

**Middlesex Community College
Fulbright-Hays Group Project Abroad Program
Presenting Cambodia from an Historical and Contemporary Perspective**

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MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE - PROJECT NARRATIVE

1. PLAN of OPERATION

(1)(a): Objectives and Group Project Abroad Program Purposes: Middlesex Community College proposes a Fulbright-Hays Group Project Abroad (GPA) focused on *Presenting Cambodia from an Historical and Contemporary Perspective*. The project has been developed in partnership with the Lowell Public Schools (LPS) and in consultation with Pannasastra University of Cambodia (PUC) in Phnom Penh. In November 2008, MCC signed a Memorandum of Agreement with PUC to engage in several collaborative activities, including joint research and other academic and technical projects and establishing educational and cultural exchanges. The proposed project is a natural extension of Middlesex's continuing engagement with and support for the Cambodian community, both in Lowell and in Cambodia and the relationship it has begun with PUC. It is based on the important need to expand the ability of K-12 and college educators to provide the type of quality learning experiences and understanding that will contribute to addressing the needs of the Lowell Cambodian population, which is the second largest population of Cambodians, on a percentage basis, in the country. Middlesex faculty from the Divisions of Humanities and Social Sciences will work collaboratively within the college and with LPS teachers to infuse content reflecting both an historic and contemporary perspective of Cambodian history, culture, arts, and political socio-economic system into courses at both the K-12 and college level. Thus, Cambodian studies will be offered across disciplines and courses, impacting high numbers of students.

The overall **goal** of the project, consistent with the purposes of the GPA program, is to establish opportunities for on-going research and communication between American and Cambodian representatives, including the faculty at PUC, which will enable MCC and LPS to

develop academic and community initiatives that will strengthen intercultural understanding, support the greater Lowell Cambodian population, and contribute to meeting the needs of Cambodian youth. **Objectives:** (1). Increase by 11 the number of MCC and LPS faculty who can integrate the Cambodian perspective and experiences into their classes through research, travel/study, and curriculum development; (2) Infuse a minimum of 25 courses at the elementary, secondary, and college levels with content reflecting historic and contemporary Cambodia and incorporate current Cambodian scholarship researched in Cambodia and America; (3) Increase faculty knowledge of the comparative connections between Cambodians in Cambodia and Cambodians in America; (4) Increase faculty expertise in designing culturally sensitive educational activities and teaching strategies that contribute to fostering positive self-imagery in students; (5) Develop new strategies to inform and engage families, neighborhoods, and institutions in offering a continuum of educational opportunities that positively impact Cambodian and Cambodian-American students' self-esteem, sense of purpose, academic achievement, and overall success; and (6) Develop connections with a minimum of five faculty at PUC and five faculty at public schools in order to continue research and collaboration following the project completion. The above goal and objectives directly relate to the GPA purpose stated in the authorizing legislation Sec. 2451. This is "to increase mutual understanding..., strengthen the ties which unite us..., promote international cooperation for educational and cultural advancement..., and assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and other countries of the world."

To implement Objectives 1, 2, and 3, each participant will identify an activity to be developed and implemented during the grant period which may include the creation or modification of a course(s) or the design and presentation of a special project. Each participant

will be supported in his/her work by a key member of the GPA Planning Team (Project Director Dean Kent Mitchell, Project Manager Professor Kenneth Dunn, and three survivors of the Cambodian Genocide – Project Curriculum Specialist Dr. Phala Chea of the LPS, Samkhann Khoeun -MCC Talent Search Advisor at Lowell High School, and Tooch Van - MCC Assistant Dean for International Programs.) Course development/modification will begin upon return from the four-week research/study period and completed during the 2010 – 2011 academic year.

Objective 4 will be accomplished through a series of monthly meetings that will be held with the participants post study/research to discuss their findings regarding new content knowledge, teaching methodologies, and strategies for relating to youth and families. Several of these meetings will include community representatives. Workshops will be held for LPS teachers and MCC faculty to present these findings and concrete strategies for advancing new teaching approaches with Cambodian and Cambodian-American students.

Similarly, to accomplish objective 5, participants will identify and implement new strategies to inform and engage families, neighborhoods, schools, and community organizations in supporting the Lowell Cambodian community. Activities will include meetings with families and community stakeholders to present findings and engage in community dialogues aimed at generating new or enhanced education and cultural programs.

Objective 6 will be accomplished through the relationships participants develop during the four-week study period and the use of technology (email, Skype, Facebook, and blogs) to maintain communication with PUC faculty and other Cambodian educators to support further exploration of education topics and related research.

(1)(b): Design of the Project: Middlesex Community College (MCC) proposes a four-week, travel-study seminar in Cambodia, *Presenting Cambodia from an Historical and Contemporary*

Perspective, from July 6, 2010 - August 4, 2010, for a delegation of 13 MCC and LPS faculty and teachers. The project has three phases:

Phase I – Pre-Travel: The pre-travel departure phase will be coordinated by the Project Director and Project Manager with assistance from the GPA Planning Team. This phase will include the following components: (1) Six hours of pre-orientation group discussions on readings related to Cambodian culture and history; (2) Twenty hours of language training in Khmer; and (3) Three-day Orientation Program (24 hours). (A brief summary follows below. See Other Narrative for complete details.)

Reading and Study Seminars (Three, two-hour sessions): Three seminars will be held focusing on “Politics and Economy of Cambodia,” Contemporary Religion and Education,” and “Contemporary Cambodian Culture.” A suggested reading list will be developed by Project Director Mitchell in collaboration other members of the Project Planning team. Suggested readings will be drawn from historical and contemporary resources, as well as travel and tourism accounts by others who have traveled to Cambodia. Specific readings will be assigned to each participant and will be discussed during the three, two-hour seminars. Each participant will discuss the readings in terms of their relationships to their specific discipline. The discussions will be led by the Project Director and Project Manager with assistance from other members of the planning team and representatives from the Cambodian community.

(2) Language Study (20 hours): Tooch Van, who teaches a non-credit Khmer course at the college, will provide 20 hours of language study. Since Khmer is a very difficult and complex language to master, faculty will only learn key phrases. The language training will not make the participants fluent in Khmer. However, it will provide them with a feeling for the Khmer language, some ability to speak directly with the people they will be meeting, and the ability to

show their respect and appreciation to those providing them with information. Note: They will receive an additional 20 hours of language training while in Cambodia.

(3) Orientation Program (24 hours – Three days): Faculty will participate in a three-day Orientation Program designed to build upon the Reading/Discussion Seminars and to make them more familiar with various aspects of Cambodia. They will also learn about the cultural practices that should be followed when interacting with people. The Project Director and Project Manager, along with other members of Planning Team and local and regional Cambodian experts, will conduct the Orientation Program, which will also include viewing of selected videos and a walking tour of Lowell's Cambodian neighborhoods. A detailed itinerary is included in the Other Narrative section. Following is a brief summary of the Orientation Program:

Day One: Overview of Cambodia with an emphasis on areas where faculty will visit and study; discussion of traditional cultural practices; viewing of videos on the country ; information on specific travel arrangements, such as passports, monetary exchange system, and final itinerary

Day Two: Seminars on Civil Society, Women in Cambodia; Discussions on Participant Projects and Research Interests

Day Three: Viewing of Film, *New Year Baby*, and discussion, lunch and walking tour of Lowell Cambodian Community, presentation of participant projects and research interests, review of travel itinerary

Overseas Phase II – Study/Travel Seminar: The Project Director and Project Manager will finalize the in-country study phase with Dr. Sok Uttara, Associate Dean and Professor of the PUC Faculty of Education, who will serve as the In-Country Coordinator. Highlights of the itinerary are as follows: (1) Travel and study in five Cambodian cities provinces(Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Battambang, Sihanoukville, and Kandal) selected to provide insight and

understanding of the past and present Cambodian experience; (2) Meetings with Cambodian government officials, NGO leaders, educators (including faculty at PUC), business people, religious leaders, community organizations, and citizens; (3) Lectures/discussions with Cambodian experts; (4) An additional 20 hours of instruction in Khmer; and (5) Collection of historical and cultural data and anecdotal information to support individual group member's projects and to address impact of the atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge, as well as the effectiveness of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia trial in addressing the generational impact of the genocide on the Cambodian diaspora.

