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Guide to Securing Support for the NABT/BSCS AP Biology Teacher Academy

Dear Colleague,

Finding the money to attend high-quality professional development experiences can be a challenge. We know that many schools and districts are not able to provide teachers with the money or resources needed to attend professional development institutes and conferences. For that reason, we have worked diligently to provide this experience at the lowest possible cost. Still, we know that the securing funding will be a challenge for some teachers, and we want to encourage you to get creative! There are organizations and opportunities available that provide funding for teachers who are trying to enhance their classroom practice and their students' learning. We have put together this booklet to help you learn more about how to seek sponsorship for the NABT/BSCS AP Biology Teacher Academy.

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The Fundamentals of Seeking Sponsorship

There are a few fundamental steps that you should take as you approach a sponsor about supporting your participation in the AP Biology Teacher Academy. These steps are listed below and we will provide more information about each of them on the next pages.

1. Before you contact anyone, do your homework to find companies, foundations, individuals who have expressed a commitment to education, teacher support, community enrichment, etc. Find someone that shares your vision (e.g., you might want to approach a family foundation that supports student/continuing education scholarships).
2. Prepare the information you want to share with a potential sponsor. State your purpose and goal clearly and succinctly with details that are specific to the potential sponsor. Review this information with a friend or colleague and ask for feedback (e.g., If a group is interested in workforce development, make sure you point out how your participation in the Academy furthers that goal).
3. Identify and share potential outcomes with prospective sponsors. (e.g., “I teach over 75 students a year, and the Academy will enhance the understanding of science for each of those students.”)
4. Start with people who know and respect your work, because the more you talk about your motivation, the easier it will become to approach people you don’t know. Remember that you may find one large donor, or multiple small donors. Let people know that every amount helps!
5. **Do not be afraid to ask for support!** What you are doing is important and worth supporting. Be ready to contact people via email, by mail, and by phone. Make sure you have committed enough time to submit proposals and make follow up inquiries.

Details about Seeking Sponsorship

1. Before you contact anyone, do your homework to find companies, foundations, individuals who have expressed a commitment to education, teacher support, community enrichment, etc. Find someone that shares your vision (e.g., you might want to approach a family foundation that supports student/continuing education scholarships).

Ask other teachers or administrators in your area if they have received scholarships or sponsors for an event. Do an Internet search to help you determine possible sponsors. As you do your research, keep notes about the organizations that might be a good fit for sponsoring you to attend the AP Biology Teacher Academy and why you think they may be interested. More ideas about who to approach for sponsorship are listed on page 6 of this document.

Use the Internet, social media, and your connections to make sure you know as much as possible about an organization before you approach them to ask for a sponsorship. The Internet will help you learn about an organization so that you can more easily make a case for why they should be interested in supporting you. You might be able to use information from their mission statements or the types of people they like to hire to show why they should support you (and indirectly, your students).

Leverage your connections to find out if they can make introductions for you. It is still important to do your homework on the person and organization, but having an introduction will help you get in the door.

2. Prepare the information you want to share with a potential sponsor. State your purpose and goal clearly and succinctly with details that are specific to the potential sponsor. Review this information with a friend or colleague and ask for feedback (e.g., If a group is interested in workforce development, make sure you point out how your participation in the Academy furthers that goal).

It is helpful for you to be able to clearly show potential sponsors as much information as you can about the professional development you will be attending. It is just as important that you be able to clearly explain why you are interested in attending the workshop and how it will benefit you, your students, and possibly the broader science education community. A sponsor is not likely to be impressed if you provide a vague description of what you are planning to do and can only explain that, "This would help me be a better teacher." ***Try preparing a one-page document to explain the details of the program and what you hope to gain from it.*** You might include information about the goals of the program and what you will do. Some specific information about the AP Biology Teacher Academy that might be helpful to include is included on the next page.

