

## Request for Graduate Assistant Application

Name of Graduate Assistant Requestor: Irene Porro

Department: McAuliffe Center for Integrated Science Learning

1. Briefly describe the project /research and the responsibilities of the graduate assistant.

The Graduate Assistant will be directly involved in the detailed planning of selected FSU multidisciplinary education and outreach programs that integrate science and engineering disciplines with the humanities, arts, and social and behavioral sciences. Tasks include:

- Identification of key audiences for each program
- Research of audiences' educational and logistical needs
- Research of available resources to address such needs
- Research of potential funding opportunities
- Design of program logistics
- Assessment of the impact of the program

In addition, the Graduate Assistant will work closely with the McAuliffe Director in developing strong collaborations with FSU faculty. In this role, the Graduate Assistant will contribute to:

- Identify faculty with unique expertise to support each program
- Contact faculty members, articulate the needs for and goals of the program and opportunities to contribute
- Manage effective participation of faculty in the projects
- Promote cross-disciplinary interactions through meetings organized by the McAuliffe Center.
- Assess faculty satisfaction with participation in the program and elicit suggestions for improvement and/or for future initiatives.

Finally, the Graduate Assistant will have the opportunity to work closely with the McAuliffe Center director to research, engage and support the participation of Smithsonian experts in the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Moon Landing Initiative.

2. How will your department/program/office benefit from the completion of this project/research?

The contribution offered by the Graduate Assistant will be beneficial on two levels:

- a) The work of the Graduate Assistant will be critical in assuring that program management and coordination are both efficient and attentive to the needs of all FSU collaborators. Specifically, the Graduate Assistant work will support the following programs:

**Girl Scouts STEM Conference at FSU (March 2019):** Framingham State will host the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual STEM Conference and Expo for the Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts (GSEA) for middle and high school girls. The McAuliffe Center is coordinating the event with GSEA and will be

responsible for: recruiting FSU faculty to offer STEM workshops, offer space science workshops at the McAuliffe Center, recruiting student volunteers to support the event, manage aspect of logistics and coordinating with FSU communication office for media exposure.

**Science on State Street (April 2019):** Science on State Street (SOSS) 2019 will mark the fifth annual science festival at Framingham State University. This free event is open to the MetroWest and FSU communities to explore science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) with fun, high quality interactive activities to stimulate further learning about these topics in everyday life. Program activities include a keynote speaker from the Smithsonian Institution, planetarium shows, *STEM on Stage* - a TED Talk-like series of presentations, a *Children Corner* and a variety of demonstrations and hands-on activities presented by FSU students and faculty and representatives from local STEM industries, non-profit organizations, community groups.

**Professional Development based on climate change (school year 2018-19):** In 2016-17 the McAuliffe Center and several STEM and non-STEM departments started a collaboration to develop a professional development institute for middle and high school teachers that aims to provide an interdisciplinary approach to climate change science and pedagogy. After a successful experience in Summer 2017, the McAuliffe Center is coordinating new PD efforts that explore different PD models and integrate the expertise of many FSU faculty.

**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Moon Landing Initiative (September 2018 to December 2019):** The initiative to celebrate this historic event will feature Lecture Series, Forums, Exhibits etc. planned over a 15 months period: from September 2018 to December 2019. Through this project we aim to engage faculty, students and the public in a multidisciplinary exploration of the period 1962 to 1972, the years of the race to the Moon, to contextualize the Moon landing from an historical, political and scientific point of view. Topics we plan to explore during this period include, but are not limited to: History of the Space Race, Vietnam War, Cold War, Decolonization, Civil Rights Movement, Feminism, Education milestones, Music and Visual Arts, Fashion, Science and Technology Discoveries.

- b) It will support the development of a deeper collaboration among an increasing number of STEM and non-STEM faculty with the McAuliffe Center in the implementation of important education and outreach programs. In conversations with faculty members involved in STEM education and outreach and other community outreach programs, we hear that faculty have more ideas than they have time to implement them. There are a number of programs that they would like to offer but do not have the time to organize the programs, find funding, and recruit participants. The McAuliffe Center, with the help of the Graduate Assistant, will provide critical management support that will allow FSU faculty to focus on “what” they want to offer instead of “how” to organize an event.

3. How will this project/research promote the assistant’s professional development? What additional skills/goals will be achieved by the assistant and will assist with building their resume?

By participating in this project, the Graduate Assistant will develop and/or strengthen skills that are highly valued in most professional contexts, especially those that involve collaborative and multidisciplinary efforts. Through this experience the Graduate Assistant will develop a good understanding of the process involved in producing successful educational and outreach events, from definition of goals, to implementation, to assessment; develop major event planning skills;

improve communication skills; and learn how to rely and benefit most from the collaboration of individuals and organizations with diverse expertise.

4. How does this position provide an opportunity for a collegial/mentoring relationship between graduate student and university supervisor?

The Graduate Assistant will work closely with all members of the McAuliffe Center staff who have years of experience organizing education and outreach events. Many of them have been involved in the organization of *Science on State Street* from its inception, for example.

Most of all, the Graduate Assistant will work on a regular basis with the director of the McAuliffe Center on developing collaborations and partnerships with FSU faculty. The Graduate Assistant will attend meetings with faculty to plan their participation in any of the programs listed above and will gradually, through mentoring and supervision by the director, become more independent in supporting participation of some of the faculty in our outreach programs. Because the programs all require a multidisciplinary effort, the Graduate Assistant will have the opportunity to develop a stronger awareness of the resources available at the University and an understanding of how to coordinate diverse expertise and points of view.

5. If the responsibilities of the graduate assistant addresses a long-term need (rather than an individual project), explain how this project/research will help the program/department/office over the short term and the long term.

On the short term, the Graduate Assistant will provide a critical role in managing and implementing four important FSU education and outreach programs that will be offered in 2018-2019. Three of these programs will most likely be established as regular offerings (*Science on State Street* is already) while the program created for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Moon Landing may well become a model for similar, multidisciplinary initiatives in the future.

On the long term, the work of the Graduate Assistant will help the McAuliffe Center establish strong collaborations with faculty with expertise in both STEM and non-STEM disciplines and develop a model for collaboration to apply to many future endeavors. Such collaborations will enable FSU faculty to engage in an increasing number of high quality community outreach events without having to be taxed with the planning and managing of the events themselves. In return, Framingham State University will acquire increased visibility through faculty engagement with and in the community thus attracting the attention of the families of potential future students.

*Jrene Pano*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 11/30/17  
Graduate Assistant Supervisor

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Program Coordinator (if different from above)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Department Chair (if different from above)