

Stuart R. Givens Memorial Fellowship
Personal Statement and Fellowship Experience Proposal

Dream.

Focus.

Plan.

Paul Hemminger

For the last year, every time a person receives an e-mail from me they become instantly connected to a philosophy that continually shapes the world for the better. The first quote, in black, reads, “An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.” – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The second quote, in red, reads, “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” - Mahatma Gandhi. Take a moment and reflect on these two people. Ponder what they stood for, how they went about their lives, who benefited from their actions, and why their words are at the beginning of this proposal. If you don’t take that moment right now, please do so after you finish this reading.

Hello, my name is Paul Hemminger, and I’d like to introduce you to a story of my past, present, and potential future. Last fall, I went on a nine-week, 18-credit hour excursion around the perimeter of the United States. This BGSU program was called GeoJourney, and what we studied was how present day USA was formed, geologically, environmentally, and culturally. This experience opened my eyes and ears to the connectedness of history, policy, business, and society’s irrationality in terms of collective decision making. I learned how much of an impact one person or one group of people can make if they push hard enough. For example, certain individuals are responsible for diverting water to another location for the rest of time, destroying whole ecosystems, creating whole cities, and wiping out entire populations. This made me realize that we are all advocates for either sustainable destruction, or sustainable development. People simply aren’t stagnant beings that don’t affect the world around us. Every action, and every lack of action, creates and destroys the world we live in.

Upon this realization, I began looking at practical and realistic actions that could develop this world to be a better place for us all. This is especially true for the 24,000 children who die every single day from preventable causes; my dream is someday that number is zero. In response, over the course of the spring semester, I coordinated both The Tap Project for UNICEF and The Rescue for Invisible Children, raising \$3,000 and \$900 respectively, each campaign lasting one week. The money raised for UNICEF, as well as the large amount of awareness, was directed towards creating sustainable sources of sanitary water for the 900 million people who lack such a source. The money raised for Invisible Children went towards the rescue, rehabilitation, and education of child soldiers located in the war-torn areas of Northern Uganda. Similarly, during the course of this fall semester, I was in charge of coordinating an Invisible

Children screening in the BTSU ballroom, in which \$4,320 was raised in one night, all from dedicated college students.

In these last two semesters I have witnessed in myself an escalation of commitment. I am committed to finding ways in which every person, every discipline, every business, and every action, can play a part in helping to save the lives of the impoverished, and the utility of the wealthy. There is a special balance that can exist in which the wealthiest people in this world can be content with the items they have been blessed with, and the poorest can be taught how to develop the skills in order to provide for themselves their basic needs. Presently, I am finding ways in which organizations, businesses, people, and networks can relate to each other interdependently in order to balance this inequality. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. also proclaimed that, "True peace is not merely the absence of tension: it is the presence of justice." Justice in terms of what the future could be, I believe, is merely the chance and the opportunity to survive, for some that is an impossible feat.

What can the future hold? For some time I have been at the mercy of networking, awareness, and my own education, witnessing the actions of others from afar. I wish now to experience what I have been so strongly advocating. Fortunately, this opportunity could not have come at a more opportune time. I have been researching many institutions since the beginning of this fall, and I believe I have found the optimal experience. My plan is to partake in a nine and a half week micro-financing internship in Kenya in coordination with The Foundation for Sustainable Development (FSD).

It has been proven that entrepreneurship and services like Kiva.org, a micro-financing loan portal, can inadvertently save a woman from getting HIV/AIDS, increase the quality of education, provide water to those who have not a supply, and even revolutionize a country through creating green jobs. Micro-finance is an applicable tool that can be used to increase the level of healthcare, empower women, develop a community, and resolve human rights issues.

The practice and experience of working in such an environment, that fosters goodwill through business, would be something that differentiates myself, as well as BGSU, from other Universities. Business, many times a dirty word, can be used to make a positive difference. I believe one of my purposes in life is to expose that to people, and to influence others to act in accordance with these principles. I learned this principle from the for-profit "do good" company, TOMs Shoes. TOMs gives a pair of shoes to someone in need for every pair bought. This

company would never have survived as a non-profit. Sometimes non-profits, with all good intentions, and out of necessity, give people fish and water. However, micro-finance teaches people how to fish, and how to catch water.

In regards to the nature of the internship, I would graciously become fully immersed in Kenya's culture, as I would be supplied with a host family and paired with one of 300 host organizations that work directly with FSD. In addition, an FSD international staff member would constantly be present to assist in any on and off the job concerns I may have. In the beginning, a one-week training and orientation would gear me up for the remaining eight weeks of developmental work. My time would essentially be devoted to providing a critical analysis of the needs of the region, and devising a plan to work with local people and organizations to meet those needs. As Kenya does have a range in both urban and rural development, I'd witness the needs of both lifestyles and transpose those back into future investments, as well as using that experience to educate people on the reality of life in a foreign underdeveloped country, like Kenya. Additionally, the application process has begun. I have been speaking to two staff members, and in result I was granted an opportunity to apply for the program two months early. If you look on the website, they publically do not start accepting applications until February 1st. FSD is prepared to share the results of my acceptance before the holidays.

Upon completion, I am ready and eager to present this information in an interactive forum to people from many different disciplines. The cross-cultural nature of this project would warrant such an event, and in effect, produce heartwarming results. Additionally, I would wish to spread the story of my time in Kenya with all students, the primary audience being undecided students, peace and conflict study students, and business students. With this experience as part of my past, the future seems bright. This is especially true in terms of applying for graduate school, continued work with non-profits such as UNICEF, or perhaps even micro-financing organizations, like Kiva.org. Without the support of the Givens Fellowship, working for the Foundation for Sustainable Development would not be possible. In fact, without this opportunity, it's unlikely I would venture outside of the country anytime soon; this opportunity would grant me my first trip outside of the United States. I am beyond prepared for this next step in life, and all in good faith, excited to give back to the local and global communities in which I take ownership. The same way in which the two men quoted earlier took ownership of the prosperity of all people.

Proposed Budget for Fellowship Project

Please Note: The following budget is not subject to change; however these two variables are all that I wish the Fellowship to fund. If for some reason the program fee or the costs of flights decrease, no additional cost will be asked of the Fellowship. Although the final total is estimated to cost \$6,000, I do plan on raising additional funds through a variety of means in order to support misc. expenses. Thank you.

Paul Hemminger ☺

Title	Description	Amount
Flights	Flights from USA to Mombasa or Nairobi, Kenya vary in price. It's dependent on the day of the week one arrives and departs, and the city one is flying from and to.	\$1,600 - \$2,100
Foundation for Sustainable Development (FSD) Fee	The program fee covers all program costs (excluding airfare) and is 100% tax deductible for U.S. residents. Included in the fee is: a one-week orientation; family home stay with all meals provided; language lessons (not included in Latin America but available for a nominal fee); development trainings and workshops; group sessions; midterm retreat (9+ weeks only); final debriefing session; on-going in-country support from FSD site team and U.S. staff; \$200 seed grant; eligibility for additional project funding up to \$1000; medical evacuation and limited health insurance; airport pick-up upon arrival; and upon return, entry into the AlumniConnect program. To be accepted into the internship program, one must commit at least nine weeks to the program.	9 Weeks: \$4,192 Or 10 Weeks: \$4,373
Total		Approximately \$5,792-\$5,973