

From: Kramer,Dennis Allan
Sent: 4/12/2016 8:05:17 PM
To: Haley, Nikki
Cc: Baker, Josh
Subject: RE: Introduction and Proposal

Governor Haley,

I wanted to send a quick follow-up to see if a conversation regarding my proposal below might be of interest.

Many Thanks,

Dennis

**Dennis A. Kramer II, Ph.D. | Assistant Professor, Higher Education Policy
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From: Kramer,Dennis Allan
Sent: Sunday, April 03, 2016 9:38 PM
To: nikkiahaley@gov.sc.gov
Cc: JoshBaker@gov.sc.gov
Subject: Introduction and Proposal

Greetings Governor Haley,

I hope this email finds you well and your weekend was relaxing. My name is Dennis Kramer and I am an Assistant Professor of Higher Education Policy at the University of Florida. My wife and I are looking to relocate to the South Carolina area and I am wanted to both introduce myself and make a brief proposal. I know your schedule has many demands, I will keep this brief.

Prior to joining the faculty ranks, I served as the Senior Research and Policy Analyst within the Georgia Department of Education. Within this role, I was charged with not only the evaluation and development of P20 policy, but also with establishing a robust research agenda that would highlight policies/programs of strengths and areas of weakness surrounding student achievement and access to postsecondary education. Through this role, I was exposed to the South Carolina education system and found the work being done fascinate and a potential opportunity to lead the nation in terms of connecting research to practice.

To be brief, my proposal is based on the potential creation on a research unit that applies insights from academic research in behavioral economics and psychology to improve not only the delivery of education, but the effectiveness of support programs. This unit would support K12 school districts and public postsecondary institutions in conducting real-time, low-cost program evaluations to continually improve their delivery of educational services. The potential power of this unit would be tremendous. For example, I am currently working on a behavioral economic study that examines the role of the default options for the student financial aid process. At some institutions, students have to physically select if they want their Pell Grant (opt-in), while at other institution the distribution of the Pell Grant is pre-selected (opt-out). What I have found is that when students have their Pell Grant pre-selected they receive their Pell Grant at 98% compared to those who have to select the Pell themselves at 60%. This small (no cost) change to the default option would save the State of South Carolina a significant amount of money and increase student persistence and achievement. There are endless possibilities within the K12 system as well that should lead to significant claims in not only student achievement, but also streamline resources across school districts. I could provide a number of examples; however, in the interest of time, I will defer to our future conversation.

As with any proposal, the secondary question (after mission) is cost. The beauty of this proposal is that this unit has the potential to be entirely grant funded within four to five year. Given the level of interest of both the federal government and private foundations in using experimental approaches to improve student outcomes, it would be expected that grants funds (soft-money) would make up at least 0% in Year 1; 10% in Year 2; 35% in Year 3; 60% in Year 4; and 85% in Year 5 of the total operating budget.

I hope this email provide enough information to provide a foundation for future conversation about the potential of a South Carolina Educational Insight Unit. I am grateful for your time and consideration. I will be awaiting your response and the prospects of our future conversations.

Warmest Regards,

Dennis

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