Applications must be submitted to the OVPR by 5:00 p.m. on the published application deadline. Refer to the SFS guidelines, available on the OVPR website, for information regarding eligibility, allowable expenses, and other submission details. Applicants must complete each item on this application form. Completed applications are limited to a maximum of 1500 words on 3 pages or less, including any figures, tables, and the budget information. Applications greater than 3 pages will be returned without review. All applications must be signed by the faculty member and the department chair.

Name __Lofton L. Durham______________________ Date _9/30/2016____________________
Department _______________Theatre____________________ College __Fine Arts____________________
Email __lofton.durham@wmich.edu___________ Phone # ______7-3308___________
Faculty rank ___________Associate Professor____________________
Title of proposed work __Demonstration Productions of Middle Dutch Drama____________________
Amount requested __________$2,000____________________
Date and title of any previous SFS or FRACAA project Rewriting the History of Medieval Theatre: Destruction de Troie and Fifteenth Century Performance Culture (Mar. 2010-Feb. 2011)

1. Provide an abstract/succinct summary of the proposal (50 words or less):

To support the translation and fully staged productions of two Middle Dutch "well-made plays," the serious play Esmoëit and the farce Lippijn, as part of the inaugural Mostly Medieval Theatre Festival alongside WMU's International Congress on Medieval Studies.
Application narrative: Items 2 – 6 cannot exceed 1,500 words on 3 pages or less

2. Describe your proposed work (e.g., objectives or goals, activities, timeline, outcomes, products, or other relevant information), including the connection, if one exists, with any previous SFSF or FRACAA project.

As part of my work as a scholar of medieval performance and a professional theatre director and producer, I am founding a new theatre festival at Western Michigan University—the Mostly Medieval Theatre Festival—to accompany the Medieval Congress and to create a completely unique venue for regularly scheduled professional and semi-professional presentations of the global heritage of drama, music, and other theatrical remnants, texts, or performance styles from late antiquity through the Renaissance. While I am currently fielding approximately a dozen applications from professional and academic groups around the world who are interested in a performance slot, I am also using the opportunity to bolster my own investigations into the stageworthiness of material from the sixth through the sixteenth centuries. In this case, I have selected two plays from the Middle Dutch, contained in a c. 1400-1410 manuscript called the Van Hulthem manuscript. These plays are virtually the only known secular plays from Europe prior to the fourteenth century, making them a unique record of the wealthy context of the Low Countries where a tradition of writing plays based on legends and chivalric romance (instead of on Christian history and doctrine) seemed to be the norm. Outside of specialists in Middle Dutch drama, or in Dutch literature more generally, these plays are virtually unknown. Moreover, the texts themselves have been translated into English only a couple of times, and then only by literary scholars not interested in the performance dimension of the text. Thus those translations attempt to replicate the language very closely, hewing to literal correctness at the expense of melody, rhythm, and the playability of the language in a performance context.

This project is designed to demonstrate that material like Middle Dutch drama, while seemingly far removed in time and place, can actually serve as viable—indeed, uniquely fascinating—contemporary entertainment in today's elaborate and specialized theatre spaces. While probably written for a community-based context where no specific theatre spaces existed, the lack of a performable English translation and the esoteric nature of the material have made it very easy to ignore these artifacts. Anyone who goes to the theatre on a regular basis understands how drama can capture the human imagination and bring us to new places and deeper understandings of human nature: Shakespeare comes readily to mind. Yet without the efforts of 18th and 19th century theatre practitioners, who championed Shakespeare to their audiences, we would likely have little knowledge or experience with the Bard's plays outside an academic context. But it is a fact that William Shakespeare is the single most-produced playwright in the United States. I am not, of course, saying the Esmoreit and Lippijn qualify as Shakespeare analogs, but I am arguing that if medieval performance scholars want to ensure their materials endure for another century, regular production of those materials is essential to ensure that they remain interesting objects of inquiry, rather than merely windows into a dead past. Rare is the Shakespeare production bent on replicating "original" production practices--instead, Shakespeare has become a cultural touchstone, both far more significant than a historical
figure, yet also continually lighting interest in audiences about the past. That is what I think we stand to gain if we support not only research on, but also productions of, premodern theatre, drama, and performance.

