WARRENSBURG, Mo. (May 5, 2015) — Fourteen projects that range from an aerial drone with equipped video camera and a set of West African drums to the creation of a transmedia storytelling lab and an eight-week structured exploration in understanding masculinity will receive funding in fiscal year 2016 through the University of Central Missouri Foundation Opportunity Grants Program. The UCM Foundation Board of Directors approved FY16 projects at their May 1 meeting.

“We’re excited that the Foundation Board of Directors approved funding for 14 of the projects submitted in our third year of offering these grants to our faculty and staff,” said Jason Drummond, vice president for alumni relations and development and executive director of the Foundation. “Year three funding was increased to $37,000, which is a 48 percent increase in funding since year one.”

The Opportunity Grant program was created to support targeted, student-centered activities of UCM faculty and staff resulting in significant outcomes that benefit the university's learning environment. Grants, which start at $100 and range to an individual maximum of $5,000, are funded based on the fiscal year, July 1 through June 30.

Recipients and projects for FY16 are:

- Stephen Price, assistant professor of communication, to teach students about aerial cinematography
- Allison Robbins, assistant professor of music, for a set of West African drums associated with the Anlo-Ewe people
- Colin Comer, director of Central Missouri Police Academy, to train students in defensive tactics and domestic violence scenarios
• Mark Rankin, professor of technology, to purchase a Proactive Technologies Microsoft Windows 2012 Server
• Coleen Fritz and Adam Caselman, instructors of technology, to purchase equipment to teach video production
• Tony Monetti, assistant dean of aviation, to fund airplane flights and flight simulators
• Mary Clevenger, education outreach coordinator, to create a Transmedia storytelling lab
• Anshuman Singh, assistant professor of mathematics and computer science, to prepare students to compete in the Midwest Regional Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition
• Katie Jacobs, assistant professor of psychological studies, to create a “flipped classroom” where students learn outside the classroom, then meet in class to discuss what they learn
• Scott Lankford, associate professor of biology and agriculture, to investigate molecular markers to rank egg quality of potential wild cultivars for paddlefish
• Keshav Bhatterai, professor of environmental, physical and applied sciences, to map the city of Warrensburg and the UCM main campus
• Ashley Wellman and Jon Talebraza-May, assistant professors of criminal justice and social work, to facilitate an eight-week structured exploration in understanding masculinity
• Gregg Etter, associate professor of criminal justice, for Lambda Alpha Epsilon shooting team regional competition
• Daniel Wong, assistant professor of aviation, to help students learn aspects of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, a future program at UCM

The UCM Foundation is the official fund raising arm of the University of Central Missouri. Established in 1979, the foundation procures, maintains and administers philanthropic gifts that advance the university's mission and help students attain their college goals. In keeping with that mission, the UCM Foundation established the Opportunity Grant Program in support of faculty and staff who have ideas but insufficient funding for entrepreneurial projects that strengthen the university's learning environment and students' academic experience.

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