



*Make It Happen!
Innovation Grant*

INFORMATION DATA FORM

1. **Project Name:** “The Jefferson Café™: Expanding the Circle”
2. **Project Director:** Dr. Francine Jamin
3. **Project Starting and Ending Date:** February – December 2006
4. **Brief description of the project:** We are requesting this funding to enable us to take a first step in enlarging the circle of people who are able to participate in our very successful, award-winning Jefferson Café™ discussions. In seeking to augment our learning community, both in house and beyond, we have been encouraged by the support of a number of potential partners, among them the Library of Congress, Montgomery Community Television, the national OASIS Institute, and the Presidential Sites and Libraries Committee of the American Association of State and Local History. (I am, in fact, thrilled to have been invited to speak about the Jefferson Café™ at the latter organization’s national conference at Hyde Park next June.)
5. **State fundamental need or concern addressed in this project.** While successful beyond expectations, the Jefferson Café™ initiative has been limited in scope by a number of factors. First, we have found it difficult to engage students in these discussion circles because their time is so limited and they lack experience with this kind of intellectual forum. Then, too, we have been restricted in our ability to get our message out and engage a larger community of participants partly because we have not had an adequate budget to produce professional-quality promotional materials. We recognize that the awarding of a *Make It Happen!* grant would not resolve all these issues but would regard it as seed money toward a more comprehensive solution.
6. **List the project's core goals and/or objectives.** For the immediate future, we have the following core goals:
 - To work with the First Year Experience coordinators on the campuses to devise a variant of the Jefferson Café™ that would constitute a viable learning community for cohorts of first-year students.

- To produce high-quality promotional materials that would enable us to promote our program more widely and engage a regional and national audience.

7. Who will benefit from this project?

- At our college, colloquium-type discussions have typically been reserved for Honors students. However, if we can incorporate the Jefferson Café™ dialogue into our first-year experience, we will be enhancing entering students' appreciation of the benefits of a learning community as well as training them in basic communication and critical thinking skills.
- If we can follow through on the recommendations of our potential external partners [see *question 3*], we will greatly enhance the College's reputation for educational leadership and, at the same time, create valuable regional and national alliances.