



# **Title III Consultant Visitation Itinerary**

**November 18-20, 2001**

**Consultant: Dr. William Campbell, University of Wisconsin-River Falls**

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## **Sunday, November 18, 2001**

Arrive in Emporia: early evening; Hotel Reservation-White Rose Inn

## **Monday, November 19, 2001**

7:30AM: Breakfast Meeting-White Rose Inn

8:30AM: Bring Dr. Campbell to campus

9:30-11:00: Title III Committee Meeting

11:00-12Noon: Meeting with authors of grant (McGlone; Ziegler)

12Noon: Lunch-Skyline Room (Note: All Title III group members welcome)

1:30-2:30: Meet with Dr. Schwenn

2:30-5:00: Meet with Dr. McGlone

5:30PM: Dinner (Downs; McGlone; Ziegler)

## **Tuesday, November 20, 2001**

7:00AM: Breakfast Meeting-White Rose Inn (Downs; Hirsh; Ziegler)

8:00AM: Bring to campus; Meet with Mr. Hauke

9:00-10:00AM: Deans' Council

10:00-11:00AM: Meet with CATS Senior Staff

12:00Noon: Lunch

1:00-2:00PM: Meet with Dr. Downs & Ms. Fillmore

2:00-5:00PM: Meet with Committee (Downs; Hirsh; McGlone; Ziegler)

5:30PM: Depart Emporia

**Analysis of Title III Proposal, Emporia State University**  
Wm. E. Campbell, 10/7/01

**Overall strengths:**

- Proposal is well-written. Voice and style are appropriate.
- Basic idea—student information system to aid institutional management—is sound.

**Weaknesses:**

- The basic argument of the proposal is ‘we need a student information system and the state won’t buy it for us.’ Title III is designed to help institutions strengthen themselves and make themselves more self-sufficient. ESU’s proposal does not show how a student information system will do that.
- Level of detail is inappropriate. In CDP, not enough detail is provided: for instance, how does ESU know that a student information system will solve its problems? In implementation plan and management sections, more detail is provided than the reader needs. We don’t need so many resumes, for instance.
- CDP and the rest of the proposal do not go together well. CDP lists several needs, emphasizing overall lack of technology on campus—information technology, faculty development for info tech, student information systems, etc. But starting with the Part II, Specific Dev. Grant Activities, you only discuss SIS. I was expecting a wider approach. I recommend either spending far more space in the CDP on SIS to convince the reader that it’s your most burning problem or adding another activity or two to deal with those other problems.
- Budget does not follow Title III guidelines, which specify maximum of \$350,000 per year from USED, total of \$1.5M.
- No appendices allowed in Title III proposals. Readers are instructed not to read them.
- It looks padded—text is stretched, too many resumes, lots of repetition. Next year, Title III proposals will probably be limited to 100 pp. Much of your argument could be presented in charts and tables, then summarized in narrative. Besides, some readers prefer more graphic presentations of data, rather than narrative. (Good rule of thumb: present important data in more than one way: narrative, tables/charts, graphs, etc.)

**Specifics:**

1. **Cover sheet.** descriptive title is *Creating an Information Management Infrastructure for Academic Support*. The title should capture a basic need and its solution, e.g. *Improving Student Retention through Improving Infrastructure and Services* or *Easing Budget Shortfalls through Increasing Administrative Efficiency*. This title already suggests to the reader that ESU has not completely thought out why it needs an SIS. I starting looking immediately for evidence that information management would make ESU stronger or more self-sufficient.

2. **Institutional Narrative.** Mission section should quote the mission from the college's catalog. Flesh it out with other information, if it's too vague or all-inclusive (as most are). But the other information should begin to make your argument, e.g. primary mission is undergraduate education with a personal touch, which is difficult to deliver without more user-friendly admissions, registration, advising, distance ed, and other systems. Data should support the argument you are about to make, e.g. student/faculty ratio of x/y and 12 hour loads means that faculty have to make most efficient use of time; or paucity of support staff means that systems must be extremely user-friendly and robust in order to provide the services your students need and expect.
3. **CDP, Analysis of Strengths & Weaknesses.** Mostly good—lists are comprehensive and persuasive. Narrative should include more hard data, e.g. p. 16 says ESU minimizes use of part-timers for gen ed instruction—how many? Also, this section should be heavily laced with references—self-studies, results of surveys, comments from regents or visitors, whatever you can put quotes around and cite. The readers want to know how you know what your strengths, weaknesses, and problems are, with some supporting evidence.

Also, make very sure that for every problem you identify, you also at least mention a solution. Most schools list at least several problems, as you do. That's good—no reader is going to believe that you only have one—but you have to convince the reader that you know how to solve all the problems you listed, not just the one that Title III dollars will be used for. You say that you'll solve the other problems, but you don't tell us how. Not very convincing.

Your proposal convinces me that ESU has several serious problems, but I never hear about most of them beyond this section. In fact, I'm much more impressed by your need for improved information technology across the campus than I am by your need for SIS. In the SIS section, you tell me what you lack, but not why those lacks make your students or faculty suffer, or how fixing this problem would make you a stronger institution.

