

The Society of Philosophers in America (SOPHIA)

Report on 2012 American Philosophical Association Grant Fund award for activities in 2013

September 30, 2013

In May of 2012, SOPHIA applied for \$5,000 of support for two events planned for the Fall of 2013. The APA generously awarded SOPHIA \$1,000. Both of SOPHIA's symposia will take place in November of 2013, and therefore have not yet occurred.

“Should Everyone Go to College?” University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS

With the support of the APA, SOPHIA will put on our first symposium on November 2nd of 2013, titled “Should Everyone Go to College?” in Oxford, MS. The event will feature three philosophers who will speak without jargon to a public audience. We are inviting public school teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, students, and parents to come to the event and talk about the challenging questions surrounding how best to answer the title question of the event.

Our three symposium panelists will include:

Dr. Tommy Curry, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Texas A&M University

Dr. Bertha Manninen, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Arizona State University

Dr. Chris Surprenant, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of New Orleans

SOPHIA Executive Director Dr. Eric Thomas Weber will moderate the event. The first half of the event will involve brief, plain language explanations of philosophical considerations that are important for addressing our theme, followed by a question and answer session. The second half of the event will feature invitations for the audience to raise questions, comments, and concerns about their challenges for advising young people, or for making decisions themselves with regard to higher education. This second session is central to SOPHIA's mission, whereby philosophers draw and learn from people who have direct experience with the questions central to our symposia. The intention is both to bring philosophy to bear on issues of public importance and to learn from real-life experiences and challenges that people beyond the academy or beyond the field of philosophy face.

Support from the American Philosophical Association was instrumental in helping SOPHIA to secure a grant from the Mississippi Humanities Council, the state affiliate of the NEH, as well as from various departments and offices around the University of Mississippi campus.

“Supreme Court Case - *Town of Greece v. Galloway*” CSU Bakersfield, Bakersfield, CA

SOPHIA was planning a second event concerning the nature and public value of higher education. Need for further funds required that SOPHIA adapt its plan for this second event, which is now a partnering event on the subject of prayer at public meetings. It will take place on November 14th, 2013, in Bakersfield, CA. Funds from the APA will therefore support just the symposium mentioned above, though SOPHIA will be putting on this second, adapted event. The opportunity which arose was to partner to run an event on prayer at public meetings. SOPHIA shifted the intended theme of our event in Bakersfield, CA, to the “Supreme Court Case – *Town of Greece v. Galloway*.”

Funds from the American Philosophical Association offer financial means, but also a strong demonstration of professional support. The latter is valuable for the pursuit of further funds, such as from grant agencies. We are very grateful for your support and will gladly send you a full report once the events have taken place and can be documented and reported on fully. Thank you for your support,

Dr. Eric Thomas Weber, Executive Director, The Society of Philosophers in America (SOPHIA)

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