

# Recommendations on Funding for Diversity Institutes

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Prepared by Amy Ferrer and Louise Antony  
for the Diversity Institute Advisory Panel  
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## About Undergraduate Diversity Institutes

Undergraduate summer diversity institutes in philosophy are one of the most promising interventions for increasing the diversity of the discipline and profession of philosophy. The APA has long supported such institutes in a variety of ways, including direct financial support. In order to ensure the continued success of such institutes, the Diversity Institute Advisory Panel has prepared the following recommendations regarding their funding.

## History of Funding for Diversity Institutes

Diversity institutes have used a variety of funding strategies to support themselves as they get off the ground and as they become more established. We outline several of these strategies below.

### Single-Institution Funding

The first diversity institute to be established, the Rutgers Summer Institute for Diversity in Philosophy (SIDP), used and continues to use the first funding model: single-institution funding. Rutgers University has provided the vast majority of the funding for the SIDP.

This funding model has served the SIDP well, as it has been reliable and provided stability for the institute. However, this funding model relies on the host institution seeing value in continuing to provide such funding, which in turn requires continuous advocacy for the institute by a committed group of faculty members. It also requires that the institution have the budget to provide such funding on an ongoing basis, which is not the case at many universities.

### Grant Funding

The other long-running diversity institute, Philosophy in an Inclusive Key Summer Institute at the Rock Ethics Institute (PIKSI-Rock), has relied heavily on grant funding to support the institute. Throughout most of PIKSI-Rock's history, about half its funding has come from its host institution, Penn State University (where the Rock Ethics Institute is located), and the other half has come from grants from the American Philosophical Association. (PIKSI-Rock has some additional smaller funding streams which will be discussed later.) PIKSI-Rock has received over \$200,000 in funding from the APA since it was founded.

While grant funding is in some ways ideal for diversity institutes, as it is a dedicated funding stream that can be relied on throughout the granting period, grant funding is unreliable in the long term. Further, the APA's resources are not sufficient to allow for long-term funding of diversity institutes, particularly as new institutes are being founded all the time. As such, grant funding, particularly through the APA, is not a sustainable long-term funding strategy for any individual diversity institute, though the APA is likely to continue providing funding to seed new institutes.

## Multi-Institution Funding

Recently, some diversity institutes have begun using a multi-institution funding model. PIKSI-Boston is one such institute. While it is hosted and largely funded by MIT, it is also funded by UMass Boston and likely to reach out to other nearby institutions for support in the future. PIKSI-Boston is receiving grant funding through the APA's Mellon Foundation grant for its first three years, but this multi-institution model gives it a more sustainable future after the grant period ends, as it won't be relying on just one school's good will for its support. Multi-institution funding makes the funding institutions accountable to one another and provides greater security for the institute.

PIKSI-Rock has used a version of this model for a portion of its funding as well: its graduate assistants are funded by their home institutions, rather than by the institute itself. This generates several thousand dollars in additional support each year.

One downside to this funding model, however, is that, like the single-institution funding model, it relies on the host institutions' seeing value in continuing to provide such funding, which in turn requires continuous advocacy for the institute by a committed group of faculty members. In this case, however, the group of faculty members must include representatives from the full set of participating institutions. This feature of the model makes it more secure in one respect than the single-institution model in that responsibility for the institutes is spread out, making the survival of the institutions at least nominally independent of faculty involvement or institutional will at any one institution. But the multi-institution model is less secure in another respect: with several institutions involved, there is increased risk that some one of them will undergo administrative changes that jeopardize the institution's involvement. Also, as with the single-institution model, the multi-institution model relies on the commitment and efficacy of faculty members in gaining the cooperation of their institutions, with the added challenge of coordinating such efforts among faculty members at different institutions. The fact that several different institutions are involved increases the risk that changes in administration or in budgets will occur in at least one of the partnering institutions. We note, for example, the national trend of declining state support for public higher education, which could well affect the level at which public colleges and universities could participate in such institutes.