Post Seminar Phase III – Curriculum Development, Special Projects and Dissemination

Upon completion of the overseas phase, the Project Director, Project Manager, and the Project Curriculum Specialist, along with the other members of the planning team, will work with MCC faculty participants and the LPS teachers to establish timelines for special projects and curriculum development completion as well as strategies for dissemination of information within the Lowell community. Highlights of this post-seminar phase include: (1) Infusing information obtained in Cambodia on the history, culture, socio-economic-political system, and arts into a minimum of 25 courses within the LPS and MCC and piloting new courses during the 2010-2011 academic year; (2) Working with the college's Asian Studies Project, International Club, LPS, Cambodian organizations, and community groups to disseminate information, hold community forums, and display presentations at key locations throughout the City of Lowell; and (3) Continuing discussions and joint research with contacts in Cambodia, including the faculty at PUC and K-12 schools through the use technology (e-mail, Skype, Facebook, and blogs)

Phase II. Cambodia Travel/Study Seminar

Sites identified for visits in Cambodia have been carefully selected to meet the specific needs of a variety of disciplines. While each day's visits have been planned to maximize the available time, we have also allowed some free time that will permit additional visits to organizations or sites that might emerge as being helpful after the faculty have had an opportunity to begin their research in Cambodia. The study trip begins and ends in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia and its most important city, with additional trips to several different locations throughout Cambodia as detailed in the itinerary. Among discussions already planned are those relating to: Preserving Angkor, Democracy Building, Access to Education in Cambodia, Rights-based Education in Cambodia, Assessment of Schools and Children, Higher Education Development, Traditional and Contemporary Arts and Culture, and Empowerment of a New Generation of Women Leaders in Cambodia. (See Itinerary for more details on activities). The lectures will enhance the faculty field research and contribute to a more in-depth understanding of specific topics. Whenever possible, we will also provide faculty with the opportunity to meet and speak with individual Cambodians who are not affiliated with government or political organizations. This will provide another, very important perspective.

Faculty will keep journals and field notes throughout their study tour. These will detail not only information that they learn as a result of their study, but also their personal reactions to their experiences. These journals and field notes will be very useful to them as they develop new courses/modules, provide training for other educators, and assist with developing community programming to engage Cambodian youth.

Phase III –Post-Trip Activities

Post-trip activities will include nine, two-hour monthly meetings, some involving community groups, as well as workshops on developing appropriate assessments and culturally sensitive

curricula and pedagogies. The monthly meetings will be coordinated by the Project Director and will take place at MCC or the LPS. The purposes of these meetings are to: (1) Continue the relationships among a continuum of educators with a common focus, Cambodian society; (2) Share infusion successes and obstacles (including content and pedagogy); (3) Investigate and address more comprehensively the post-trauma family issues in Cambodian students; (4) Discuss the insights coming from the variety of colleagues in Cambodia (PUC and other schools and organizations); and (5) In collaboration with the greater-Lowell Cambodian community and LPS, design, implement and assess initiatives aimed at providing support for Cambodian families and teachers working with the children in the schools. Topics to be discussed at the monthly meetings include Expectations versus Realities, Legacies of Trauma and Re-traumatizing, Family World Views and American Education, English Language Proficiency in Cambodian Heritage Students, and Work Habits and Motivators for Cambodian Students, (See Appendix for further details on post-trip activities)

(1)(c): Management Plan: A management plan has been carefully designed to benefit from the broadbased international experience of the Project Director and Project Manager, who have worked closely with the Project Planning Team to design the research/study project. Kent Mitchell, Dean of International Arts, will serve as overall Project Director. He will be assisted by Professor of Legal Studies Kenneth Dunn, who will serve as Project Manager and accompany the faculty to Cambodia. Professor Dunn has traveled to Cambodia several times and is well qualified to oversee travel activities in Cambodia. (See Quality of Key Personnel and resumes for additional information)

Dean Mitchell will oversee all phases of the project, including participant selection, orientation and pre-trip activities, travel/study abroad itinerary, curriculum development,

continuation of contacts with PUC, evaluation, and dissemination activities. Dean Mitchell will be responsible for completion of all required documentation to the US Department of Education. He has extensive experience planning and implementing international education programs, as well as working with the Lowell Cambodian community to offer programs and services.

Professor Dunn will assist Dean Mitchell with planning the specific aspects of the trip, including finalizing all arrangements in Cambodia, coordinating travel arrangements (passports, plane tickets, hotel accommodations), conducting orientation and pre-travel activities, accompanying faculty throughout the trip, and assisting with the dissemination activities. The project will benefit significantly from his experience as a faculty member who has traveled, studied and taught in Cambodia.

The GPA Planning Team worked collaboratively to develop the itineraries for all three phases of the project. Samkhann Khoeun has been the key staff working with MCC's Cambodian partner Pannasastra University in Phnom Penh and held meetings with the University President Dr. Chea San Chanthan and other university leaders last fall to begin preparations for building MCC's relationship in anticipation of a Fulbright-Hayes GPA application. Dr. Phala Chea will serve as the Curriculum Specialist on the trip. As part of the dissemination activities, she will work with both the LPS and MCC faculty to support their curriculum development and special project completion. Dean Mitchell and Professor Dunn will also work with MCC faculty participating in the study/research component to assist them in developing curricula and community-focused projects. (See Appendix for resumes)

In addition to planning the proposed itinerary, the management team conducted a survey that was sent to all full-time Humanities and Social Sciences faculty and LPS teachers requesting the following information: (1) why it would be beneficial for them to conduct research in

Cambodia; (2) a proposed specific project or curriculum initiative that they might develop as a result of this research; (3) areas of research and interest in Cambodia that would support their project or curriculum development; and (4) how they would address a “continuum-relational perspective,” which relates to how research conducted in Cambodia will influence their approach to educating and relating to Cambodian students and their families. This management structure and survey results directed the development and linkage of all three project phases.

The following table identifies the specific activities to be undertaken and individuals responsible for their completion. It clearly demonstrates the efficiency of operation and linkages between all project phases.

Schedule of Activities and Responsibilities

Task	Person(s) Responsible
Phase I – Pre-Travel	
Selection of Participants	Project Director, MCC Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, Representative from LPS
Reading and Study Seminar	Project Director, Project Manager
Orientation Activities	Project Director, Project Manager
Language Training	Tooch Van, MCC Assistant Dean of International Programs
Identification of Travel/Study Sites and identification of Cambodian experts to speak on various topics and to hold discussions with faculty	Project Director and Project Manager in consultation with Project Management Planning Team
Phase II – Travel-Study Seminar	
Finalization of Travel Arrangements	Project Director, Project Manager
Travel through Cambodia	Project Manager
Lectures and Discussions	Experts identified in planning phase
Phase III – Post Travel-Study Dissemination	
Curriculum Development and Enhancement; posting of curriculum modules and activities on MCC Asian Studies Website	Project Director, Curriculum Specialist
Dissemination Activities, including community outreach	Project Director, Project Management Planning Team, Faculty
Faculty, Student, and Project Evaluations	Project Director

The chart below demonstrates how MCC will utilize resources and staff to achieve objectives.

