



## **Lee Scholar's Support Fund Report from the Chair to the SSSP Board of Directors**

July 29, 2019

2018-2019 Lee Scholar Support Fund Committee:

Chair: Cristina Cielo; Members: Kamini Grahame, Erica Chito Childs

The selection of recipients and fund allocations for this year's Lee Scholar's Support Fund committee was fairly straightforward and benefitted from one of the committee's longer experience serving on SSSP committees as well as Michele Koontz's ever-helpful knowledge and conscientious work. After discussion via email among committee members, we agreed to collective decisions for the allocation of the awards' funds. As with last year, we were again concerned by the lack of applicants to these travel funds. There were seven applicants to the funds, three of whom had received funding multiple times over the last years. In addition, we were bothered by one of these past applicants' underpayment of fees. Despite having received several thousands of dollars of funding over the last years, this applicant paid professional dues as a first-time member. This may have been an oversight on the applicant's part but may also point to the need for clearer guidelines for members and applicants. Clearer guidelines may also help a more prevalent problem in the applications (and perhaps in all applications), which is the overstatement of costs. The SSSP provides cost estimates for rooms and meals, yet many of the applicants overestimated those costs. One of the reasons for the overestimation, particularly of room costs, could be that attendees may expect to stay longer in the hotel than others. Would it be possible in the future for the committee or the SSSP to indicate a set amount that applicants should estimate for room and board, with an explanation and justification for any request beyond that amount? To allocate funds, our committee chose a set amount to allocate for room and board for all recipients. Funds were allocated to the four applicants who had not previously received funding based on that amount plus their estimated travel costs.

The small number of applications to this fund may point to the SSSP's lack of international profile. Given the important work that the SSSP does connecting academic exchanges to practical, political and engaged working towards solutions to intractable multi-scalar social problems, it would be great to see the SSSP gaining more international recognition and membership. This would, on the one hand, benefit scholars and activists for whom participation in international exchanges is increasingly important. It would also, however, diversify the SSSP's discussions. Last year's committee recommended establishing institutional homes in different countries to promote Lee Scholars Support Fund information. The Lee Scholars' Funds have an important role to play in the internationalization of the SSSP's profile and discussions, and such a continuous presence in other countries, organized from the SSSP Board level, could play an important part in this internationalization.

Thank you for the opportunity of working with this committee, and we wish you the best for an excellent meeting this year.

