

Lectures Committee Annual Report for 2016-2017

Statement of Committee Function

The University Lectures Committee considers requests for lectures of general interest that are not primarily supplementary to or extensions of programs of instruction provided by colleges, schools, or departments, recommends annually to the chancellor a budget for its activities, and exercises such control over the announcement of lectures as it deems necessary and desirable. It supports departments, academic programs and student organizations that bring distinguished lecturers to the UW-Madison campus. These university-wide lectures are intended to enrich the general intellectual and cultural life of the university community. The committee itself does not initiate lecture arrangements. Rather, it receives and acts on requests from eligible university groups that are interested in inviting outstanding speakers to the campus.

Past Years' Activities

During the 2016-2017 academic year the committee received a total of 56 applications for lecture support, 53 of which were supported and occurred and three were cancelled. The attached report presents information for each supported lecture; lectures are listed chronologically by the lecture's date.

In 2016-2017, the 53 supported lectures that occurred drew a combined reported attendance of 4,247 persons, a decrease in attendance by 973 from 2015-2016, and an average of 81 attendees per supported application. Lectures were sponsored by a total of 44 different campus units. Lectures had 124 co-sponsoring units, in addition to the primary sponsor.

The committee's total expenditures for the 2016-2017 year were \$51,151. Of this sum, \$26,654 (52%) was paid directly to lecturers as an honorarium, \$23,569 (46%) was paid to sponsors to reimburse travel and hotel and meal allowance expenses, and \$928 (2%) was paid for lecture administrative costs (i.e., student hourly, postage, printing and poster distribution).

The table below compares committee activity from the most recent five years. Fifteen fewer applications were received and supported from 2014-2015 to 2016-2017, but the committee received more applications (three) than the previous year (2015-2016). The total expenditures increased and then stayed consistent over the past three years, as the committee made significant efforts to follow up with units regarding attendance reports and transferring of lecture funds after the event. Sponsors have also been limited to supporting only one lecture for each spring and fall semester during recent years.

	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13
Number of applications received	56	53	71	72	74
Number of applications supported	53	51	65	70	70
Average reported lecture attendance	81	82	84	86	86
Number of different sponsors	44	42	52	61	63
Average number of co-sponsors	2.3	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.6
Average lecture cost	\$1,007	\$1,070	\$1,066	\$704	\$947

(continued)

Current Issues or Concerns

The committee has piloted funds for live captioning services and an online application system (fall 2015) as well as an online balloting system (fall 2016). No lectures took advantage of the live captioning service in 2016-2017. The committee is also collecting lecture videos from units and creating a repository of past university lectures on the lecture committee's website. The committee looks forward to extending their visibility to the university and local community.

The committee welcomes suggestions regarding use of the William K. Fitch Fund, which is available "to bring to Madison prominent business people to give lectures on the American free-enterprise system." This past year, the committee performed extensive promotion and outreach to the general campus community and to a targeted audience in various schools, colleges and departments. It was a primary goal to increase awareness and availability of the Fitch Funds. One lecture by Adam Sachs was approved for funding in 2016-2017 by the William K. Fitch Fund; with another to be presented by Curt Culver in spring 2018. The committee will continue to promote the availability of Fitch Funds, as the fund continues to grow. A memo publicizing the Fitch Funds was distributed to all faculty in September.

Summary/Recommendations

We gratefully acknowledge sources of financial support for university-wide lectures. For direct funding of lectures in 2016-2017, the Anonymous Fund provided \$19,200 (\$12,000 directly from the Anonymous Fund and an additional \$7,200 from the Jay & Ruth Halls Visiting Scholars Fund), the Kemper K. Knapp Bequest provided \$35,000 and the Chancellor's Office (General University Fund) provided \$30,000.

2016-17 Committee Membership

Elena D'Onghia, Astronomy
Thomas DuBois, Scandinavian Studies
William Karpus, Academic Dean Representative
Antje Petty, Max Kade Institute
Jessica Rainbow, Student Representative
Timothy Smeeding, Lafollette School of Public Affairs (Chair)
John Svaren, Comparative Biosciences