## Rotating Institutional Hosting

On this model, a diversity institute seeks new institutional hosts on an  $n$ -year basis. An institutional host agrees to provide support for, say, five years, after which the Institute would move on to a different institutional host. Though we are not aware of any diversity institutes currently using this funding model, it has worked successfully for the journal *Hypatia* and could easily be adapted to suit diversity institutes. In the case of *Hypatia*, the editorship changes every few years; a prospective editor secures a commitment from her institution to provide space, clerical help, and a teaching reduction for the editor.

If diversity institutes adopted this funding model, it would have the drawback of institute directors' having to find a new institutional host periodically. But it would have the advantage that the directors' "ask" would be for a fixed term, reducing the uncertainty involved in relying on ongoing institutional support. This funding model could also be combined with a multi-institutional model.

**The Diversity Institute Advisory Panel strongly recommends that diversity institutes consider this model, and that the APA support diversity institutes in pursuing relationships with potential fixed-term institutional hosts.** We believe this funding model could generate more energy to sustain diversity institutes, and we think the fact that diversity institutes using this model would not rely on the continuous

advocacy of a single faculty member (or small contingent of faculty members) would be a benefit to the long-term sustainability of the institutes.

## **Options and Recommendations for Future Diversity Institute Funding**

The existing funding models for diversity institutes have been effective thus far, but as diversity institutes flourish and increase in number, there have been calls for new, more sustainable, less labor-intensive funding strategies to support them. Many times, these calls have been directed to the APA. Below, we consider ways the APA could support the long-term funding of diversity institutes, both directly and indirectly.

### **APA Grants and Other Direct Support Strategies**

The APA has given grants to nearly all existing diversity institutes, and we recommend the APA continue to provide this kind of support. Some diversity institute advocates have called on the APA to increase its funding of diversity institutes in various ways. Here we consider ways in which the APA could consider expanding its direct financial support for diversity institutes.

#### **Increase APA grant funds**

The APA could simply increase the amount of grant funding available. This could take several forms, including increasing the Small Grant Fund (currently \$25,000 annually provided by the Eastern Division, given in grants of up to \$5,000), increasing the Diversity and Inclusiveness grants (currently \$20,000 annually provided from the operating budget, given in one \$20,000 or two \$10,000 grants), or establishing a separate fund specifically for diversity institutes.

These strategies raise an important question: where would the money to support the increase in grant funds come from? Neither the Eastern Division investments (which support the Small Grant Fund) nor the APA's operating budget (which supports the Diversity and Inclusiveness grants) are sufficient to allow for a significant increase in these funding pools or the establishment of a new funding pool, and there are no additional internal resources that could be used for this purpose. Therefore, we do not see a simple increase in APA grant funding pools as viable.

#### **Eliminate preference for seed funding**

The APA's grant programs have a strong, longstanding preference for providing seed funding rather than ongoing support. Some diversity institute advocates have suggested that this preference should not apply to diversity institutes. However, given the limited resources the APA has available to it, APA is not in a position to be a long-term funder of any diversity institute (or any other grant-funded program). For this reason, the board has on numerous occasions reaffirmed this preference. Therefore, we do not see the elimination of the seed funding preference as an option likely to be acceptable to the APA leadership.

#### **Seek new external grants for diversity institutes**

Since existing APA resources cannot support an increase in funding to diversity institutes, the APA could seek external grants to do so.

This is the strategy that led to the Mellon Foundation's grant supporting the expansion of PIKSI and the establishment of the Diversity Institute Advisory Panel authoring this report. The APA could seek to renew the Mellon Foundation grant and work with other diversity institutes to identify and apply for grants through other funders. While this strategy can be effective in securing additional funds, it is labor-intensive

for both the APA and the diversity institutes involved and comes with many of the same restrictions, such as preference for seed-funding, as existing APA grants. Grant funders are unlikely to be interested in providing grants to simply continue an existing program, renew funding more than once for a program they've already supported, or establish an open-ended fund to support diversity institutes.

