

## ***THE ASPIRE AND PROMISE SUPPORT GRANTS***

### ***A RETROSPECTIVE REPORT (2015-2019)***

College of Liberal Arts Faculty Research Support Program

June 2019

#### **Executive Summary**

The present report summarizes the main trends and outcomes of the ASPIRE and PROMISE funding programs. Both programs support travel, manuscript preparation, conference presentations, and incipient research projects. ASPIRE grants, which are awarded in two tiers (Tier 1: \$1,500 and Tier 2: \$2,500), support faculty research efforts. PROMISE grants, similarly structured into two tiers (Tier 1: \$750 and Tier 2: \$1,500), support graduate student work. Both programs have disbursed more than \$2.3 million, of which \$1.5 million was given to faculty. ASPIRE and PROMISE have supported 1,900 individual faculty member and graduate student projects.

Two of the most important findings are: 1) half of the projects and amount were used for non-routine research activities, and 2) this led to articles and book publications - and higher investment led to higher research productivity in terms of articles as well as books. This is significant because the programs could support routine research activities or attending conferences. And, while funds *were* used to support these routine activities, almost half of the total amount went into much more significant and impactful expenses.

The specific recommendations of the present report are to increase the amount of support (including by external fundraising), to encourage direct research outcomes, and to even out the distribution of effort and financial support across departments. One way to increase

engagement is to organize a workshop featuring past recipients and to enroll future recipients from under-represented disciplines and a wide range of professional achievements.

### **ASPIRE Program Description**

The Provost's Office, in collaboration with the College of Liberal Arts, launched the ASPIRE program in September 2016 to support faculty research. ASPIRE is intended to enhance institutional excellence and to promote *all* areas of intellectual inquiry of tenured and tenure-track faculty in the arts, humanities, and the social sciences. The goal of the program is to provide CLA faculty better and more opportunities for research and collaborative partnerships to help advance their scholarship and foster more national and international recognition to Purdue.

ASPIRE is fully funded by the Provost's Office and operationally managed by the CLA Dean's Office. For the first two years of the program (FY16 and FY17), the Provost's office allocated \$500,000 per year toward ASPIRE. For FY17 and FY18, the Provost's office allocated \$425,000 per year toward the program. ASPIRE funding is structured in two tiers and is available only to tenured or tenure-track CLA faculty. Tier 1 provides up to \$1,500 for expenses related to scholarship/creative activity including domestic travel for conference presentations. Tier 2 provides funding up to \$2,500 for international travel to present original scholarship/creative works for research.

Since the inception of the program, the inaugural year for the program, we have made 867 ASPIRE faculty awards with an allocation of \$1,508,766.87, and with the Provost's approval moved \$75,000 to the PROMISE graduate student program for a total allocation of \$466,352.67 of the \$500,000 available.

Of the 867 ASPIRE awards to date, CLA has made 639 awards (\$1,096,252.04) for conference participation and 228 research awards (\$412,514.83). Faculty participation varied by rank with Associate Professors applying for and receiving the most awards (37.5% of the total, 26.8% Research, 73.2% Conference). Assistant Professors received 31.5% of the awards, (23.4% Research, 76.6% Conference). Full professors received 29.1% of awards (27.4% Research and 72.6% Conference).

The higher degree of utilization by Associate professors is encouraging, indicating a healthy uptake by colleagues that are expected to be active and engaged within their own disciplines and within the scholarly community at large.

Overall, the distribution of the grants across tiers indicates a slight majority of Tier 1 awards, under \$1,500 (48%).