Use of Resources and Personnel to Achieve Objectives

Objective and Purpose	Resources/Methods	Project Personnel	Timeframe
1. Increase by 11 the number of MCC and LPS faculty who can integrate the Cambodian perspective and experiences into their classes through research, travel and curriculum development	Fulbright Group Project Funds, MCC International Program Funds Assist. Dean of Instruction	Project Director, Project Manager, Project Curriculum Specialist	3/2010 – 12/2010
2. Infuse a minimum of 25 courses at the elementary, secondary, and college levels with content reflecting historic and contemporary Cambodia and incorporate current Cambodian scholarship researched in Cambodia and America	Fulbright Group Project Funds, Curriculum Dev. Workshops, Assist. Dean of Instruction	Project Director, Project Curriculum Specialist, Faculty,	9/2010 – 12/2010
3. Increase faculty knowledge of the comparative connections between Cambodians in Cambodia and Cambodians in America to strength ability to relate to students and families	Fulbright Group Project Funds Lectures and discussions in Cambodia	Project Director, Project Manager, Project Curriculum Specialist, Faculty	7/2010 and ongoing
4. Increase faculty expertise in designing culturally sensitive educational activities and teaching strategies that contribute to fostering positive self-imagery in students	Fulbright Group Project Funds MCC Workshops for faculty on designing culturally sensitive materials Assist. Dean of Instruc. Assist. Dean Diversity, Chair, FSA Diversity Committee	Project Director Project Curriculum Specialist, Faculty,	9/2010 – 12/2010
5. Develop new strategies to inform and engage families, neighborhoods, and institutions in offering a continuum of educational opportunities that positively impact Cambodian and Cambodian-American students' self-esteem, sense of purpose, academic achievement, and overall success	MCC and LPS Meeting Rooms Forums and discussions with Cambodia organizations, LPS representatives and other community organizations	Project Director, Project Manager, Project Management Resource Team, Faculty	9/2010 and ongoing
6. Maintain connections with a	MCC Professional	Project Director,	7/2010 and

minimum of five faculty at Pannasastra University and five public school faculty in order to continue research and collaboration following the project completion	Development and International Program Funds, IT Services	Faculty, Project Planning Team	ongoing
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(D)(e): Equal Access: MCC and LPS will make every effort to ensure that project participants who are eligible to participate are selected without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age, or handicapping condition. Eligibility for study in Cambodia will follow MCC’s equal access/affirmative action policy, as well as the stated guidelines for eligible GPA project participants in the Fulbright-Hayes GPA application. In addition, MCC recognizes the significance of ensuring that participants must be actively engaged in the education process; and currently teaching and/or studying in the fields of humanities, social sciences, foreign languages, and/or area studies.

At MCC, the selection committee will be comprised of the Project Director, Project Manager and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs. At LPS, the selection process will be overseen by the Superintendent of Schools, who will identify two other representatives to serve on the committee. The application will clearly state the criteria that will be considered in the evaluation of each applicant. The application will include specific information on how the trip will enable faculty to enhance their curricula, as well as the way they teach and interact with Cambodian students and their families.

Pending notification of funding, all full-time MCC faculty teaching in the Divisions of Humanities and Social Science and all LPS K-12 teachers will be invited to submit a formal application. MCC faculty will be informed of this opportunity through MCC Newscaster that goes out to the entire college, individual emails, and announcements made at Division and Faculty Staff Associate meetings. LPS teachers will be similarly informed.

(1)(f): Detailed Itineraries for all phases of the project

See Other Narrative Attachment appendices

2. QUALITY of KEY PERSONNEL

(2)(a): Project Director's qualifications: Dean Kent Mitchell served on the MCC faculty from 1971 - 1983 and assumed the position of Dean of Humanities in 1983. In 2002, he became the Dean of International Arts and has extensive experience working with international projects. Dean Mitchell has assisted in the design and implementation of several grant programs aimed at fostering cultural understanding. He has successfully developed and organized two institutes funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and assisted in developing the programming concepts that were carried out through two U.S. Department of Education Title VIA grants focused on internationalizing curriculum. The NEH institutes were: *Common Ground: Identity and Community in Southeast Asia*, *Common Ground: Identity and Community in Spanish America*, and *Resonances: Africa in the Americas*. The Title VIA grants provided a further focus on Southeast Asian and Latin American cultures. In addition, Dean Mitchell has successfully developed and directed two Department of State Citizens Exchange projects, one with the Municipality of Johannesburg, South Africa, "On the Ground: Building Contexts for Citizen Engagement Among Teenagers in SOWETO," and the second with Marishane Senior Secondary School (MSSS) in Limpopo Province, South Africa, to establish a Women's Support Center.

Dean Mitchell has intensively studied the ways in which international perspectives influence the worldviews of people and their relationships with others. In his current position, he works closely with immigrants in Lowell, including those from Cambodia, to assist them in maintaining their cultural heritage. In 2007, he aided in coordinating Lowell's production of

Where Elephants Weep, the North American debut of the Cambodian rock opera. He also developed and co-directed a Cambodian Bilingual Community Conversations and was instrumental in obtaining grant funding for an annual Cambodian Arts Festival, *Cambodian Expressions*. His extensive experience in managing international grant projects and working with the Lowell Cambodian community provide the expertise required to ensure that this project will meet its goals and objectives. Dean Mitchell will devote 15% time to the project throughout its duration. His responsibilities include overall management oversight for all phases of the project, including participant selection, orientation and pre-trip activities, travel/study abroad itinerary, curriculum development, continuation of contacts with PUC, evaluation, and dissemination activities. Dean Mitchell will be responsible for completion of all required documentation to the US Department of Education.

(2)(b): Other key personnel's qualifications: Kenneth A. Dunn, J.D. will serve as Project Manager. A member of the MCC faculty since 1983, he is Professor of Legal Studies and has directed the MCC Law Center since its inception in 1989. He is the former chair of the Paralegal Studies Program. Professor Dunn has extensive travel and study experience in Cambodia. From 1997 – 2002, he served as Project Director of a USIA College and University Affiliations Program (CUAP) focused on establishing a conflict resolution program at the National Institute of Management. He served as Project Manager for a 2002 Fulbright-Hays Group Study Abroad Program in Cambodia that involved MCC and University of Massachusetts faculty. In 2003 and 2008, he was selected by the NGO NICFEC to be trained to serve as an international election observer for national elections in Cambodia. In 2004, he was selected as a Fulbright Senior Specialist and completed a project in 2004-2005 designing an undergraduate law curriculum at

National University of Management in Phnom Penh. From 2006-2008, he taught International Business Law in the Doctorate in Business Administration program at that institution.

Professor Dunn has a wide range of experience in law and conflict resolution, including establishing mediation and training programs with the Office of the Attorney General of Massachusetts, the trial courts, communities, businesses and schools systems, members of the Lowell Cambodian community and Cambodian students at Lowell High School. The MCC Law Center is a member of the Lowell Youth Violence Task Force of the Middlesex District Attorney's Office. Through the CUAP grant project, Professor Dunn has established numerous relationships with Cambodian faculty, who have traveled to MCC to study conflict resolution. He has toured Cambodia extensively. His knowledge of Cambodia and contacts with people at key organizations throughout that country, as well as the work he has done in developing curricula at MCC, make him highly qualified to serve as Project Manager. Professor Dunn will devote 10% time for assisting with the organization and implementation of pre- and post- project activities and full-time to the project when the study trip occurs in July 2010. His responsibilities include assisting Dean Mitchell with planning the specific aspects of the trip, including finalizing all arrangements, meetings, and site visits in Cambodia; conducting orientation and pre-travel activities; accompanying faculty throughout the trip, and assisting with the dissemination.