Throughout the CDP, you need to illuminate your general statements with specific examples. Make up a few students who have spent two days trying to register because they have to run from office to office, or a faculty member who wants to try WebCT with a night course but gets no support. Some readers respond better to specific examples than to generalizations. To close the circle, mention those examples later on in Part II to show how your implementation is going to make some specific differences.

In this long section, your organization becomes confusing. You need more levels of heads, or a better outline system, to help the reader keep track of where s/he is. Page after page of narrative doesn't help either—breaking them up with some charts or tables, where appropriate, would help. For instance, many proposals close with a

table summarizing the weaknesses and the problems they have led to. That also leads into the next section, where you can open with the same chart with additional columns for goals and objectives. This chart can lay out the logic of your proposal: campus-wide needs which lead to specific problems, goals to solve them, and specific and measurable objectives which, when achieved, will complete the goals, solve the problems, and meet the needs. In the chart, you can asterisk the items which Title III will address.

4. **Planning process.** It's clear that you completed an extensive and comprehensive planning process. But you need to explain to the reader why Title III is addressing the priority that ranks 3<sup>rd</sup>; why not address 1 or 2? (You might say, for instance, that you have already addressed 1 and 2, or 1 has been solved and 2 is well under way, or whatever—but you have to say something.) Also, earlier you told us that you are chronically underfunded, yet in this section is the 2 for 1 program. That's going to sound quite rich to readers from schools that are poorer than yours, e.g. some community colleges.
5. **Goals and objectives.** Good, though once again you have to tell the reader at least a little bit about how you will achieve the goals and objectives which are not addressed by Title III.
6. **Institutionalizing.** It's good to tell us how much ESU will contribute to the project, but you also need to tell us exactly how ESU will continue to support Banner. You tell us that you will, but not how. You might argue, for instance, that Banner will make you so much more efficient that you can pay for continuation and upgrades through cost-savings. (Make up some plausible numbers to make your case.) Or that ESU will be so much more student-friendly that your enrollment will increase 15% and the extra fees will pay for upgrades and continued training.

Finally, never use weasel words like 'possibly,' as you do on p. 49. Always say 'will' instead.

7. **Ranking Activities.** 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph is all you need, the rest is irrelevant and annoying to the reader. The only purpose of Title III is to make institutions stronger and more self-sufficient; GPRA and literacy count for nought in this competition.
8. **Activity Narrative.** A-2 charts are good. You don't address how you will re-allocate \$450k by 2006. You could also add a little narrative for the readers who hate charts, but it's not required and page limits may prevent it.
9. **Relationship of the Activity to the CDP.** Needs more detail. This section should tie to the specifics of the CDP, the objectives, and the activity narrative. If you had said that 87 students were so disgusted with the cumbersome advising/registration processes in fall, 2001, that they dropped out, then in this section you could say that installing Banner and training admissions/advising/registration staff will alleviate this problem.

10. **Implementation Strategy.** A-3 charts are good, though the tangible results should at least point to broader goals, e.g. improving student retention or administrative efficiency. Your argument here verges on circularity: the task is to install the software, the tangible result is that software is installed. Narrative is too detailed, easily summarized in a table. Administrative structure seems many-layered and cumbersome, though involvement of lots of folks is a plus.
11. **Key Personnel.** Too much detail. You list key players, briefly describe their qualifications and Title III responsibilities—that's enough, no need for resumes or position descriptions beyond Project Coordinator and Activity Director.
12. **Budget.** As noted above, you must divide your budget into 5 years of no more than \$350k each and the total can't be more than \$1.5M. That takes a little juggling, I know. I suggest you pay the personnel with ESU funds and use all your Title III cash for equipment and contracts, at least for the first few years. Don't shrink the time commitment of those folks, the readers thought 25% was minimal. Also, you'll need detailed budgets for each year, both for activity 1 and management/evaluation. I usually build those detailed budgets in a spreadsheet with columns for USED and my own institution—that shows the total costs of the project and who's paying for what. Using a spreadsheet lets you move expenses between columns so that the USED total for each year is exactly \$350k.
13. **Management plan.** Good, though you should emphasize direct access of Coordinator or Activity Director to Chancellor/President. That's one of the specific items on the scoresheet.
14. **Evaluation plan.** Good, though it reflects a basic problem—you have not made the case that the SIS will make you a stronger or more self-sufficient institution. When you fix that, then your objectives will show it and your evaluation plan will measure to what degree it has happened. If you create a needs/problems/goals/objectives chart, in eval section you can follow the same pattern, listing objectives, tasks, and methods of evaluation for each.

I think the readers' comments are accurate. If I had read and scored this proposal, it would have earned around 90 points, I think. (I've read for Title III on three different occasions.) Not terrible—in fact, it would have won you a grant 15 years ago—but certainly not good enough. The cutoff has been creeping up, year by year; last year it was 98.

The good news: as USED has carved off Title III and Title III-like grant programs for tribal colleges, Hispanic-serving institutions, etc., the number of proposals submitted to the original program has decreased significantly. When I started reading for Title III, there were 600 proposals. Last year there were about 190 submitted, as I recall. They funded approximately 35, a success rate of slightly over 18%. Tough odds, but not impossible.

Which raises a question: does Emporia enroll a large proportion of Hispanic students? If it's 25% or more, you qualify for a Title V grant. They're like Title III only a little richer, \$400k/year, and the success rate last year was over 50%.