

University Lectures Committee Annual Report for 2017-2018

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 2017-18 academic year the committee received a total of 55 applications for lecture support, 54 of which were supported and occurred and one that was supported and cancelled. The attached report presents information for each supported lecture; lectures are listed chronologically by the lecture's date.

In 2017-18, the 54 supported lectures that occurred drew a combined reported attendance of 4,133 persons, a decrease in attendance by 114 from 2016-17, and an average of 81 attendees per supported application. Lectures were sponsored by a total of 42 different campus units. Lectures had 130 co-sponsoring units, in addition to the primary sponsor.

The committee's total expenditures for the 2017-18 year were \$41,893. Of this sum, \$19,926 (48%) was paid directly to lecturers as an honorarium, \$20,281 (48%) was paid to sponsors to reimburse travel and hotel and meal allowance expenses, and \$1,688 (4%) 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. A similar number of applications were received and supported during the past three years. The total expenditures increased and then stayed consistent over the past four 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.

	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14
Number of applications received	55	56	53	71	72
Number of applications supported	55	53	51	65	70
Average reported lecture attendance	81	81	82	84	86
Number of different sponsors	42	44	42	52	61
Average number of co-sponsors	2.4	2.3	2.0	3.0	3.0
Average lecture cost	\$1,006	\$1,007	\$1,070	\$1,066	\$704

Current Issues or Concerns

The committee has piloted funds for live captioning services. Two lectures took advantage of the live captioning service in 2017-18, after no units took advantage of this service during the previous academic year. 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 again this year to increase awareness and availability of the Fitch Funds. One lecture by Curt Culver was approved for funding in 2017-18 by the William K. Fitch Fund. The committee will continue to promote the availability of Fitch Funds, as the fund continues to grow. An annual memo publicizing the Fitch Funds will be distributed to all faculty and targeted areas each Fall and the committee will advertise to the entire campus community through the Inside UW newsletter in January.

Summary/Recommendations

We gratefully acknowledge sources of financial support for university-wide lectures. For direct funding of lectures in 2017-18, the Anonymous Fund provided \$15,000, the Kemper K. Knapp Bequest provided \$35,000 and the Chancellor's Office (General University Fund) provided \$30,000.

2017-18 Committee Membership

Elena D'Onghia, Astronomy
Thomas DuBois, Scandinavian Studies
Eve Emshwiller, Botany
William Karpus, Academic Dean Representative
Antje Petty, Max Kade Institute
Timothy Smeeding, Lafollette School of Public Affairs (Chair)
(no student representative assigned)