Phala Chea, Ed.D., the Specialist for Community Outreach in Support of English Language Learners and Families within the Lowell Public Schools, will serve as the Project Curriculum Specialist. Dr. Chea's responsibilities included ensuring all state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to the education of English Language Learners (ELLs) are understood and are part of the daily school and classroom practice, monitoring the program delivery services for ELLs, developing and overseeing professional development for teachers and tutors that

promotes the use of best practices in the instruction of ELLs, and collaborating with district staff to design, and implement and support innovative programs and maintain community connections in order to assure that families are involved in their children's academic life. She holds a doctoral degree in education leadership and a master's degree in curriculum and instruction. Her professional experiences include seven years of teaching in the LPS. She has also served as an instructor at Fitchburg State College where her responsibilities included teaching and guiding teachers on cultural diversity and urban teaching. Additional experience includes having been the Coordinator of the LPS Parent Information Center. Dr. Chea will devote 10% time to assisting with pre- and post-travel activities and full-time to the project during the July study trip. Her responsibilities will focus on providing guidance to the LPS teachers and MCC faculty as they conduct research in Cambodia and then develop curriculum and special projects following the trip. She, herself, will also be developing a plan and related curriculum for the LPS to infuse Cambodian studies into K-12 classes. Finally, Dr. Chea will assist in leading the community meetings and forums to disseminate the project's findings and to develop ongoing initiatives aimed at increasing the ability of educators to relate to Cambodian youth and their families. Dr. Chea's expertise in curriculum development and deep understanding of the challenges faced by Cambodian youth and their families will enable her to provide significant assistance.

(2)(c): Host country coordinator(s)' qualifications: The In-Country Coordinator, recommended by PUC President Dr. Chea San Chanthan, will be Dr. Sok Uttara, Associate Dean and Professor, Faculty of Education at PUC. Dr. Uttara holds a doctorate degree in educational leadership and management and a master's in educational administration. Prior to joining PUC, he served as Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities and Languages at Norton University. Proficient in speaking and writing English, his professional experience includes developing

curriculum, providing professional development training, supervising classroom training, and teaching social science and education courses. Dr. Uttara will devote 10% time to pre- and post-project activities and 120 hours during the July 2010 trip. His responsibilities will include identifying PUC faculty, as well as other educators, to meet with American faculty; facilitating faculty discussions; providing guidance on the research being conducted by participants; assisting in coordinating visits and travel and accompanying the group several days outside of Phnom Penh; and facilitating ongoing communication LPS, MCC and PUC faculty post-trip. Dr. Uttara's strong background in education will enable him to provide significant assistance to the participants.

(2)(d): Non-discriminatory practices: MCC has a comprehensive affirmative action policy that is followed closely by all Departments. To fulfill GEPA and GPRA requirements, MCC will select eligible participants according to College and program guidelines established to fulfill the requirements of the General Education Provision Act (GEPA) section 427, and the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA).

(2)(e): Curriculum vitas: Curriculum vitas of the GPA key personnel and planning team are included in the Other Narrative Attachment section.

3. BUDGET and COST EFFECTIVENESS

(3)(a): Budget justification: A cost effective budget has been developed that provides extensive in-kind contributions, including the work of the Project Director from MCC, who will provide a high level of leadership throughout the project. Direct costs reflect all necessary and appropriate items related to the four-week study in Cambodia and focus on international travel from Boston, Massachusetts to Phnom Penh and in-country travel to three additional cities (Siem Reap, Battambang and Sihanoukville). Additional funding is provided for participants to purchase

research and study related educational materials in Cambodia, as well as stipends for translation services, in-country language instruction, and the In-Country Coordinator.

Care has been taken to develop a budget that maximizes the use of grant resources to support faculty study and research. MCC and LPS will fund all Phase I and Phase III activities. For these phases, due to significant reductions in state budget allocations, costs will be controlled by utilizing in-house and local experts, including those affiliated with the Lowell office of the Royal Honorary Consulate General for the Kingdom of Cambodia, Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association, the Angkor Dance Troupe, Inc., and Light of Cambodian Children, Inc., as well as faculty and staff from regional colleges.

A total of \$89,246 is requested. This includes: \$32,500 for international air travel; \$9,100 for surface transportation, and \$ 3,900 for air travel between Cambodian cities. All travel costs have been calculated at current “over-the-counter ticket purchases” in order to accommodate maximum transportation costs when the project is implemented. We will, however, make every effort to obtain the most reasonable air and land transportation fares. The total per diem expense charged to the grant for 13 participants is \$35,386. According to grant guidelines, the per diem expense has been calculated at 50% of the U.S. State Department published per diem rates.

(3)(b): Cost effectiveness: MCC and LPS will provide in-kind and cash support for pre-travel seminars (6 hours), language instruction (20 hours) and three-day orientation (24 hours). GPA participants will be devoting 52 hours to pre-trip activities and will not be compensated for this time. The four-weeks of study in Cambodia translates to approximately \$229/day per participant of direct costs to the USDOE for 13 faculty and teachers. The post-study curriculum or special project required of all 13 participants will require a minimum of 40 hours per participant or a total of approximately 520 hours of in-kind work. Thus, the budget is very cost effective in

utilizing both grant funds and college and LPS resources, both in-kind and cash. The total match is \$57,601.

(3)(c): Relationship between project costs and project objectives: In order to develop a relational continuum of educational teaching strategies from kindergarten through post-secondary education to positively impact the educational success of Cambodian and Cambodian-American students, it is necessary to provide faculty and teachers representing MCC and LPS with a comprehensive pre-travel study and orientation, four-weeks of exposure and study to a range of historical and contemporary economic, political, and cultural experiences within Cambodia, and time and support upon return to Lowell to work collaboratively to complete curriculum and special projects and then pilot or dissemination special projects with the college, LPS and/or community. In addition, post-trip activities will include continuing the connections made with PUC faculty and other schools. All of these activities relate directly to the objectives and are therefore necessary and supported by grant and matching funds.

(3)(d): Budget narrative and line item budget: Please see Budget Narrative Attachment

4. EVALUATION PLAN

(4)(a): Evaluation plan for project activities and impact and curricular outcomes

The Project Director will oversee a comprehensive evaluation plan that will include both quantitative and qualitative assessments. The MCC Assistant Dean of Assessment will work with the Project Director and participants to design appropriate evaluations and assessments related to all instructional and project activities. Upon selection for the GPA project, each participant will be required to fully develop his/her project outline that will include the following: topic, course or project goal and objectives and relationship to the GPA project goal, problem statement, target audience or grade level, anticipated outcome(s)/impact, and potential course assessment tools.

Additionally, participants will identify components of the research/study itinerary necessary for his/her project completion. This information will contribute to developing baselines to assess final impact of the project.

(4)(b): Methods of evaluation, Linkage to Objectives, How Evaluations will be Used, Timetable, and Impact

The following chart illustrates the assessments that will be completed to measure the achievement of each objective. All evaluations and assessments will be used to inform project activities. For example, evaluation of the orientation activities may result in enhancements or revisions; evaluation of the study trip will inform planning for future trips and well as providing the Project Planning Team with information related to additional needs that participants might have; evaluation of the courses and projects will demonstrate the overall impact of the trip and follow-up activities on the participants, students and the greater-Lowell Cambodian community.

