

To the Finance and Appropriations Committee of the 14th GUSA Senate,

Introduction

The Lecture Fund (LF) humbly prepares this appeal and respectfully requests that the Finance and Appropriations Committee reconsider our initial request for an allocation of \$98,000 for Fiscal Year 2021. As it stands, LF has been forced to rely upon the same budget of \$85,000 for the past two academic years, amid astronomically-rising honorarium and co-sponsorship costs. This lack of growth in LF's yearly allocation has hindered our organization from fully accomplishing its mission to spark dialogue on Georgetown's campus and bring speakers that enlighten, educate and, occasionally, entertain. This increase in our organization's allocation by \$13,000 would allow us to better cover the costs of rising honoraria, support more co-sponsorships from other student organizations, and ultimately, to better serve the greater Georgetown community.

Outlook for FY21

In FY21, LF hopes to broaden our outreach across Georgetown's campus. We hope to do this by strengthening our capacity to offer more honoraria to a diverse array of speakers and by collaborating with more organizations across campus. Without an increase in our budget LF cannot hope to achieve these goals. For example, with regard to the former, LF hopes to create more dialogue in the music and arts realm in the future. As a collective, we feel that these areas are underrepresented and thus, hope to pursue more speakers in music and the arts. However, speakers in these areas also typically request higher honoraria. For example, this past year LF hosted rapper and poet NoName. Her original honorarium request was \$30,000, which is **twice** the average honorarium request LF receives. While we were able to successfully negotiate that down to \$9000, this is emblematic of the higher prices LF faces to broaden dialogue and outreach on campus.

Beyond honoraria, a \$13,000 increase LF's budget would enable us to collaborate with more organizations on campus **and** offer greater financial contributions to those organizations. Insofar as our average financial contribution to co-sponsors was \$1593, a \$13,000 increase could allow LF to co-sponsor up to 8 more events. It could also give us the option to increase our financial contributions from the average \$1593. LF would have loved to partner with organizations we historically haven't partnered with such as African Society of Georgetown, but we simply lacked the funds to do so.

In short, our goal for FY21 is to broaden the topics and speakers we bring to campus. A \$13,000 increase in our budget would go a long way in helping offset the rising costs of honoraria and increasing co-sponsorship requests.

Honoraria

In recent years, LF has been experiencing a trend of rising honoraria. This is our primary budget concern as between FY19 and FY20, the average honorarium request increased from \$6,071 to \$15,000. Despite the fact that we negotiated honoraria down by 37% this year, a limited budget hindered us from pursuing more costly speaker engagements, and we ran out of money several months before the end of the 2020 semester.

Co-sponsorships

Co-sponsorships are essential to the mission of our organization because they actively empower Georgetown students outside of our organization to conduct meaningful events open to the Hilltop. They also diversify the speech and topics covered in our campus environment, and allow organizations that may not have the means, to cater to important on-campus niches. This fiscal year, the Lecture Fund entered into co-sponsorships with AASA, the African Society, the Astronomical Society, B.R.A.V.E, the Black Student Alliance, Caribbean Culture Circle, the College Republicans, Georgetown Scholars Program, Georgetown Program Board, J Street, the Lannan Center, GU Pride, Rangila, Right to Life, TAMID, the Prisons and Justice Initiative, the Voice, and WERC. However, there were four co-sponsorships this semester that we had to turn down, and could not support financially due to the fact that we had reached our budgetary limit. For example, the African Society of Georgetown, who requested LF's financial support for their Young Africa Summit, was unable to pursue their original keynote speaker because LF could not offer the necessary financial contribution.

Between FY19 and FY20, the total of received co-sponsorship requests exploded from \$47,112 to \$123,616, of which only \$22,300 could be filled. With more funds, we would have been able to support the co-sponsorships that we had to deny financial allocations to. We would also be able to increase our partnerships with newer organizations that have not institutionally partnered with us over the years.

Value

We understand that one of the biggest concerns FinApp raised was measuring LF's impact on campus. While there is no formal metric for calculating the impact our lectures have, that is not to say their impact is not seen or felt on campus. As a former LF chair put it, "Lecture quality is like intelligence. Ask 10 people for a definition and get 10 different answers; but most **people will know it when they see it.**" Quantitatively speaking, the impact of our lectures can be seen in the attendance they garner. The Meek Mill lecture on Criminal Justice Reform, for example, filled Lohrfink Auditorium (occupancy 402). Likewise, NoName's lecture filled Copley Formal, which holds 200 people. However, the impact of these lectures was not contained to the occupancy of these rooms. Articles published in the Hoya and the Voice reached people who could not attend these events, and both artists' social media presence helped their messaging reach even further. Qualitatively, the impact of LF's lectures can be seen in the unique dialogue and discussions they generate. From discussing women's healthcare with the former CEO of Planned Parenthood, Dr. Leana Wen to analyzing human behavior and big data with renowned journalist and podcast host, Shankar Vedantam LF has made every effort to spark dialogue across a diverse array of topics.

In order to accommodate LF's request for a \$13,000 budget increase, FinApp should look to cut from the following organizations: GOLD, GPB, and GUSA Exec. While GOLD is a tremendous organization that provides leadership opportunities for Hoyas on campus, as the FinApp Budget Summit Report, GOLD has experienced a decline in student participation. LF, on the other hand, by virtue of rising co-sponsorship requests and increasing attendance at our events, has experienced a sharp rise in student participation and outreach. Unfortunately, we don't currently have the funds to meet that rise. With regard to GPB and GUSA Exec, both organizations received increases from their FY20 budgets. While GPB coordinates beneficial student programming and GUSA Exec advocates for students, LF's lectures are an essential and unique tool for sparking productive dialogue on campus and incorporating different students and organizations into the conversation. Put simply, LF is the only organization which makes this its sole mission. As honoraria and co-sponsorships continue to rise, LF will not be able to execute that mission. Insofar as it is the sole organization that cultivates constructive dialogue through speaking engagements on campus, dialogue as a whole would suffer.