

# FIELD NOTES

Newsletter of the Geographies of Food and Agriculture Specialty Group



## A Message from our Chairs

by Colleen Hammelman, GFASG Chair  
and Kristen Lowitt, GFASG Vice-Chair

Greetings GFASG Members,

We hope this newsletter finds you all as well as possible. It can feel so challenging to plod through the multiple crises unfolding in this turbulent 2020, yet we remain galvanized by the activists, community leaders, and scholars that are resisting systemic oppression, experimenting with new ways to keep communities healthy, and fighting to create a more just and ecologically sustainable world. These social, ecological, and health crises have illuminated the compounding injustices evident in our food system, making the work of GFASG members ever more critical.

This newsletter includes information about member accomplishments and activities since the spring and plans for the upcoming AAG meetings. Despite the uncertainties and life-changing events this year, the GFASG membership brought forward impressive achievements in terms of publications, presentations, and community engaged events (pg. 3-5). The Food Justice Scholar-Activist/Activist-Scholar community of practice (FJSAAS) remains

Photo: Unless otherwise noted, photos in this edition of the GFASG Newsletter come from Madeleine Fairbairn's research in California's Cuyama Valley.

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quite active with a growing membership (pg. 6). This year we also mourned the loss of Evan Weissman, Associate Professor in Nutrition and Food Studies, Syracuse University. Laura-Anne Minkoff-Zern shares more about his scholarship, life and legacy on pg. 7.

Planning for the 2021 American Association of Geographers' Annual Meeting is in full swing. We look forward to seeing many of you at the virtual and/or in person events during Wednesday, April 7 to Sunday, April 11, 2021. The meeting promises to feature more than 6,000 presentations, posters, and workshops, by leading scholars, experts, and researchers. The GFASG again seeks to have a significant presence at the meeting with many paper presentations, sessions, posters, and special events organized by our members. If you are planning to submit an abstract or session for the conference, keep in mind these deadlines:

#### Key Deadlines

- **Nov 19, 2020** - Paper abstract submission deadline
- **Dec 18, 2020** - Paper and panel session organization deadline
- **Jan 29, 2021** - Poster abstract submission deadline
- **Feb 5, 2021** - Poster session organization deadline
- **Feb 19, 2021** - Abstract and session editing deadline

If you are interested in having GFASG sponsor your AAG session, please email your request to Madeleine Fairbairn (mfairbai@ucsc.edu) with the session title and abstract. Once the request is approved, you indicate GFASG sponsorship by selecting our specialty group from the drop-down menu when you register the session with the AAG. Sponsorship helps other GFASG members find your session through the conference app and makes sure that it will appear in our list of sponsored sessions in the spring GFASG newsletter.

More information on the AAG Annual Meeting can be found at <https://annualmeeting.aag.org/>. If you are interested in organizing field trips, panels, other events, or have suggestions more broadly for the specialty group, please reach out to any member of the board.

The GFASG Board is also seeking nominations for its Graduate Research Awards for masters and doctoral students. The award selection committee is committed to

equity in this process and especially encourages submissions from underrepresented students. The award announcement can be found at the end of this newsletter. Next year, our biennial book award will also again be offered. As well, for subsequent years, the Board is exploring the establishment of a community-engaged research award to further recognize scholar-activists/activist-scholars and support community-campus engagement. A proposal for such an award is currently being developed and we hope to share this with the wider membership for discussion and consideration at our Business Meeting as part of the AAG Meeting in April.

Finally, during the summer, the GFASG Board released a statement of solidarity with Black colleagues and activists. As we take forward our commitments in that statement, the Board has established a committee focused on justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion. This committee is meeting regularly to identify ways to better integrate these approaches into all of the work of the specialty group—including elections and board membership, awards, conference activities, and resources shared through our platforms. We are taking time to be intentional in this work, so please be on the lookout for announcements and more information in the various activities of the specialty group. Given the limitations of our largely white Board, we also welcome all ideas and contributions for the best way to approach this effort. If you are interested in and/or willing to support these initiatives, please contact the board chairs (contact details are below).

We look forward to continuing to share and hear about the exciting work of the specialty group in the coming months and to hopefully being able to reconvene soon.