Objective	Assessments	Timeline
1. Increase by 11 the number of MCC and LPS faculty who can integrate the Cambodian perspective and experiences into their classes through research, travel and curriculum development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following each Phase I orientation activity, participants will complete a survey adopted from that used by the MCC Office of Professional and Instructional Development. The survey measures increase in knowledge, as well as most useful and least useful elements of the seminar and suggestions for enhancements. 	3/2010 – 6/2010
2. Increase faculty knowledge of the comparative connections between Cambodians in Cambodia and Cambodians in American	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty will complete a pre- and post survey related to their understanding of Cambodia, which will contribute to evaluating initial impact of the project on faculty. In addition, at the conclusion of the trip, faculty will complete an evaluation survey of the travel/study trip and participate in a follow-up focus group discussion. The survey and focus group will seek to highlight the quality of the activities (site visits, meetings, lectures, and discussions) accommodations, and travel arrangements, as well as provide suggestions for future travel/study trips. (See Appendix for tools) 	4/2010 – 6/2010 8/2010 – 9/2010

Objective	Assessments	Timeline
<p>3. Infuse a minimum of 25 courses at the elementary, secondary, and college levels with content reflecting historic and contemporary Cambodia and incorporate current Cambodian scholarship researched in Cambodia and America</p> <p>4. Increase faculty expertise in designing culturally sensitive educational activities and teaching strategies that contribute to fostering positive self-imagery in students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants will complete modules and/or new course outlines by December 30, 2010. These outlines will be reviewed by the Project Director and approved by Division Deans or LPS Curriculum Coordinator to ensure content meets college and school standards • Each module or course will include information on how student learning will be assessed and activities to determine impact in students. Assessments may include the use of rubrics, reflection papers, and projects. (See Appendix for examples) • Faculty participating in workshops related to developing culturally sensitive materials and curricula will complete workshop evaluations 	<p>9/2010 – 12/2010</p> <p>9/2010 – 6/2011</p> <p>Fall 2010</p>
<p>5. Develop new strategies to inform and engage families, neighborhoods, and institutions in offering a continuum of educational opportunities that positively impact Cambodian and Cambodian-American students' self-esteem, sense of purpose, academic achievement, and overall success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments will include number of participants and the number of new initiatives begun as a result of these discussions; additional assessments will include measurement of impact of these activities on Cambodian students against relevant benchmark data 	<p>9/2010 - 6/2012</p> <p>This includes both short- and long-term assessment.</p>
<p>6. Maintain connections with a minimum of five faculty at Pannasastra University and five faculty in Cambodian K-12 schools in order to continue research and collaboration following the project completion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data will be maintained on the number and type of connections made with PUC faculty and the activities that result from these connections 	<p>9/2010 - 6/2012</p> <p>This includes both short- and long-term assessment.</p>

Project impacts include: (1) both Cambodian and non-Cambodian students will gain increased sensitivity, awareness and multicultural understanding of the influence of historic and

contemporary Cambodia on the American Cambodian community and the evolving relationships between the United States and Cambodia; and (2) by assisting faculty and teachers in integrating information about Cambodia into their courses and/or developing new courses or projects, as well as in developing strategies to relate more effectively to Cambodian and Cambodian-American students and their families, the project can influence the development of strategies to help to combat in- and out-of-school suspensions, dropout rates, graduation rates, and gang-involvement, as well as to increase entrance into and completion of post-secondary education. Please see chart below for examples of some of these indicators. This chart clearly demonstrates that Lowell students of Asian decent (primarily Cambodians, Laotians and Vietnamese) lag greatly behind Asian students throughout the state, particularly in terms of suspension and graduation rates, clear indications of their disengagement. Thus, one of the project’s most important impacts will be to strengthen opportunities for Cambodian students to succeed, both at the K-12 and college level.

School Indicators (2007-08) for Asian Students		
	District	State
Grade 9-12 Dropout Rate	2.4	3.4
Attendance Rate	93.1	94.6
Average # of days absent	11.4	9.2
In-School Suspension Rate	8.1	3.6
Out-of-School Suspension Rate	10.8	6.2
Graduation Rate	73.8	81.2

All assessments and evaluations will be compiled into reports that will be shared with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Division Deans and also submitted with the final project report.

5. ADEQUACY of RESOURCES

(5)(a): Resources to accomplish project objective: Participants will have access to extensive support in developing curricula and projects. For example, Dr. Chea, the Project Curriculum Specialist, who is Cambodian and employed by the LPS, will provide ongoing consultation regarding appropriate curriculum content and pedagogical strategies. She will collaborate with the MCC Assistant Dean of Professional and Instructional Development and the MCC Assistant Dean of Diversity and Equity Affairs, as well as the Chair of the MCC Faculty-Staff Diversity Committee to conduct professional development workshops for faculty and staff. The project will also draw upon the high level expertise of two members of the Project Planning Team, Samkhoun Khoun and Tooch Van, both of whom have personally experienced the Cambodian genocide and are now engaged in working with Cambodian students at LPS and MCC, as well as the greater Cambodian community. The MCC Assistant Dean of Assessment will consult on all aspects of the evaluation and assessment process. The MCC Interactive Technology Department will provide support to MCC and LPS Faculty in utilizing technology to enhance pedagogy.

(5) (b) Facilities, Supplies and Other Resources: Most of the Phase I and all of the Phase III activities will take place on either the MCC campus or in the Lowell public schools. All facilities are fully handicap accessible and meet all ADA requirements. Project staff and participants will have full access to meeting rooms, computers, Internet connections, multimedia, and other resources to support pre- and post-trip activities. All MCC faculty have furnished offices that include personal computers. They may also access computers in the library or in the college Teaching, Learning and Reflection Centers. In addition, faculty will be able to use the MCC Interactive Technology Labs that are located on both MCC campuses. The labs feature a wide variety of curriculum development hardware and software to support the use of multimedia

(web-based activities, video, PowerPoint, etc.) in the design of the modules. LPS teachers will have access to technology available through the school system, as well as through MCC.

Finally, MCC is an affiliate site for the East-West Center Asian Studies Development Program, which works with colleges and universities to further the integration of Asian Studies at the undergraduate level. Over the years, MCC has offered several symposia on Cambodia, China and Japan. The Coordinator of MCC Asian Studies Projects will work with project participants to design additional symposia related to Cambodia based on their research and study. An Asian Studies website overseen by the Coordinator has recently been established. This website is an online hub networking academics interested in Asia with quality resources and research materials. Through this site, participants will be able to keep in touch, interact with other educators, and continue substantive discussions on their experiences in Cambodia, as well as upload curriculum and other resources.

(5)(c): Letters of Support: Letters of Support have been received from nine organizations, as well as from U.S. Representative Nicola Tsongas and U.S. Senator John Kerry. Lowell organizations have indicated a strong commitment to assisting with project activities, particularly as these relate to involving the community in designing initiatives to support Cambodian youth. (See Other Narrative for Letters of Support)

6. POTENTIAL IMPACT

(6)(a) potential impact of the project on the development and improvement of area studies in U.S. education; and (6)(b): long-term benefits to project participants, their students, colleagues, and communities resulting from successful completion of the grant

College faculty and public school teachers will disseminate the curriculum and related pedagogy they develop in a variety of ways, such as making it available through the MCC Asian Studies project website, sharing it with colleagues, and presenting at conferences for K-12 educators and

college-level faculty from disciplines within the humanities and social sciences. In this way the project has the potential to impact large numbers of educators, as well as students, across the nation. The project will also provide the foundation for ongoing connections, joint research and collaborations with PUC faculty and K-12 Cambodian educators. These collaborations, in turn, will further impact how faculty and teachers design curriculum for their area of study, as well as the related pedagogy.

Finally, the project will impact education studies and practice. Information obtained from participants will be shared with fellow educators through seminars and workshops. One of the long-term objectives of this GPA project is to build support and understanding for Cambodian and Cambodian-American students and their families to reverse the numerous misconceptions that many educators hold about Cambodians students. It is recognized that to be Cambodian is to 'own' Cambodian culture- Buddhism, Khmer language, Khmer arts and the ability to pass this culture of proper Cambodian behavior, customs and heritage to one's own children.¹ Research has shown that Cambodian parents fear that their children will lose this culture as they become more Americanized. Additionally, these beliefs influence child-rearing practices and attitudes toward education and the role of the schools. Parents believe that children have a pre-determined destiny and consequently they are more likely to observe their children to find out what this destiny is rather than push them into particular roles or directions as U.S. parents often do. Cambodians believe the school should reinforce the moral training students receive at home and are concerned that American schools do not do this. Teachers are considered to be the second mother or father, deserving respect and obedience. When national schools developed in

¹ Mortland, C. Cambodian refugees and identity in the United States. In L. Camino and R. Krufeld (Eds.). *Reconstructing lives, recapturing meanings: Refugee identity, gender, and culture* (pp.5-27). Washington, DC: Gordon and Breach Publishers (1994).

