

# *The Slay Fund for Social Justice*



## **The Slay Fund for Social Justice at Drake University**

Report on Grants Awarded and Completed, Academic Year 2023/2023

Prepared by Renée Ann Cramer, August 2023

In academic year 2022/2023 the Slay Fund for Social Justice made grants to projects in three broad categories: pedagogy for social justice, including student research, internships, and travel; campus-wide events and speakers; and long-term programs with community partners. These funding categories coincide with the three strategic priorities of the Slay Fund, which allocate funding for: speakers and events related to social justice; capacity building and institutional support programming; student-proposed and student-focused initiatives. These categories and priorities overlap to a great extent, but we have identified primary activities in the following ways:

### **Pedagogy for Social Justice, Including Student Travel and Internships**

**Professor Tim Knepper** (Philosophy and Religion) accessed Slay Funding during the summer of 2022, to pay stipends to Drake students involved in the Inter-Faith Youth Camp associated with The Comparison Project (\$5000).

Drake student **Tara Lindner** received funding to support her summer internship at MIT, working with Breakthrough Greater Boston to provide middle schoolers access to educational equity in STEM (\$1200).

**Professor Elizabeth Talbert** (Study of Culture and Society) traveled with two students to present on their social justice research at the Midwest Sociological Association meetings in Minneapolis, MN. The Slay Fund paid for the student travel not covered through the College of Arts and Sciences' STAR fund (\$1200).

**Professor Elizabeth Talbert** (Study of Society and Culture) and **Professor Matthew Record** (Political Science) received (\$3000) funding to extend their previous work documenting the lived experiences of unhoused people in Des Moines, through the assistance of undergraduate student research assistance. This project garnered significant local press, as well as disciplinary recognition within sociology and political science for the tremendous work done by the undergraduates hired and mentored by these two faculty members.

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**Professor Cassity Guttierrez** (College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences) used Slay funding for her project “Narrative Medicine and Digital Storytelling,” which engaged a student researcher in collecting and analyzing client voices as they went through the health care process (\$1300).

**Ryan Arnold (Director, Community Engagement)** brought activist, speaker, and author Mia Birdsong to campus, dovetailing with his First Year Seminar (\$5,000).

Professor **Melisa Klimaszewski (English)** was granted a stipend through the Slay Fund for her work to develop curricula, marketing, and structure around our interdisciplinary Black Diaspora Studies minor (\$5,000). This substantial initiative to revitalize the curriculum incorporated a systemic/institutional approach and offered the value of our students seeing themselves and their experiences recognized in our programming and classrooms.

Using Slay funding, **Professor Leanne Purdum** (Law, Politics, and Society) paid social justice activists and nonprofit leaders nominal honoraria when they spoke to her “Legal Advocacy” class about the ways that they make social change and work for justice (\$550).

## **Events and Speakers**

The Slay Fund purchased a table at the annual Chrysalis Luncheon (\$1000). Not only did this purchase support the good work of a local organization that we frequently partner with, **Professors Renee Cramer, Kelly Bruhn and (Dean) Catherine Staub** attended the luncheon with seven students from the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, to hear Laura Ling talk about her imprisonment in North Korea – which she discussed as a project of journalistic ethics in the context of the women’s revolution in Iran, and Britney Griner’s recent release from a Russian prison.

**Interim Associate Dean of Students Lynne Cornelius, and Director of Women’s and Gender Studies/Professor of Psychology Jill Allen** received funding to bring the local organization Voice to the Voiceless to campus (\$6,000). This collaboration between curricular and co-curricular campus groups resulted in a well-attended event, in which students were empowered to transform their personal stories into activism and outreach toward social justice goals.

**Faculty from the School of Education’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee** accessed Slay funds to hire Whitney Harris to facilitate a half day workshop for the SOE, continuing their earlier conversations around valuing our unique identities and creating brave spaces within which faculty can flourish (\$2500). Also in the School of Education, **Professor Shelley Fairbairn**

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brought speaker Lovar Davis Kidd to campus to work with students around issues of racial justice (\$1,500).

**Professor (and former Dean) Kathleen Richardson** (School of Journalism and Mass Communication) received \$5,000 from the Slay Fund to support bringing Dartanian (Dart) Brown to Drake as a practitioner in residence during the month of October. Dart is a Drake alum, and a pathbreaking scholar-writer-creative-activist engaged in important social justice work around representation, journalism, and the arts; SJMC faculty planned and brought to fruition a thoughtful and immersive experience for Mr. Brown and our students.

## **Broader Projects to Support Social Justice Initiatives at Drake**

The Slay Fund partnered with **Associate Provost Melissa Sturm-Smith** to provide \$7,000 in cost share and a housing stipend to support an AmeriCorps position serving Drake's 1<sup>st</sup> Generation and Limited Income students via a success coach.

The Slay Fund continued to support the work of **Faculty Fellows within the Office of Community Engaged Learning**, as a continuation of a two year grant; similarly, **Professor Carol Spaulding-Kruse (English)** and **student Anika Pfister**, an intern for the Drake Community Press, received the second year of committed funding for the press (grant award calculated as part of FY22).

**Professor Dian Nostikasari (Environmental Science and Policy)** received a grant of \$8,873 to continue to her work with Drake students, Oakridge neighborhood students, and community leaders collaborating on a "Walk My Bricks" project to improve transportation and walkability in the neighborhood.

**Professors Meredith Moore and Tim Urness (Math/Computer Science)** were awarded \$7,805 to support a mentoring program for students from under-represented groups in STEM fields: Inclusive Scholars of Digital Proficiency, meant to help recruit and retain these students at Drake University.

The Slay Fund committed \$10,000 for each of the next three years to support a project undertaken by **Professor Will Garriott** (Law, Politics, and Society) in partnership with the Iowa Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy to provide an annual survey of Prejail Diversion and Deflection Programs in the state. State-level attempts to provide alternatives to jail for those with substance abuse disorders is an essential part of a social justice led approach to criminal



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justice reform; students engaged in the project will gain necessary research skills as well as a deeper understanding of criminal justice reform.

## **Summary**

In AY 2022/2023, the Slay Fund awarded \$71,928 in grants for social justice on Drake University's campus.

- 31% of funding -- \$22,250 – awarded for pedagogy, student internships, research, and travel
- 22% of funding -- \$16,000 – awarded for events and speakers
- 47% of funding -- \$33,678– awarded for long term and broader projects

In addition, the Slay Fund supports **Professor Renée Cramer** with a stipend each year, for her work to direct the fund (\$6,100 – stipend + benefits).