In health and solidarity,

Colleen Hammelman, GFASG Chair  
colleen.hammelman@uncc.edu

Kristen Lowitt, GFASG Vice-Chair  
kristen.lowitt@queensu.ca 

## Member Achievements

### Recent Publications

Ashwood, Loka, John Canfield, **Madeleine Fairbairn**, and Kathryn De Master. "What owns the land: The corporate organization of farmland investment." *Journal of Peasant Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/03066150.2020.1786813.

**Baumann, Megan**, Karl Zimmerer, and Jacob van Etten. 2020. Participatory seed projects and agroecological landscape knowledge in Central America. *International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability* 18(4): 300-318.

Clapp, Jennifer and **William Moseley**. 2020. "This Food Crisis is Different: COVID-19 and the Fragility of the Neoliberal Food Security Order." *Journal of Peasant Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/03066150.2020.1823838.

Clark, Jill, **Kristen Lowitt**, **Charles Levkoe**, and Peter Andrée. 2020. The power to convene: Making sense of the power of food movement organizations in governance processes in the Global North. *Agriculture Food and Human Values* 1-17. DOI: 10.1007/s10460-020-10146-1

**Connor, Georgeta**. 2020. "Incorporating Stalinist approaches into the Romanian post-war agricultural and rural development." *Balkanistica* 33: 1-31.

**Ellis, Rebecca**, Tony Weis, Sainath Suryanarayanan, and Kata Beilin. 2020. "From a free gift of nature to a precarious commodity: Bees, pollination services, and industrial agriculture." *Journal of Agrarian Change* 20(3): 437-459.

**Hammelman, Colleen, Kristin Reynolds, and Charles Levkoe**. 2020. "Toward a radical food geography praxis: integrating theory, action, and geographic analysis in pursuit of more equitable and sustainable food systems." *Human Geography* 13(3), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1942778620962034>

**Jimenez-Soto, Estelí**. 2020. "The political ecology of shaded coffee plantations: Conservation narratives and the everyday-lived-experience of farmworkers." *The Journal of Peasant Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/03066150.2020.1713109.

**Levkoe, Charles, Colleen Hammelman, Kristen Reynolds, Xavier Brown, M. Jahi Chappell, Ricardo Salvador, and Beverly Wheeler**. 2020. "Scholar-activist perspectives on radical food geography: Collaborating through food justice and food sovereignty praxis." *Human Geography* 13(3). DOI: 10.1177/1942778620962036.

**Levkoe, Charles**, Irena Knezevic, Donna Appavoo, Andrea Moraes, and Steffanie Scott. 2020. "Serving up food studies online: Teaching about 'food from somewhere' from nowhere." *Food, Culture and Society: An International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 23(3), 434-453.

**Lowitt, Kristen, Charles Levkoe**, Andrew Spring, Colleen Turlo, Patricia Williams, Sheila Bird, Chief Dean Sayers, and Melaine Simba. (2020). Empowering small-scale, community-based fisheries through a food systems framework. *Marine Policy* 120 (104150): 1-8. DOI: 10.1016/j.marpol.2020.104150.

**Luna, Jessie** and Brian Dowd-Urbe. 2020. "Knowledge politics and the Bt cotton success narrative in Burkina Faso." *World Development* 136 (105127). DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.105127.

## GFASG BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Chair

Colleen Hammelman, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

### Vice Chair

Kristen Lowitt, Brandon University

### Secretary-Treasurer

Megan Dwyer Baumann, The Pennsylvania State University

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Christopher Bryant, University of Guelph, and University of Montréal

Renata Blumberg  
Montclair State University

Kristin Reynolds  
New School for Social Research  
\*liaison with FJSAAS community  
of practice

### Newsletter Editor

Madeleine Fairbairn, University of California, Santa Cruz

### Website Coordinator

Russell C. Hedberg II, Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania

### Student Board Members At Large

Dana James  
University of British Columbia

Laura Williams  
University of Hawaii



**Luna, Jessie.** 2020. "Peasant essentialism in GMO debates: Bt cotton in Burkina Faso." *Journal of Agrarian Change*. DOI: 10.1111/joac.12381.