Cambodia, they usually lacked supplies and had large classes. The children were expected to listen, pay attention and learn by memorization. They rarely asked questions, responding as a group in unison. The teachers never praised the children, but only corrected errors. Similarly to the parent attitudes, they believed “If you praise children, they won’t respect you.”² These practices are in sharp contrast to American schools, with their emphasis on answering questions, critical thinking, creativity, individuality and praise for positive performance. One source of teachers’ misunderstanding of their students is that many Southeast Asian immigrants consider silence a desirable trait and indirect interaction preferable to direct. As a result, Southeast Asian students may be reluctant to volunteer in discussions or may smile when what they mean is “no.” Behaviors such as these can be confusing to U.S. teachers unfamiliar with Southeast Asian students and the result is children can be labeled as lacking. This tendency to remain silent also contributes to the invisibility of Cambodian students in the school context. When U.S. teachers and schools interact with Cambodian families, they must be aware of the beliefs and experiences the families have brought with them.³ Through their research and study in Cambodia and the sharing of this information with colleagues, the participants will be able to approach teaching and interacting with Cambodian families in new ways, and they will be able to share their strategies with others through presentations at regional, state, and national conferences.

(6)(c): Indicate the process by which resulting curricula will be evaluated for accuracy and effectiveness;

At MCC, Division Deans approve all revisions in course syllabi to ensure they reflect project goals and objectives. Any course modules developed by faculty will be approved by the Deans.

² Smith-Hefner, N. *Khmer American: Identity and moral education in a diasporic community*. Berkley: University of California Press (1999).

³ Wallitt, R. Breaking the Silence: Asian American Students Speak Out.
www.teachingforchange.org/SpeakOut

All new courses are presented to the Faculty-Staff Curriculum Committee for review, which then submits the course proposal to the Faculty-Staff Association for approval. This ensures that course development meets all college standards. In the LPS, approval of new curriculum is overseen by Department Heads and Curriculum Directors. As noted above in the Evaluation Plan, Section 4, the MCC Assistant Dean of Assessment and the Project Curriculum Specialist will work with faculty and teachers to include assessment tools to determine effectiveness of content presented to students. Assessments may include the use of rubrics, course artifacts, student reflections, and overall course performance.

7. RELEVANCE to INSTITUTION'S EDUCATIONAL GOALS

(7)(a): institutional development goals: The MCC Strategic Plan, linked to the college's mission, has three key priorities, the second of which is to "identify and respond to current and emerging educational, workforce, civic, environmental, multicultural, and global awareness needs of the communities within the service region." The proposed project clearly fits with this institutional priority and its related specific objectives of (1) designing and implementing international initiatives that focus on faculty, staff and student exchanges and (2) working with the Light of Cambodian Children (Lowell organization) to implement a Cambodian Folktale project. In addition to this strategic priority, the college has established as one of its six student learning outcomes, one on developing global perspectives. This includes students being able to demonstrate knowledge of significant global issue(s); compare physical conditions and cultural practices of their own cultures with those of others through an interdisciplinary approach; recognize and appreciate the ways in which people in their community, nation and throughout the world are increasingly interconnected; and communicate an appreciation for the diverse forms of creativity as expressed through the arts locally, regionally, and globally as well as

the value of cultural expression. Finally, the college requires that all students complete two courses that fulfill multicultural intensives. Courses that integrate Cambodian modules may fulfill this requirement, based on criteria established by the General Education Committee. Thus, the project meets a key strategic priority and a college institutional student learning outcome, as well as the academic priority to increase the number of courses including the multicultural intensive requirement.

MCC staff and faculty are committed to ongoing internationalization of the curriculum as a way to further cultural diversity and understanding, as well as to reflect global history and change. Since 1989, MCC has been actively engaged in international programs and currently has linkages with more than 30 countries. The linkages have included international training programs for faculty and business people in such countries as Russia, Kyrgyz Republic, People's Republic of China, Armenia, Ukraine, and South Africa. In terms of Asian studies, the College has collaborated with the East-West Center in Hawaii and other institutions to implement a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to develop a consortium of two- and four-year colleges committed to teaching about Asia. Middlesex served as the first site on the Mainland for the Asian Studies Development Program. It has now taken a leadership role in the Association of Regional Centers, a new East-West Center initiative. Through the East-West affiliation, the College has sponsored several faculty who have studied at the Center, in addition to hosting East-West Center Southeast Asian Institutes in Lowell. Another NEH grant and two U.S. Department of Education Title VIA grants provided faculty with the opportunity to attend Institutes on Southeast Asia that focused on historical, political, and cultural aspects of Southeast Asian countries, particularly Cambodia, and to infuse the curricula with international content relating to these studies.

Other international-related projects include an NEH grant that enabled faculty to learn more about the infusion of African culture in American society; a USIA College and University Affiliations Program grant that funded a collaboration with Addis Ababa Commercial College in Ethiopia, Denmark Technical College in Denmark, South Carolina, and the American Association of Community Colleges; an American Liaison Office grant to establish a Small Business Development Center in Ethiopia; a Title VIB Grant from the Department of Education that supported an Institute for Internationalizing Business Curricula at colleges and long-term consultation to a selected number of businesses seeking to enter the international market; a grant from the Luso-American Development Foundation that supported the establishment of a Portuguese Studies Program; a Department of State grant for workforce development in Ukraine; a Department of State College and University Affiliations Program grant that funded the conflict resolution training program Professor Dunn (Project Manager) in implementing in collaboration with the National Institute of Management in Cambodia; and the Department of State grants that supported projects in South Africa overseen by Dean Mitchell (Project Director).

This proposed project is directly related to the college's program priorities and related objectives. It builds upon other activities for internationalizing the curriculum that have already taken place at the college and offers faculty an important opportunity to learn more about a country that is directly connected to Lowell and the campus community.

(7)(b): relationship between the project and the institution's program development in modern foreign languages and area studies

This project will benefit area studies by providing faculty from the humanities and social science disciplines with the opportunity to study and conduct research in Cambodia. The knowledge they obtain will enable them to design new curriculum modules and may also lead to the

development of new courses, some of which may take an interdisciplinary approach based upon the cross-fertilization of ideas that will take place throughout the study tour. Specific ways by which the project will impact area discipline studies are: (1) providing content for the development of a minimum of 25 new curriculum modules that will be integrated into existing courses and taught to students; content will draw upon both factual and anecdotal information that faculty will obtain during their research; (2) providing opportunities to videotape and/or photograph sites in Cambodia and obtain other artifacts; these can be used to support curriculum activities; (3) providing interesting perspectives that can lead to the development of entirely new courses with an international focus; and (4) providing faculty with knowledge that can then be shared with other educators through the Asian Studies website overseen by the Coordinator of the MCC Asian Studies Connection website (See Resources)

Through providing participants with 40 hours of instruction in Khmer language, the project will increase the capacity of LPS and MCC faculty to communicate, in a very introductory way, with Cambodian students and their families. This, in turn, will help Cambodians to realize that their heritage, experience and needs are being validated and will encourage them to begin the conversations and dialogues that can result in stronger connections with the schools and college, resulting, ultimately, in the positive engagement and success of Cambodian youth and their families.

(7)(c): Outline what changes will take place due to a GPA project: As described above, a minimum of 25 courses offered at LPS and MCC will include an integration of Cambodian content. It is likely that this number will be even greater, given that faculty are likely to integrate content in several courses. Thus more students at the K-12 and college levels will gain a greater understanding of historic and contemporary Cambodia. The travel and research will

also enable participants to relate more effectively with the Cambodian community and work with them to develop a continuum of educational experiences that will nurture, support, and validate all Cambodians and contribute to their fuller integration into American society, while at the same time honoring and preserving their culture and heritage.