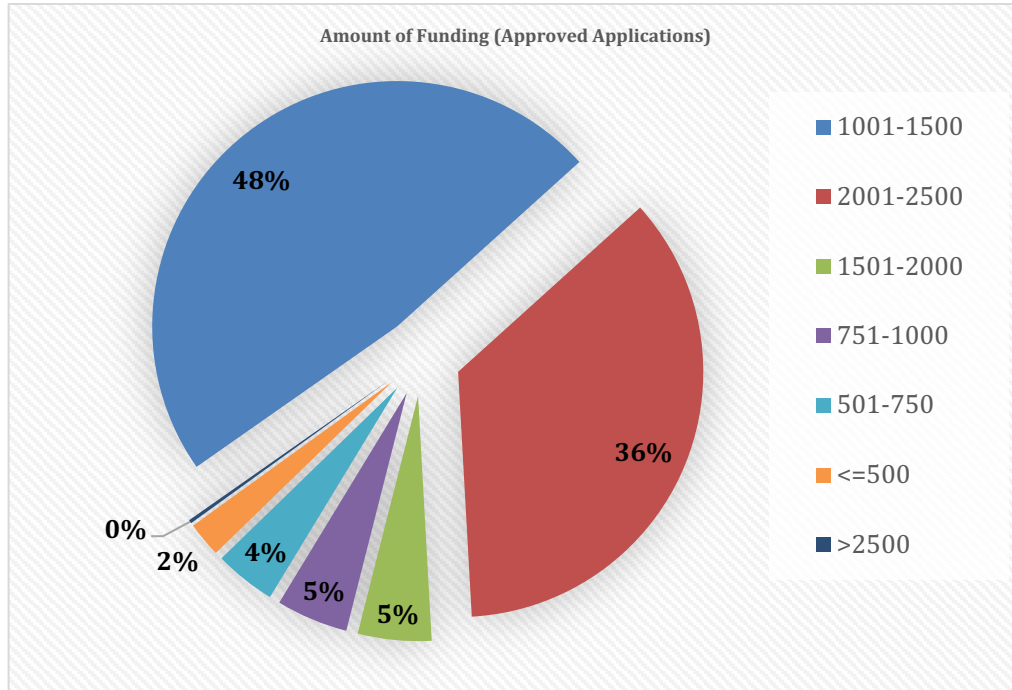


Figure 1. ASPIRE: Distribution by tiers of funding

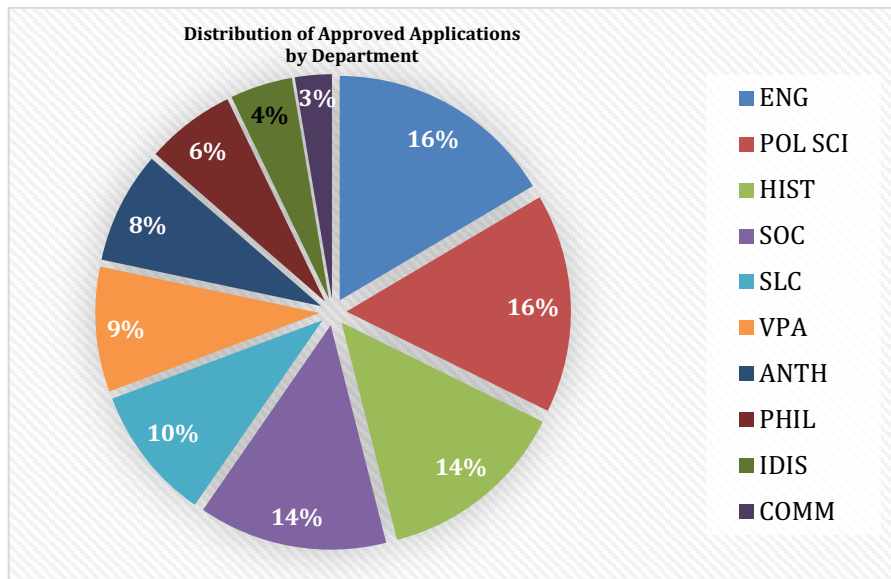


Figure 2. ASPIRE: Distribution by department

More instructive is, however, the distribution by departments. As **Figure 2** indicates, the largest beneficiaries were (in order) English, Political Science, and History - with Communication and Philosophy at the bottom of the ladder.

### Funding by Department

In absolute numeric terms, the highest recipient was the English department - with more than \$260,000 in funding. History (\$212,000) and Sociology (\$211,000) followed. While English is one of the larger departments, and use can be explained by size, the History department used the funds to a greater degree (due to its specific needs and relative scarcity of external funds).

**Table 2** (following page) shows the distribution of the ASPIRE awards by award type and department as well as the relative participation of departments in the program. However, it shifts the attention from *absolute* to *relative* use of the funds. The last column in the table indicates if the participation of any given department over or under what its faculty size would predict

Dept.	Funding Count	Funding Amount
ENGL	143	\$260,860.05
HIST	119	\$212,114.12
SOC	118	\$211,914.48
POL	137	\$196,227.19
SLC	84	\$156,406.56
VPA	77	\$148,598.87
ANTH	70	\$127,818.00
PHIL	56	\$99,380.67
IDIS	39	\$65,619.00
COM	23	\$29,827.93
<b>Total</b>	<b>866</b>	<b>\$1,508,766.87</b>

Table 1. Funding

(and by how much). The numbers in Figure 2 indicate that five departments used the funds at rates much higher than their respective faculty weights, while six departments used at rates much lower.

