



American Studies Association
Solidarity Fund

2019 Annual Report

About the Solidarity Fund

This past year, the American Studies Association, as represented by the 2018 and 2019 National Council, embarked on planning period in response to the difficult realities we face as our profession and the fields we share in common are increasingly pressured by neoliberalized college and university administrations, cuts to funding, and federal and state policies that try to limit and even endanger our work.

Against this backdrop, the **ASA Solidarity Fund** allows the association to facilitate the transfer of resources – between teachers and students; emerging scholars and more established ones; public practitioners or activists and academics; and (especially) those precariously situated with those employed with greater stability – to support and strengthen our membership.

While the future of the Fund will unfold as we build toward a collective vision, our immediate goal for 2019 was to raise enough funds to provide conference subsidies for **precarious members** who receive little to no professional development support from their institutions and employers.

Above and beyond the financial support generated through the Fund, the association has also started to develop an infrastructure to better understand how these challenges are impacting our membership. **This Annual Report shares that growing knowledge, in gratitude to the contributing members who comprise the ranks of the ASA Solidarity Fund.**

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“ I remain grateful for the sheer existence of the Solidarity Fund. As I have come to expect from the ASA, it not only recognizes the deterioration of labor relations in the academy, but also confronts that process in an effective way. I am honored, as ever, to be a part of this organization.”

- 2019 Solidarity Fund Grantee

Letter from the Presidents

Dear ASA members and friends:

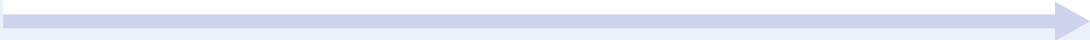
We write as president and president-elect of the ASA to thank you for your support in making the ASA a home for scholars, artists, and organizers doing vital intellectual work that rises to the immense challenges we face.

These are perilous times for all of us who care about justice, democracy and academic freedom. There is no shortage of powerful forces plotting and acting to disrupt our progress, thwart our mission, and retaliate against organizations and individuals who take principled stands for social justice and international solidarity.

Defying ominous trends within academia, the ASA is both growing and building a base that is younger, more diverse, and deeply engaged. The 2019 Annual Meeting was another major step forward - with 520 sessions and 2,384 presenters on the program crossing disciplinary and geographic boundaries. We have been inspired and invigorated by the dedicated community coming together in the ASA.

These promising developments, however, mandate that we assume greater responsibility for our colleagues struggling in the face of academic precarity. Reflecting the ASA's abiding commitment to equity and justice, we are redoubling our efforts to support contingent and unemployed faculty, undergraduate students, and community-based scholars through the **ASA Solidarity Fund**. The Fund is a modest attempt to exemplify a material commitment to equity amidst deteriorating labor conditions in higher education, as well as to demonstrate an organizational ethic of care and support for members who need our support.

Consistent with our theme "Build as We Fight," we offered 50 travel stipends plus free registration for eligible applicants through the Solidarity Fund for the first time in 2019. This paralleled the existing support the ASA offers graduate students through the Baxter Travel Grant and complemented initiatives to promote universal access and uplift working parents. Such measures helped make possible



Letter from the Presidents (continued)

... the participation of insurgent scholars addressing the burning issues of our time. These and other sessions will continue to make an impact through the ASA's [YouTube channel](#).

We know the climate within our organizations and institutions significantly shapes the conditions of knowledge production in our field. Supporting the ASA Solidarity Fund goes a long way toward building a healthy and nurturing culture for everyone in American Studies. And we have bigger plans for the 2020 Annual Meeting in Baltimore, animated by the theme "[Creativity within Revolt](#)." This theme highlights the vast, thriving forms of scholarly and artistic knowledge that emerge from within collective struggles for community, self-determination, and radical freedom.

The ASA has built a reputation as one of the largest, most exciting academic organizations in the world; in fact, we are collectively stretching and challenging conventional notions of "the academy" in our Annual Meeting as we consistently exhibit new ways of sharing our critical scholarly and creative labors. To contribute, visit theasa.net/donate-now where you will be linked to our secure donation page. We also ask that you consider joining the Solidarity Fund as a [monthly contributor](#).

Please feel free to contact either or both of us with any questions, comments, and or suggestions. Thank you for your consideration, and long live the ASA!

