

Published by the Office of Foundation, Corporate and Government Relations, *Faculty Grants Quarterly* is an internal newsletter created for Hamilton faculty members to report on funding and research trends of public and private funding sources, as well as the grant and scholarly activities of their colleagues.



Considering writing a grant proposal?
Have an idea, but don't know what to do next?
Need help sorting out your budget?
Contact our office.



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Steve Yao leading a class discussion

Fellowship Supports Yao's Study of Asian American poetry

Steve Yao, associate professor of English, had one goal during his junior leave: complete his monograph. His project, when finished, would be the first book-length study dedicated specifically to poetry as a distinctive genre within the larger body of Asian American literature. Yao needed at least a year-long sabbatical to complete the manuscript. With support from the American Council of Learned Societies and a fellowship from the Stanford Humanities Center, he is beginning the second of a two-year leave.

His monograph, *Foreign Accents: Chinese American Verse and the Counter-Poetics of Difference in the US, 1910-Present*, examines the various formal strategies by which different poets have sought to represent elements of a particular cultural tradition in their articulations of an ethnic subjectivity.

"I want to expand the domain of Asian American poetry beyond the strict confines of English," Yao explained. "Foreign accents will map out both a new methodology and an expanded textual arena for Asian

American literary studies."

Yao hopes that his new methodology will be used by scholars who examine or are familiar with other traditions and have different linguistic competencies. He notes that the majority of Asian American literary studies focus on prose narrative. While Yao acknowledges the value of these studies, he feels that by neglecting to consider the impact of poetry, the field of Asian American literary studies is limited.

"Such a narrow purview neglects the central role that poetry historically played in the very political and cultural struggles that helped give rise to the Asian American movement in the first place," he argues. Moreover, he feels that it ignores the variety of techniques employed by writers and the complex relationship among the range of specific cultural and linguistic traditions that inform Asian American literary production.

Yao began exploring the topic in 1999. Advanced versions of three chapters were written and multiple conference papers were drafted prior

continued page 2

Yao, from page 1

to submission of various grant and fellowship proposals.

“I had a publisher interested in seeing a completed manuscript. With the preliminary research and writing completed, I needed time to be fully dedicated to the project in order to complete the monograph,” Yao said. Finding time to complete the project meant finding funding so that he could extend his junior leave to a full year. As such, he decided to apply to several grant and fellowship programs in hopes that at least one would result in an award. He applied to the National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship Program, the American Council of Learned Societies, the American Philosophical Society, the National Humanities Center, the University of

democratic year, while the ACLS allowed him to defer that award to 2006-07. Yao then combined the ACLS fellowship, which would fund half a year’s leave, with his junior sabbatical. The two awards enable him to take two consecutive years of leave.

Finding funding for scholarly research and writing is a time-consuming process. Yao’s search lasted two years. During the first year, he admits that he did not send out a large number of proposals and was not as aggressive. He ramped up his efforts during the second year, further refined his proposal and sent it out to more funding agencies and organizations.

“I decided to significantly increase the number of proposals I sent out during the second year. It meant some late nights at the office, and it did take a lot of work, but once you have a

“The NEH is required by law to provide you with the reviewers’ comments — most other programs do not provide comments to applicants. While I was ultimately rejected by the NEH, the reviewers’ remarks forced me to re-think the project. I added a new dimension, and it has since made it a much richer project,” Yao added. He feels the key to his success was revising his proposal such that his overarching goals and objectives were up front.

“Tell the reviewers exactly what you want to do and what you hope to accomplish at the very beginning of the proposal,” he advises. “And, remember that a rejection doesn’t always reflect the true merit of your project. There are a lot of very good proposals out there and sometimes it just comes down to luck.”

The Stanford Humanities Center was founded in 1980 to promote humanistic research and education, both at Stanford University and at other institutions in the United States and around the world. By awarding approximately 20 fellowship per year (eight to ten are for external faculty) and inviting speakers from around the world, the center allows historians, philosophers, literary critics, anthropologists and other humanists to learn from one another’s work while widening the role of the humanities in society.

The American Council of Learned Societies grants fellowships to scholars and seeks to advance humanistic studies in all fields of learning in the humanities and the social sciences. ACLS is perhaps best known as a funder of humanities research through fellowships and grants awarded to individuals and, on occasion, to groups and institutions. The centerpiece of this work is the ACLS Fellowship Program. ACLS fellowships are designed to permit scholars holding the Ph.D. or equivalent to devote a full year to research and writing.

