This document serves as a template for the Applied Research Project (ARP) for SAA online students. These sections will be covered as assignments in courses SAA 761 and SAA 780 (2 courses). The ARP needs to meticulously follow APA (6th ed.) guidelines including the abstract, citations, and references.

The Applied Research Project (ARP) serves as the capstone writing project for students in the SAA Program. The ARP aims to present a creative and innovative project for potential implementation on a campus of the student’s choice. The ARP is a comprehensive and integrative project that draws upon the course content in the SAA Program. Under consideration for this final project are key elements of research and assessment, diversity and culture, budget and administration, and student development theory as well as scholarly writing, planning, and training of staff.

**Note:** Your final Applied Research Project is a detailed proposal for developing a new program or policy, evaluating a program or service, or assessing an institutional need. Students are not required to implement their project ideas but are expected to create proposed plans/steps for doing so that can be presented to a specific institution or unit. Students may want to think of completing the ARP as similar to writing a grant for a campus project where precise information is requested and delivered in a structured format and specified length. The proposal provides a solid case for implementing the project and the budget that is included in the proposal.

Similar to a grant proposal, your ARP must meet the required minimum/maximum number of pages indicated for each section below (no exceptions):

- Title page
- Abstract
- Proposal Narrative (minimum 15 pages, maximum 20 pages)
- Budget Narrative (maximum 2 pages)
- Budget Overview (maximum 1 page)
- Appendices
  - Attachments (as needed)
  - Literature Review (minimum 15 pages)
  - References

**Important Dates for online students (subject to change):**

- Nov. 16th – Complete ARP draft due
- Dec. 1st – ARP’s returned with feedback
- Dec. 7th – Final ARP due

Note: On-Campus spring deadlines will be determined by the course instructor
SAA ARP TEMPLATE
(to be submitted in the following order)

Title Page
In accordance with APA style (6th ed.)

Abstract
In accordance with APA style (6th ed.)

Proposal Narrative (required: minimum 15 pages, maximum 20 pages)

Description of Project (approximately 1-2 pages)
In the first paragraph, describe your proposed project (e.g. this proposal seeks to develop…). Provide a concise description of the proposal and its intended audience. Provide a framework that gives information about the institution, office, and students that would be impacted by this proposal when it is implemented. Describe the cultural, political, and organizational issues of the institution that pertain to this topic. This section must set the stage so that the reader knows specifically what would be implemented (and funded) if this proposal moves forward.

Statement of Need (this section may have several subheadings and may be quite lengthy)
State the current/historical status of the problem/issue you have chosen for your project and provide a brief background. Use key references from the literature to confirm the status of the issue in a broader sense. Then, briefly explain the status of the issue on the campus you are choosing for the ARP. Make sure to include data (quantitative or qualitative) from the campus of your choice to signal the project is bridging a gap in service, student learning, or assessment.

Examples of data include the following:
- enrollment or persistence data
- national survey data (e.g., NSSE, CIRP, CLA)
- market research (e.g., national or specific to your institution)
- institutional research (contact your institutional research office)
- brief conversations with leading administrators about a currently unmet need for the campus (this should not be your only source of data, however)

Important note: the gap should not be based on a hunch or opinion (e.g., “I think this would be a good idea because we’ve not tried that here.”). Numbers matter while hunches do not.

This section should also address the significance of your project and may address many of the following questions:
- Who is your specific audience and why is this important to know in relation to your project (e.g., “financial aid professionals at Harvard University”)?
- What can your audience learn from your study?
- Why should we care about the project?
- Why is your project necessary?
- Why is it important to your educational institution/the profession of student affairs?
• What can SA administrators of the campus of your choice do with your proposal they could not do before?
• Who will benefit from your project and why?

This section may also provide a more detailed description of your institution (and students) and the potential benefits that this project could bring if implemented.

*Project Purpose*

The purpose of this project is to do what? For example, “the purpose of this ARP is to advance/propose/recommend a service/website/intervention/course stratégic plan/diversity initiative for X college/university.” Be specific about which population of students your project targets and how your project will reach these students.

*All the sections above plus the Lit Review will be completed in the 1st SAA 780.*
*The sections below will be completed in the 2nd SAA 780.*

*Assessment of Project*

*Learning Outcomes* – identify learning outcomes for the intervention, service, program, or whatever is developed as a result of the implementation of this proposal

*Methods of Assessment* – identify direct and indirect measures that will be utilized to assess the project when implemented. In other words, how will progress be measured?

*Benchmarks* – Identify performance indicators (benchmarks). Throughout the project process and at its completion, what information will you provide that describes the value of the project and shows that the project is meeting its intended outcomes? Think of this as a checklist that clearly identifies the progress of your ARP.

*Project Implementation* -- Provide a detailed plan of project implementation that identifies who will do what and when. You may want to list the major phases of the project implementation and identify key tasks within each phase. Throughout the project process and at its completion, what information will you provide that describes the value of the project?

*Budget Narrative (maximum 2 pages)*

Provide an explanation and rationale for the costs of your proposed project. Your budget may need to cover the costs of personnel, expenses, supplies and more. How will your project be funded? Will you pursue several sources of funding (ie…other grants)? Why do you need what you have indicated in your budget overview (next section)? Check with university sources to make sure your requests are reasonable and within institutional guidelines.

*Budget Overview (maximum 1 page)*

Provide a clear and simple one-page overview of your budget that indicates each specific request and cost. The numbers and total cost of the proposed project should be clearly identified in a line item format.
Appendices
- If applicable: learning modules, lesson plans, strategic plan, assessment plan
- Other items pertinent to your proposal (such as a pre-existing evaluation form)

Literature Review (is part of your Appendices, minimum 15 pages)
The literature review should feature the key empirical and theoretical sources related to your topic. Further, the review should include 2-3 sample practices at institutions of higher education which have implemented a similar program/service/intervention/course as you are aiming to do. Appropriate sources for this literature review are almost exclusively peer-reviewed research articles, theses or dissertations, books or book chapters, and technical or research reports. Beware of non-peer reviewed sources like newspaper or magazine articles or websites other than the specific sample practices (no Wikipedia whatsoever!).

Finish your literature review with a section on Theoretical Framework where you identify at least one theory (e.g., student development, organizational development, leadership, diversity-related) that informs your project. Please make sure to provide examples about specifically how the theory can be used as a lens through which to view your project. Please make sure to review at least two sample practices from other institutions you would consider "best practices" relative to your chosen topic (most of these would be websites).

Make sure the literature review flows well and is not simply a listing of unconnected sources. Consider the structure of the lit review. Your sources will likely target different issues or topics surrounding your project. How many overarching topics or issues should you discuss? This depends on how many issues in general inform your topic. Work with subheadings that make sense and provide a chronology or order to how the literature is presented. Review your sources to provide examples on how to structure the literature.

References (about 20-30 total or more)
Your reference list will identify all the sources cited throughout your whole ARP including those used in the lit review.