In Fall 2008 I received a Faculty Development Grant for the purchase of airbrushes and a compressor that are integral to the surface color development of new and ongoing sculptures that form the core of my studio output.

Since 2007 I have been involved in a significant material shift in my work, from casting plastics that involved the integration of color into the casting material to the direct building of mixed media forms. Since then I have been involved with an after the fact application of color to the built forms. In previous work I was able to take advantage of a greater interplay of light moving through form because of the translucency of the polyurethane. This light served as a means to harness the effect of within the material and was a potent force in the work. In the new material I am using I have realized that light must now be artificially manufactured and how I am attempting to do that is through the mixing of color as it is applied to the sculptures. I am not interested in painting per se as technique, but in the application of color to enhance the presence of the prism of color that occurs in light. The way I am trying to get at that is through the laying on of color, falling on form as light appears to do, to touch and reflect off form. The airbrush is the best tool that I have found to replicate these phenomena and therefore this tool is now integral to the way I am thinking about the development of my work. For the first couple of years I was using borrowed and sub-par equipment and becoming frustrated in my efforts. This grant has allowed me to purchase a variety of airbrushes that I can use simultaneously and that run off of a compressor with dual attachments. This allows quick interchanges of runs of color and the ability to switch, change and add color in an efficient manner.

I realize that because of what I have been learning through my experiments and applications I have become much more keenly aware of the interaction of color and form. I am excited about sharing this with students and will be bringing my IPD Interactive Practices students to my studio this semester for a demonstration. Most of our students become familiar with a computerized version of the airbrush tool but as an actual tool on three dimensional form it has become relegated primarily to the realms of car, t-shirt and nail art. The spray can has taken on the role of supreme fall back tool to add easy color and a shiny finish. I think there is room for much greater nuance and delicacy in the role that color might play with form and I look forward to introducing that to my students through demonstrating the use of these tools.

In conclusion, one of my greatest discoveries is that I wish I had had the same kind of education as a young artist that our students are receiving in their Color and Design Studio. If I knew half as much about color and color mixing and color interactions that our students get in their first year at Otis I think my whole learning curve would have occurred much faster. This process has given me great insight and envy into the incredible education that our students receive.
I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the college for making this grant available and to the committee for their time and commitment in facilitating and overseeing the grants. I have spoken to colleagues at other colleges and universities and they have expressed surprise that these grants are available to our faculty since they do not have a similar program. I believe this support of faculty is one of the many qualities that distinguish Otis.