“I decided to significantly increase the number of proposals I sent out during the second year. It meant some late nights at the office and it did take a lot of work, but once you have a well-written proposal, its relatively simple to revise it to fit the requirements of different funding agencies. Moreover, developing and fine-tuning the proposal forced me to really think through the project. While it was labor-intensive, I think in the end my monograph will be better because of the process.”

— **Steve Yao, associate professor of English**

Connecticut Humanities Institute, the Cornell Society of Fellows and the Stanford Humanities Center.

“A few months after submitting the proposals, I received the good news that I had been awarded both a Stanford Humanities Fellowship and an American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship,” Yao said. He was able to use the Stanford Humanities Fellowship during the 2005-06 aca-

well-written proposal, it’s relatively simple to revise it to fit the requirements of different funding agencies. Moreover, developing and fine-tuning the proposal forced me to really think through the project. While it was labor-intensive, I think in the end my monograph will be better because of the process.” In fact, he actually credits one of his rejections for having a significant effect on the project.

Grants.gov criticized

Representatives of major research universities are urging the federal government to halt the administration's plans to increase the number of programs requiring electronic submission through grants.gov (Federal Grants and Contracts Weekly, Dec. 12, 2005). The Council on Government Relations (COGR), an independent organization that represents some of the nation's most research intensive institutions, sent a letter directly to National Institutes of Health Director Elias Zerhouni asking to slow NIH's transition to grants.gov.

The council is urging NIH to slow the transition until all the processes have been adequately tested and grantees have tested the system. In his letter, Anthony DeCrappeo, president of COGR, argued that while the research community has supported streamlining the grants process, NIH's accelerated transition schedule and the government's failure to adequately and rigorously test the system are raising concerns within the research community. DeCrappeo was quoted as saying: "At very least, the potential for system failures and missed deadlines will erode investigator support for these changes."

COGR is requesting that: 1) NIH should have a phase-in timetable for electronic submissions and have a clear strategy for delayed deadlines or paper submission in the event of a grants.gov system failure; 2) NIH and grants.gov should provide a demonstration or test opportunity that allows for a mock submission of a real application so that the investigator has to complete all steps he/she would complete in a real submission; and 3) NIH should give institutions additional time to set up internal systems to support the new applications and to train their investigators.

NIH has responded in its latest edition of its *Extramural Nexus* newsletter. Dr. Norka Ruiz Bravo, director of OER and NIH deputy director for extramural research, announced that NIH was pushing back the planned

transition date for R01 grants (major research grants) by four months to Feb. 1, 2007, in order "address business processes here and at applicant organizations."

Budget proposal includes cuts to science education

Critics are decrying the nearly 27 percent cut to the NSF Math and Science Partnership (MSP) program proposed by the Bush administration (*Federal Grants and Contracts Weekly*, March 9, 2005). If approved, the cut would prevent any new grants from being issued, although current grant obligations would be fulfilled. The grants support institutes for K-12 teachers, partnerships between institutions of higher education and local K-12 schools, and capacity building grants for school districts with the intention of improving math and science education.

While the cuts to the MSP program have garnered much attention, the 8 percent proposed increase to NSF's overall budget was welcome news for many researchers. The number of research grants forecasted to be funded during FY'07 will increase from 6,190 to 6,760, the funding rate will likely increase from 20 percent — one of the lowest levels seen in decades — to 21 percent, and the median annualized award size will increase from \$108,900 to \$111,800. Overall funding for research and related activities would total \$4.6 million, up from \$4.3 million.

NEH FY'07 budget proposal remains flat

The Bush administration has proposed keeping the National Endowment for the Humanities' budget at the current year's level of approximately \$141 million. Some \$15 million will be directed toward the "We the People" program, which encourages and strengthens the teaching, study and understanding of American history and culture.

In addition to "We the People," the proposal seeks to support NEH's strategic priorities, including increasing access to cultural and intellectual resources; strengthening humanities teaching and learning; facilitating research and original scholarship in the humanities; providing opportunities for Americans to engage in lifelong learning in the humanities; strengthening programs and activities of the state humanities councils; strengthening the institutional base of the humanities; leveraging third-party contributions to humanities projects; and providing administrative funds.