**Luna, Jessie.** 2020. "'Pesticides are our children now': Cultural change and the technological treadmill in the Burkina Faso cotton sector." *Agriculture and Human Values* 37(2): 449-462.

**Martin, Jeff Vance.** 2020. "Peace in the valley? Qualitative insights on collaborative coexistence from the Wood River Wolf Project." *Conservation Science and Practice*. DOI: 10.1111/csp2.197.

Morgan, Julia and **William Moseley.** 2020. "The secret is in the sauce: Foraged food and dietary diversity among female farmers in Southwestern Burkina Faso." *Canadian Journal of Development Studies / Revue Canadienne d'Études du Développement* 41(2): 296-313.

**Moseley, William** and Jane Battersby. 2020. "The vulnerability and resilience of African food systems, food security and nutrition in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic." *African Studies Review*. 63(3). DOI: 10.1017/asr.2020.72

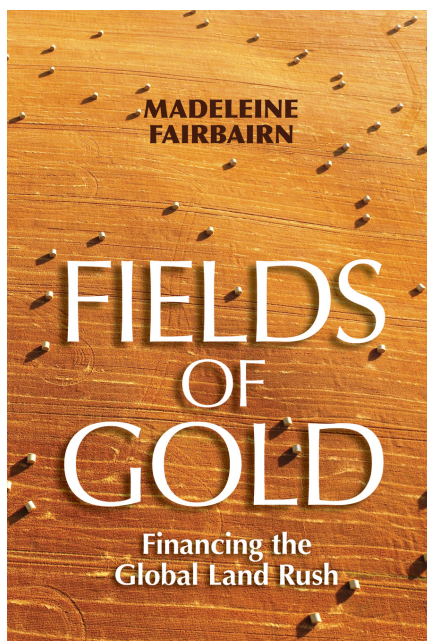
**Reisman, Emily.** 2020. "Next year, together." *Canadian Food Studies / La Revue Canadienne Des Études Sur l'alimentation* 7(1): 5-7.

**Reynolds, Kristin, Daniel Block, Colleen Hammelman, Brittany Jones, Jessica Gilbert, and Henry Herrera.** 2020. "Envisioning radical food geographies: Shared learning and praxis through the food justice scholar-activist/activist-scholar community of practice." *Human Geography* 13(3). DOI: 10.1177/1942778620951934

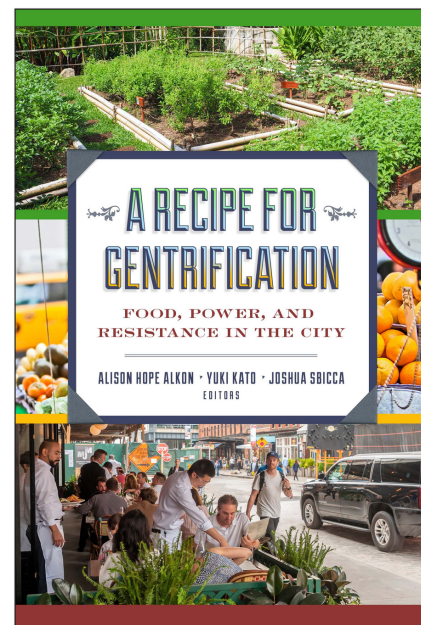
**Reynolds, Kristin.** 2020. "Food, agriculture, and environmental justice: Perspectives on scholarship and activism in the field." In *Environmental Justice: Key Issues*. Coolsaet, Brendan (ed.) London: Routledge.

**Walsh-Dille, Marygold.** 2020. "Resilience compromised: Producing vulnerability to climate and market among quinoa producers in Southwestern Bolivia." *Global Environmental Change*, 65. DOI: 10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2020.102165

**Warshawsky, Daniel.** 2020. "The limits of food waste governance in cities: Case study of Dayton, Ohio." *Geographical Review*. DOI: 10.1080/00167428.2020.1776124.



**Fairbairn, Madeleine.** 2020. *Fields of Gold: Financing the Global Land Rush*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.



**Alkon, Alison, Yuki Kato, and Joshua Sbicca** (eds). 2020. *A Recipe for Gentrification: Food, Power, and Resistance in the City*. New York: NYU Press.

