Partnering with CREP

Todd Zoblotsky
CREP Research Director

Cindy Muzzi
CREP Assistant Director

Carolyn Kaldon
CREP Research Associate Professor
Meet our Team

Robert McKinney
Todd Zoblotsky
Cindy Muzzi
Carolyn Kaldon
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Mojtaba Khajeloo
Tonya Cooper
Shelia Burch
Ronisha Childress
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The Center for Research in Educational Policy was designated a Center of Excellence by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission in 1989.
Our Reach

With experience conducting large-scale evaluations in 37 states, CREP strives to provide up-to-date, relevant data useful to both schools and policy makers through high-quality research and rigorous program evaluation.
CREP Focus Areas

- STEM
- Urban Ed Reform
- School Climate
- Literacy
- Teacher Prep
- Tech Integration
We are grant and contract funded
Current budgets range from $800 to $1,375,000.
A general guideline is to allocate 10%-15% of project costs for the evaluation.
Local, Foundation, and Federal Grant Experience:

1. IES
2. USDOE
3. NSF (DRK-12, REU, ITEST, CAREER, ExLENT, IUSE)
4. NIH (SEPA)
5. HRSA
6. USDA
7. Bureau of Justice Assistance
8. Spencer Foundation
9. CoRs
10. Urban Child Institute
Collaborations across campus:

College of Education
- CEPR
- ICL
- Leadership
- Office of Teacher Education and Clinical Practice

College of Arts and Sciences
- Chemistry
- Computer Science
- Criminal Justice
- Psychology
- School of Urban Planning

Herff College of Engineering
- Civil Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering

Division of Research and Innovation
- Research Development
- Research and Innovation

Center for International Education Services (CIES)

College of Communication and Fine Arts

Institute for Intelligent Systems (IIS)

Loewenberg College of Nursing

School of Communication Sciences and Disorders

University Schools
Collaborations within the college:

College of Education

Working with Dr. Amanda Rockinson-Szapkiw in ICL evaluating her NSF IUSE grant

- Year 1, we conducted interviews with all the project members
- Monitored the implementation of components and the quality of online mentor/mentee modules
- Provided the PI with an annual summary
Collaborations within the college:

US Dept of Education ASPIRE project (Advancing School Counseling Programs by Increasing Representation and Experiences) with Dr. Melanie Burgess & Dr. Michelle Brasfield (CEPR)

- Five-year mixed methods evaluation
- Attend trainings and participate in advisory board
- Develop data collection instruments with project team
- Conduct focus groups and site visits to provide feedback on fidelity of implementation
- Analyze evaluation data to provide formative and summative evaluation reports
Collaborations outside the college:

**College of Arts & Sciences**

Working with Dr. Kan Yang in Computer Science evaluating an NSF CyberCorps Scholarship for Service grant

- Interviewing and surveying program students yearly
- Reviewing all data collected by project team
- Writing a final summative report

**Research and Innovation**

Working with Dr. Cody Behles in Division of Research and Innovation on the Delta Regional Authority Pilot called DRIVE

- Surveying 8 Delta regional community partners in TN, AR, and MS about their current knowledge of grants
- Surveying the community partners after most events and trainings to see if they are helpful and effective
- Assess community partners’ knowledge at the end of the grant
Local and National Partners

• Smithsonian Science Education Center
• Virginia Department of Education
• Heinemann
• UT Health Science Center
• Memphis-Shelby County Schools
• Seeding Success
• ALLMemphis
• Urban Child Institute
• Women’s Foundation
• Shelby County Office of Reentry
We are currently working on 18 grants

- Internal: 56%
- External: 44%
Services Offered
Research and evaluation design:

Core project team members

- PI/Co-PI
- Key/Senior personnel
- Pre-K to Postsecondary levels
- Experience in areas outside of, but related to, education:
  - Economic impact studies
  - Criminal justice reform
  - Poverty reduction
Research and evaluation design:

Expertise in Quasi-Experimental (QED) and Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs)

- Over 30 years of experience

- We apply the most rigorous methods and analyses possible based on the needs of the study and the data available, adapting the design as needed.
Research and evaluation design:

Independent third-party evaluation

CREP will develop an evaluation plan designed to answer the research questions and that can meet rigorous WWC standards.

As an external evaluator, CREP has no vested interest in the outcomes, which strengthens the findings.
Research and evaluation design:

Independent third-party evaluation

A well-designed evaluation plan from CREP will help with:

1. Identifying strengths and weaknesses of the project/program
2. Facilitating learning and improvement
3. Guiding decision-making and resource allocation
4. Demonstrating accountability to stakeholders
Project Logistics and Management: Diverse Team

- With CREP, you get our entire team

- Not only capable researchers, but research faculty and staff who can support Faculty in the College and external partners with project management by helping run the project, providing technical support, managing budgets, etc.
Project Logistics and Management:

Instrument Development/Validation

- Develop and validate surveys, interview and focus group, and observation measures
- Use standardized, established instruments or assessments
CREP has expertise in collecting, managing, and analyzing large qualitative and quantitative data sets; restricted use data; individual level data.
Project Logistics and Management:

Data Collection and Management

With CREP conducting data collection and analysis, the PI can focus on program implementation.
When we serve as **independent** from research team, CREP is well positioned to collect **open and honest** feedback from participants.
Quantitative and Qualitative data entry and management:

CREP not only collects the data, but we create databases and carefully review data for errors, missing data, and inconsistencies.
Data Security & Storage:

CREP has **secure drives and networks** to collect, transfer, and store sensitive data, adhering to privacy standards, and restricted data use policy when applicable.
Project Logistics and Management:

Data Analyses

**Qualitative analyses:** various transcription and coding approaches

**Quantitative analyses:** ranging from *descriptive* to *advanced statistics* (e.g., multi-level models)
CREP can:

- support alignment between the RFP requirements and the proposal narrative.
Proposal Development:
Grant Proposal Partners

**CREP can:**
• offer **guidance** to strengthen the research design.
How to Engage with Us
Other Ways to Partner and Collaborate

- Opportunities for COE faculty to work on CREP projects
- Dissertation & Search Committee Members
- Professional Development
- Class Presentations
- Potential for Data Mining
CREP will also identify and share grant opportunities that align with faculty members’ area of research.
Other Ways to Partner and Collaborate

CREP may identify grants where we can serve as PI, but also want to collaborate with faculty as subject matter experts, or program implementers.
Approaching CREP About Grants

- Provide a copy of the solicitation (RFP, RFI, RFA, etc.)
- Meet to discuss roles and responsibilities, which ultimately informs the budget
- Provide a draft of project narrative with **adequate lead time** to develop and write an evaluation plan or collaborate on the full proposal (4-6 weeks best)
- Discuss budget to make sure your project and evaluation is adequately and appropriately funded
In Summary...
• We do this day-in day-out
• The three presenters have nearly 50 years of experience
• CREP faculty and staff work 12 months, so projects continue year-round
• Grants often require an external evaluation that is adequately funded
• CREP’s evaluation plans typically receive all points awarded
• Accessible, available, flexible, knowledgeable, and excellent at communication
• We’re a good deal: You get an entire team with both research design and statistics expertise

What we bring to the table...
Don’t forget...

- Reach out to us early if you are considering applying for a grant
- Proposal development partners with research design and project narrative
- While you may be a content-area expert, we can provide the methodological expertise
- In addition to research, CREP also participates in service for the College and University (committees, class presentations, trainings, etc.)
Questions?