The top user was Political Science, whose usage was 80% over its faculty weight. Communication, however, used the funds 70% under its weight. The reasons are multiple, and varied, from department to department. One could be access to internal funds and proportion of assistant professors with busy travel schedules.

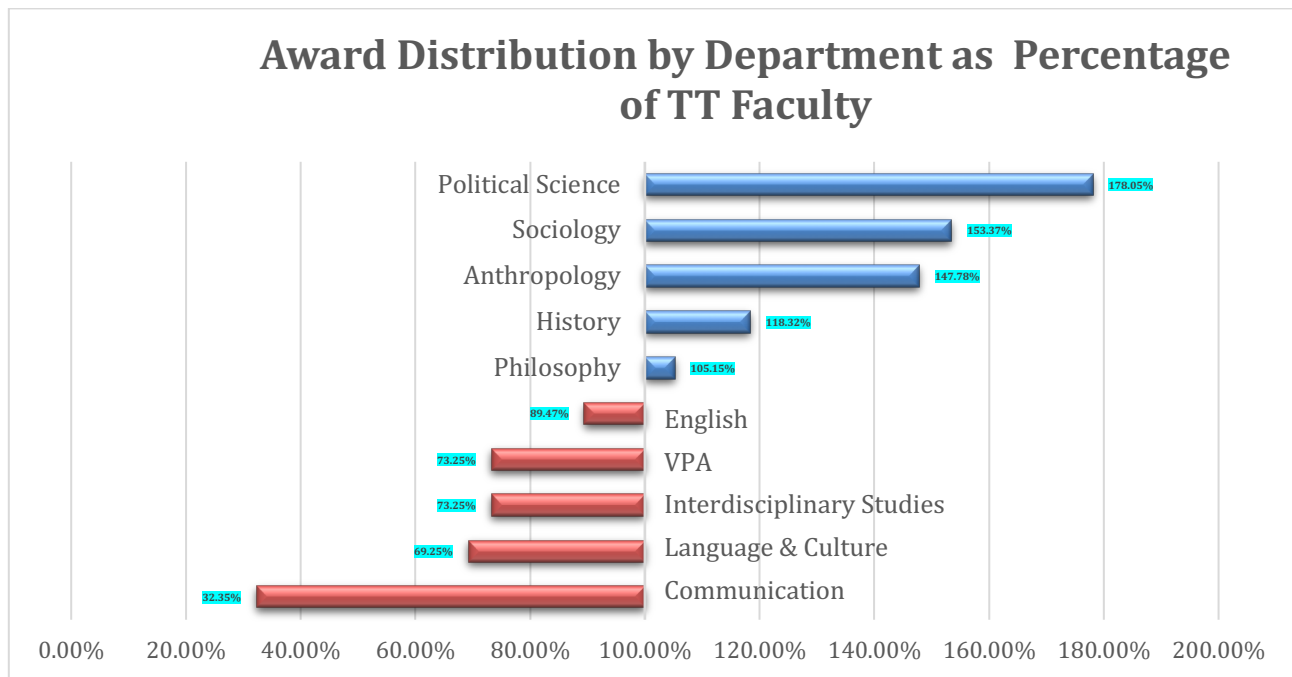
*Table 2. 2015 - 2019 ASPIRE Awards by Department and Award Type*

Department	Conference	Conference %	Research	Research %	Total Count	Total%
English	107	12.34%	36	4.15%	143	16.49%
Political Science	114	13.15%	23	2.65%	137	15.80%
History	58	6.69%	61	7.04%	119	13.73%
Sociology	112	12.92%	6	0.69%	118	13.61%
Languages & Culture	62	7.15%	22	2.54%	84	9.69%
Visual & Performing Arts	45	5.19%	33	3.81%	78	9.00%
Anthropology	43	4.96%	27	3.11%	70	8.07%
Philosophy	54	6.23%	2	0.23%	56	6.46%
Interdisciplinary Studies	31	3.58%	8	0.92%	39	4.50%
Communication	13	1.50%	10	1.15%	23	2.65%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>73.70%</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>26.30%</b>	<b>867</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Table 3. 2015-2019 ASPIRE Award Distribution by Dept. and as % of Departmental Tenure-Track Faculty*

Department	Number of tenure track faculty	ASPIRE AWARDS	Department Percent Awards	Percent Awards/Tenure-Track Faculty
Political Science	26	137	15.80%	178.05%
Sociology	26	118	13.61%	153.37%
Anthropology	16	70	8.07%	147.78%
History	34	119	13.73%	118.32%
Philosophy	18	56	6.46%	105.15%
English	54	143	16.49%	89.47%
Interdisciplinary Studies	18	39	4.50%	73.25%
Visual & Performing Arts	36	78	9.00%	73.25%
Languages & Culture	41	84	9.69%	69.25%
Communication	24	23	2.65%	32.35%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>867</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

Looking at the over-time utilization of the awards (**Figure 3**), we notice that in terms of number of awards, English saw a dramatic decline in the last two years – while Sociology and Political Science saw a dramatic increase. The difference between departments demands closer attention – and that the appropriate means of faculty engagement be developed.