Sincerely,



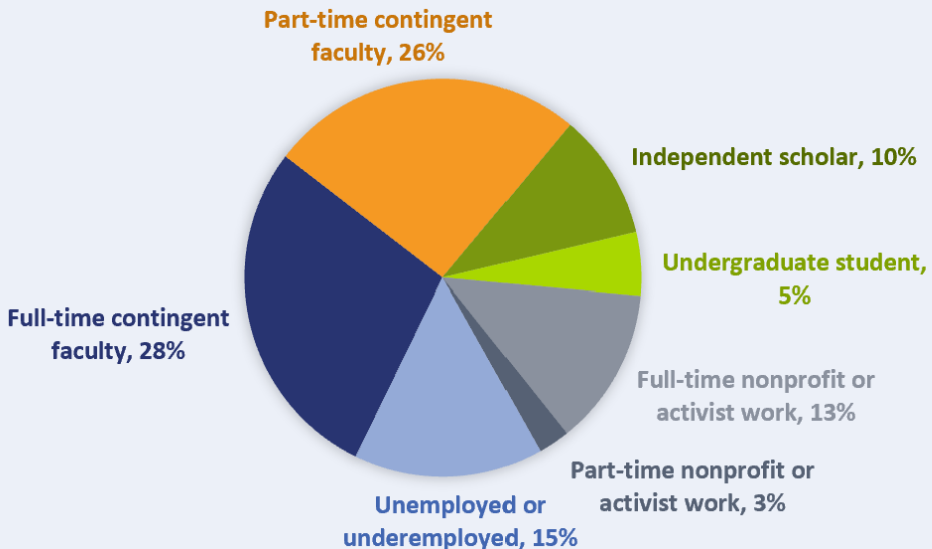
Scott Kurashige
2019-2020 President



Dylan Rodriguez
2020-2021 President

Solidarity Fund 2019 Grantees

Solidarity Fund travel grants of \$300 and additional money to cover conference registration fees were provided for members who receive little or no institutional support to attend the Annual Meeting.



Solidarity Fund Grants: By the Numbers

- 51 applications were received by October 1st deadline.
- 5 applicants were earmarked for Baxter grants, given grad student status.
- 2 applicants withdrew after last-minute appointments provided funding.
- 2 applicants canceled as total costs exceeded their ability to attend.
- 1 applicant canceled due to health issues.
- 1 applicant didn't meet requirements, with the bulk of costs covered.
- In total: 40 Solidarity Fund grants were awarded and accepted.

Topics brought to the Honolulu Meeting by 2019 Solidarity Fund grantees

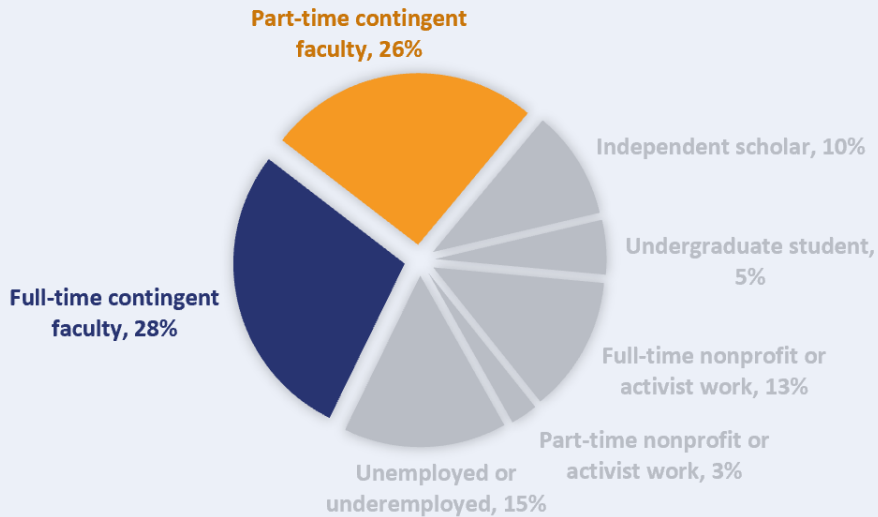
The theories, methods, and practices of open-access scholarship • the contingent majority in higher ed • building support for multiply-marginalized disabled people • the failure of multiculturalism in the academy • donor influence across higher ed • the racial and colonial entanglements of U.S. higher education • white nationalism on campus and in the classroom • policing and racial repressions in the largest cities of the U.S. • critiques of public health and healthcare as inseparable from state/policing • the afterlife of the Hawaiian plantation economy • hula as performative enactment at Mauna Kea's summit • artist collectives at Standing Rock in support of #NoDAPL • hunger strikes against the weaponization of life by the carceral state • the incorporation of Zionism into U.S. white nationalism • the transpacific figured in transracial adoptee poetry • later-life migration to the U.S. in the Filipino-American community through the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1990 • the 1963 Birmingham church bombing • American studies in Africa • "-x" as a gendered morpheme in Spanish



More about contingent members

With the introduction of the Solidarity Fund, the association started to ask members to let us know if they're part of a constituency that may need more support and outreach – including contingent faculty.

Contingent faculty comprise a majority of 2019 grantees.