8. NEED for OVERSEAS EXPERIENCE

(8)(a): first-hand overseas experience is necessary in order to achieve the project's objectives

Experiencing another country and culture directly enhances what one has learned about it through reading and research. While MCC and LPS faculty are committed to increasing their understanding of the Cambodian experience so that they may revise curricula, strengthen their ability to work with Cambodian students, and collaborate on community projects, they are limited in doing so by their current knowledge. By touring and studying in Cambodia --- actually walking the Killing Fields, touring the remains of once magnificent temples, learning from those who are rebuilding the country's economic, political, educational and cultural structures, and observing the ebb and flow of daily life --- they will gain the information and insight that will profoundly influence their perspective of Cambodia and future teaching. Professor of Humanities Dona Cady stated, upon learning about the possibility of the GPA project, "The GPA study would be a broadening experience...I know that my students -- Cambodian and otherwise -- need that authenticity, and so do I." Her views have been echoed by numerous other MCC faculty and LPS teachers. Through this trip, faculty will gain the insight required to provide much more meaningful instruction not only to their Cambodian students, but also to all students so that the Cambodian experience is understood and valued by increasing numbers of Americans.

(8)(b): Outline how the needs for overseas experience were identified and how these needs are addressed by the project

The need for overseas experience was identified through analyzing data and other information available relating to the challenges and needs of the Lowell Cambodian population, holding discussions with Cambodian community leaders, and conducting a survey of LPS and MCC educators to determine why such a project would be important to their work and relationships with Cambodian students and families.

Results of data analysis and discussions with community leaders

The City of Lowell is home to the second largest population of Cambodians in the United States, on a percentage basis, and Cambodians represent nearly one fourth of the total city population of 106,000. The Lowell Public Schools currently serve more than 3,800 students of Asian ethnicity, and nearly 1,700 students are considered English Language Learners (ELL) where Khmer is their native language. The number of students of Asian descent at Middlesex continues to increase. In 2008-2009, students of Asian ethnicity comprised nearly 10% of the total fall enrollment with the majority of these students being Cambodians.

Continuing concerns have been raised in the Lowell School system and within the community regarding several issues facing Cambodians and Cambodian-Americans including: high risk and disproportionate rates of teen pregnancy, gang involvement, STD transmission/infection, runaways, substance abuse, court involvement, school dropout, and the effects of second generation trauma⁴. Among the factors contributing to the disengagement of Cambodian youth are the linguistic isolation, the difficulty educators have in engaging Cambodian families in the educational process to support their children; and the growing intergenerational alienation

⁴ McNamara, E., Van, K., Sim, G., and Vong, B. *Understanding Cambodian-American Youth: Building Bridges for Targeted Prevention and Risk Reduction*. Presentation at the Annual APHA Public Health and Human Rights Meeting. Boston, MA 2006.

between older Cambodians and their children who are adopting the values and behaviors common among today's American youth, which often directly conflict with the beliefs and behaviors of the traditional Cambodian culture.

High school drop-out rates: Lowell High School's four-year graduation rate of 69.5 percent ranks in the bottom 10 percent of all high schools in the state. For a given class of 900 students, roughly 275 will not graduate within four years. An additional 150 youth will drop out. During the 2005-06 school year, Asian American students comprised 42.9% of the high school students who were removed, pushed out, or dropped out due to truancy-related issues that the school failed to address. Many of these students were not high academic achievers, did not receive proper truancy intervention, and often did not meet the criteria for dismissal.⁵

Violence/gang involvement: According to the Lowell Police Department (LPD), between 1,500 and 2,000 Lowell youth, about one in every ten young people are engaged in gang activity, and there are 25-30 gang sets active at any given time. Data reveals that people under the age of 20 commit 70 percent of violent crime in Lowell. Of great concern to the LPD and community is the large number of Cambodian students affiliated with gangs. Several Asian gangs exist in Lowell including one of the largest and ruthless national Asian Crip gangs, the Tiny Rascals. Also the Asian Boyz are known for firearm and narcotics trafficking and new Blood gangs are emerging to stand up against the larger Crip gangs. These gangs are involved in all types of crime including homicide, aggravated assaults, firearms possession and sales, drive by shootings, drug distribution, burglary, robberies and home invasions. Over the past seven years, 45% of all homicides involved a gang member of Asian descent. An original member of

⁵ *Left in the Margins: Asian American Students and the No Child Left Behind Act.* A report by the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund. (2008).
http://www.aaldef.org/docs/AALDEF_LeftintheMargins_NCLB.pdf

the Lowell-based Angkor Dance Troupe who escaped Cambodia with her family and came to the US when she was 15, describes the impact of gang violence resulting in the death of one of her brothers and incarceration of another. *"I was old enough to have had something beautiful about Cambodian culture to hold on to before the fighting and genocide took everything away. But fighting and killing is all my unfortunate brothers have ever known. This may be why I am able to cope with the feeling of fractured identity and confusion that break so many young people apart."*⁶

Role of Educators in Meeting Needs of Cambodian Students: Joel Spring in his research on the immigration of Cambodians to the US, writes that there are important lessons for teachers from the Cambodian experience in America, "Teachers should know the social and political conditions people left. In the case of Cambodians, few US teachers know and understand the horror of the killing fields, the traumatic flight to refugee camps, and the difficulties of camp life. This requires more than a simple knowledge of customs of other countries. Teachers need to understand the psychological impact of political and social upheavals. Teachers must [also] attend to the problem of English literacy. Many US teachers assume an Asian face means a literate student capable of academic success."⁷

The challenges Cambodian students face are further compounded by how the Cambodian culture views educators. Cambodian parents hold teachers in high regard and rely on them to meet all the educational needs of their children and to teach Cambodian social structure and behavior.⁸ Therefore, frequently students do not have the support required to succeed in

⁶ Higgins, J. & Ross, J. *Fractured Identifies Cambodia's Children of War*. Loom Pr (July 1997)

⁷ Spring, J. *The Intersection of Cultures: Multicultural Education in the United States and the Global Economy*. 3rd Ed. New York: McGraw-Hill (2007)

⁸ Rintell, E. The Hood Children's Literacy Project. Vol. 1 no. 2 *Khmer culture survival and native language literacy*." http://www.lesley.edu/academic_centers/hood/currents/v1n2/rintell.html. (2005)

American schools. On the other hand, most American educators do not understand the nuances of the Cambodian culture and interpret the actions of Cambodians as a lack of respect, interest and commitment on behalf of the student and/or parent. In the Lowell Public Schools, very little professional development has been offered to K-12 teachers to help them in understanding and relating to Cambodian students and families. Equally disturbing is that specific curriculum related to teaching about Cambodian history and culture has not been formally integrated into K-12 courses. Thus, Cambodian students receive only infrequent validation of their culture and identity within the school system, further contributing to their sense of isolation and disengagement.

Despite the difficult challenges sited above, an increasing number of Cambodian students are entering Middlesex, although this number is still disproportionately small in comparison to the total Cambodian population in Lowell. Over the years, the college has offered to faculty and staff several professional development programs related to understanding the Cambodian culture and history. However, during the past five years, there has been a high number of retirements with a resulting increase in new faculty, who would benefit from learning more about Cambodia. In addition, both new and seasoned faculty are seeing a growing variety of differences within the Cambodian youth population ranging from recent immigrants who do value education, have a long-term vision and value the Cambodian culture to those youth who were born and lived in this country for several years, lack an understanding of their culture and heritage, tend to view Cambodia through the lens of the media (corruption, killings, and no rule of law) and are lost between the Cambodian and American worlds. Throughout these two ends of the spectrum are youth who have difficulties with the language, which impacts learning, and those who do not have the support of their families, resulting in their need to focus on working to survive.

Meeting the varied needs of these Cambodian students is a significant challenge to K-12 and college educators.