*Figure 3. Over-time utilization of funds by department*

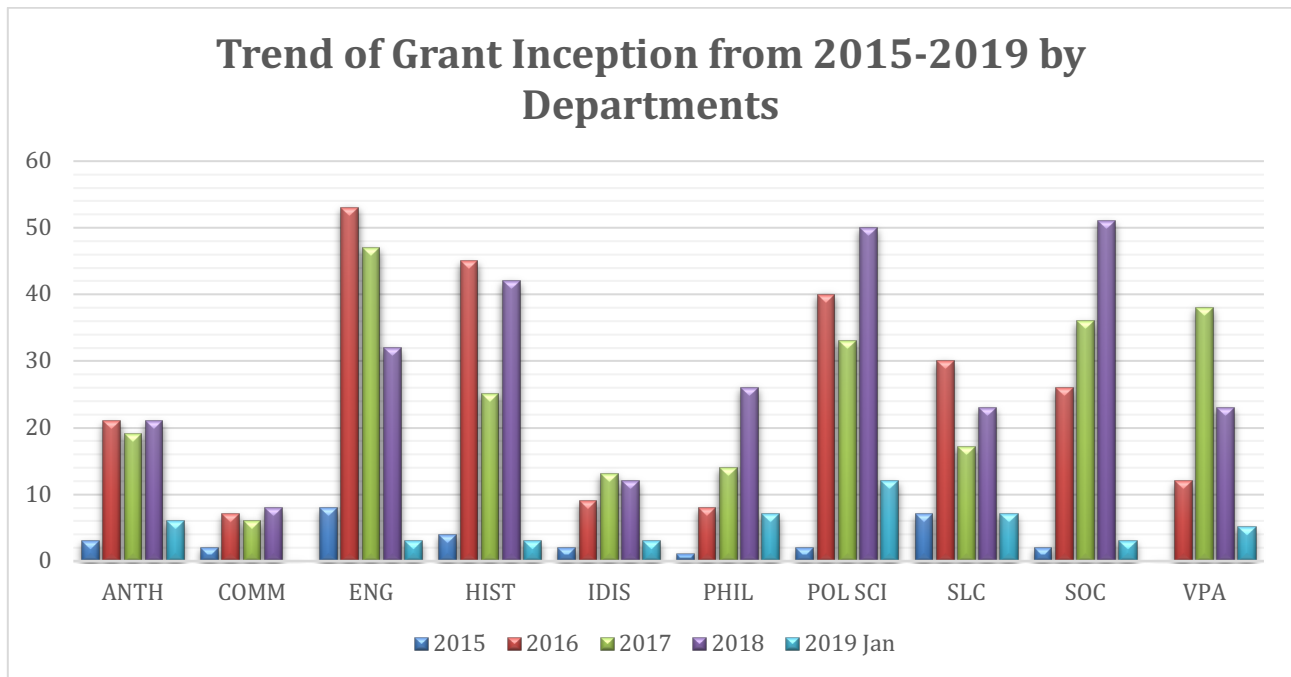
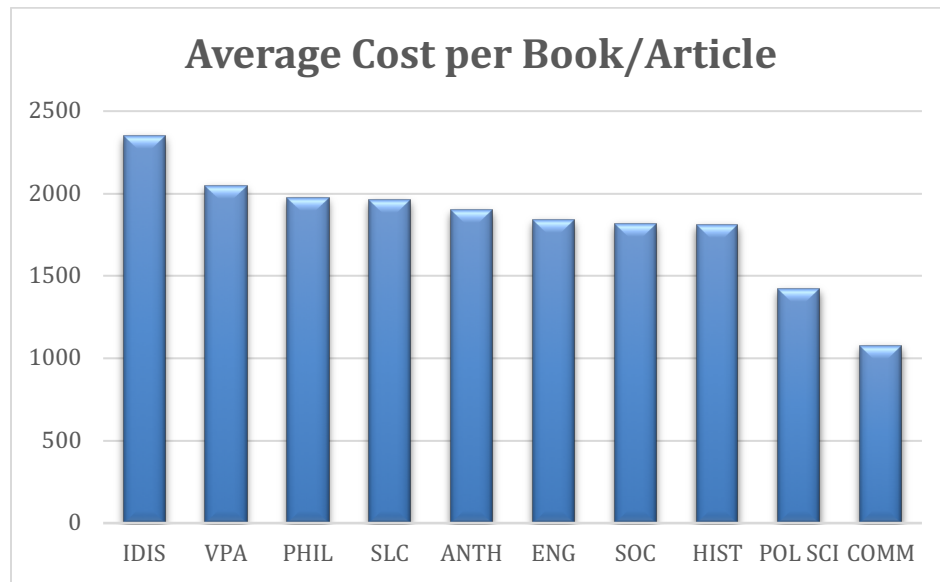


