

REPORT

THE ACSAA TRAVEL GRANTS PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members: Cecelia Levin (Chair), Lisa Owen, Stephanie Rozman

Goals

The ACSAA Travel Grants Planning Committee has been requested to make recommendations in the following areas related to a potential travel grant program. These are:

- 1- Eligible recipients of grants
- 2- Amount of the grants
- 3- Frequency of grant application and review process
- 4- Number, demographics of disciplines, term length, and appointment manner of future Travel Grant Selection Committee members.

Process

In developing its recommendations, the Travel Grants Planning Committee made the preliminary survey responses from our ACSAA membership its top consideration. These results are as follows:

Grant Purpose

- * 76% favor ~ Sponsoring scholars to PRESENT papers at ACSAA symposia and ACSAA-affiliated panels at CAA.
- * 58% favor ~ Supporting members' field research.
- * 49% favor ~ Sponsoring scholars to ATTEND ACSAA symposia and ACSAA-affiliated panels at CAA.

Recipient Priorities

- * 79% favor ~ Students.
- * 64% favor ~ Foreign scholars.
- * 60% favor ~ Independent scholars.

Based on these responses, the Committee focused on the survey's clear priorities of using the travel grant program to support scholars presenting papers at ACSAA symposia and ACSAA-affiliated panels at CAA, and the priority recipient category of students. After a review of comparable criteria—mainly student grants for conference travel offered by organizations kindred to ACSAA, particularly those which have affiliated panels at CAA, and infusing our own experiences as either grantors or grant recipients, we are proposing the following:

Recommendations

- The ACSAA travel grants should be primarily designated for students who are presenting papers in or chairing or moderating sessions exclusively at ACSAA symposia. The term “student” is defined as those enrolled in any accredited graduate program both here or abroad.
- Any additional available funding could be used to underwrite the travel of students who wish to attend an ACSAA symposium in a non-participatory role.
- An application for an ACSAA Student Travel Grant Award might include a two-page CV, the abstract of the paper/session to be presented or chaired or moderated; a brief one-page letter explaining the benefits for a particular student to attend the symposium/conference, and an endorsement (via signature) by his/her academic advisor.
- After vetting the applications, the grants can be awarded to eligible candidates on a lottery basis.
- Award amounts should be determined by a tiered system. Those recipients living within the general locality of the symposium/conference venue—within a 250-mile radius— would be granted an award of \$500; those living beyond this parameter but residing in the United States would receive \$1000, and an international student would be awarded \$1500. We recognize that these amounts should be realistically aligned with available funding for the program, and that these grants are designed to supplement, rather than ideally cover, all of a student’s monetary needs. Awards will be distributed in lump sums.
- Based on membership feedback to our preliminary report, it was also determined that an additional grant will be offered to an international scholar with one of the same participatory roles in ASCAA symposiums or serving as key note speaker.
- It would be ideal if the grant review process and dissemination of awards occur biennially; concurrent with years during which ACSAA has scheduled a symposium. Applications should be submitted by a specific deadline date, perhaps six months prior to the event.
- A future Travel Grant Selection Committee should be ideally comprised of three members who represent various areas of geographic (South, Southeast and Himalayan art) and chronological specializations (historical,

modern and contemporary). These members should serve for either a two or three year term.

Additional and Future Considerations

While the Committee acknowledges that graduate students participate in ACSAA panels at the annual CAA and AAS conferences, we believe that there are other funding opportunities that they can pursue and that our student travel grants should be solely employed for travel to ACSAA symposiums. The Committee also recognizes one member's proposal that ACSAA travel grants' eligibility should be widened to encompass individuals who have received their doctorates within the past five years. This expansion of the program should be given future consideration. Further, regarding the second preference expressed by our membership survey, that of research travel grants, we believe as we embark on our first travel grant program, it would be best for the organization to target a singular and smaller-scale project so we might realize successes and gain from our experiences. Moreover, the differing avenues of potential support for student conference travel vis-à-vis research travel grants might encourage the formation of a separate committee for the latter so that ACSAA can be better served.