In the Spring of 2013 I requested and received a Curriculum Development Grant to support the development of a new graduate-level course being offered for the Master’s in Liberal Studies Program for the 2013 Summer II Session. I received $3,000.00 in Summer Salary Replacement and Fringe Benefits in order to develop the course during Summer I. Indeed I utilized the grant to achieve my goals and successfully develop the course entitled, “The United States and Latin America’s Not-So-Cold War” (MLS D501).

In accordance with the proposed objectives, I spent four weeks during Summer I doing the following activities to prepare the course. First, I read or re-read several books and articles in order to select those I assigned for the course. Second, based on these materials, I produced a syllabus. This included the extra step of designing the written assignments I wanted students to complete for the course. These assignments included five out of six possibilities to write 2-3 page analyses of the reading assigned for that day. The objective of these assignments was to ensure that students were reading actively and able to identify the argument and main conclusions of each author. Thus students would improve their reading and critical thinking skills and ensure that they were prepared to participate in class discussion. For some of these short papers, I gave students a pointed question on which to focus, which was listed on the syllabus. Students were also required to write a longer critical review of one the books assigned for the course. In addition, students completed a final project. Finally, I used some of the time to plan the discussions/activities for each class meeting.

Though a few students felt that there was too much reading and writing to fit into a condensed summer session (it was a graduate seminar), overall, the student evaluations I received from the course were very positive and testify to the successful fulfillment of the grant. For example, one student declared that, “I found the writing assignments for each class positive as it helped focus on the aspects for discussion in class.” Another student stated, “[t]he discussion was superb. Professor Froysland did a great job facilitating the discussion and her first hand experience with the subject matter made for a better learning experience.” Finally, another student proclaimed, “[i]t was fascinating and eye opening to learn about the Cold War in Latin America. I really enjoyed learning about this. I appreciated Dr. Froysland’s incorporation of different types of media and discussion in the classes. I really appreciated her knowledge of the subject and ability to communicate it to the class. She was very interesting to listen to.” Furthermore, when asked the question of whether they would recommend the course, students unanimously replied, “yes.”

Further testament to my ability to carry out the grant and to the success of the course is that I was subsequently asked by the Director of the MLS program to join their committee/board. It appears that there is demand to offer this course again and incorporate it into the MLS curriculum on a regular basis. Also, becoming a member of the MLS faculty involves more
regular participation in the program, including the offering of various classes for the program on a permanent basis.

I am grateful for the support I received. Without this Curriculum Development Grant, it would have been very difficult for me to find the time to develop this course. It was wonderful to have had the opportunity to teach in the MLS program and it is clear that having done so has opened up the door for me to participate and offer classes in the MLS program on a permanent basis, thus helping to advance my career.