

**Baker-Hernandez Grant Proposal**

**Name:** Audrey Cisneros  
**Student ID:** 800196821  
**Program:** Rhetoric and Writing Studies  
**Email:** afcisneros@utep.edu  
**Title of Presentation:** "Risks and Rewards of Transnational Digital Research: Methodological Challenges and Maneuvers"  
**Conference:** National Council of Teachers of English's (NCTE) 2015 Conference of College Composition and Communication (CCCC).  
**Dates:** March 18–21, 2015  
**Location:** Tampa, FL

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**Travel Proposal.**

This proposal seeks travel funding to Tampa, Florida to attend and present at National Council of Teachers of English's (NCTE) 2015 Conference of College Composition and Communication (CCCC). The title of the presentation is "The Risks and Rewards of Transnational Digital Research: Methodological Challenges and Maneuvers"

My presentation is a part of a larger panel presentation which includes colleague and PhD student Sara Bartlett-Large, as well as my dissertation director and Director of the Rhetoric and Writing Studies Program, Dr. Kate Mangelsdorf. This panel will address the risks and rewards of conducting transnational research by describing two research projects conducted in digital environments in two international contexts. Digital spaces, as Hawisher and Selfe (2010) have noted, "allow for the increasingly rich representation of language and literacy practices" (56). Due to the challenges of conducting transnational research, such as the expense and even danger of traveling to specific research sites, digital communities offer researchers and participants alternative spaces uniquely suited for transnational research. In particular, global digital communities such as Facebook and Twitter allow for performances of identity and resistance that can help Rhetoric and Composition scholars and teachers better understand the mobile and shifting rhetorics of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The first speaker on this panel, Sara Bartlett-Large, will describe the digital research she has conducted with Mongolian youth as they negotiate new identities in various global spaces. As the second speaker, I will discuss my research on the online discourses of Arab Women surrounding Egypt's 2011 Arab Spring and the 2013 coup d'état. The third speaker, Dr. Kate Mangelsdorf will highlight the risks and rewards faced by these speakers, examine theoretical frameworks suitable for such research, and initiate a discussion among audience members concerning global research methodologies.

My segment of the panel presentation reflects my dissertation research, titled "Micro-level Movements Matter: Rhetorical Agency and Resistance within the Digital Discourse of Arab Women during the Egyptian Arab Spring." In this presentation, I describe the research challenges I have encountered in my mixed-methods study which focuses upon discursive negotiations made by Egyptian women on Twitter during Egypt's 2011 revolution through

Egypt's current military coup d'état. In my examination of how my Egyptian women participants shape and are shaped through these micro-level digital performances, I have encountered a number of challenges, such as language barriers, cultural misinterpretation, limited digital access, growing censorship within the region, and interrupted or limited access to research participants. Moreover, this presentation will focus upon the challenges found in researching with Big Data, such as Historical Twitter Data of which my dissertation is focused upon. This presentation will discuss the cross-disciplinary partnerships fostered within my dissertation and focus upon the value of Data Mining and Discourse Analysis in social science research. Many of these methodological challenges translate to ethical challenges as well; in particular, data privacy and the safety of participants in a dangerously censored region are of primary concern. I will also discuss how this research has needed to adapt to a rapidly shifting sociopolitical terrain. Many of the challenges I have faced throughout the dissertation can be attributed to the uniquely global, transnational research setting. The mixed-methods framework also invites many complexities but has facilitated collaboration among Rhetoric and Writing Studies (RWS) and Academic Technologies (AT) here on the UTEP campus. My research has also promoted collaboration with GNIP, a corporate data mining company which will provide the raw Twitter Data for analysis in my dissertation. This presentation will discuss value of Twitter data in RWS, and address the gaps within our field in dealing with Big Data as social scientists.

