Lectures Committee Combined Annual Report for 2014–2016

Statement of Committee Function
The University Lectures Committee considers requests for lectures of general interest that are not primarily supplementary to or extensions of programs of instruction provided by colleges, schools, or departments, recommends annually to the chancellor a budget for its activities, and exercises such control over the announcement of lectures as it deems necessary and desirable. It supports departments, academic programs and student organizations that bring distinguished lecturers to the UW-Madison campus. These university-wide lectures are intended to enrich the general intellectual and cultural life of the university community. The committee itself does not initiate lecture arrangements. Rather, it receives and acts on requests from eligible university groups that are interested in inviting outstanding speakers to the campus.

Past Years’ Activities
During the 2014–15 academic year the committee received a total of 71 applications for lecture support, 65 of which were supported and occurred and six were cancelled or not funded. During the 2015–16 academic year the committee received a total of 53 applications for lecture support, 51 of which were supported and occurred and 2 were cancelled or not funded. The attached report presents information for each supported lecture; lectures are listed chronologically by the lecture’s date.

In 2014-2015, the 65 supported lectures that occurred drew a combined reported attendance of 5,220 persons, a decrease in attendance by 775 from 2013-14, and an average of 80 attendees per supported application. Lectures were sponsored by a total of 52 different campus units. Lectures had 198 co-sponsoring units, in addition to the primary sponsor.

In 2015-2016, the 51 supported lectures that occurred drew a combined reported attendance of 4,188 persons, a decrease in attendance by 1,032 from 2014-15, and an average of 82 attendees per supported application. Lectures were sponsored by a total of 42 different campus units. Lectures had 99 co-sponsoring units, in addition to the primary sponsor.

The committee’s total expenditures for the 2014-2015 year were $46,858. Of this sum, $22,088 (47%) was paid directly to lecturers as honoraria and travel expenses, $23,750 (51%) was paid to sponsors to reimburse travel and per diem expenses, and $1,019 (2%) was paid for lecture administrative costs (i.e., student hourly, postage, printing and poster distribution).

The committee’s total expenditures for the 2015-2016 year were $55,940. Of this sum, $27,337 (49%) was paid directly to lecturers as honoraria and travel expenses, $28,602 (51%) was paid to sponsors to reimburse travel and per diem expenses.

The table below compares committee activity from the most recent five years. Nineteen fewer applications were received and supported from 2013-14 to 2015-16. The total expenditures increased significantly over the recent two academic years, as the committee made significant efforts to follow up with units regarding attendance reports and transferring of lecture funds after the event. Sponsors have also been limited to supporting only one lecture for each spring and fall semester during recent years.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of applications received</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of applications supported</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average reported lecture attendance</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of different sponsors</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average number of co-sponsors</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
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<td>Average lecture cost</td>
<td>$1,070</td>
<td>$1,066</td>
<td>$704</td>
<td>$947</td>
<td>$1,048</td>
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Current Issues or Concerns
The committee has piloted funds for live captioning services and an online application system (fall 2015). The committee is also examining the possibility of recording and creating a searchable database of lectures to extend their availability to the university and local community.

The committee welcomes suggestions regarding use of the William K. Fitch Fund, which is available “to bring to Madison prominent business people to give lectures on the American free-enterprise system.” None of the committee’s supported lectures during 2014-15 or 2015-16 met the criteria necessary to draw from this fund. Therefore, the William K. Fitch Fund continues to grow. The committee will send targeted messages and an annual call for nominations to promote the availability of the Fitch Funds.

Summary/Recommendations
We gratefully acknowledge sources of financial support for university-wide lectures. For direct funding of lectures in 2014-15 and 2015-16, the Anonymous Fund provided $20,000 both years, the Kemper K. Knapp Bequest provided $25,000 in 2014-15 and $35,000 in 2015-16 and the Chancellor’s Office (General University Fund) provided $30,000 both years.

2014-15 Committee Membership
Clifford Cho (Biological Sciences)
Elena D’Ongbia (Physical Sciences)
Thomas DuBois (Arts and Humanities)
Jessica Dykstra (Student)
Jacklyn John (Academic Staff)
Elizabeth Larson, Chair (Social Studies)
Paul Robbins (Administration)

2015-16 Committee Membership
Clifford Cho (Biological Sciences)
Elena D’Ongbia (Physical Sciences)
Thomas DuBois (Arts and Humanities)
Jessica Dykstra (Student)
Antje Petty (Academic Staff)
Elizabeth Larson, Chair (Social Studies)
Paul Robbins (Administration)