

A Proposal for Funding by the American Philosophical Association

Diversity Essays Project

Proposal submitted by: Mark Chekola, chair, Steering Committee

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Steering Committee:
(c.v.'s attached at end)

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Sally Scholz, Villanova University
Anna Stubblefield, Rutgers University-Newark

Amount requested: \$3600

Description of Project:

There are relatively few papers and essays on diversity issues written by philosophers that are accessible to undergraduate students. With regard to LGBT issues, Richard Mohr's "Gay Basics," originally commissioned by James Rachels for an ethics anthology and later picked up by more than 38 other anthologies, stands out. Some anthologies use articles from professional journals that aren't suitable, either because they have an unsuitable focus (such as on relatively technical issues being debated by philosophers working on the issue) or are written in a style and with language just not accessible to typical undergraduates.

This lack is generally attributed to there being little incentive for philosophers to write papers and essays for undergraduates because it does not enhance their c.v.'s.

Most members of the American Philosophical Association are involved in the teaching of philosophy in colleges and universities. The largest number of students taking philosophy courses is, by far, undergraduates. In addition, in terms of the influence the field of philosophy can have on the society, it could be pointed out that one of the main areas is in the teaching of undergraduates. It is critical to have good reading materials for undergraduate courses that are accessible to undergraduate students. Presently there is great interest in diversity issues and teachers putting together reading packets and editors putting together anthologies and reading packets would be very interested in having

suitable materials to use. Several of us have regularly been asked by colleagues preparing course syllabi for recommendations for essays on diversity issues that could be added to a course reading list and have been frustrated by our not having much we can recommend.

A preliminary version of this proposal was presented and discussed at the Committee on Inclusiveness meeting in December, 2005, at the APA meetings in New York City. A more developed proposal was presented and discussed at the Inclusiveness Committee meeting at the Washington, D.C. APA meetings on Dec. 30, 2006.

The Diversity Essays Project has two main purposes: (1) to encourage the writing of excellent essays by philosophers on diversity issues for an audience of undergraduates and the general public and (2) to have such essays readily available for use in teaching, through inclusion in reading packets and adoption in anthologies. The Diversity Essays Project will encourage the writing of such essays by asking the Diversity Committees to commission people to write essays. Authors will be invited based on their demonstrated expertise in a subject as well as their ability to write in an accessible format. An honorarium of \$300 will be granted. Contributions would be reviewed by the DEP steering committee and a panel of additional scholars. In addition, authors will be able to list on their c.v.'s that the essay was commissioned.

Availability of Essays

a. For classroom use

In discussion with the Inclusiveness Committee it was suggested that the essays be available on the Inclusiveness Committee's web page. There would be no permissions fee for teachers using essays for educational purposes in the classroom.

b. For publication in anthologies or textbooks

We suggest a permissions fee which would be charged to publishers who wish to include any of the essays in textbooks or anthologies. The plan is that the APA would hold the copyright and the permissions fee charged to publishers would be set by the APA and divided equally between the APA and the author of the essay. (It is our understanding that the APA currently charges permissions fees for reprinting presidential essays from the APA Proceedings. If that is so, there must be some existing mechanism for handling this.)

Plan and Schedule for Project

The Steering Committee is developing specific criteria for selection of essays. The plan is to seek twelve essays for the first stage of the project. In commissioning essays, the DEP steering committee would ask the diversity committees (Committee on the Status of American Indians in Philosophy, Committee on the Status of Asian and Asian-American

Philosophers and Philosophies, Committee on Blacks in Philosophy, Committee on Hispanics, Committee on the Status of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People in the Profession, and the Committee on the Status of Women) to each invite authors to contribute to the project. For the initial essays, the diversity committees would be encouraged to invite authors with demonstrated expertise and an ability to write in an accessible format. If this is not possible, they would be free to issue wide-spread calls-for-papers in order to select a representative essay. We would ask the Committee on Inclusiveness to invite someone to contribute an essay on disabilities and inclusiveness. In addition, if for some reason a diversity committee is not able to carry out the task of identifying someone to write an essay in their area the Inclusiveness Committee and DEP steering committee will seek to identify such a person. The DEP steering committee will provide a list of criteria for the essays that specifies the nature of the project, the audience for each essay, and the approximate length.

We plan for the first set of diversity essays to include essays on:

- Disability issues
- Africana philosophy/issues
- LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) issues
- American Indian philosophy/issues
- Asian philosophy/issues
- Latino/a philosophy/issues
- Feminist philosophy: two essays: one essay on feminist ethics and one essay on feminist epistemology/philosophy of science.
- In addition to the eight above, four more. The topics for these will be determined as consultation with the diversity committees demonstrates the need for other essays to adequately cover their areas.

The project would be carried out over two years. A twenty-four month procedure is presented below:

- Month 1 & 2: Steering Committee draws up detailed criteria for selection of Diversity Project Essays and enlists feedback from APA Diversity Committee Chairs and the APA Committee on Inclusiveness.
- Month 3: Steering Committee invites Diversity Committees to participate by commissioning an essay.
- Month 4-10: Authors write their papers. (Diversity committees can negotiate a longer period if it is required by the person they've identified to write the paper.)
- Month 11-14: DEP Steering Committee and panel of scholars reviews papers.
- Month 15-18: Authors revise papers.
- Month 19-24 and beyond: Papers published on the Inclusiveness Committee website. DEP begins campaign to advertise these essays and encourage instructors, textbook editors and others to utilize the essays in their undergraduate courses.

Since essays on diversity issues can become dated we anticipate that it might be wise to carry out a Diversity Essays Project every 5-10 years.

Amount Requested and Budget

The total amount requested is \$3600.

Budget: 12 essays @ \$300 honorarium each \$3600

Fiscal agent:

Other funding sought: This project is focused on strengthening undergraduate teaching in the profession and thus we believe the APA is the organization most appropriate for funding it. We have been in contact with the NEH about the possibility of seeking additional funding through one of their programs. It appears this project does not fit the criteria for the NEH Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants. We will consider the possibility of submitting an application for funding under the NEH Grants for Teaching and Learning Resources and Curriculum Development. It is expected that guidelines will be available late summer, with an October deadline.