

Artistic Excellence Programming Grants College of Humanities and the Arts, Report for 2020-2021

Starting in Fall 2017, the College of Humanities and the Arts was awarded \$150,000 in base IRA funding to use for Artistic Excellence Programming Grants (**AEPG**) across all of the arts, including culinary arts and the humanities or letters. This money was intended to provide robust educational enhancement and support for students' classroom and educational experiences. These funds were meant to support events including, but not limited to: master classes; lectures engaging the letters; professional residencies; art exhibits; literary readings; theatrical and musical performances; and film productions. Each year preceding the programming season for the next year, the College has issued a call for proposals, and members from the Hammer Programming Board have evaluated proposals and awarded funds based on criteria that have stressed impact for students, numbers of students involved or connected to the event, curricular linkage or support, and educational value of the event. Over the last two years, a proposal could also receive an additional point in the review process if it connected to two College of Humanities and Arts programming themes, "Borderlands" and "Deep Humanities and the Arts." The awards have supported co- and extra-curricular events across all departments in the College of Humanities and Arts as well the Department of Hospitality (in CHSS) and the Department of Communication (COSS).

This program has been immensely successful, as detailed in the 2019-2020 report, which covers the first three years of the program. 2020-2021 brought a series of new challenges as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. A number of Spring 2020 events had to be transformed to a virtual modality as the Bay Area was under a pandemic lockdown, but as we began a largely on-line Fall 2020 semester, recipients of AEPG grants had to transition to an almost entirely virtual modality. Because of significant work necessary to rethink these events, most of the 2020-21 events ended up appearing in the Spring semester (5 Fall semester events versus 40 events in Spring 2021, with one event postponed).

Of the Fall events, a number specifically stood out in terms of the innovation undertaken by the faculty. The theatre faculty shifted to livestreaming from the Hammer Theatre Center – an adjustment the Hammer Theatre Center had made to allow for some forms of live performances without live audiences. All COVID protocols and safety regulations dedicated by the County of Santa Clara Public Health were followed; audiences at home were able to experience two live productions in the Fall in the comfort of their own homes. One of these, "The Living," explored the 1667 Plague outbreak in London and allowed performers and audience members to understand the pandemic through this artistic piece. "Surge," a dance event live streamed from various locations around campus, innovatively adapted as well to a campus with almost no in-person teaching. It made use of a largely deserted campus, live streaming dance performances to SJSU students and other audience members using Vimeo and encouraging audience participation through the live chat feature. The innovation across the performing arts continued in the spring, as "Alone Together" presented theatrical vignettes from experiences during the COVID lockdown, and dance performances, including "Wanderers" and "In the Garage," continued to make use of

campus spaces during a pandemic to foster community and affective nostalgia for viewers (who became part of the production with their robust chat).

Other adjustments were necessary in the context of the virtual programming that dominated 2020-2021. The Black Cab musical events, which normally sold tickets to support the cost of the performers, offered “pay what you will” events. And some adaptations to a virtual modality, such as the “Beethoven Beyond Borders” virtual reality exhibit, explored entirely new technologies to mount a virtual art gallery exhibit, as did the Wafaa Bilal: Canto III exhibit. Many events were originally planned as in person workshops, but were able to pivot to on-line demonstrations and creative makerspaces at home using Vimeo, YouTube, and Zoom to invite attendees to become active participants in the topics. The creativity of the faculty leading our 45 events over the course of 2020-21 allowed the bulk of the exciting proposals originally submitted in February of 2020 to achieve their original educational, artistic, and intellectual goals.

Of these 45 events, twenty-five events were part of our “Borderlands” College programming theme, and sixteen were part of our “Deep Humanities & Arts” College programming theme. (For a full list of the 45 events presented in 2020-21 of programming that has been supported 2017-2020 across 10 departments and the university, see the attached lists of sponsored events). The total requests for grants have continued to rise from \$245,230 in 2018-2019 to \$281,690 for the 2019-20 programming year, to \$320,00 for the 2020-21 programming year.

We look forward to another extraordinary year of Artistic Excellence.

Future Plans for Artistic Excellence Programming Grants (AEPG)

For 2021-2022, we look forward to transitioning to two new College themes, “The Inclusion Initiative,” which explores social justice and racial equity, and “Sustainable Futures.” We continue to work to integrate programming into specific classes, especially those in the letters, while establishing thematic programming activities. This work is part of the College’s H & A in Action Initiative, and it will be supported this year by a new position, Director of Public Programming. Professor Katherine Harris will serve in this role for 2020-22. The College is committing resources through this position to raise additional funds for Artistic Excellence Programming through philanthropy and grant proposals.