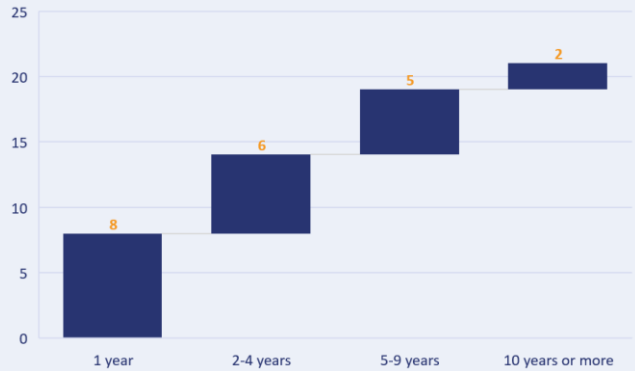
Contingent faculty represent a growing majority of faculty across higher ed institutions.

At the ASA annual meeting, there are **3 graduate students** and **6 full-time faculty members** for every **1 contingent member**.*

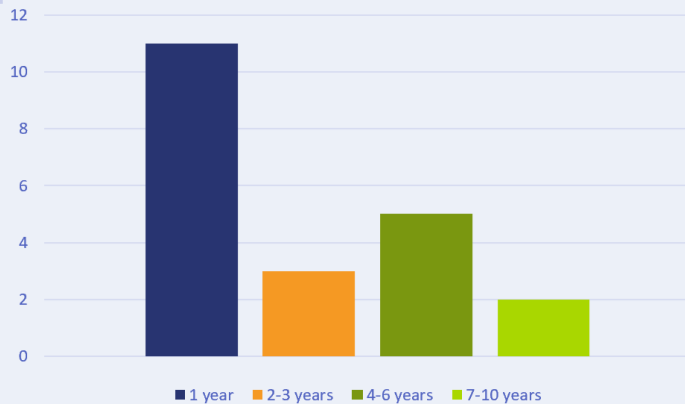
*based on registration as of Oct 15, 2019

The life and times of contingency among 2019 Solidarity Fund grantees

*This year's Solidarity Fund grantees were asked: **how long have you worked in contingent positions?***



*Solidarity Fund grantees were also asked: **how long ago did you complete your degree?***



The above (gathered from grantee surveys) gives visibility into the **window of time** in which members remain active in the association following completion of their degree and without secure employment. It is partial in the sense that the association has yet no formal way understand where contingent members go in their careers when they stop participating regularly in the meeting. The data above is also partial: it reflects Solidarity Fund grantees, but not the larger subset of contingent members who presented at the 2019 meeting.

Reports from the field: Professional development funding

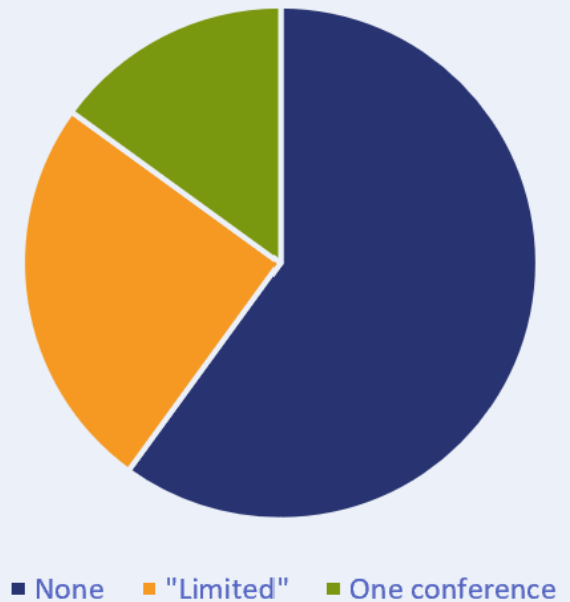
This year's contingent faculty grantees were asked:

What kind of professional development funding do you receive from your institution?

The majority answered "none" (60%).

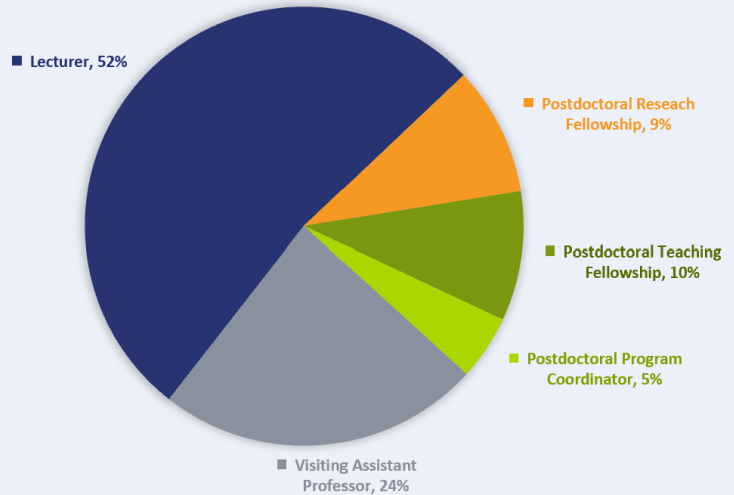
Some responded that professional development funding was "limited" (25%) – where "limited" is cited as limited to: full-time faculty; conference travel only, with no research-related funds; or entirely at the discretion of a dean or provost. Professional development may also be limited to only paper presentations, not chairing or commenting on a panel.

