

UNIVERSITY *of* MISSOURI

RANDALL D. SMITH, PROFESSOR AND DONALD W. REYNOLDS CHAIR OF BUSINESS JOURNALISM

MISSOURI SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

IIF Fund
April 2013

To: Interdisciplinary Innovations Fund Committee
From: Randall Smith, Donald W. Reynolds Chair in Business Journalism

Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to update you on the results of the IIF's grant of \$25,000 to help fund the start up of Missouri Business Alert, a statewide business publication.

The purpose of Missouri Business Alert was and is, foremost, to provide a learning platform for our business journalism students at the Missouri School of Journalism. But it also has two other goals: Serve business news to Missouri residents. Explore alternative content and revenue opportunities that can be shared with the news industry.

The IIF played an important role in helping launch Missouri Business Alert in summer 2012. The grant paid for the salaries of six student reporters and one student editor: Alecia Swasy, a PhD student in journalism; Chris DeRosier, a MA student in journalism; Lorah Slaton, a MA student in journalism; Ryan Neal, a MBA student in business; and Ben Unglesbee, a MA student in journalism; and Alex Sagi, a double major in journalism and economics.

Together, they launched the CMS that was designed by our students in spring 2012. To get an idea of the project and the work behind it, please see the video on this webpage: missouribusinessalert.com

Missouri Business Alert is now in its third semester of helping students learn about business journalism and entrepreneurship. The stories of more than 40 students have appeared on the website: home.missouribusinessalert.com

In January, Missouri Business Alert hired a full-time editor, Michael Stacy, who had been the editor of Silicon Prairie News in Omaha, Neb. In March, the Curriculum Committee approved a new, advanced business journalism class that's been organized around the new venture. Two other classes, one taught by Professor Martha Steffens and another by the convergence faculty, use MBA as working media lab for students.

A new iPhone app was completed in April for MBA. We are also ,in discussions with Steve Wyatt, vice provost, to turn MBA into a public private partnership. Based on those negotiations, we hope to have private funding in place this summer. Our plan is to hire two new employees immediately and to contract with other experienced journalism professionals to help our students.



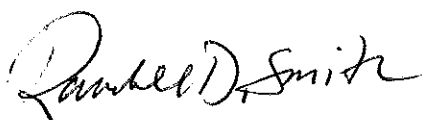
There is much to discuss with MBA because new features are being added every day. This summer, we will have five students working at the publication and we will host students from the convergence class.

The committee's belief in our ability to start something new was instrumental in our success. We have attracted the attention of Bloomberg, which is sending three senior editors to work with our students and the project in the fall.

Attached are the specifics of how every dollar of your grant was spent. You'll see that virtually all was spent on our students for their work in summer 2012.

We are deeply grateful for your support. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randall D. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Randall D. Smith
Professor and Donald W. Reynolds Endowed Chair of Business Journalism
Co-Director, Center for the Digital Globe
President, Alfred Friendly Press Fellowships
University of Missouri
School of Journalism
310H Reynolds Journalism Institute
Columbia, Missouri 65211
smithrandall@missouri.edu