NIH to pilot a speedier review process

The National Institutes of Health is attempting to shorten the peer reviews of its applications to cut down on time lags (*Federal Grants and Contracts Weekly*, Dec. 12, 2005). The pilot program will initially target new investigators applying for their first major grant.

"[New investigators] are the most vulnerable in times of budgetary constraints and often do not have the resources to withstand long review cycles," said NIH Director Elias Zerhouni. NIH is seeking to reduce the time of their review cycles by half. The current system generally takes nine months before researchers know whether they will receive an award.

Applicants who do not succeed on their first submission and who chose to try again face the lengthy process of revising, resubmission and re-review. The pilot is aimed at new investigators who are ready and able to address concerns and issues raised by reviewers in their summary statement. These applicants may resubmit the amended applications for the next scientific review meeting, rather than waiting a cycle, thereby lopping off four months from the process.

A Sampling of Awards and Submissions

Please join the Office of Foundation, Corporate and Government Relations as we extend congratulations to the following faculty members who have recently received awards or submitted proposals.

Mark Bailey, associate professor of computer science, submitted a grant to the National Science Foundation, requesting \$35,259 for support of his project "Collaborative Research: Stimulating Wide Interest in Computer Science using Computer Security."

Eugene Domack, professor of geosciences, was awarded a \$7,500 grant from the National Science Foundation's Office of Polar Programs for support of his workshop "Micromorphology of Glaciogenic Deposits." Domack also submitted a proposal to the Office of Polar Programs' International Polar Year program, requesting \$379,390 to support his project "Collaborative Research: IPY in the Antarctic Peninsula — Ice Shelves, Oceans, Climate and Biota."

Timothy Elgren, associate professor of chemistry, was awarded a \$259,000 grant from the National Science Foundation for support of his project "RUI: Mechanistic Studies of Encapsulated Metalloenzymes."

Didar Erdinc, former visiting assistant professor of economics, has been awarded a curriculum development grant from the Syracuse University Maxwell School European Union Center to develop a new course "Law and Economics in the EU."

Jinnie Garrett, professor of biology, was awarded a \$50,603 grant from Li-Cor Biosciences for support of her project "Genetic Diversity Studies in Undergraduate Biology Laboratories."

Christophre Georges, professor of economics, was awarded, in collaboration with colleagues from The Brookings Institute, a \$108,299 grant from the National Science Foundation for their project "Macroeconomics from Bottom Up Via Very Large Scale Multi-Agent Systems."

Naomi Guttman, associate professor of English, submitted a proposal to the National Endowment for the Arts fellowship program.

Camille Jones, assistant professor of chemistry, was awarded a \$60,000 grant from the Department of Energy. The grant, which was awarded in collaboration with colleagues from Tulane University, will support their project "Molecular Design Basis for Hydrogen Storage in Clathrate Hydrates."

Michael McCormick, assistant professor of biology, was awarded a \$27,413 Small Grant for Exploratory Research from the National Science Foundation's Office of Polar Programs for support of his project "SGER: Geologic Constraints on Life in the Antarctic Sub-ice-shelf Environment." McCormick also submitted a grant, in collaboration with colleagues from Argonne National Laboratory, to the Department of Energy requesting support for their project "Coupled Microbial, Geochemical and Mineralogical Controls Onbiogenic Fell Speculation and Reactivity."

Tara McKee, assistant professor of psychology, has submitted, in collaboration with a colleague from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, a proposal to the National Institutes of Health requesting support for the project "A Prospective Study of the Development of ADHD, ODD and CD."

Melek Su Ortabasi, assistant professor of comparative literature, was awarded a fellowship from the Japan Foundation for support of her book project "Disseminating Modernity: Language and Doubt in Yanagita Kunio's Native Ethnology."

Ann Owen, associate professor of economics, has submitted, along with colleagues from Vassar, Colgate, Smith and Drew, a proposal to the National Science Foundation's economics program requesting support for their project "Workshop in Macroeconomic Research at Liberal Arts Colleges."

Sharon Werning Rivera, assistant professor of government, has submitted a proposal to the Smith Richardson Foundation's International Security Junior Faculty Research Grant program requesting support for her project "Foreign Leaders and the Spread of Democracy in the Post-Communist Region."

Thomas Wilson, professor of history, was awarded a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities for his study of the cult of Confucius in China from the 14th through 18th centuries.