning experiences. The total requested investment is $509,100.00 over a three year time period.

Requested Funds for the Common Ground Alliance Project:

**CGA Graduate Assistantships (GAs): $72,190** —This proposal seeks two GAs to support CGA projects. One will be responsible for the coordination, implementation, and assessment of all events, collaborations and retreats. One will be responsible specifically for the Global Experiential Learning programs. An additional $1,500 is requested to support the professional development and training of each GA.

**CGA Event Series: $30,000**—This series will sponsor at least one major event during Transgender Awareness and Coming Out Weeks, Native American Heritage Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, Asian Pacific Heritage Month, and Women’s Herstory Month. Funding will also be used to explore disability identity as well as support collaborative, multi-identity events beyond nationally designated months and weeks.

**Intersectional Collaborations: $6,500**—Funding for Intersectional Collaborations will be used to pay operations costs for the continued development of collaborative programming that teaches about and engage students’ multiple identities through art with a focus on healing. For example, the QTPOC (queer and transgender people of color) Discussion Group will engage participants in empowerment building dialogues and activities while also presenting events and activities for the wider campus to learn more about being allies to QTPOC. Relatedly, Outspoken uses spoken word poetry to engage students on current issues and develop student voice to address these issues. This area includes:

- **Student Facilitator Stipends: $4,000**—One QTPOC facilitator and one Outspoken facilitator will receive $1,000 for up to 5 hours a week of facilitation work per semester, during both the fall and spring semesters.

**Common Ground Courage Retreat: $8,000**—The Common Ground Courage Retreat will be a social justice training, interpersonal development, and coalition building opportunity rooted in the arts for UA students to
work together for the development of a more inclusive campus community. Participation will be intentionally recruited from student populations who are not generally able to pay to attend social justice trainings as well as from organizations across campus like ASUA, Greek Life, WRC, LGBTQ Affairs and the Cultural Centers.

Global Experiential Learning (GEL) Program: $51,823.92—The Global Experiential Learning Program will offer accessible global learning opportunities for historically marginalized and low socioeconomic scholars. Programs include, but are not limited to Study Abroad, Alternative Spring Break, and Domestic Experiences. Students will engage in transformative education through self-reflection, intercultural engagement, dialogue, and service learning that will give them deeper understanding of their own cultural perspectives. Funding supports student travel, marketing costs, and travel costs for faculty/staff such as:

- **Student Assistant Wage: $11,423.92**—One GEL student assistant will be working with the Director through the fiscal year.
- **Student Travel Expense: $20,000** — Students will be awarded travel scholarships to participate in the GEL experiences
- **Staff Travel Expense: $18,400** — This expense will cover staff leading the experiences, thus offsetting the cost for the students
- **GEL Marketing Expense $2,000** — This will help with marketing the GEL experiences

**REASONS FOR CREATING THIS PROJECT:** Students have the ability to be successful independent of the university. However, institutions create conditions that either foster or constrain success (Pitcher, Camacho, Renn, and Woodford, 2016). The vision and plan articulated in this proposal focus on developing the talents of scholars, fostering conditions that support achievement, and reducing institutional barriers.

CGA has been an incredibly successful program that needs to expand to address the ongoing and increasing need for dialogue, discussion and action on social justice issues impacting Arizona, the UA and our student populations. CGA partnering offices want to continue to develop proactive events, activities, and programs as part of the extraordinary university experience for the UA’s diverse campus community. Additionally, preventing incidents of bias through education and engagement improves academic performance and reduces the environmental stressors that impact the health and wellness of students who are at highest risk for major health conditions.

Finally, the CGA Project aligns with students’ priorities by creating paid positions for undergraduate and graduate students to develop skills that will make them more marketable for future career opportunities. CGA has impacted over 10,000 UA students over the past 3 years. We estimate the CGA Project will have a direct impact on at least 5,000 UA students per year with potentially thousands more benefitting from improvements in the general campus climate.

---