



Marietta College

November 20, 2015

Dear Members of the Review Committee:

It is my pleasure to write this letter of support for Building Bridges to Careers, and their Straight A Grant Application to support the Epicenter project. Marietta College has partnered with Building Bridges to Careers in various ways over the past few years. Marietta College students completed a service-learning project as part of their class to design the BBC logo and branding. Our staff have been part of the BBC community advisory group and served on BBC committees. Students from the McDonough Leadership program have completed both community service requirements and internships through working with Building Bridges to Careers. Leadership Students have also partnered with Building Bridges to Careers to create and implement events, such as a recent workshop on networking skills for eighth graders. Building Bridges to Careers has also supported the planning, staffing, and implementation of the summer DRIVE (Dreams+ Resources+ Innovation +Vision=Entrepreneurship) Camp for middle and high school students, supported through the Young Entrepreneurs Consortium. BBC helped develop plans, recruit teachers, refer students, and connect Marietta College with other innovative entrepreneurship education projects in Ohio.

We are excited for the potential for expanded partnership and programming that would come with the creation of the Epicenter. We are currently working on creating an option for students for Marietta High School to take our LEAD 240 Leadership Practicum; the Epicenter could be a valuable community resource for both high school and Marietta College students enrolled in this class, which involves working in groups to understand the local context and create innovative solutions to community challenges. We would also work with BBC to create new volunteer opportunities for college students to be directly involved with the Epicenter. Volunteers could gain valuable experience through supporting the center itself as well as assisting with educational programs that would be hosted there.

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We also plan to continue to partner with the BBC for DRIVE camp, which empowers middle and high school students to design and launch their own business or social ventures. The Epicenter is not only an excellent location for camp activities, but also makes accessible a variety of creative local entrepreneurs who can work with both middle and high school campers and also our college student facilitators. The Epicenter also has potential to nurture the student-created businesses that come out of DRIVE camp through providing space, resources, and ongoing mentorship.

Further, we are interested in exploring potential connections between the Epicenter's "Entrepreneurs in Residence" model and the McDonough Center's ongoing Executive in Residence program to see how these initiatives could support and build on each other to create a stronger connection between experiential education initiatives at the college and in the community. We have also discussed using the Epicenter as a connection point between high school students and our "Piopitch" program, which is a College-wide initiative that brings together the campus community and local entrepreneurs to discuss local and regional business ventures.

In my role as Director of Civic Engagement at Marietta College, I have personally worked extensively with Building Bridges to Careers over the past three years, and have been consistently impressed with the vision, motivation, ambition, and creativity of this group. I have also been inspired by the BBC staff, partners, and volunteers who give their energy, ideas, and time to design and implement innovative projects throughout our community that create mutually beneficial outcomes for students, teachers, businesses, and the community as a whole. We look forward to continued and expanded partnership with BBC, and hope that the Epicenter will be part of that.

Sincerely,

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