

FACULTY GRANTS NEWS

Published by the Office of Foundation, Corporate and Government Relations, Faculty Grants News reports on funding and research trends of public and private sources, as well as the grant and scholarly activities of Hamilton's faculty members.

Janack Lands \$90,000 NSF Grant

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM TELLS US that our experience of the world is selective — that we only “see” what we have been taught to see. Is this true? And, further, how does that relate to our mundane experience of the world? These are the issues Marianne Janack, the Sidney Wertimer Associate Professor of Philosophy, plans to examine while working on her project *The Educability of Experience: Value, Theory and the Problem of Objectivity*, funded with a \$93,348 grant from the National Science Foundation.

The grant will enable Janack to extend her regularly scheduled sabbatical to a full year. She plans to complete a manuscript examining the various theories from philosophy, psychology and the social sciences that relate to realism in scientific theory and moral knowledge.

“Experience as a concept occupies a central place in the humanities and the sciences — it appears in discussions of identity politics, religious studies, political theory, history and in discussions of empirical methods in the sciences. But underlying those discussions are some really difficult problems about the relationship between mind and world, and those problems are the ones I’m interested in addressing,” Janack said. She hopes her book will be of interest to a wide range of scholars, including those in philosophy, anthropology, social scientists, cognitive scientists, psychologists and others interested in feminist theory.

“Since the concept of experience plays a vital role in a number of disciplinary debates, and since its fate is tied both to theories of mind and discussions of realism, it is my hope that the analyses I give will contribute to a variety of disciplinary debates,” Janack added. “I hope, above all, to clarify the issues and to show how theories of mind both contribute to the problems about experience and how attending to work in psychology about the relationship between mind and world can contribute to a clarification of those problems.”



Marianne Janack

NSF is not generally thought of as an organization that funds philosophers, but the foundation does support the work of ethicists, philosophers, anthropologists and other social scientists interested in examining the relationships among science, technology, engineering and society. Under the Science, Technology and Society (STS) Program, NSF encourages applications from scholars interested in the historical, philosophical, social, cultural, policy and ethical questions that arise in connection with science and technology, and their respective interactions with

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NSF RELEASES NEW PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

One year after releasing updated proposal guidelines, NSF has issued a notice that it is once again revamping its proposal preparation guide. Faculty members who are planning to submit a grant application to the NSF should note that these new guidelines become effective Jan. 5, 2009. There are four significant changes:

- New guidance that addresses and implements the mentoring requirement of the America COMPETES Act.
- A “major” revision of NSF’s faculty salary reimbursement policy. The new guidelines limit compensation for senior personnel to no more than two months of their regular salary in any one year from NSF-funded grants.
- The debut of the Grants for Rapid Response Research (RAPID) and Early-concept Grants for Exploratory Research (EAGER) mechanisms, which replaces the SGER program.
- A revision of the definition of a Co-Principal Investigators.

The new guide can be found at www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf091.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS AND FINANCIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Beginning sometime in 2009, NIH will require all principal investigators (PIs) to enter and update annually information into its new Financial Conflict of Interest (FCOI) module. PIs should continue to check for updates from NIH to confirm the date for full implementation. PIs who do not update the FCOI module once it is implemented may make themselves ineligible to receive new grants or receive incremental awards for ongoing grants.

OMB PROPOSES GUIDANCE REGARDING THE GRANTS DATABASE

The Office of Management and Budget issued proposed pilot guidelines to implement reporting requirements for the new centralized federal grants database created under the 2006 Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (*Federal Grants & Contracts Weekly, June 2008*). Lawmakers wanted to create a single searchable Web site that would enable the public to access information about grants, cooperative agreements and other awards (see www.usaspending.gov). Agencies are required to submit information about new grants, but starting Jan. 1, 2009, grantees must also submit information about sub-awards that total \$25,000 or more.

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society. The STS program invites proposals that address four broad and overlapping themes: 1) studies of ethics and values in science and technology; 2) studies in history and philosophy of science and technology; 3) social studies of science and technology; and 4) studies in policy on science and technology.

Janack’s proposal fell into the second category. Proposals for this theme use the traditions and tools of history and philosophy to examine intellectual, theoretical, socio-cultural and material dimensions of science and technology. NSF asks that proposals submitted to this area of STS engage in “analytical, critical,

reflective and interpretive modes of study of the scientific and technological enterprises both past and present.” Moreover, NSF requests that proposals from philosophers “focus on a variety of modes such as providing epistemological, methodological, conceptual or metaphysical perspectives on a particular theory or conceptual or technological innovation, or on science or technology more broadly.”

Janack’s award wasn’t won easily. She first submitted the proposal to NSF in August of 2007. While that proposal received good reviews, the program officer was unable to fund

“Using the reviewer’s comments, I made substantial revisions to the proposal, which ultimately made the project stronger,” **Janack explained.** “Additionally, I took advantage of the Grant Activity Fund, administered by the Dean’s Office, which enabled me to lower my request from NSF.”

The exact data grantees are expected to provide has yet to be determined, but OMB said it will issue more specific guidelines once the pilot has been completed and reviewed. Like the FCOI, grantees who do not comply with this requirement may be disqualified from receiving future grants.

NSF SAYS SUCCESS RATE HOLDS STEADY

Despite flat budgets and increased competition, the NSF reports that applicants have the same chance of getting a grant in FY2007 as they did in FY2006 (*Federal Grants & Contracts Weekly, August 2008*). However, they also acknowledge that the success rates have declined significantly since FY2000 — the success rate now hovers around 26, down from 33 percent. Moreover, the success rate for research grants was lower than the NSF-wide rate. Applicants had a 21 percent chance of obtaining a research grant.