Through participation in the **AP Biology Teacher Academy**, educators have the opportunity to

- strengthen how they teach AP biology so students learn more meaningful biology and are more interested in studying biology in the future;
- experience the practices of science as articulated in the new framework;
- analyze and enhance their current curriculum materials to better reflect the new framework;
- learn to use formative and summative assessment information to examine what their students understand; and
- network with other teachers to share resources and support each other in transforming our teaching practices.

Participants in the Academy not only have a chance to collaborate and work with other AP teachers, but will also learn more details about the new AP Biology Curriculum Framework, discover ways to incorporate more inquiry into their classrooms, and come to a deeper understanding about strategies to help their students make sense of science.

Once you have written about the program itself and what it is meant to do, include information about why you want to participate in the program and what you hope to gain from it. How do you expect this program to influence your teaching? Your students? Other teachers at your school or in your district? Be willing to advocate for yourself and your students. Teachers are not always great about “tooting their own horns” but this is an opportunity to really make yourself shine and explain why you and your students deserve this opportunity.

This one-page document is meant to be the “flyer” that will give people enough information to decide if they want to talk to you further. For this reason, include pertinent information but do not go overboard. This document should help you get in the door to have a further conversation about sponsorship.

3. Identify and share potential outcomes or data with prospective sponsors. (e.g., “I teach over 75 students a year, and the Academy will enhance the understanding of science for each of those students.”)

This may be data about yourself and your classes. Can you describe how a previous professional development experience had an impact on your students? Can you show a gap in student learning that could clearly be addressed by attending the AP Biology Teacher Academy? Share that as part of your work for the Academy, you will be providing professional development workshops to other teachers as well, so you will be working to improve science education in your area.

Data about the program is also something that sponsors may be interested in. On page 8 of this booklet, we have included a brief summary of the effectiveness of the AP Biology Leadership Academy (the program on which the AP Biology Teacher Academy is based). It includes both

graphs and quotes from teachers involved in the Academy. Consider sharing this with the people you approach to ask for sponsorship.

4. Start with people who know and respect your work, because the more you talk about your motivation, the easier it will become to approach people you don't know. Remember that you may find one large donor, or multiple small donors. Let people know that every amount helps!

People who know you and your work understand your commitment to your students. Ask them if they know anyone at the places you might be interested in approaching for sponsorship. Ask if they know a company/organization (or person within the company) that might be willing to sponsor you. Ask if there are foundations associated with the place they work. Even if they can only give a suggestion of, "I heard that XYZ company sometimes has philanthropic money," it gives you another idea of someone to talk to.

5. *Do not be afraid to ask for support!* What you are doing is important and worth supporting. Be ready to contact people via email, by mail, and by phone. Make sure you have committed enough time to submit proposals and make follow up inquiries.

People may say no. But, people may say yes! If you do not ask, you will not have a chance to know what their answer is. Organizations need to know that you need assistance before they can make a decision. As long as you have a clear, strategic plan that shows what you want to do and why, people will appreciate your efforts to improve science teaching and learning.

Who Should I Ask for Sponsorship?

There are a variety of sources for sponsorships and funding. They can be sorted into some general groups.

Schools or Districts

Start with the administration at your own school. Ask if they have funding for professional development or if they know of any possible funds at the district or state level. Sometimes districts have funds to send teachers to professional development that are not available at the school level. Ask if there are prohibitions against fundraisers to support you (colleagues, alumni, and parents may all be interested in helping you).

Local Foundations

There are often local foundations that are willing to support teachers who are working to improve student achievement. Sometimes these foundations are dedicated specifically to funding teachers. For example, in Colorado we have the Mikkelson Foundation that is dedicated to teacher training. In other cases, foundations support general causes in the state or local area. Start with an Internet search to find out what foundations do work in your community.

Local Businesses

Local businesses are often willing to support teachers and education causes. Often, those businesses that hire science or STEM graduates are willing to provide money to teachers who will be attending events that will improve the quality of the graduates the business will hire later on. Consider both local businesses that hire STEM graduates as well as local branches of national companies who have corporate citizenship programs (Medtronic, Amgen). Sometimes these local branches have money set aside that they can use to sponsor projects in their own communities.

