# Transcript

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The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

Donnelson: A fuse lights a fire, generates a spark, and leads to big changes. Likewise, the Missouri State University AD team started something big in the 2020-2021 academic year by creating a campaign to prevent radicalization, which they called Fuse. I'm Nicki Donnelson today on the Missouri State Journal I have Samantha Francka marketing and communications coordinator for international programs at MSU. She advises ad team and now serves as a Co P for major federal grant. She also serves as a resource to the fuse team that is spreading its message. She tells us more about the inception of this initiative.

Francka: The fuse program came to Missouri State through a class project, so the Missouri State ad team, its marketing 4. 80 took on a project for the Department of Homeland Security's Center for Prevention programs and partnerships, and they challenge students across the country to come up with a product tool service initiative. To help combat or prevent targeted violence or domestic terrorism. So that's kind of a lofty goal for a group of students, but I was really proud of what the students produced. So they found that a lot of people are having a hard time having tough conversations or talking about like, quote, UN quote, tough topics. You know politics, religion, all those things that we're told not to talk about. And students are really interested in having those conversations and they want to come at them from a place of we don't have to agree or be on the same side of an issue. But we can at least talk. About them in a civil way so. So they developed the fuse program and game and a podcast and they just really took it off and ran with it and ended up getting second place in their competition through the competition. The Department of Homeland Security and some of the other partners who we were working with shared grant opportunities and really encouraged the students to go forth with those. They, if they were interested, so that's when doctor Steven Spates from communication and Alex Johnson from the Center for Community Engagement and myself took the grant and we kind of ran with it. We submitted our first several grants. It was a federal grant that was huge. It was. Very intimidating and. We we submitted it, thinking you. Know we'll just see how it goes. And we were really lucky to receive $650,000 to implement the program full time into Missouri State. So all of the students who developed the project as a class project to begin with have graduated. They've moved on, but the work that they've done is being carried on at Missouri State through other students and a whole team of people that are really excited about.

Donnelson: At this stage, to meet the goals of the grant funding, Francka says the team is trying to fan the flames to spread the mission across campus by getting in front of as many people as possible. Besides sharing on social and traditional media, they really want to get in the rooms and have the conversations so people can experience fuses full impact.

Francka: There are lots of opportunities for the fuse team to come and present to offices or groups around campus, so the team has seen a lot of interest from student organizations. They present to several classes and a couple of offices across campus, so we're really excited for that to continue to spread, and as part of that presentation, you get to learn about. So why it's so difficult to talk about these topics? We learn about implicit bias and how we all kind of come to the table with that. And then we also have an opportunity to actually play the card game that the students developed so. It's a conversation based game. You just answer questions and go back and forth and it really helps helps you talk about some things that maybe you haven't. Been comfortable talking about before and it does it in a way that you don't feel like. You're put on. The spot, or like it's an uncomfortable conversation because both people playing the game are answering these tough questions and having these tough conversations together.

Donnelson: Fuse encourages university students to engage in meaningful conversations on difficult topics and form connections with peers, and it's evident that this mission and method speaks to people.

Francka: For the fuse. Project I think the coolest part for me now is that it's not the students who originated the idea. It's new students and we just had a visit from our Department of Homeland Security grant coordinators and they got to talk to the team. That's that's directing Fuse now, and I was. Nearly crying in the room to stay here. How passionate the students are and what a good job they're doing with something that wasn't even their idea. It wasn't their brainchild, but they're just so passionate about the mission that they're carrying it forward.

Donnelson:

Visitfusecampaign.org to review the tools, listen to podcast episodes or sign up for a fuse presentation and play the game that was Samantha Francka. I'm Nicki Donnelson for the Missouri State Journal.

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For more information, contact the Office of Strategic Communication at 417-836-6397. The Missouri State Journal is available online at kcmu.org.