NSF received 44,577 proposals in FY2007 — a five percent increase from the previous year and a record for the agency — and made 11,463 awards, with the average award being \$146,270 and the average award length being three years.

Other findings of note include:

- The success rate was slightly higher for women PIs than men — 27 percent vs. 26 percent — but the number of proposals submitted by women continues to be behind the number submitted by men.
- The success rate for minority investigators was 25 percent.
- New PIs had the lowest success rate — 19 percent.
- NSF is continuing to increase the size of the grants it awards.

UNIVERSITY R&D FUNDING LAGS BEHIND INFLATION

According to a new NSF study, federal funding of academic science and engineering research and development fails to outpace inflation for a second year in a row (*Federal Grants & Contracts Weekly, August 2008*). NSF characterizes the decline as “unprecedented.” Sixty-four percent of R&D funding came from the federal government in FY2006, while in FY2007 it decreased to 62 percent.

During this period of decline, state and local governments have increased their funding of R&D expenditures by 6.1 percent, and industry funding is also increasing. ■

the project but encouraged her to resubmit. The STS program at NSF, like almost all of NSF's programs, had been receiving a record number of proposals while its budget remained essentially flat. Because of this increase in budgetary constraints, fewer proposals were being recommended for funding.

“Using the reviewer's comments, I made substantial revisions to the proposal, which ultimately made the project stronger,” Janack explained. “Additionally, I took advantage of the Grant Activity Fund, administered by the Dean's Office, which enabled me to lower my request from NSF.” The Grants Activity Fund has recently been reconstituted by the Dean of Faculty's Office. The new guidelines provide more flexibility in how the fund is used to support grant-active faculty members.

“I received a very generous \$10,000 grant development award, which will allow me to work on the project for a longer period of time than the NSF grant alone would have allowed. The Dean's Office also committed to cover 30 percent of supplies and travel costs and an additional \$6,500 for other project-related costs once the project was funded by the NSF,” Janack added.

Janack resubmitted the proposal in early February 2008 and received word in April that the proposal had been recommended for funding. After some minor re-budgeting, the award was officially made in August.

“My regularly scheduled leave takes place this fall. The NSF award will enable me to continue to devote all my attention to this project next semester and through the summer,” Janack said. The award also provides some travel funds, a stipend for an undergraduate research assistant, and will cover supplies and publishing costs.

The National Science Foundation is an independent federal agency created by Congress in 1950 “to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; to secure the national defense...” With an annual budget of about \$5.92 billion, NSF is the primary funding source for approximately 20 percent of all federally supported basic research conducted by America's colleges and universities, particularly in fields such as mathematics, computer science and the social sciences. ■

SELECTED 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.

HEATHER BUCHMAN, assistant professor of music and director of College orchestra and chamber music, was awarded a \$1,500 grant from the League of American Orchestras.

NATALIA CONNOLLY, assistant professor of physics, was awarded a \$68,655 grant from the National Science Foundation for her project *RUI: Developing New Computational Tools for the Study of Dark Energy*.

MYRIAM COTTEN, associate professor of chemistry, was awarded a \$525,000 grant from the National Science Foundation for her project *CAREER: Molecular Recognition and Biological Function at Water-Bilayer Interfaces: Bridging Structure, Dynamics and Function in Antimicrobial Peptides*.

CAMILLE JONES, assistant professor of chemistry, submitted a proposal to the National Science Foundation requesting \$602,575 for her project *CAREER: Hydrate Research: From Structure to Function*. Jones also submitted a proposal, along with a number of her colleagues, to the Department of Energy requesting support for their project *National Center for Multiscale Gas Hydrate Research: Methane Harvesting and CO₂ Sequestration*.

GORDON JONES, associate professor of physics, was awarded a \$89,988 grant from the National Science Foundation for his project *RUI: The aCORN Experiment to Measure the Beta-Neutrino Asymmetry in Neutron Decay*.

ANNE LACSAMANA, assistant professor of women's studies, was awarded a \$30,000 postdoctoral fellowship from the American Association of University Women for her project *Revolutionizing Feminism: The Philippine Women's Movement in the Age of Terror*.

SCOTT MACDONALD, visiting professor of comparative literature, received a \$4,000 grant from the New York State Council on the Arts for support of his program *F.I.L.M.: Forum for Images and Languages in Motion*.

STEPHEN ORVIS, professor of government, submitted, in collaboration with a colleague from SUNY University at Albany, a proposal to the National Science Foundation requesting \$336,536 for support of the project *Global Platform for Opinion Research*.

SHARON WERNING RIVERA, assistant professor of government, submitted a proposal to the Smith Richardson Foundation's Junior Faculty Research Grant Program requesting support for her project *The Militarization of the Russian Elite under Putin and Medvedev: How Wide, How Deep and What Impact?*

NICOLE SNYDER, assistant professor of chemistry, submitted a proposal to the National Institutes of Health requesting \$143,400 to support her project *Understanding the Role of the Vancomycin Glycan in Binding Glycosyltransferases*.

ASHLEIGH SMYTHE, visiting assistant professor of biology, submitted, in collaboration with colleagues, a proposal to the National Science Foundation requesting \$149,718 to support their project *RUI: Collaborative Research: Feeding preferences of nematodes in hot desert soils*.

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