## More Member Achievements

**Julie Guthman's** 2020 book *Wilted: Pathogens, Chemicals, and the Fragile Future of the Strawberry Industry* won the prestigious AAG Meridian Book Award for Outstanding Scholarly Work in Geography.

On September 18, **Dana James**, along with other members of the University of British Columbia's Working Group on Redistribution for Food Systems Transformation, hosted a webinar titled "Dismantling and Rebuilding the Food System after COVID-19: The 5Ds of Redistribution." The recording is now available to watch online here.

**Kristin Reynolds** and students in her graduate *Social Justice in the Global Food System* capstone course at Yale School of the Environment began a collaboration with the Food Chain Workers' Alliance; HEAL Food Alliance; and the Good Food Buffalo coalition (of which GFSAG member **Jessica Gilbert**, who has been instrumental to the collaboration, is part). The class is helping to conduct research on food supply chains, racial, and environmental justice in New York State this fall. The research will contribute to an ongoing campaign of the three organizations.

On August 12, more than thirty food scholars, among them many GFASG members, met on zoom to initiate an ongoing, inter-societal conversation on (anti-)racism in food and agriculture scholarship. The group decided to focus on

(anti-)racism in research, outreach, inclusivity and diversity, relationship-building, pedagogy and curriculum, and supporting anti-racist scholarship. If you would like to participate in future meetings, please contact **Johann Strube** at [johann.strube@psu.edu](mailto:johann.strube@psu.edu)

**Marygold Walsh-Dilley** is a co-PI on a project examining food and housing insecurity among students at the University of New Mexico. Their 2020 report, along with other information about the project, is available here. Among the results are the finding that nearly one third of UNM students report experiencing food insecurity, and 42% reported housing insecurity. This research is already having an impact and UNM is setting up a task force to address the issues it raised.

**Marion Werner** (University at Buffalo), along with Becky Mansfield (Ohio State University), Christian Berndt (University of Zurich), and Ryan Galt (UC-Davis), recently won an NSF grant for their study titled: "The generic herbicide industry: A global production network analysis." The project will examine new geographies of pesticide production and trade in the global South and how they intersect with regulatory struggles, particularly around glyphosate. They also hope the project will enrich dialogue across economic geography, nature-society, and political ecology subfields. 🌍



## Update from FJSAAS Community of Practice

by Kristin Reynolds, GFASG Board Member/FJSAAS  
Liaison and FJSAAS coordinator

The **Food Justice Scholar-Activist/Activist-Scholar community of practice (FJSAAS)** is a working group within the *Geographies of Food and Agriculture Specialty Group* focused on:

- the meaning and scalability of “food justice” (in urban and rural spaces), as both a paradigm and material goal;
- productive questioning of the dichotomy between activist and scholar;
- recognition of experience-based food systems expertise in a variety of settings (e.g., community; academia; policy making); and
- the potential roles of academics/academic work—geographic work in particular—in advancing food justice.

As a community of practice, our intent is to support collaboration among a broad diversity of actors in the food system, through the lens of geography, broadly-defined, and help to strengthen the integrity of both food justice scholarship and activism. **Since FJSAAS began in 2014, our listserv has grown to 150 members**, and in 2020 we have had **steady participation in our monthly online meetings**, ranging from 10-40 participants from several countries, including India, Mexico, Canada, and the US. We are currently in a process of **strategic planning to cultivate a more explicitly anti-oppression, anti-racist, and justice-oriented praxis** in our collective work. This dovetails with the work of the new GFSAG justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion committee. We welcome any and all comments or suggestions on this process.

