Indiana University South Bend  
Faculty Research Grant Report:  
Democratic Politics and Corporate Citizenship

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1. Description of grant-supported activity.

The grant allowed me to undertake a thorough literature review of current academic literature in the field of business ethics regarding the corporate social responsibility and corporate citizenship. It also allowed me to review the current literature of political science regarding theories of the public sphere and civic engagement in order to examine how well the field actually does undertake discussion of corporations and then consider where it may need to do so more fully. The significance of this research is two-fold. First it introduces into the field of political theory and political science a review of an important development in social and political life that as of yet is not well comprehended in the political science literature. Second, it will allow me both to challenge the limits of that literature for its neglect of this topic and then to draw upon its strengths to develop a critical and practical framework for engaging democratically with the modern corporation as a political actor.

2. Were you able to complete the project? Describe any difficulty you had.

I was able to make significant head way in the project. Each of the fields of literature that I undertook to review are large and in the time of the grant, I did not have time for as an exhaustive review as I had originally intended. However, I was able to lay out the major elements of the fields and then begin the process of identifying areas of overlap and conflict. This also allowed me to follow through in a paper that was accepted for presentation at an academic conference and to prepare a second proposal for presentation (see below). As I indicated, each of the fields will take more time to explore and the main difficulty that I had was in gauging the significance for scholars in a different area (business ethics) than of my own training (political science), but with more time, I plan to get a better sense of the field.

3. Did, or will, the project result in a specific product -- a manuscript, composition, syllabus, etc? If so, please describe and indicate state of development.

The work that I accomplished with the grant resulted in a paper “Corporations and Political Society” that was accepted for the 2016 Annual Meeting of the Association of Political Theory at The Ohio State University in October 2016. Illness prevented me from delivering the paper but it was uploaded to its conference archives. I have also submitted a proposal for presentation of a second paper from that research titled “Corporation Citizenship and the Legitimation of a Political Actor.” The proposal is for a panel presentation at the American Political Science Association Annual Meetings in San Francisco this coming September 2017.