**Internationalization Grant Report**

**To:** Graham Pike, Dean, Faculty of International Studies

**From:** Dawn Thompson, English Department]

**Date:** 1 December 2014

**Re:** Internationalization Grant for travel to London, UK to organize a Field School

I would like to thank the Faculty of International Education for its ongoing support to our Voices of London Field School. It has been a long process, and I am thrilled that the Field School will be taking place in May-June 2015.

In Oct. 2013, I was awarded a travel grant for a reconnaissance trip to London. My travel was delayed by personal circumstances; however, I was able to make the trip Oct. 25-Nov. 1, 2014. It was invaluable. In the course of one short week, I was able to do the following:

* Meet with Dr. Justine Baillie at the University of Greenwich. Justine heads an M.A. program in Literary London, and teaches courses with the same focus as the course I will be offering. She has generously offered to consult with me regarding curriculum for the spring term and allow our students to sit in on lectures and seminars when we are in London. This will be a marvelous experience for our students, and Justine and her colleagues are clearly interested in exploring possibilities for more of a relationship with VIU.
* Check out both of our accommodations and confirm details with staff, as well as scout neighborhoods for services such as grocery stores and laundromats. This was important, as our earlier plans for accommodations had not worked out, and neither my partner Jerry Hinbest nor I had actually seen the hotel where we will be staying during the second part of the trip. I’m glad to report that it is satisfactory.
* Participate in numerous bus, boat, and walking tours, the latter both historical and literary, to assess their value for our students. We will be doing several walking tours!
* Visit the British Library, numerous museums, and other sights in order to prioritize them for our visit. There is simply too much to see and do, so we will need to plan our time carefully.
* Visit and tour Oxford, as we will be taking our students there on a day trip – I saw the lamp that “probably” inspired C.S. Lewis!
* Walk the streets of Bloomsbury, Whitechapel, Shoreditch, and Kilburn, as well as numerous other locales that are the settings for the texts we will be studying.
* Attend a theatrical performance of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, based on the novel by Mark Haddon. This was especially exciting as I am teaching that novel in another course in the Spring of 2015, and the performance and stage-craft spoke directly to the topic of the course in a powerful way; I will now be able to share my experience of it with my students.
* Find a lovely curry restaurant on Brick Lane for our celebratory feast (although I think I will have to try a few others beforehand, just to be sure).

All in all, it was a busy week, and I can’t imagine planning the field school without having had this opportunity. Just travelling from Heathrow to London and becoming familiar with using the Underground, Overground, and bus services was vital for when I will be leading a group of students around the city. Our students will see a London that few tourists see, one that will definitely help them to develop an increased awareness of cultural diversity and global citizenship, as well as an understanding of different models of multiculturalism, and the ways in which urban geography helps to shape different identities.

I am grateful for the financial support, and the ongoing support of Faculty of International Studies, especially Audrey Hansen, whose experience, encouragement, and advice continues to be invaluable.