For those who responded that there is funding available for conference travel (15%), some specified a monetary amount (i.e., \$450 or \$600), while others quantified it in relation to the number of conferences that are covered (i.e., one large national conference vs. two small regional ones).



Reports on the profession: Horizons and hopes

*This year's Solidarity Fund grantees were asked:
What kind of contingent position do you hold?*



*They were also asked:
Which terms below best describe your career focus for the next five years?*





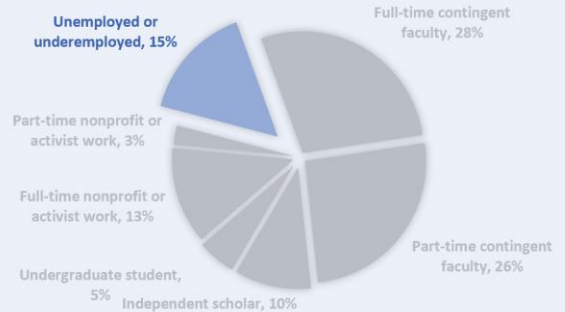
“ I am an adjunct member and I am only employed on a contingent basis. My employment is very unstable.... I am on the job market, and my university is my only source of income. I do not have any external support.

Attending the ASA’s conference is something I am not sure how I will be able to manage without the Solidarity Fund.”

- 2019 Solidarity Fund Grantee

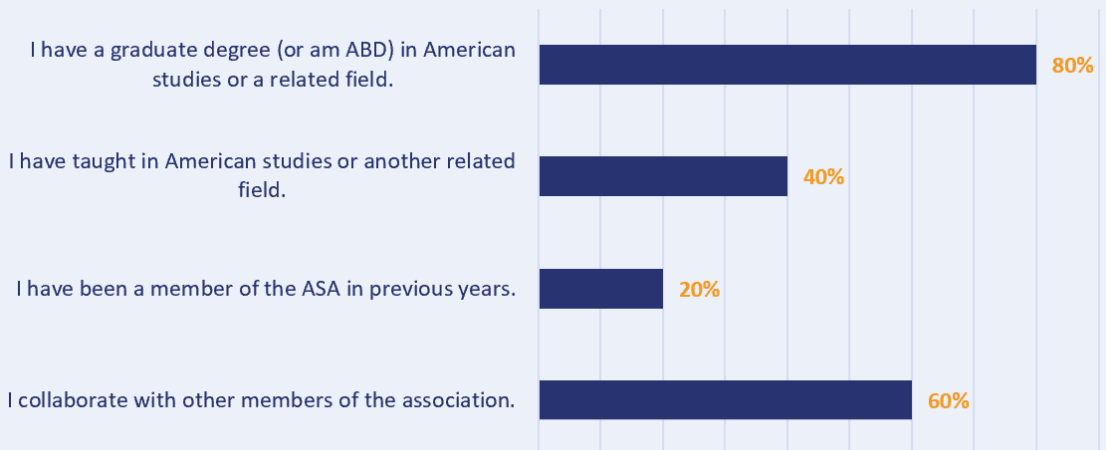
The heart of precarity: The unemployed and underemployed

Unemployed and underemployed members represent the third largest group of grantees for the inaugural year of the Solidarity fund, with 15% of travel grants going to support their participation in the annual meeting.



Unemployed and underemployed grantees were asked:

What background brought you to the ASA?



The academic labor market as seen from the margins

Solidarity Fund grantees who are unemployed or underemployed were asked:

Can you tell us about conditions that have made (academic) work untenable or hard to find?

In their words ...

- “I have a MA but not a PhD. Despite having thirty years of practical work experience, without a PhD I am ineligible for many positions.”
- “I have a disability, and it has been difficult to find work.”
- “I am a mother of two young children, where parenting and the demands of academia have been hard to balance. I come from a working-class background and am the daughter of once-undocumented parents and have also had to fight hard for my husband to gain ‘legal’ status. Thus, time and finances have been challenging because our family has been in survival mode for so long. I am hopeful though and haven't given up.”
- “I am completing a manuscript and so I’ve taken time off to write and to attend to health issues.”
- “I was asked to leave my PhD program quite unexpectedly. Afterwards I wasn’t sure if I was cut out to pursue work in academic spaces. As I regained confidence, the next obstacle was realizing that I also had little work experience. I went from undergrad directly to grad school and did not work in academic spaces during school. I wanted deeply to continue pursuing my goal of museum work, but entry level positions for an Anthropology MA are hard to find or [hard to] translate [for] skills.”