We therefore recommend that the APA remain open to partnering with diversity institutes to seek outside grant funding in certain circumstances, but we do not recommend that this be the sole or primary strategy for funding diversity institutes.

### **Establish a new grant fund for diversity institutes**

The APA has previously been asked to seek and accept donations specifically directed to diversity institutes. While the APA cannot accept donations specific to a single diversity institute, as the APA's attorneys have determined that doing so would potentially endanger its nonprofit status, the APA could accept donations to a fund whose express purpose is to support diversity institutes. We feel that ongoing, member-based appeals to donate to such a fund are unlikely to generate enough funds to effectively support diversity institutes. However, we do recommend that the APA identify and cultivate one or more high-level donors who would be likely to support diversity institutes, with the intent of establishing an endowed fund to provide grants to diversity institutes. Once such a fund is established, the APA should make it open to contributions from any donor.

### **Establish a donor-advised fund for diversity institutes**

The possibility of a donor-advised fund has been suggested by the APA's treasurer, Matthew O'Brien. As we understand it, a donor-advised fund is a fund that is set up with the charitable arm of a financial firm (e.g., Fidelity Charitable, Vanguard Charitable) and serves as a granting platform for funding nonprofit projects and donations to it are tax-deductible. This is a promising strategy both for the APA and for individual diversity institutes.

**We therefore strongly recommend that the APA look into donor-advised funds and work with the leaders of diversity institutes to determine whether establishing one or more such funds would be an effective strategy for funding diversity institutes.**

One cautionary note regarding donor-advised funds is that the donor setting up the fund is solely empowered to direct disbursements from the fund. However, it may be possible to create a donor-advised fund whereby a group of individuals are collectively the donor empowered to direct disbursements. Therefore, it would be advisable for diversity institutes interested in pursuing this funding strategy to create a small committee of individuals willing to take on responsibility for advising the fund and ensuring contributions to it are disbursed to the participating diversity institute(s).

However, it should be noted that disbursements from a donor-advised fund can only be directed to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations. Therefore, diversity institutes not incorporated as 501(c)(3)s themselves and not affiliated with a charitable organization (such as a university) would not be able to take advantage of this funding strategy.

### **Indirect Support**

In addition to direct funding of diversity institutes, the APA can support diversity institutes in indirect ways. We recommend that the APA pursue as many of the following indirect support strategies as is feasible.

### **Assist diversity institutes in securing institutional funding**

The APA should develop materials to support institutes in securing institutional funding; specifically, we recommend that the APA develop materials, such as a white paper and infographics, demonstrating the value of diversity institutes to participants, institutions, and the discipline. Information gathered from the recent “Where are they now?” survey of diversity institute participants is ideally suited to these purposes, and this panel would be pleased to take the lead on developing such materials.

**We strongly recommend that the APA develop and maintain such informational materials and that diversity institutes commit to maintaining and providing to the APA the data foundational to such informational materials.**

### **Assist diversity institutes in seeking grant funding**

Because the APA is limited in its ability to seek grant funding on behalf of diversity institutes, we recommend that the APA do what it can to assist diversity institutes in seeking grant funding on their own behalf. In particular, the APA should provide diversity institutes with letters of support and introductions to grant funders.

**We strongly recommend that the APA authorize the executive director and chair of the board to write letters of support, on behalf of the association, for diversity institutes seeking grants.**

### **Connect institutions interested in multi-institution funding strategies**

The APA should be prepared to assist diversity institutes pursuing multi-institution funding strategies by helping to connect institutions that may be willing to consider partnering to fund a diversity institute. The APA leadership’s networks are broad and could be invaluable to diversity institute directors who need such networks to identify institutions that could provide funding and other support.

### **Conclusion**

While there is no “silver bullet” available for funding diversity institutes, we believe that the APA can offer important support to new and established diversity institutes. We have provided a number of possible strategies above and are eager to work with the APA board and the leaders of various diversity institutes to ensure that these important programs continue and flourish for years to come.