



PLATO Philosophy Fund Application

Project Title: 2019 Iowa Lyceum: American philosophers and Existentialism

Dates for Project: June 2019

Amount of Funding Requested: \$700

1. Please describe the project, including any work that has already been done to develop it. (500 words max)

The Iowa Lyceum is a free five-day philosophy summer camp. The Iowa Lyceum gives local high school students a chance to engage in philosophy that is all-too rare for American high school students.

The Iowa Lyceum divides into 20 45-minute sessions which include an introduction to logic and critical thinking, a session focused on a close textual reading and reconstruction of a well-known philosophical argument, and various other sessions related to the chosen theme for the year. The students create and deliver presentations on the final day of the Iowa Lyceum on a philosophical topic of their choosing, which giving them a chance to practice what we teach.

The Iowa Lyceum provides free breakfast and lunch to participants, and gives students two gifts: a philosophical text and an Iowa Lyceum t-shirt. It is organized by graduate students in, and taught by members of, the University of Iowa Philosophy Department.

The Iowa Lyceum is entering its sixth year, so it is a quite well-developed program. We have double-digit enrollment and a worked-out annual schedule for organizing the Iowa Lyceum. We have an established selection of vendors and a network of 34 contacts from local high schools who advertise the program and encourage students to attend. Thanks to widespread support in our philosophy department, we easily fill our twenty scheduled slots with volunteer teachers, resulting in a rich group of philosophical topics organized around a theme for that year.

Thanks to the support of a PLATO grant for the 2018 Iowa Lyceum, we had 25 students. We aim to build on that success with PLATO's support in the upcoming year.

Our new president, Laura Brown, has helped organize the past two Iowa Lyceum programs and taught the critical thinking sessions, and our president *emeritus* will remain in an advisory role. So there is plenty of experience among the current organizers heading into the 2019 Iowa Lyceum. After six successful Iowa Lyceum programs, we know how to run it.

2. What is the purpose of this project? (500 words max)

The Iowa Lyceum is organized by a group of philosophers engaged in introducing critical reasoning and philosophy to pre-college students. We think one's education in philosophy is too important to wait. To that end, we organize an annual summer camp with the purpose of introducing philosophy and logic to Iowa's pre-college students. The five-day summer camp is free to any interested students aged thirteen and up, and we aim to keep it that way. We limit enrollment to about fifteen students to ensure each student has a chance to participate. Our program mission is to encourage younger students to engage in philosophical discourse and to provide them the benefits of a philosophical education.

3. Who will benefit from the project, and how? (500 words max)

The first and foremost beneficiaries of the Iowa Lyceum are the students. They get some exposure to philosophical questions and some practice in critical thinking that is too rare in American high schools.

The volunteer-organizers and volunteer-instructors are also beneficiaries: all those that teach in the Iowa Lyceum enjoy doing it year-after-year, and the organizers put in many hours to ensure the program runs, and runs smoothly, each summer.

Further, the profession of philosophy itself benefits from our program outreach to our Iowa community. We visit local high schools to encourage students to apply for the Iowa Lyceum. We have started looking for off-site locations for the Iowa Lyceum. And each year about 15-to-25 students (and their parents) are positively informed about what philosophers do (by doing it themselves) and of philosophy's value (also by doing it themselves). This is sorely needed given the underexposure of American high school students to philosophy and its strong practical value.

One important effect has multiple beneficiaries: the Iowa Lyceum helped spread pre-college philosophy programs beyond Iowa. One of our Iowa Lyceum co-founders started a sister program in Cedar City, Utah. Another University of Iowa alumnus contacted us for advice on budgeting for the Iowa Lyceum. He has started a Southern California Philosophy Academy for high school students. This has resulted in part from the example set by our Iowa Lyceum. PLATO even called our program "A Model for Pre-College Philosophy Programming".

We believe this increase in pre-college philosophy programming is in part due to the positive and helpful experiences with the Iowa Lyceum enjoyed by philosophers founding new programs after their completion of the PhD at the University of Iowa. And the beneficiaries include the institutions, organizers and volunteers, and students involved in such a program, as well as the profession of philosophy itself.

4. What is the plan for developing and implementing the project? Include a timeline.

The Iowa Lyceum is entering its sixth year. So we have a well-established groundwork we use to organize our annual summer camp. We already have partial funding for our 2019 program: we are seeking the remaining funds for our 2019 Iowa Lyceum. Our current funding for the 2019 program comes to us largely from the University of Iowa—in particular, from the philosophy department (\$500), the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (\$1,000), and American Philosophical Association (\$330).

The philosophy department also provides instructors for the Lyceum: they generously volunteer their time to teach for the Iowa Lyceum, and have done so for the past five years.

In addition to these university relationships, we have a fairly extensive network of 34 contacts at local high schools to advertise the Iowa Lyceum: these are teachers and counselors who help bring students that may be interested in philosophy to the Iowa Lyceum. We have also visited high schools to advertise the Iowa Lyceum with guest talks.

We have established vendors for t-shirts, catering, and books for the Iowa Lyceum, and we are well-practiced at placing these orders. We advertise the Iowa Lyceum through in-person visits to schools, e-mail, press coverage by national and local outlets, and social media. We will continue to engage in all these activities. Our annual schedule is as follows:

Annual Schedule

December/January

1. Choose a week and theme for the Lyceum. Update the website for year's program. Set the week for the Tuesday-Saturday immediately after emergency weather days for the Iowa City school district end.
2. Reach out to contacts to advertise the Lyceum.

February

1. Confirm faculty and graduate students from the philosophy department to commit to teaching sections.

March

1. Do background checks on everyone who will be involved—without exception.
2. Order books for the year's program.
3. Order t-shirts.

April

1. Reserve a room for the week.

Early May

1. Admit participants, watch e-mail for students' and parents' questions
2. Plan catering orders for the Lyceum, keeping in mind dietary restrictions.

Late May/June--weeks leading to Lyceum

1. Be in regular, early contact with parents.
2. Place catering orders.
3. Debrief at the end of the Lyceum, noting what went well and why, and what didn't and why.

5. What other funding sources have you explored for this project?

We have partial funding for the 2019 Iowa Lyceum (\$1,830). Our 2019 program budget is \$2,500. With an extra 10 students last year, and with the expectation that of at least 20 students in the 2019 Iowa Lyceum program, we have elected to forgo honorariums for organizers. This will keep costs manageable and to ensure that all resources benefit the students participating in our Lyceum program.

We are pleased to note that our request this year is one-third of what we received from PLATO last year, and that our budget for the 2019 program is smaller than our 2018 budget.

We submit this application after having received approval of departmental funding this week, allowing us to minimize our funding request from PLATO. We apologize for submitting it after PLATO's posted deadline, but we wished to request only what we felt we would actually need to grow and develop the 2019 Iowa Lyceum.



6. Please list your budget, including any amounts from other sources.

Background Checks	\$200
Books for the students	\$300
Breakfast and beverages	\$350
Lunches	\$1,000
Paper, Folders, and Pens	\$50
T-shirts for the students	\$400
2019 Iowa Lyceum Budget	\$2,250
<i>Funds received from other sources</i>	\$1,830
Requested Allocation from PLATO	\$500

Summary

The organizers of a free, week-long philosophy-summer camp for Iowa high schoolers, the Iowa Lyceum, request \$500 in funding from PLATO to run the program once more in June 2019.