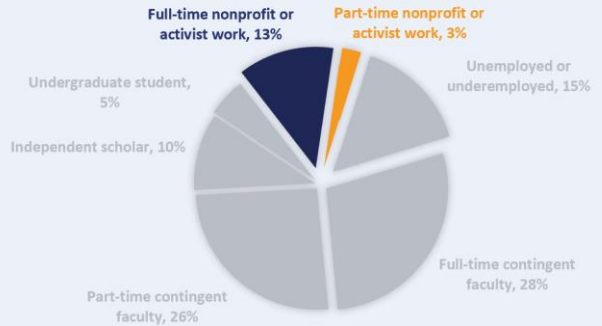


“ For the last two years I have worked as contingent faculty while seeking a tenure-track position. I was informed in May of this year that my contract would not be renewed due to financial constraints. This news was unforeseen and in violation of the Adjunct Faculty Union’s collective bargaining agreement, which specifies that non-regular rank faculty members must be given five and a half months’ notice of nonrenewal. Due to these late breaking and unanticipated circumstances, I have found myself in significant financial hardship.”

– From a Solidarity Fund application

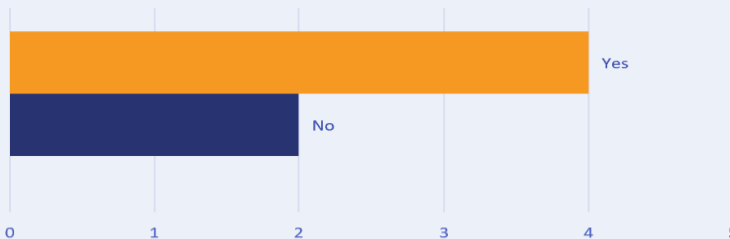
More about nonprofit grantees

Taken together, full-time and part-time nonprofit grantees represent the second largest group of grantees for the inaugural year of the Solidarity Fund, with 16% of travel grants going to support their participation in the annual meeting.

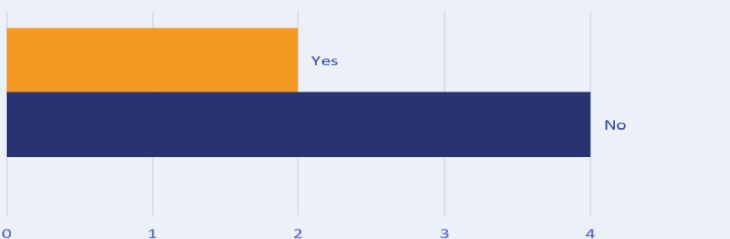


Nonprofit grantees were asked:

Is this your first time attending the ASA meeting?



Do you often go to conferences hosted by scholarly societies?




Strengthening bonds with mission-driven organizations

As a new initiative, the Solidarity Fund gave the **2019 Program Committee** the means to offer support to those working at nonprofits. As such, the Fund provided a “signal boost” for critical practice that happens outside a strictly academic framework. At the meeting, it will also provide visibility for alt-academic and post-academic careers.

Grantees were asked:

What is the mission of your nonprofit?

- “Our mission is to equip campus and community advocates with research and organizing materials to create informed grassroots campaigns that reclaim public institutions from privatization and donor influence.”
- “Our mission is to advance justice and equity by empowering low-income immigrant communities through collaborative legal services, advocacy, and education.”
- “Our mission is to protect and advance the civil rights of adults and children with mental illness or developmental disabilities. “
- “We engage in disability as a creative practice.”
- “We bring Asian American communities together online and offline to reimagine Asian American identity with nuance, specificity, and power. We utilize digital-first advocacy tactics to elevate the voices of and mobilize our over 120,000 members to take action on issues that matter to them.”

A photograph of two women sitting at a table, engaged in conversation. The woman on the left is seen in profile, wearing glasses and smiling. The woman on the right has long blonde hair and is also wearing glasses, looking towards the first woman. They are both holding coffee cups. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting like a cafe or office breakroom. The entire image has a blue color overlay.

“ [As a nonprofit grantee] I hope to come away from the ASA meeting with deeper connections to people working to bridge scholarship and activism, especially cross-disciplinary and multidisciplinary work.”

- 2019 Solidarity Fund Grantee

More on **undergraduate grantees**

In 2019, the Solidarity Fund also provided a base of support to bolster another new initiative, the **ASA Undergraduate Initiative**.

Launched in 2017 at the Chicago Annual Meeting, which convened under the theme of “Pedagogies of Dissent,” the Undergraduate Initiative gives advanced undergraduates an accessible, welcoming introduction to the association.

