Lawrence Talks Report

Lawrence Talks is a public philosophy program with the goal of bringing together academic and non-academic perspectives. The hope in bringing these two perspectives together is that philosophy is made more accessible to the public and that philosophers and other academics of the University of Kansas be part of public discourse on topics of interest to the general public. In order to do this, Lawrence Talks is made available in three formats. First, we make available the considered thoughts and positions of KU scholars through an online blog that is free to the public. Second, we produce a monthly podcast that attempts to bring out philosophical issues that arise from local events or controversies. To this end, Lawrence Talks attempts to be locally focused rather than trying to be of national or global prominence. Our first priority is the community we are a part of - the Lawrence, KS community. Finally, through various partnerships with local institutions such as the Lawrence Public Library and University programs, we hold public events in the form of paneled discussions.

To the matter at hand, the Lawrence Talks project has grown a great deal from the time the grant of $200 was awarded in December 2018. The successes above are due in part to the reorganization of our site. The money received from the Berry Fund went entirely towards this effort. Just by the numbers alone our page views in 2019 to this date (3,220) have far exceeded our 2018 numbers (2,364). The same is the case for unique visitors (1,249 in 2019) and (576). While these numbers appear minuscule compared to more nationally based programs, Lawrence Talks seeks to serve the local community of Lawrence, KS first and foremost. These numbers are a result of the improvements we made to our site format with attention given to making the information and programming easily accessible to the general public.

In the next, we hope to expand on these successes and solidify the project as a full participant and contributor to the local community and local discourse. It is our firm belief that part of being a philosopher involves making clear to a general public in what ways theories in ethics, metaphysics, and epistemology may be relevant for practical and existential questions. Philosophers are not just observers of their communities, we are also participants. To this end, our project is in the process of filing for 501c3 status so that it may serve the community beyond the tenure of its current editorial board.

None of the above successes would be possible were it not for the support and funding of the APA and the Berry Fund for Public Philosophy. For this, we offer our sincere appreciation for their initial patronage and hope to continue our project so that it justifies your investment in us.

Thank you!

David Tamez