

Faculty and Staff Diversity Mini-Grant Final Report

Project title: The Mythology of the Jewish Experience

Grant Recipients:

Barry Mehler, Professor, Humanities Dept. (Primary Applicant)

Team Members:

Piram Prakasam, Director Office of International Education

Tracy Busch, Assistant Professor of History

Todd Stanislav, Director FCTL

Caryn Mehler, Student Intern for ISAR-FSU

Date Project Started Spring 2014

Amount of Money Funded by the Mini-Grant, \$3,000

1. How was the grant used to address a diversity or inclusion related goal?

This event was part of the Office of International Education's *Beyond Mythologies* theme for the Fall 2013 and Spring 2014 school year. It was a multifaceted event which brought together, Jewish, Christian and Muslim students, community residents, faculty and staff in discussions that crossed gender, ethnic and religious barriers. The program's focus was a feminist analysis of patriarchy, Zionism and animal rights. The program included a book club which met three times during the Spring semester, a major public talk and our first ever Passover celebration on campus with our guest speaker as the host.

2. Describe the audience that was impacted by the grant's implementation. Provide quantitative data, if available.

The program brought Aviva Cantor, a noted Feminist, Zionist and champion of animal rights, to campus for a series of programs that began two months before her arrival with a book club, graciously organized by Todd Stanislav with 50 copies of the author's book to distribute free to anyone on campus who might want a copy. The book club brought together about twenty people for the first meeting, twelve for the second meeting and eight at the final meeting. Among those who stayed for all three sessions was Judge Susan Grant and Diane Marvel, two noted Jewish locals, who deeply appreciated having a Jewish event of this kind on campus. Judge Grant not only came to the book club but also to the Great Lakes Books meet and greet. The students who came were from every segment of the community, one young African student was particularly taken with the book and discussion and also was among those who came to all the sessions. The Passover celebration, our first ever at Ferris, was attended by Saudi students, which may also be a first ever, and it was sponsored by the Circle of Tribal Nations. Scott Herron, the advisor for the Circle of Tribal Nations was not listed as a grant recipient but was instrumental in organizing and sponsoring the Passover celebration which was underwritten by the Office of International

Students as part of a supplemental grant. Our Jewish students especially appreciated having this event on campus and they helped organize the book club, the campus visit and the Passover seder.

The keynote speech of the program nearly filled the Business auditorium. The audience was a mix of students from all segments of the campus, faculty, administrators, and community members.

3. Grant recipients are required to provide a short narrative that details the specific efforts each of the collaborators made to the implementation of the grant.

Barry Mehler, Professor, Humanities Dept. - Dr. Mehler initiated the program and assembled the team. He acted as the team leader.

Piram Prakasam, Director Office of International Education - came to all the planning meetings and coordinated the event with the Beyond Mythologies event. Piram's office also put together the contract to bring the speaker and arranged the travel for the event. Piram also provided the funds to purchase fifty copies of the speaker's book to distribute to anyone on campus interested in having a copy. Katie R. Davidson, from the Office of International Education was the key liaison person between the Office and the Program. She came to all the meetings and took our speaker to lunch on the day of the program.

Tracy Busch, Assistant Professor of History - helped organize the event on all levels, attended all meetings and was primarily in charge of organizing the advertising signs and posters for the event. Dr. Busch also moderated the book club discussion.

Todd Stanislav, Director FCTL - was primarily instrumental in organizing and hosting the three book club events. The Book Club lunches were courtesy of the FCTL office. Laurie Daniels was the key liaison person for the FCTL and she arranged the lunches for the Book Club and other details including the room assignment, arrangement and advertising.

Caryn Mehler, Student Intern for ISAR-FSU - student assistant, attended all meetings and helped on every level with organization of the event as well as hosting the speaker in her home.

Scott Herron, faculty advisor for the Circle of Tribal Nations was particularly instrumental in organizing the Passover seder. Piram Prakasam arranged for a special grant to cover the cost of the event which was hosted in the Library.

Frances Rosen, Faculty in Residence for the Diversity and Inclusion Office, helped throughout the planning stages, attended the book club meetings and the Great Lakes event. She also was our speaker's escort on campus for the International Festival. She took charge of our guest for most of the

day, seeing to her transportation and meals.

While David Pilgrim was not a member of the team, I think it needs to be said that without his active intervention, the program would have been cancelled. I am deeply grateful to him for his assistance.

4. What is your overall assessment of the project's impact on the Ferris community? How did this impact compare to what you expected?

This program brought many members of the small Jewish community together. This was not a Jewish religious event, our speaker was a feminist and animal rights activist and outspoken Zionist. I don't believe we have ever had an event like this before. Certainly, the Passover seder was the first ever in Ferris history. Since there is nothing here for Jews, Jewish community members hardly ever engage with Jewish students and Jewish students hardly ever have an opportunity to be engaged in a Jewish oriented event on campus. The sponsorship of the Diversity Office, the FCTL, the Office of International Education and the Circle of Tribal Nations made this a truly unique event. I think everyone was hopeful that this event would be the beginning of many more similar events that might lead eventually to establishment of a Hillel on the Ferris Campus.

5. Present a final budget including all funds received and spent related to the project, with special focus on the funds received via the Diversity Mini-grant.

ORIGINAL Budget

a. Anticipated Expenses:	
Airfare:	\$500
Baggage	\$50.00
Car to and from Laguardia:	\$100
Car to and from GR:	\$77.00
Honorarium:	\$2,000
50 copies of <i>Jewish Women</i>	\$500
Publicity and Printing	\$200
Entertainment and food	\$300
Total:	\$3727
b. Funds anticipated from other sources:	
Office Of International Education	\$500
Faculty Center for Teaching & Learning	\$127
Humanities Department	\$100
c. Amount requested Faculty and Staff Diversity Mini-Grant	\$3,000

NOTE: The final budget numbers have to be assembled from several offices on

campus, the Office of International Education was primarily in charge of the transfer of funds and I have requested a final budget from them. As soon as I have the final numbers, I will submit an addendum to this report.