FINDING BIG IDEAS

ESSAY CONTEST

“Great ideas are everywhere”

TWO ESSAY PRIZES - $1000 EACH

In every part of the world, communities are striving to address urgent social and environmental problems. The Finding Big Ideas Essay Contest challenges students to write about a “big idea” which they have observed making a significant, positive, social impact in a particular community. This big idea could take many forms, from an inspiring new way of organizing community action, to an inventive technology, to a new institution, to a new mode of communication and many more possibilities. The challenge is for you to recognize this big idea, observe it, and write about it. Winning authors will be encouraged to publish their work, and, toward that aim, will receive mentorship from Blum Center staff.

Eligibility:
This is a first-year, trial run for this essay contest. Students eligible for the competition this year include UCB students who are traveling or otherwise spending time in communities outside of UCB and who also are:
• enrolled in the Global Poverty and Practice Minor who are completing their practice experience between February 1 and October 1, 2013; or,
• participating in the Development Impact Lab (DIL), and the DevEng Seminar series; or,
• finalists (or part of finalist teams) in the Big Ideas@Berkeley 2013 competition; or,
• enrolled in the Masters of Development Practice program and traveling within the noted dates.
Essay Topic:
Describe the Big Idea which you observed and, in doing so, address the following questions:

- How did you encounter the idea?
- What problem(s) does this innovative big idea address?
- What are the broader social, economic, political, and environmental conditions that cause this problem(s)?
- Describe how this idea creatively and effectively addresses this problem.
- What are the available resources and factors that make this solution appropriate for this location? (This might require you to address broader social, economic, political, and environmental conditions.)
- How did the idea emerge?
- What are the possibilities and limitations for implementing this big idea in other locations?

Writing Guidelines:
- Your essay must be between 1750 and 2000 words (12pt font, double-spaced).
- Your essay must have a title.
- UC Berkeley’s policy on plagiarism applies to this essay (http://writing.berkeley.edu/about-us/academic-honesty). Use proper citations when/if necessary and please follow the APA in-text citation format with accompanying works cited list at the end of the essay. For reference see: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

Submission Guidelines:
- Essays must be submitted via email to burns@berkeley.edu in PDF format before Tuesday, October 1, 2013 at 5pm.
- The subject line of your email should read: “Finding Big Ideas Essay Contest Submission.”
- On the first page of your submitted document please provide: your full name; major; year; if you are GPP, DIL, BigIdeas or MDP affiliated. Also include a 1-sentence statement of the travel or other experience during which the big idea was observed including location and dates.

Terms and Conditions:
- Only one essay may be submitted per participant.
- The focus of your essay (the big idea you choose to write on) must not have been widely written on before, and your discovery of the idea must be through personal observation, not, for example, via on-line research.
- Winning authors will be assigned a mentor to assist them in developing the essay and seeking outlets for the essay’s publication. For this reason, we strongly encourage all applicants to photo document the big idea that is the focus of your essay. These photos are not part of the essay contest and should not be submitted for the essay contest. However, should your essay be selected, your photographs could prove beneficial in seeking publication of the essay.
- Blum Center reserves the right to reproduce all essay submissions in its own publications.
- Essay contest prizes will only be awarded for high quality submissions. Decisions of the judges are final and not subject to appeal. Winning authors will be notified in early November, 2013.