

## Appendix I: Letter of Invitation

I am writing to encourage you to be one of this year's three courses with a focus on assessment. After reviewing your research assignment and your portfolio of work from the Institute, I think developing the assessment component of your assignment would be beneficial to you and your students.

I think your course is particularly well suited to assessment because...

- Example 1: You have shown a great ability to think analytically about the skills students will develop at each stage of your research project. In addition, we developed a variety of assessment tools for Brian's Sociology 3AC course that could be improved and revised to work with your assignment and course goals.
- Example 2: You clearly have expertise working with performance assessment and an interest in applying this approach to your assignment. Because your project targets more advanced research skills, the models developed might be applicable to many other courses in the social sciences.
- Example 3: You have worked toward developing an assignment that develops key research skills but is limited in scope. We could build on this assignment to develop a simple assessment that can be used by GSIs.

As we discussed at the institute on Friday, we are most interested in structuring the research assignment to provide an assessment of the research skills you value. This generally entails the following steps:

- Refining assignment goals and learning outcomes
- Tweaking the assignment to provide evidence
- Articulating criteria for evaluating student performance in those areas
- Setting up a mechanism to collect data

This is not a one-size-fits-all approach. We would work together to select approaches that work with your assignment and teaching style.

The best thing about being an assessment course is the additional support I can provide to you and your implementation team. Last year I researched models and products previously created in a discipline; drafted learning outcomes and rubrics based on conversations with faculty; organized reviews of previous and current student work; worked directly with GSIs in training sessions about assessment; drafted surveys; and analyzed data on student work. My goal is to create some polished products that allow you to learn more about student skills and continue to improve your assignment.

The Mellon Foundation would like us to investigate the impact of our model on student research skills. To this end, we are interested in develop a range of models that work for faculty in different disciplines with different styles and interests.

Please give this proposal some thought. At the Institute on Friday, I will check in with you to answer any questions and hear your thinking on this proposal.