

September 25, 2016

APA Grant Report: Small Grants Program

Project: Workshop on Philosophy of Race and Racism

Steering Committee: Dr. Megan Mitchell (Stonehill College) and Dr. Yolonda Wilson (Howard University)

The Workshop on Philosophy of Race and Racism took place at Stonehill College in Easton, MA on June 4th, 2016. With funding through the APA Small Grants program, Stonehill College and the Howard University philosophy department, we hosted a full day of papers by invited speakers. The gathering was intimate and collaborative, and according to the results of our post-conference survey, successfully fulfilled our aims of allowing for deep discussion on issues particular to philosophy of race and helping to move papers in this area towards publication.

Early in our planning stages, we settled on the theme of racial injustice. In particular, exploring the development of this concept across time and within a range of philosophical disciplines. Cognizant that one of the major pioneers of African American political philosophy had recently retired from teaching, we decided to invite Dr. Bernard Boxill (UNC-CH, Emeritus) and to host the workshop in honor of his work. Dr. Boxill's work is some of the earliest within to take up racial injustice within the context of academic philosophy and so, it seemed especially appropriate to acknowledge how his contributions laid the foundations for the evolution of philosophy of race as we moved into a discussion of contemporary issues on this topic.

We decided a small program of 6 additional speakers would provide an environment for the kind of deep, intimate intellectual engagement and exchange that we'd initially envisioned. Our goal was to draw philosophers from different philosophical disciplines, at different stages in their careers, to trace the trajectory of Dr. Boxill's intellectual influence through various areas of philosophy and over many years. At the same time, we invited speakers with similar philosophical backgrounds, who were likely to be versed in the same literature and employ similar approaches to problems. This was in an effort to attend to two of our aims from our initial proposal: First, to provide an opportunity for relationship building and mentorship and second, to create a context conducive to deep discussion and detailed feedback. Respondents to our survey all agreed that the workshop was helpful in establishing new/deeper relationships with others working in the field of philosophy of race. They also reported that by focusing specifically on philosophy of race, discussion was deeper/more insightful than at general conferences.

In the end, we had five additional presenters, who gave papers on ethics, political philosophy and philosophy of language. Four were philosophers of color. Although we aimed for gender parity, inviting an equal number of male and female presenters, due to a variety of circumstances, only men accepted our invitation. In addition, we were unable to achieve the wide variety in career stages we had hoped for. Most of the philosophers who accepted our invitation were senior faculty members at their respective institutions. Women, junior faculty, and philosophers of color (especially ones who work largely or primarily on race) are more likely to be at smaller institutions with limited (or no) funding for travel. For example, one female philosopher of color we invited to present would have liked to come but was unable to because we could not fund her travel. In organizing this conference, we learned that providing travel funding is indispensable to achieving an event that is diverse along several metrics. Luckily, give the proximity of the conference to Boston, by advertising the workshop on listservs (including WOGAP) and reaching out to contacts in the Boston area, we were able to attract some additional participants, including two graduate students, one early-career faculty member, and two senior faculty, all of whom were active in the discussion. We are ourselves both early career faculty members and women, and one of us is African American, so our presence provided some representation for those groups.

Next Steps

One of the goals we set for ourselves was to use this workshop as a platform for increasing publication in philosophy of race. To further this aim, Dr. Megan Mitchell reached out to journals about the workshop and recently, the Journal of Social Philosophy approved a special issue proposal submitted by one of the conference organizers, Dr. Yolonda Wilson, and conference presenter Dr. Luvell Anderson. The co-editor expect that this special issue, inspired by the workshop, will appear in late 2017.

Funding

Use of Funds	Amount	Funding Agency
Accommodations for out-of-town-presenters	\$625	American Philosophical Association
Travel for Keynote speaker	\$375	American Philosophical Association
Breakfast	\$50	Howard University Philosophy Department

Lunch	\$150	Howard University Philosophy Department
Dinner (day of workshop)	\$300	Howard University Philosophy Department
Facility Rental Fee	\$1750	Stonehill College
Admin/Printing	\$30	Stonehill College
Dinner (6/3, for speaker and other out-of-town presenters)	\$140.00	Megan Mitchell
Transportation for out-of-town presenters/participant s	\$47	Megan Mitchell
Snacks/Drinks/Addit ional food for conference	\$50	Megan Mitchell

Survey Results

A short (6 question) anonymous survey was distributed to conference presenters and participants via weblink on June 29th, 2016. Our response rate was 77.78% (7/9).

The following are the complete results of the survey:

Question 1: Because this workshop focused specifically on philosophy of race, discussion was deeper/more insightful than at general conferences.

Strongly Agree	6
Agree	1
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0

Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0
Not Applicable	0

Question 2: The space was accessible to me and my disability-related needs and all accommodation requests were adequately addressed.

Strongly Agree	3
Agree	0
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0
Not Applicable	4

Question 3: This workshop helped me to establish new/deeper relationships with others working in the field of philosophy of race.

Strongly Agree	6
Agree	1
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0
Not Applicable	0

Question 4: I would participate in a workshop like this again.

Strongly Agree	7
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Agree	0
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0
Not Applicable	0

Question 5: For the presenters only: The feedback and discussion at this workshop will help me to move my paper towards publication.

Strongly Agree	3
Agree	0
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0
Not Applicable	4

Question 6: What suggestions do you have for improving this workshop?
(4/7 respondents)

Have another day with the same format.

The number and quality of participants and the setting for discussion among the was ideal.I can't think of a thing I would do differently. THANKS for sponsoring such a unique conference. It went far beyond my expectations.

This might be hard to do, but maybe if all the papers were made available beforehand.

I thought everything worked well & smoothly: the length & venue, the number & identity of participants, the presentations' variety & quality. (Maybe they should have a few fans if they use that room again.)