

November 23, 2021

Dr. Blair P. Nelson
UIC Grant Review Panel Chair
701 S. Morgan Street
UH 1208
Chicago, IL 60607-7120

Dear Dr. Nelson:

I write to you as a representative for students from the communication program contributing and running The Red Line Project. As a student writing and reporting on the Red Line project Website I write to submit a grant proposal for \$1,000. These funds will allow us to purchase data locked behind a paywall that will advance our investigative pursuits for a feature story about United States politics and Covid-19. The gracious gift of this grant will also aid travel costs for students to gather interviews and digital content from every region in the United States.

The Red Line project is a website filled with journalism content made by UIC communication students enrolled in journalism courses. Founded in 2011 by UIC communications and journalism professor Mike Reilly, the website has gathered over 50 awards for incredible journalism. The website offers a space for communication students interested in pursuing journalism to have their work appreciated and awarded.

This grant from the panel will directly impact UIC's student's ability to challenge themselves and become competitive and employable journalists post-graduation. It also has the potential to uncover new information about a highly debated topic occurring in the United States.

Looking forward to your response,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julia Kindelin". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional but personal style.

Julia Kindelin
Contributor, The Red Line Project

The Red Line Project

Submitted to: UIC Grant Review Panel

Date: November 23, 2021

Amount Requested: \$1,000.00

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Summary

The Red Line Project is a website that features writing and reporting done by students from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). It is overseen by journalism professor Mike Reilley. Students journalists from The Red Line Project are requesting \$1,000.00 from The UIC Grant Review Panel to fund the research and writing of a feature story about U.S. politics in the age of covid-19 that will be posted on The Red Line Project. This application outlines the current limitations of the Red Line Project, goals and objectives if awarded this grant, plans for evaluation post-publication, the budget of how the grant will be spent, and methods for completing the project within a respective timeline.

Introduction

The Red Line Project has been home to the work done by communication students in the three journalism classes UIC has offered since 2011. Using the expertise of professor Mike Reilley, students can publish their feature stories, many of which students have spent months on. On the site you can find honest, ethical journalism that utilizes top data visualization tools. Students write and report on politics and elections, COVID-19, and other data or visual-driven stories.

Need Statement

The Red Line Project needs \$1,000.00 to expand and accommodate for widespread coverage on the feature story about politics and Covid-19. Students from UIC's Communication degree with an interest in journalism have fewer resources than other Universities in Chicago. UIC offers three journalism classes for students pursuing a communication degree but does not offer a journalism major or minor. The lack of funds currently does not allow access to paid data or travel accommodations that can allow for thorough reporting that covers a wider group. UIC's communication program offers only three journalism courses, leaving fewer resources available to students wanting to pursue journalism. Journalism students at UIC are taught strong research and reporting skills but are unable to report on a larger story due to the lack of funds given to the program. Reporting on investigative cases such as the proposed story helps prepare students for success in their journalism careers. Funding travel and research at this level allows students to put their skills into practice in a larger arena and experience similar opportunities to journalism students at larger journalism schools. Additionally, the work done by students on this project can provide a thorough investigation into why the United States is so divided about Covid-19. The investigative journalism from this story has the potential to draw conclusions not yet discussed and drive traffic to The Red Line Project as well as UIC's communication degree.

Goals and Objectives

The Red Line Project's goal is to offer more resources to students for journalistic purposes, including exposure to data behind paywalls. The Red Line Project also champions ethical and extensive reporting that provides benefit to the public as well as practice for the students. Offering students the ability to make an impact on the community through this type of journalism sets them up for success in their future journalistic career endeavors. The Red Line Projects main objectives for this feature story are the following:

- Gather data and interviews from all regions of the United States
- Publish feature story to the Red Line Project website by March 2022
- Make 5,000 impressions on the story once published on the Red Line Project website

Evaluation

The Red Line Project will use quantitative and qualitative data as a means to determine the success of the feature story on politics and Covid-19 after it has been published. The gathering of data will take place six months after the story has been live on the website and will be done by student journalists that worked on the story and overseen by Professor Mike Reilley. The following quantitative and qualitative data will be analyzed for discovery:

- The number of regions in the United States that were covered in the feature story will be read, counted, and cross-checked to be sure that all five were included in data and interviews. This includes the Northeast, Southwest, West, Southeast, and Midwest.
- Evaluation of publication date to determine if March 2022 goal was hit
- Website data analytics will be scraped by journalism students to determine the number of original impressions made within six months (September 2022) after publication.

This evaluation will determine if The Red Line Project met its goals and was successful in its reporting. It will determine how impactful the grant was on the Red Line Projects' ability to accomplish their goals. It will also demonstrate how beneficial future grants can be for students writing reports on the Red Line Project in the future.

Methods

To accomplish proposed goals, students from The Red Line Project will adhere to the proposed schedule taking place from January 2022 until September 2022.

Methods	Timeline
Divide reporting responsibilities among student team	Early January 2022
Begin preliminary research for data sets	January 2022
Travel to regions of U.S. to gather digital content	February 2022
Compile, edit, and publish feature on Red Line Project	March 2022
Six-month post publication evaluation done by assigned student team	September 2022

Budget Summary

Outlined below are the items, cost and justification of where grant funds will be used. The Red Line project will use the majority of allowances to cover the cost of access to paid data sets which will be used for storytelling and in data visualization graphics. Additionally, \$400.00 from the grant will cover partial travel costs for four students to drive to locations in the listed regions to collect digital images and videos along with interviews from residents and experts. Students visiting each region will be responsible for the remainder of their travel costs, however the funds will cover their drive to and from their locations. Mileage costs to each location will vary on the distance of the location from each student's starting points.

Item	Justification	Cost
Data.world political data set access	One time download and access fee \$600.00	\$600.00
Partial travel compensation to locations in Northeast, Southwest, West, and Southeast regions	\$0.14/ mile x 2,857 miles	\$400.00
Total		\$1,000.00

References

“The Red Line Project.” *Redlineproject.org*, <http://www.redlineproject.org/>.