***In 2020, in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic and the important uprisings for racial justice, we have engaged in a number of initiatives connected to our community of practice goals:***

- On April 20, 2020, we held a virtual panel session and discussion, Geographies of Food Justice Scholar-Activism/Activist Scholarship: Exploring Synergies in the Work as part of the AAG annual meetings. The session was part of one of the 2020 AAG conference themes “Expanding the Community of Geography” and was sponsored by two

specialty groups within the AAG, the Geographies of Food and Agriculture Specialty Group (GFASG) and the Black Geographies Specialty Group. Nearly 100 people representing academic departments and research centers, community-based groups and non-profit organizations, graduate students, faculty, and unaffiliated scholars from around the world were in attendance. The session included participants from [FJSAAS](#); the [National Black Food and Justice Alliance](#), [NBFJA](#); and [People’s Knowledge](#). **You can check out the (rough cut) video [here](#).**

- FJSAAS members **Kristin Reynolds, Daniel Block, Colleen Hammelman, Brittany Jones, Jessica Gilbert, and Hank Herrera** published an article about the evolution and future possibilities of radical food geographies of FJSAAS for a forthcoming special issue on radical food geography in *Human Geography* (guest edited by GFASG members **Colleen Hammelman, Kristin Reynolds, and Charles Levkoe**). The article is available [online here](#) and from the authors upon request.


- FJSAAS members **Robin Lovell, Melody Lynch, and Sahil Patni** collaborated on a literature review for movement leader Soul Fire Farm: “Can Small Scale Regenerative Agriculture Feed the World? An Annotated Bibliography for Soul Fire Farm.”

- We have begun **revamping** our [webpages](#) on the GFSAG website to make them more robust and easy-to-read. Members Sahil Patni, Melody Lynch, and Kristin Reynolds are working on this initiative, including a regular blog that will be launched in coming months.

### Join us!

- The FJSAAS community of practice is open to all. We meet regularly through video and conference calls, and in-person at the American Association of Geographers annual meetings.

- More information about FJSAAS is on our webpage: <https://gfascg.wordpress.com/activist-scholarship/>

- Contact us by email with questions or to join a meeting or the listserv: [fjscholaractivists@gmail.com](mailto:fjscholaractivists@gmail.com) 



## Tribute to Evan Weissman

by *Laura-Anne Minkoff-Zern*,  
Associate Professor of Food Studies, Syracuse University

This past spring, we tragically lost Evan Weissman, an urban food geographer, social justice advocate and activist, participatory collaborator, and renowned mentor and teacher. His research examined grassroots efforts to address food disparities in urban America. His specializations in local food policy, community food systems, food system inequality, and urban agriculture, were not only academic endeavors, they were deeply personal projects, which built upon his lifelong connections and relationships in his hometown of Syracuse, New York. Evan received his Ph.D. in Geography from Syracuse University in 2012. Upon graduation, he was hired as the founding faculty of the newly created Food Studies program at Syracuse, where he was promoted to Associate Professor in 2019.

At Syracuse University, he received numerous honors for his engaged community-based teaching, including the Syracuse University Excellence in Graduate Education Faculty Recognition Award, the Falk College Faculty of the Year Award for Teaching Excellence, the Syracuse University Faculty Sustainability Fellowship, a Teaching Recognition Award, as well as a Chancellor's Award for Public Engagement and Scholarship for his course, *Feeding the City*. Most recently, he had been awarded a Lender Faculty Fellowship in Social Justice, to focus on Food Justice initiatives in the Central New York region.



Photos: *Syracuse University News*.



As a faculty member, colleague, and advisor, he modeled thoughtful and purposeful scholar-activist research for his students and colleagues. He was an actively engaged member of the Syracuse food justice community on campus and off; a founding member of Syracuse Grows, a grassroots network that cultivates food justice through advocacy, education, and resources in support of urban food production, and the Syracuse-Onondaga Food Systems Alliance (SOFSA), a multi-sector coalition of stakeholders from across the food system in Onondaga County.

In his published work, teaching, and mentorship, he made an indelible impression on the Geographies of Food and Agriculture community—he is deeply missed. 🍌

## 2021 Graduate Research Grant Competition

The AAG Geographies of Food and Agriculture Specialty Group (GFASG) invites proposals for the 2021 Graduate Research Grant Competition. The Master's and Doctoral competitions are designed to support graduate students' conducting *initial* research for their master's thesis or doctoral dissertation.

The master's level competition is intended to support research-related expenses and travel in support of thesis research during the 2021 field season. Proposals should clearly demonstrate scholarly merit and the ability to be successfully completed during the time-frame of the master's research.