I have already negotiated the terms of the translation with Amanda Albert, a PhD candidate and expert on Middle Dutch drama at Cornell University, who has agreed to a Dec 1, 2016 deadline in order to accommodate a production process that begins in mid-January (with the advertising for and hiring of artists, development of marketing materials, and the initiation of a design process for the show). I have already obtained sufficient other funds for this production and the other half of the translation fee, so that the SFS Award completes the full budget and enables the production to proceed. (648 wds)

3. Describe how the proposed work will make (a) a significant and (b) original contribution to the discipline.

Performance or practice-based research, where live performance serves as a method for investigating textual material or practices, has increasingly become a part of the suite of methods used by researchers of early theatre, drama, and performance. However, this method has been applied most vigorously to English texts, or texts already translated into English. To date, very little practice-based research has also been linked to the translation of texts into English, other than my own work at recent Congresses. This project will mark both the creation of two new translations into English of Middle Dutch plays, in order to demonstrate the stageworthiness of the material and also the appeal of early drama to contemporary audiences that is possible within contemporary production techniques at a professional level. (125 wds)

4. Describe the mechanism for dissemination.

The productions will occur at the same time as the Congress, meaning (if the theatre sells out) that 450 people will be able to experience the shows. In addition, the translation will likely be published as a result of the production (since the occasion of the production commissioned the translations), either with WMU’s Medieval Institute Press, which has a newly constituted series on medieval drama, or as a special supplement of the journal *Comparative Drama*, where I am an editor. Thus this project will directly result in both a live performance event and, very probably, a published pair of works that will be a new standard for translating Middle Dutch plays, since the last English translation done in 1999. (119 wds)

5. Describe how the proposed work will enhance your reputation and that of WMU.

Produced as part of the new Mostly Medieval Theatre Festival sponsored by the Medieval Institute alongside the Congress, my productions of *Esmoreit* and *Lippijn* will put WMU on the map as a new center of investigation into medieval performance for both historical understanding, and for the enhancement of public appreciation of the virtually unknown repertoire. For me, these productions will widen the range of scholars who see me as an interpreter of medieval culture as well as a leader in changing the views of the public regarding the appeal of medieval theatre, drama, and performance. (95 wds)

6. Provide an itemized budget and budget justification. A proposed budget greater than the allowed maximum amount of $2,000 will disqualify the proposal. Such a proposal will not be reviewed. Fully justify why the budgeted expense is necessary for the project.

The budget for the SFSF project includes:
Production Creative Team Fees:
2nd payment to Translator $375
Scenic/Props designer $250
Lighting designer $250
Sound designer $250
Stage Manager $250
Production Assistant $250
SUBTOTAL: $1,625

Production Materials $375
TOTAL: $2,000

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION
A theatre production is a community task requiring the coordination of many people’s efforts. Since the production occurs AFTER the end of the spring term, for me to accomplish the show requires that I compensate all artists involved in the work, with at least a minimal stipend. I imagine hiring potentially some Western students (undergraduates of exceptional ability, and perhaps some graduate students from the Medieval Institute) as well as local artists and technicians with experience in theatre production. Moreover, as part of the project intent is to demonstrate the viability of this material through professional-level productions, I must be able to pay all artists a fee and therefore hold them accountable for the best possible work.

LINE ITEM JUSTIFICATION
The translating fee completes the $750 amount to commission the two translations. The Scenic/Props designer is responsible for creating a unique and functional space within the Williams Theatre, to give both shows a specific theatrical identity, as well as the finding or creation of any objects in the show handled by performers. The Lighting designer is essential for controlling and corralling the complex lighting systems in the Williams to both enable audiences to see the plays as well as to create some important theatrical moments with each show. The Sound designer will collect and create all sounds used for playback in the show, as well as ensure that audiences can hear all actors. Since this is a contemporary production of old material, sound will be essential to help create the exotic European and Middle Eastern locales of the scripts. The Stage Manager is the coordinator of the entire production, working directly with me as a technical and logistical partner during rehearsals and preparing the show for an audience in the theatre space. The Stage Manager is the central communicator of any production process, among director (my role), performers, and the design team (listed in this proposal). The Production Assistant provides direct support to the stage manager, doing both physical (moving and storing of props, costumes; preparation of space for rehearsal; creation of a functional and safe backstage) and administrative work. Finally, all theatre productions require materials in order to be fully realized. Therefore the $375 supplies a portion of the production materials budget. (413wds)
Faculty name: ______ Lofton Durham _______  
Application #: _______  
(For OVPR use only)  

Faculty member signature:  

Acknowledgement of Department Chair:  
☐ The department chair acknowledges submission of the SFSA application.  
☐ The department chair acknowledges the proposed expenses are reasonable and necessary.  

Chair's signature: _______  
Date: _______  

For OVPR use only:  
Faculty member completed previous reporting requirements:  
Yes ☑ No _______  
Funding decision: Funded _______ Not funded: _______  

Date received:  
SEP 30 2016  

Research and Sponsored Programs  

Application for Support for Faculty Scholars Award  

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