

**The Slay Fund for Social Justice at Drake University
Report on Grants Awarded and Completed, Academic Year 2014/15
Submitted by Professor Renee Ann Cramer, July 2015**

This list details the grants awarded through the Slay Fund for Social Justice, in fiscal year 2015 (July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015), which roughly corresponds to academic year 14/15. The amount noted in the awards is the amount funded on each particular project – though not all allocated funds were expended. Some expenditures are still pending; on other projects, frugality and changes in plans led to reduced expenditures. At the end of the report, you will notice plans for the future of the Fund, as well as some notes about changes on campus not directly related to the Fund, but happening synergistically with its work.

The Slay Fund made grants to projects in four broad categories: *student research and internships*, *pedagogy for social justice*, *campus-wide events and speakers*, and *long-term programs with community partners*.

Student Research and Internships Funded

Drew Harkin and Mackenzie Leier were awarded funding to defray costs associated with their January 2015 trip to Kikandwa, Uganda, where these two Drake students have been working in partnership with community members to establish a health center. Drew and McKenzie are both senior Pharmacy majors who have made several trips to the region; they plan to return during their post-graduate and medical school careers.

Megan Lindmark, Hayley LeBlanc, and Kathryn Brightwell were awarded funds to travel as a team to Uganda, to work on setting up new relationships in the region that will impact the availability of drinking water.

Senior **Sarah Reckling** was awarded a grant to offset costs of her summer internship in Washington, DC, where she worked on issues of marriage equality and gay rights.

The Slay Fund provided funding to offset costs of J-term service learning travel to Belize, for several **School of Education students** working on literacy education in that country (with associate professor **Shelley Fairbairn**).

Business student **Eric Kinman** was awarded a grant to defray costs associated with travel to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico for a justice-oriented project, “Financial Inclusion in Latin American Landfill Communities,” which follows up on work he has done in the region with Professor Matt Mitchell.

Pedagogy for Social Justice, 13/14

Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religion, Tim Knepper and his colleague Assistant Professor Leah Kalmanson received funding for their collaborative project, “Digital Storytelling and Religious Communities in Des Moines.” Slay Funds provided stipends for nine resident informants who agreed to give oral history interviews to students in religious diversity classes, discussing their religious community and practices. Professor Knepper has facilitated several

training sessions in the technique of digital storytelling, and several of our faculty use it as a tool for social justice pedagogy.

Associate Professor Darcy Vandegrift (Sociology), working in conjunction with **Assistant Professor Lourdes Gutierrez Najara** (Anthropology), utilized Slay Funds to develop an “Art of the Feminist Interview” course, which culminated in a collaborative production “How it Goes,” with Roosevelt High School Women’s Studies Students. The theatre piece, presented on campus in spring 2015, explored sexual violence on college campuses.

Jennifer Perrine, Associate Professor of English and Director of Women’s and Gender Studies, was awarded grant funds to cover costs associated with a reading group for faculty. Eighteen faculty gathered to read *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia* and host group dialogues about it.

Campus-Wide Events and Speakers Funded, 14/15

Students in Critical Concepts in Law, Politics and Society (LPS 002, Professor Renee Cramer) were awarded a grant to bring LiveLaw 7: Des Moines! to our city. LiveLaw is a legal storytelling event produced and podcast by Life of the Law, a project of the Tides Foundation. The evening event focused on the theme “Schooled in the Law” and asked storytellers to describe a time when they learned an important lesson about the law, with a focus on social justice. Students produced the event – working on conjunction with executive producers in New York and San Francisco, and hosted seven storytellers at Ritual Café in downtown Des Moines, to a packed house.

Professor Jennifer Harvey (Philosophy/Religion) brought social justice activist Imani Henry to campus, to facilitate a half-day workshop for faculty, staff and students on the topics of social justice, advocacy, and alliances. The Slay Fund provided his facilitation fee.

Tim Schmitt, a staff member in Drake’s Office of Marketing and Communications, collaborated with several student groups to bring social justice activist Boots Riley to campus in fall 2015. Slay Funds provided his speaking fee and travel costs.

Professor Renee Cramer (Law, Politics, and Society), and students in her Critical Concepts in LPS class were awarded funding to offset costs of Hadar Avarim’s visit. Professor Avarim is a prison and death penalty abolitionist who teaches at the Hastings College of Law. She came to campus to speak on her book, *Cheap on Crime*, which explores the impact of the recession on prison politics and practices.

The Slay Fund was pleased to assist in bringing McArthur Genius Award winner Alison Bechdel to campus. **Assistant Professor of English Amy Letter**, coordinated several funding sources to bring Bechdel to Drake to give a public talk and meet with several classes. Bechdel’s work – comic books and performance art – focuses on acceptance and diversity, especially in the realms of gender identities and sexual orientation.

Students in **American Indian Law and Politics** (Law, Politics, and Society 135, Professor Renee Cramer) brought the independent documentary film: *Sober Indian/Dangerous Indian* to campus in fall 2014. The documentary argues for stricter rules on the sale of alcohol in border towns along

the Pine Ridge Reservation, and highlights the debilitating impact of alcoholism on tribal life. The filmmaker and one of his activist informants attended the showing, and also spoke to the class the next morning.

Kathleen Richardson, Dean of the School of Journalism, used Slay Funds to offset costs of bringing columnist and activist Leonard Pitts to campus in fall 2015. Pitts spoke to a packed house in Sheslow Auditorium, and met with student groups (including the Crew Scholars) and classes.

The Coalition of Black Students was awarded a grant to help bring the Henrietta Lax family to campus to share their perspective on the book made possible, and famous, by their mother's genes. CBS brought the Lax family in the context of campus- and city-wide events celebrating the book's author, Rebecca Skloot, who was in Des Moines to speak. The book, *The Immortal Lives of Henrietta Lax*, was also the Drake Humanities Center book for the year.

The Slay Fund provided Professor of English, **Carol Spaulding Kruse**, with funding to help offset costs of a nonviolent communication training in her First Year Seminar class (fall 2014).

The Slay Fund authorized a grant to a **coalition of students from a wide range of organizations (primarily students from Coalition of Black Students, and Working Group to Infuse Global and Multicultural Understandings)** for a Welcome Weekend BBQ hosted at the Black Cultural Center House. This well-attended BBQ will become an annual tradition, offering students an early opportunity to meet and socialize.

Long-Term Programs with Community Partners

The Slay Fund continued its financial support of the **Violence Intervention Partner (VIP) Advocacy Team**, directed by the Coordinator for Sexual Violence Response and Healthy Relationship Promotion, **Alysa Mozak**. VIPs are trained to respond compassionately and effectively to sexualized and intimate partner violence, and to help students in need access support and counsel in the wider community. The Fund also continued its support of Mozak's collaboration with **Professor John Graham (Theater)**, in the creation of a theater piece examining women's experiences of assault and sexual violence.

The Slay Fund continued its support of the **Working Group to Infuse Global and Multi-Cultural Understandings**, hiring students who are at work on various projects relating to social justice on campus. The students were: McKenzie Lauer, Randy Kane, Selchia Cain, and Jackie Heyman.