The doctoral competition is intended to support pilot research, or provide startup funds to help launch dissertation research. This award is not intended to supplement dissertation research that is already underway or near completion. Proposals should clearly demonstrate a scholarly contribution to geographic research on food and agriculture, an ability to successfully complete the proposed work, and a readiness to begin research in 2021.

The awards are competitive; applications are judged on the basis of scholarly merit of the project, organization and clarity of the proposal, qualifications of the student to conduct the proposed work, and their experiences and engagement with diversity. The Awards Committee is committed to equity in this process and especially encourages submissions from students of underrepresented groups including women, people of color, Indigenous people, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQ2S+ persons. As part of the application process, we therefore ask students to submit a diversity statement reflecting on their personal experiences with diversity and/or how their proposed research may engage with broader questions of diversity and equity as they pertain to food systems.

Each applicant must be a student member of the GFASG at the time of application, and the proposed project should be part of their thesis or dissertation research. *Again, please note that applicants should not yet have completed research, as this is a seed grant.* The amount of the research grant prize will be determined by membership and funds available to the GFASG at time of award. Past awards have been in the range of \$400 - \$600. Awards may not be given if no proposals are deemed suitable.

Entries undergo review by the Geographies of Food and Agriculture Specialty Group's Graduate Student Award Committee. A complete application must be sent by email attachment (as a single PDF file with applicant's name and graduate level [master's or Ph.D.] in the title of the document). The submission and questions should be directed to **Kristen Lowitt** ([kristen.lowitt@queenusu.ca](mailto:kristen.lowitt@queenusu.ca)). Application Deadline: **February 1, 2021**.

The application form follows below. The application consists of the application form and a one-page synopsis of the curriculum vitae. Submissions should be original, interdisciplinary, well-written and well-researched, and it should be obvious that the applicant is prepared to begin research AND has not already received full funding for the work.

The competition results will be announced at the 2021 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers during the GFASG Business Meeting.

Kristen Lowitt (Queen's University)

Megan Baumann (Penn State University)

Russell Hedberg (Shippensburg University)



## 2021 Graduate Research Grant Competition: Application Instructions

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be enrolled in a Master's or PhD program in Geography or related fields at an institution of higher education. The proposed research must be an integral part of ongoing research toward the Master's or PhD degree. The applicant must be a member of the AAG Geographies of Food and Agriculture Specialty Group at the time of application.

**Application Deadline:** February 1, 2021

**Application Directions:**

1. Complete the Research Grant Application Form (see below). This form includes
  - Application information
  - 250-word description of research activities
  - 250-word diversity statement
  - 500-word research proposal
  - An itemized budget of no more than two pages
2. Provide a 1-page synopsis of your curriculum vitae.
3. Email all materials as one file (.pdf only) to Kristen Lowitt ([kristen.lowitt@queensu.ca](mailto:kristen.lowitt@queensu.ca)).

## 2021 Graduate Research Grant Competition: Application Form

Name:

Email Address:

Mailing Address:

Phone:

Institution/Affiliation:

Department:

Degree Sought:

Year in Program:

Title of Proposal:

Advisor's Name:

Advisor's Email:

Advisor's Phone:

- In approximately 250 words, please list the work you have completed towards your Master's or Ph.D. degree with corresponding dates where applicable. Include courses taken that relate to your thesis/dissertation topic, background research completed, time that you have already spent at your research site, contacts you have made in regard to your thesis/dissertation, and conferences you have attended that relate to your research topic.
- In approximately 250 words, please provide a diversity statement reflecting on your personal, lived experiences with diversity and/or how your proposed research may engage with broader questions of diversity and equity as they pertain to food systems. Contributions to diversity and equity in food systems scholarship will be substantive criteria for the evaluation of proposals.
- In approximately 500 words, please provide a concise proposal including research context, question(s)/goal(s), data, methods, and significance. You may include a reference section that is not included in the word count. This proposal will be evaluated based on the originality and importance of the work's contribution to the geographies of food and agriculture, strong theoretical framework(s) and clear presentation/framing of the problem, and evidence of strong and appropriate methods.
- Please provide an itemized budget of research expenses you anticipate for the project period. Provide a brief explanation for how the GFASG research grant will be used. Include other grant money applied for or received, and the personal funds you plan to contribute (if applicable). Budget should not exceed two pages. 