

**From:** [Campus Climate Proposal form](#)  
**To:** [Libby Peterek](#); [Carrie Olson](#)  
**Subject:** New submission from Campus Climate Proposals  
**Date:** Thursday, April 21, 2016 3:20:19 PM

---

**First name:**

Dr. Susan

**Last name:**

Nossal

**Email address:**

[REDACTED]

**Phone number:**

[REDACTED]

**What is your affiliation with UW-Madison? For group submissions, please respond for main contact.**

- Academic Staff

**Describe the concept. If already in use here or elsewhere, please indicate this.**

Stereotype Threat, the fear of confirming a negative stereotype about one's identity, can negatively impact the experiences of student achievement and interactions. Research has shown that stereotype threat can have adverse effects on outcomes for women students in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) courses and students from historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups across various aspects of academic performance. This proposal seeks funds to support a year-long 50% Project Assistant position to provide workshops for students and to train instructors in STEM courses to reduce impacts of stereotype threat.

The Physics Learning Center recognizes that Stereotype Threat is a challenge for some of our students. For the past few years, we have thus invited [REDACTED] to provide training for our Peer Mentor Tutors and staff to increase our awareness of stereotype threat and how to reduce its impacts through inclusive teaching practices.

Similarly, [REDACTED] understand Stereotype Threat and its impact, that can include "imposter syndrome." The McNair Program supports and prepares undergraduates in both STEM and non-STEM majors who are low-income first-generation students as well as students from racial/ethnic groups that are historically underrepresented in higher education, for research-based graduate studies. This is an ideal group for Althea to work with because the population they serve may be particularly vulnerable to the negative impacts of stereotype threat.

[REDACTED] focuses on stereotype threat. [REDACTED] Vivaldi Ain't All We Whistle Project at UW Madison and part of the national team working on continuous development of "reducingstereotypethreat.org" resource.

Vivaldi Ain't All We Whistle (VAAWW) is an initiative named after Claude Steele's book, Whistling Vivaldi: Cues to How Stereotypes Affect Us, that seeks to expand on Steele and others' work on the stereotype threat- the fear of confirming a negative stereotype about one's [racial, ethnic, gender, etc.] identity in academic and professional settings, and how that fear contributes to underperformance – especially in STEM fields. Thus, VAAWW aims to increase the participation and retention of people of color and women in STEM education and occupations by translating two decades of research on the stereotype threat; the goal of this

synthesis being community-based research, and intervention- a missing link between the stereotype threat theory and the application thereof.

██████ has presented across campus to groups such as the Physics Learning Center staff and undergraduate Peer Mentor Tutors, the Chemistry Learning Center staff, the Peer Learning Association, the Delta program's Diversity in the College Classroom Course, students in the NSF Wisconsin Alliance for Minority Participation in STEM (WiscAMP), the McNair Scholars Program, the Peer Learning Association, and the Teaching Academy Summer Institute (TASI). ██████ workshops are interactive and based on a research foundation. She has generously given these presentations as a volunteer.

We recommend funding a Project Assistant position to enable ██████ to continue such training and expand it by providing more intensive and ongoing training and reaching out to new audiences such as for graduate Teaching Assistants. Workshops for students on stereotype threat can also help students to recognize when it is occurring and to develop a growth mindset and other strategies to reduce its impact.

#### **How would this affect cultural change on campus?**

The training on stereotype threat provided by ██████ is invaluable for helping teaching staff to create more inclusive teaching environments to support all students in doing their best learning. Additionally, workshops for students could assist them in developing strategies for reducing the impact of stereotype threat on their learning, assessments and interactions with other students and teaching staff.

#### **For new ideas, how would you propose piloting this idea to see if it would work? If the idea is already in use at UW-Madison, how would you propose expanding or altering this program for greater impact?**

██████ has been piloting workshops on reducing impacts of Stereotype Threat across campus since 2012. She started leading these interactive workshops as a project when she was enrolled in the Student Success Institute course while she was an undergraduate student majoring in psychology. Over time, there have been an increasing number of groups requesting presentations from ██████ including the Physics Learning Center, the Chemistry Learning Center, the Peer Learning Association, the DELTA program, the McNair Scholars Program, and the Teaching Academy Summer Institute. Her passion has led ██████ to volunteer her time and expertise to deliver these workshops.