At the Honolulu meeting, undergraduate members were:

- Invited to attend the Student Committee social mixer
- Connected with other undergraduates to help in navigating the conference
- Provided with local recommendations from UH Mānoa AMST undergrad students
- Given a special spot on the program via a panel on the undergraduate initiative
- Placed in contact with members who volunteered their time as ASA mentors for “office hours” at the annual meeting

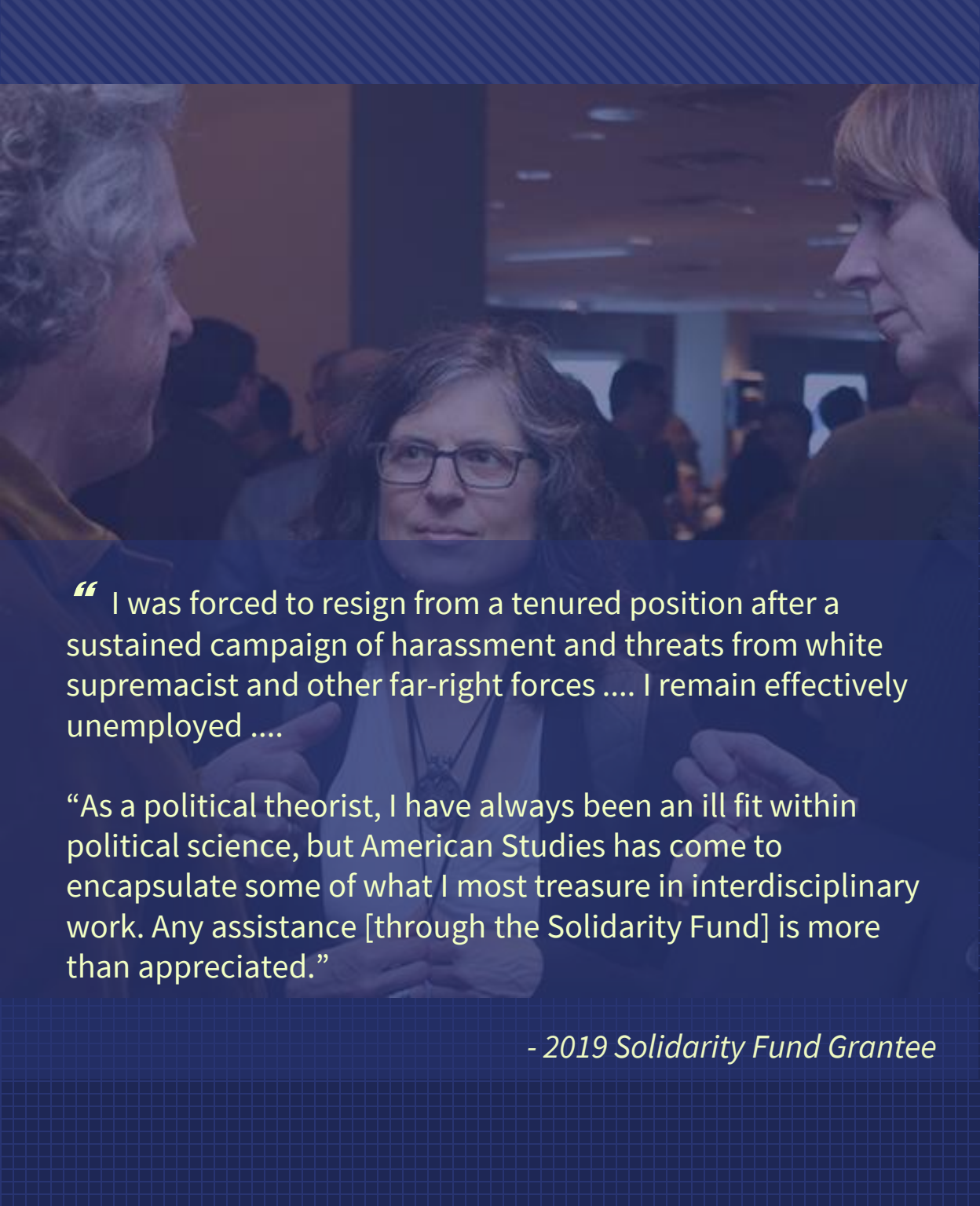
Through participating in ASA annual meetings, undergraduates:

- Grasp a wide spectrum of scholarship and debates within the field
- Discover and engage with faculty beyond their institutional context
- Attend panels and informal office hours with authors they’re reading in coursework
- Become familiar with programs ahead of applying to a MA or PhD program

Interested in having your students participate in this initiative – or participating yourself?

Contact 2018 President Rod Ferguson (roderick.ferguson@yale.edu) and Mérida Rúa (mrua@northwestern.edu).



A photograph of a woman with glasses and a necklace, looking slightly to her right, engaged in conversation with two other people. The background is a blurred indoor setting, likely a conference or meeting. The image has a blue tint.

“ I was forced to resign from a tenured position after a sustained campaign of harassment and threats from white supremacist and other far-right forces I remain effectively unemployed

“As a political theorist, I have always been an ill fit within political science, but American Studies has come to encapsulate some of what I most treasure in interdisciplinary work. Any assistance [through the Solidarity Fund] is more than appreciated.”

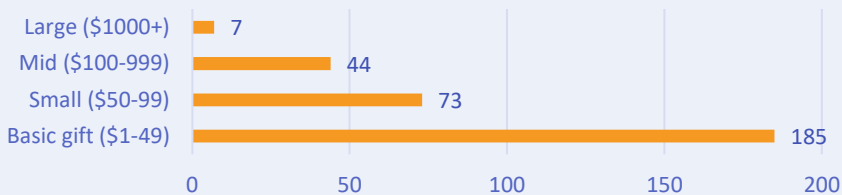
- 2019 Solidarity Fund Grantee

Funds raised and distributed for 2019

The preliminary goal for the ASA Solidarity Fund in 2019 was to raise \$20,000 to provide travel grants and registration reimbursements for precarious members traveling to the annual meeting with little to no institutional support.