Results of faculty surveys: More than 20 MCC and LPS educators responded to a survey that was conducted to demonstrate the need for this GPA project. Following are some quotes from their responses that underscore the importance they attach to conducting this research and study project.

“One area of research I would like to focus on relates to the seeming disengagement of parents from their children’s education. Since many of them are survivors of the Khmer Rouge, is this a post-traumatic distress response? If so, is there a way we help can these parents and their families? Does the disinterest stem from isolation due to language and culture? Is there some way to overcome this alienation, or are there specific ways we could support Cambodian-America students in the face of it?” **(LPS Teacher)**

“I envision that I would be able to develop a curriculum to teach students about Cambodia. Helping students to construct their own personal bridges with our diverse culture and world is how understanding is developed. Ultimately, I would like to develop an exchange program for teachers as well as high school students in order to maintain an ongoing exchange of culture, ideas and experiences.” **(LPS Teacher)**

“My Drawing II course includes a project in which students illustrate Cambodian folktales collected from the elders in the Khmer community in Lowell. Our goals are to preserve the folktales, to publish them in bilingual form, to use them to bring Khmer elder and youth together and to educate Middlesex students about Khmer philosophy, culture and art. It is very important for my students to create drawings than authentically depict Cambodia. I must rely on advisors to offer ideas to me on how to teach my students to create these drawings. I would love a chance to immerse myself in Khmer art and culture...and to develop connections with the Cambodian-based National Folklore Recovery Project at the Buddhist Institute.” **(MCC Humanities Faculty)**

“My goals include partnering with local Cambodian-American artists and developing a new MCC college course/community program teaching traditional Cambodian arts, including, but not limited to, ceramics, sculpture, relief carving, and mask making. My research would focus on whether the teaching of traditional arts can respect and support the self image and engagement of Cambodian-American youth.” **(MCC Humanities Faculty)**

“The process of transculturation...the sorting out and defining of what is valuable or authentic from the past while developing an American identity is an important part of the Cambodian-American student’s experience. Cambodian students’ behavior patterns differ. I would like to develop a deeper understanding of the socialization and education processes of these students to inform my teaching.” **(Humanities Faculty)**

“I would like to develop a six-credit course on Contemporary Issues in Cambodia with an overarching theme of ‘justice’ as it applies to culture, language, business, education, law, society, corruption, human rights, government, history and other factors relating to today’s Cambodia..” **(Social Science Faculty)**

“I would like to develop new modules for my Micro and Macroeconomic courses. This would include not only looking at trade, itself, but also the cultural aspects of trade, as well as its effect on the distribution of income in Cambodia. I would create a module on the implications for both countries on the use of relative inexpensive Cambodian labor, net job gains and losses for the two countries, as well as the potential for unionization of the garment industry. Given the large number of Cambodian students taking economics courses at MCC, introducing a current perspective is important in helping them to determine for themselves what ‘progress’ is to be gained by internationalizing Cambodian society.” **(Social Science Faculty)**

The above quotes demonstrate the immense desire of K-12 and college educators to provide instruction and programs that will meet the needs of their Cambodian students and strengthen the Cambodian community.

(8)(c): Describe the benefits to be gained through the project by meeting those needs

By meeting the needs described above, the project will create a stronger web of support in the public schools, college and community for Cambodian youth and their families, helping them to integrate successfully into American society, but also to understand, preserve and value their culture. At the same time, the project will increase understanding and sensitivity among non-Cambodian educators and students.

(8)(d): Explain how effectively the host country’s resources will be utilized toward this effort.

As the trip itinerary indicates, participants will be visiting more than 44 sites throughout the country and engaging in discussions with numerous experts, including public school staff and teachers and college faculty and staff. The In-Country expert, along with numerous contacts that the Planning Team have already made and new ones that the participants will establish, ensure that they will gain a comprehensive knowledge of Cambodia as it relates to their individual

research. The schedule of activities maximizes the time spent in each Cambodian city, while still providing some free time for participants. (See Other Narrative – Itinerary)

9. COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY I

(9)(a): Discuss in detail how the project will provide training and focus on a critical language. Outline the specific activities to take place, the number of hours of training that will be provided and by whom

The critical language to be addressed through the GPA project is Khmer. Khmer is the official language of Cambodia and is the second most widely spoken Austroasiatic language (after Vietnamese) with speakers in the millions. Khmer is one of the world's most challenging languages and therefore very difficult to master. Our plan provides participants with a total of 40 hours of language instruction. A total of 20 hours of direct Khmer instruction is offered in the pre-departure phase with additional auditory tools to develop a familiarity of the language and key phrases. During the study and research phase, participants will be immersed in the Khmer language as they travel between Cambodian cities as well as receive an additional 20 hours of formal instruction. Pre-Departure instruction will be provided by Tooch Van, a native of Cambodia and member of the Project Planning Team. He has taught both credit and non-credit Khmer classes at MCC. In-country instruction will be provided by Language Corps Teaching Center at PCU. In-country interpreters will be provided to assist in the language translation and participants will experience additional daily opportunities to utilize and practice the language. Upon return from Cambodia, participants will have the opportunity to continue their study of Khmer through a community education course at MCC.

(9)(b): Describe how the project theme will focus on a critical language: As previously stated, to be Cambodian is to 'own' Cambodian culture- Buddhism, Khmer language, and Khmer arts. Ninety percent of Cambodians speak Khmer and the language is intimately connected to its

tribal history, culture, architecture, arts and religion. Throughout all three phases of the trip our theme, *Presenting Cambodia from an Historical and Contemporary Perspective*, the Khmer language will be integrated beginning with direct study pre-departure, direct study and immersion in Cambodia, and discussion and opportunities for further study upon return.

10. COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE II

(10)(a): Explain how educators at the K-12 level will be involved in a substantive way, during the pre-travel, in-country, and post-travel periods of the project

The project includes a specific focus on MCC and LPS developing academic and community initiatives that will strengthen intercultural understanding, support the Lowell Cambodian population, and contribute to meeting the needs of Cambodian youth. The success of the project to develop a continuum of courses and to develop new teaching strategies to meet the needs of Cambodian and Cambodian-American students in elementary, secondary and post-secondary educational settings requires the involvement of K-12 educators in each of the three phases. In the pre-departure phase, participant selection will be directed to include at minimum of one teacher from the elementary schools, one from the middle schools and one from the high school level. These educators will work closely with the Project Curriculum Specialist, who is also an employee of the LPS. The study and research phase in Cambodia will provide opportunities to visit and study the educational structure and curriculum within the country with scheduled visits to schools. Finally, the third phase will require participants to develop their individual projects with support of the Project Curriculum Specialist as well as to host workshops for teachers within the LPS for professional development on new teaching strategies for working with Cambodian and Cambodian-American students.

(10)(b): What changes will result from this GPA project such as new and/or revised curriculum? How will this be developed? What processes are in place to support these activities?

The changes that will result from the GPA project include the development of new/revised K-12 curriculum that will incorporate Cambodian perspectives and experiences. The process for the curriculum development has been carefully planned by the GPA Planning Team. The Project Director, Project Manager, LPS Curriculum Specialist, the MCC Assistant Dean of Assessment and the MCC Assistant Dean of Instructional and Professional Development will work closely with participants to finalize design during the pre-departure phase and to revise and/or develop curricula and projects during Phase III. Teacher and faculty teams will be established to support each participant's work. Evaluation and assessment resources will be provided through the LPS and MCC. The development of strategies for teaching and communicating with families will also be a noted change resulting from the GPA project. The GPA Planning Team will coordinate participant teams to develop workshops that will be provided as professional development opportunities for teachers, faculty and other interested individuals. MCC will provide meeting space and technical support to deliver these forums. Each workshop will conclude with attendee evaluations to continuously improve the workshops, resources, assistance available to teachers.