In addition to companies that might hire your students in the future, consider banks, grocery stores, and department stores. These businesses often provide money to projects that will improve the community and/or education.

Professional Organizations

Search for the professional and state affiliates of science and education organizations in your area. There may be teacher professional organizations that have money to support professional development. There might also be professional organizations that support people in careers related to science, such as nurses or physicians. Sometimes these organizations are able to support teacher professional development as it will improve the quality of professional they can have as part of their organization in the future.

Budget Guide

In order to make a request, it is important to have a good idea of how much money you need. The following worksheet will help you estimate costs of attending the AP Biology Teacher Academy.

Academy Registration (includes NABT membership and conference fees \$500 if registered by 5/31, \$600 after 7/15)	\$550
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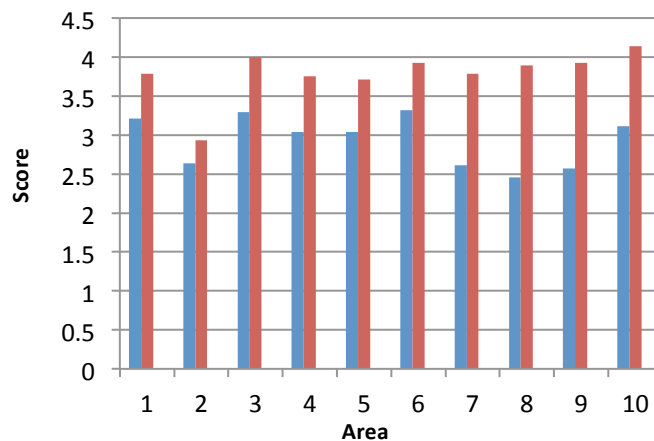
Transportation to and from East Lansing	_____
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Room & Board at Michigan State University (If you are local & don't need a room you can pay for meals only at \$80 – we highly recommend staying on campus to take full advantage of the social aspects of the program and networking with other teachers)	\$266
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TOTAL _____

Data About the Effectiveness of the AP Biology Leadership Academy

Initial evaluation results from cohort 1 of the AP Biology Leadership Academy show that when teachers later scored what they think they knew before the Academy (blue) compared to what they knew after the Academy (red), there are clear increases in each of the 10 areas measured.



Areas Measured

1. Help students use representations and models to communicate scientific phenomena and solve scientific problems.
2. Help students use mathematics appropriately.
3. Engage students in scientific questioning to extend thinking or guide investigations.
4. Help students to plan and implement data collection strategies appropriate to a particular scientific question.
5. Help students perform data analysis and evaluation of evidence.

6. Help students work with scientific explanations and theories.
7. Help students to connect and relate knowledge across various scales, concepts, and representations in and across domains.
8. Use teaching strategies to support students in scientific practices as described in the AP Biology Curriculum Framework.
9. Help students develop the science practices described in the AP Biology Curriculum Framework.
10. Help students learn science content (e.g., photosynthesis) through inquiry-based teaching strategies.

Quotes from Teachers in the BSCS/NABT AP Biology Leadership Academy Cohort 1

"It is wonderful to be a part of a group who has embraced the change in curriculum as an opportunity to better prepare students in critical analysis and problem-solving skills while also teaching central concepts in Biology. I appreciate that the Academy is not prescribing a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Instead, I feel that the collaborative work promotes active listening skills and flexibility in our thinking of how the curriculum might be approached by other teachers."

"This was the best professional development experience I've ever had. My expectations are far exceeded by the materials, staff and ideas, exercises etc. Knowledgeable, motivated, staff and well-crafted experiences have helped me to break through some difficult material and preconceived ideas about the way to deliver and pace content- I feel like I can be a more efficient manager/director of my student's opportunities to learn."

"The Academy has been essential to my own understanding, confidence and competence to approach AP Bio in a new way and to pass along willingness to change to other teachers."