A project assistant position would enable ██████ to expand her training. For example, the Physics Learning Center invites ██████ to present at one of our Peer Mentor Tutor teaching seminar meetings each year. We always run out of time during the discussion and would like to ask ██████ to come to multiple meetings, but have been hesitant to ask her knowing that she is a volunteer. We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to work more closely with ██████ if she had a Project Assistant position for her work. The same is true for her presentations to the Peer Learning Association.

The Physics Department is involved through the REACH (REdesigning for ACtive Learning in High-enrollment courses) effort in redesigning our largest introductory course sequence, Physics 103-104, to increase active learning. These courses are taken by over 900 students each semester, mainly to satisfy a requirement for their majors. One of our course goals is to develop a more supportive and welcoming atmosphere for all students. A key component to the redesign is to develop a new approach to training our TA's, most of whom come from diverse cultures. The REACH team would like to invite ██████ to help us develop a sustainable method for training TA's that reduces stereotype threat.

The Zoology Department and Introductory Biology 151/153-152 TA training programs would also like to invite Althea to work with them. This involves more than 70 TAs involved in the training who work with over 2000 students each semester. In addition, the McNair program would like ██████ to continue to work with each new batch of McNair scholars – to facilitate scholars understanding of the nature of Stereotype Threat, to recognize the ways in which this might show up in each of them, and what steps they can take to overcome its impact.

An additional component of ██████ work would be to develop and facilitate "train-the-trainer" workshops to build the capacity of those training faculty and staff, graduate teaching assistants, and undergraduate peer tutors to lead discussions about privilege, stereotype threat, and strategies for creating inclusive

learning environments.

As a 50% project assistant, [REDACTED] duties will be to either, a) deliver on average at least two trainings per week, or b) lead discussions with students and staff, some of which would be multiple training sessions to allow her audiences more in depth learning opportunities. In addition, she will assess the impact of these trainings using multiple methods (e.g., survey, interviews, focus groups) that will allow her to both have continuous improvement of her training content as well as provide useful and actionable data in reporting her results. To this end, the PAship is a professional development opportunity for [REDACTED], capitalizing on her training in the Curriculum and Instruction department. She will also develop materials (e.g., facilitator's manual, documents, videos, etc) to sustain the program after her PA-ship ends.

The Project Assistant position would be located in the Physics Learning Center and [REDACTED] would collaborate with a broad network of people across campus. To inform her work, [REDACTED] will draw upon a network of campus resources, including her advisor, Prof. Gloria Ladson-Billings in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, the Delta Program in Research Teaching and Learning, resources in social psychology, the Division of Student Life's Student Success Institute, and other programs working in similar areas, e.g. Prof. Angela Byars-Winston, in the Department of Medicine whose work focuses on diversity training and mentorship in STEM.

In her role as one of [REDACTED] mentor's Susan Nossal, the Director of the Physics Learning Center, will draw upon her experiences directly teaching and mentoring undergraduate students and Peer Mentor Tutors in the Physics Learning Center and witnessing the impacts of stereotype threat in these settings. She has been a long term member of the Student Success Institute, is a member of the Physics REACH team, and participated in the Delta program's Closing the Equity Gap Program. Susan is also a research scientist in the field of atmospheric physics and encourages students to pursue undergraduate research opportunities.

**What resources would be needed to implement your suggestion?**

We are urging the University to create a year-long 0.50 FTE Graduate Project Assistant position for [REDACTED] to expand her work educating the campus about Stereotype Threat. In addition, we request \$1000 to cover printing costs and food for student workshops.

**If this proposal was developed in partnership with any other organizations, please list them below.**

The Peer Learning Association (Jean Heitz, Director)  
Introductory Biology 151/153 – 152 and the Zoology Department TA training programs (Jean Heitz and Nazan Gillie)  
The Chemistry Learning Center (Tony Jacob, Director)  
The McNair Scholars Program [Bharati (Maya) Holtzman, Associate Director]  
Delta Program in Research Teaching and Learning (Don Gillian Daniel, Associate Director)  
Physics Department REACH Team (Chair, Prof. Peter Timbie)

The proposal is supported by Prof. Gloria Ladson-Billings (Curriculum and Instruction) and Assoc. Prof. Angela Byars-Winston (Department of Medicine).