**Benefits: Professional and Educational**

This conference is of great significance to the field of RWS. Since 1949, the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) has been the world's largest professional organization for researching and teaching composition, from writing to new media. The CCCC's conference facilitates an unprecedented opportunity for showcasing new and innovative research, like that found in my dissertation within the field of RWS to the field's most expert scholars and teachers. The conference offers unmatched networking opportunities necessary for advancing research, scholarship, and publication opportunities as well. Acceptance into CCCC's is extraordinarily competitive, making this presentation inexplicably valuable for me as scholar, looking to present my research and represent UTEP in an arena offered only at CCCC's.

The utilization of CCCC's participants and attendees is also worthy of note. Those in attendance are among the field's most expert scholars and teachers thereby making audience response uniquely valuable. I, along with my panelists will encourage audience response by distributing a series of questions intended to stimulate debate, problem solving, and collaboration. As academia is only recently delving into the value and significance of social media and Big Data like Twitter, much is still to be said regarding methodologies for best managing the data that this dissertation investigates. Discussion found at CCCC's is intended to advise other scholars facing similar challenges and in turn, I look forward to learning from those whom are researching with Big Data as well.

**Estimated Budget for Travel Costs**

Item	Cost	Notes	Total Requested
Flight	\$478.40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• El Paso to Tampa; Tampa to El Paso</li> <li>• Depart March 17</li> <li>• Return March 22</li> <li>• Quoted by Anthony Travel (see attachment)</li> <li>• Covered by Graduate School Travel Grant</li> </ul>	\$0.00
Hotel	\$267.68/night including tax for 5 nights (\$669.20 each) (\$1338.40 total)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At Conference Sponsored Hotel: Hilton Tampa Downtown</li> <li>• Total cost split with another colleague.</li> <li>• \$371.60 covered by Graduate School Travel Grant</li> <li>• \$297.60 covered by Dodson Travel Grant</li> </ul>	\$0.00
Conference Registration	\$65.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student price</li> <li>• Covered by Dodson Travel Grant</li> </ul>	\$0.00
Workshop Registration	\$20.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student price</li> <li>• Covered by Dodson Travel Grant</li> </ul>	\$0.00
Per Diem Meals and Incidental Expenses	\$50/day for 6 days, or \$300.00 total	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120">http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120</a></li> <li>• \$117.40 of \$300 covered by Dodson Travel Grant</li> <li>• Seeking funding from Baker-Hernandez</li> </ul>	\$182.60
Total			\$182.60

**Budget Notes:**

Funding from the Baker-Hernandez grant is mainly sought to cover per diem meals and incidental expenses. I was awarded a travel grant from the Graduate School in the amount of \$850 and from the Dodson Travel Grant in the amount of \$500 to attend this conference. The Graduate School Award will cover the cost of my flight to and from Tampa, and partially cover the cost of my hotel stay. The Dodson Travel Grant will cover the remaining costs of my hotel stay, conference and workshop registration, and partially cover per diem meals and incidental expenses.

**Notes flight and hotel.**

Flights were cheaper for Tuesday – Sunday travel than for Wednesday – Sunday travel, and the hotel price was also cheaper for a Tuesday – Sunday stay than for a Wednesday – Sunday stay, and as of January 26, no double-occupancy rooms were available for a Wednesday – Sunday stay. Unfortunately, hotel rooms filled up quickly, and no sponsored hotels offered the CCCC group rate as of January 23. All of the other sponsored hotels were completely booked for these dates, at any price. The Hilton alone offered rooms at a slightly higher rate. I have split total hotel cost of \$1338.40 with another colleague.

**Notes on use of time.**

Although conference sessions do not begin until Thursday, March 19, there are several workshops offered on Wednesday, March 18. I plan to attend one entitled "The Job Market and Higher Education: Negotiations and Navigations of the New Doctoral Student," for which I have received funding from the Dodson Grant. This workshop will involve discussions and activities that will help me to prepare for the job market, which I plan to enter in the Fall of 2015.