Total donors	273
Total gifts received	309
Total funds raised	\$ 22,564

Members who contributed through multiple donations in AY2018-2019 provided 21% of the total funds raised.



2019 Successes

- We reached our preliminary goal by July 2019. Within a month of opening for applications, 75% of grants had been filled.
- Members contributing to the association grew by 220%.
- The majority of gifts (82%) came from members making their first donation to the ASA.
- By sheer numbers, ASA lifetime members donated more than almost every other leadership group combined.

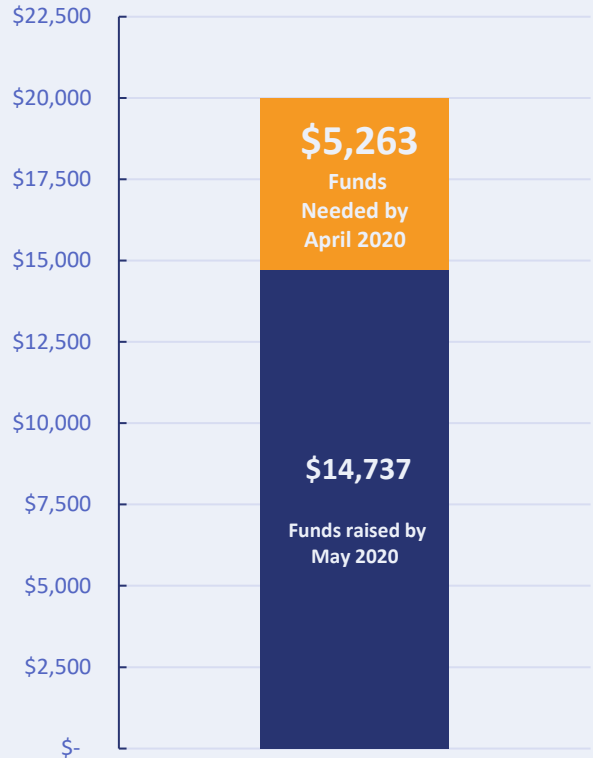


Solidarity Fund goals for 2020

In an early 2020 call, the **Solidarity Fund subcommittee** set goals for the Baltimore Annual Meeting.

They committed to help raising **\$20,000 by Summer 2020**, when the Solidarity Fund grant program plans to open for applications.

As of May 1, 2020 – members have raised \$14,737 toward grants for the Baltimore Annual Meeting.



To reach our goal, \$5,263 is needed.

Please donate today! –

<http://theasa.net/donate-now>

Requests for support from 2019 contingent faculty grantees

Contingent grantees were asked:

Thinking of the ASA's role as a scholarly society that supports teaching and the dissemination of research, **what other kinds of mutual aid could help contingent members**, if collectively organized by the association?

- 1 Encourage tenured members to lead organizing within the association.
- 2 Create space in which contingent faculty can speak openly with one another.
- 3 **Include the Solidarity Fund in the 2020 call for proposals.**
- 4 **Reconsider the rule of participating virtually.**
- 5 **Reconsider the advance registration discount fee**, as contingent members don't have the means to often pay in advance and must instead register late.
- 6 **Create a task force** on contingent member concerns and informally advising contingent members on issues related to contract negotiations.
- 7 Adopt policies/resolutions that specifically criticize exploitative positions with the goal of pushing universities to stop relying so heavily on contingent faculty in American Studies, Ethnic Studies, etc.

Bolded items indicate requests that the steering committee brought forward for National Council review. These four items were endorsed.

Continued 

Requests for support from 2019 contingent faculty grantees

- 8 Create a digital commons for contingent members.
- 9 Gather data about various forms of contingency that could be used to discern similarities and differences across disciplines.
- 10 Designate some support for research – via grants, short-term writing fellowships, awards, publication opportunities (some contingent members rely on extra work and second jobs to fund their research, even though they work as much as TT/T faculty)
- 11 Professional development funds to assist contingent faculty with enrolling in National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity, specifically for Core Curriculum webinars.
- 12 Mentorship programs that could result in new letters of recommendation.



The Solidarity Fund exists because of you, our donors.

Anonymous • Su'ad Abdul Khabeer • Hokulani Aikau • Leticia Alvarado • Jose Anguiano • Heidi Ardizzone • Michio Arimitsu • Aimee Bahng • Marlon Bailey • Yousef Baker • Lois Banner • Toby Beauchamp • Cristina Beltran • Nancy Bentley • Kelly Bezio • Kaitlin Blanchard • Edward Blum • Eileen Boris • Shannon Brennan • Jennifer DeVere Brody • Simone Browne • Rachel Ida Buff • Rebecca Burditt • Lucy Burns • Angelica Camacho • Peter Campbell • Dolores Inés Casillas • Bianet Castellanos • Wendy Cheng • Sarah Chinn • Yu-Fang Cho • Aymar Jean Christian • Kandice Chuh • Elizabeth Colwill • Anne Cong-Huyen • Sam Coren • Eric Covey • Manuel Criollo • Paul Croce • Edward Curtis • Cathy Davidson • Sasha Davis • Jigna Desai • Angela Dillard • Derek DiMatteo • Sarah Dowling • Jennifer Doyle • Lisa Duggan • Sarah Ehlers • Nan Enstad • Elizabeth Esch • Nicolas Estes • Adriana Estill • Toeutu Faaleava • Amy Farrell • Keith Feldman • Roderick Ferguson • Shelley Fisher Fishkin • Laura Foster • Cynthia Franklin • Laura Free • Laura Sachiko Fugikawa • Diane Fujino • Takashi Fujitani • José Fusté • Mikal Gaines • Lindsay Garcia • Adriana Garriga-Lopez • Irene Garza • Ruth Wilson Gilmore • William Gleason • Jesse Goldberg • David Goldstein • Macarena Gomez-Barris • Francis Gourrier • Daniel Gutiérrez • Michelle Habell-Pallan • Bambi Haggins • Juliane Hammer • Christina Hanhardt • Andrew Harnish • Ianna Hawkins Owen • July Hazard • Christina Heatherton • Glenn Hendler • Cheryl Higashida • Jennifer Ho • Karen Ho • Vicki Hsueh • Juliana Hu Pegues • Lydia Huerta • Erica Hunt • Ren-yo Hwang • Matthew Jacobson • Laura Jaffee • E. Patrick Johnson • Kendall Johnson • Jeanette Jones • Miranda Joseph • Tristan Josephson • Laura Kang • Carolyn Karcher • Kerwin Kaye • Lydia Kelow-Bennett • Roshanak Kheshti • Heidi Kim • Sabine Kim • Deborah Kimmey • Kim Knight • Hunter Knight • Erica Kohl-Arenas • Karen Kosasa • Wendy Kozol • Karen Kuo • Scott Kurashige • Mariam Lam • cont'd

*Thank you for your contributions
in our inaugural year, 2018-2019!*

The Solidarity Fund exists because of you, our donors.

Jacob Lau • Andrew Leong • R. L'Heureux Lewis-McCoy • Carl Lindskoog • Eric Lott • Lisa Lowe • Dana Luciano • Gene Luzala • Kimberly Mack • Daryl Maeda • Jasmine Mahmoud • Greggor Mattson • Don James McLaughlin • Tara McPherson • Brittany Meche • Erica Meiners • Laurel Mei-Singh • Jodi Melamed • Victor Mendoza • Mharlyn Merritt • Liz Montegary • Lyra Monteiro • Fred Moten • Shaun Myers • Juliet Nebolon • Philip Nel • Marguerite Nguyen • Helena Oberzaucher • Eve Oishi • Tatiana Omokawa • Janet O'Shea • Jan Padios • A. Naomi Paik • Teraya Pamehta • Veronica Paredes • Deborah Paredes • Lisa Park • Amie Parry • Casey Patterson • Emma Perez • Theri Pickens • Roxane Pickens • Samantha Pinto • Martin Ponce • Miriam Posner • Anna Price • Robert Ramaswamy • Anthony Ratcliff • Israel Reyes • Jennifer Rhee • Ramón Rivera-Servera • Francisco Robles • Dylan Rodriguez • David Roediger • Stephanie Rountree • Kevin Rozario • Britt Rusert • Avigail Sachs • Jeffrey Sacks • Kathleen Sands • Sarah Scarlett • Susan Scheckel • Zachary Schwartz-Weinstein • Micol Seigel • Barry Shank • Subramanian Shankar • Jay Sibara • Angela Smith • SA Smythe • Siobhan Somerville • Karriann Soto Vega • Gustavus Stadler • Gustavus Stadler • Heather Stansbury • Michelle Stephens • David Stephens • Melanie Stewart • Ben Streeter • Jan Suberman • Stephen Sumida • Erin Suzuki • Stacy Takacs • Lisa Thompson • Shirley Thompson • Lisa Thompson • Deborah Vargas • Pavithra Vasudevan • Jordan Victorian • Isadora Wagner • Priscilla Wald • Robert Warrior • Mary-Helen Washington • Kyla Wazana Tompkins • Harlan Weaver • Tisa Wenger • Kim Hester Williams • Sunny Xiang • Jane Yamashiro • Richard Yarborough • Lisa Yoneyama • Mari Yoshihara • Magdalena Zapadowska • James Zeigler

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in our inaugural year, 2018-2019!*

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precarious members in the
American Studies Association.

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