Figure 4. Grant over-time utilization by departments

## ASPIRE Funds Usage Impact

### Financial impact

A noticeable finding refers to the level of productivity per dollar spent for each department. We obtained this indicator by dividing the total amount disbursed to each department by the number of publications associated with each awardee. The data were collected through a post-award survey (see details below). The most effective users of the funds were Communication (which is also a sporadic user of the fund) and Political Science. English, Sociology, and History - all three significant users of the funds - are moderately effective. The least effective, in relative terms, is Interdisciplinary Studies.



*Figure 5. Average cost per book/article published*

If we analyze the impact of the amounts disbursed by the number of publications, we find a strong positive correlation ( $r = .71$ ). The faculty members that got more money (X axis, Figure 6, following page), produced more publications (Y axis) for the period studied (2015-2019). The amount of variance explained by this correlation is 50%; in other words, 50% of the variation in the number of publications is explained by amount invested.



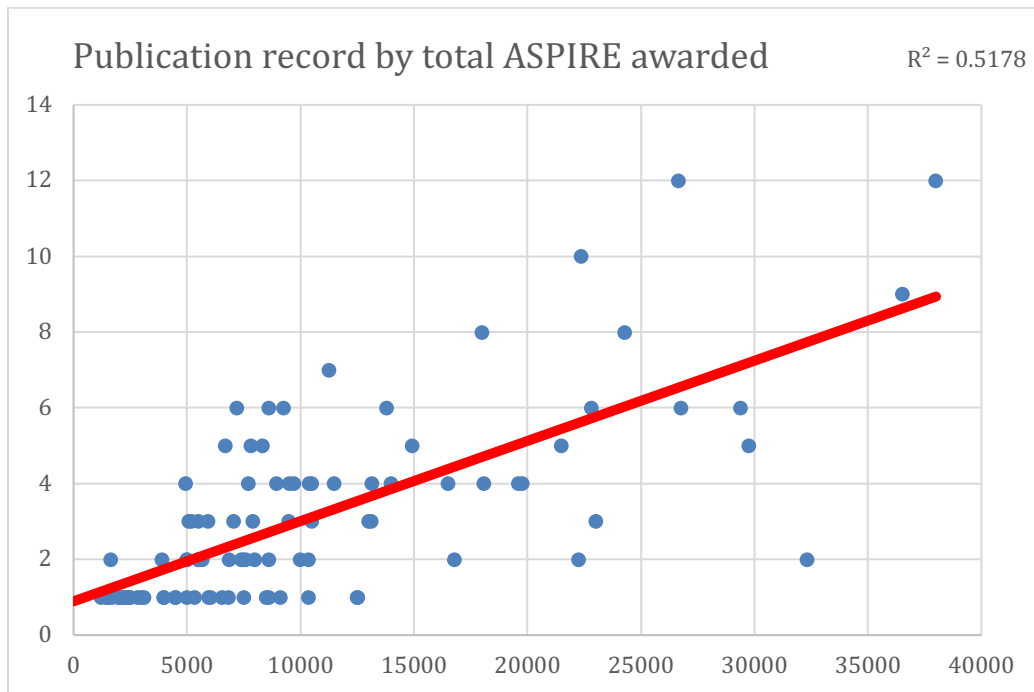


Figure 6. Publication record by total amount of ASPIRE awarded

*Use Type*

The majority of the funds have been used for conference travel (74% or \$1,096,252), but a significant number (228, and the corresponding amount of \$412,414) was used for research. This suggests that the grant, which was initially meant to support routine activities, has made an inroad into research space. This is, overall, a positive factor - especially if we consider the proportions. A sustained effort should be made at all levels, however, to encourage faculty to also seek extramural funds for this purpose.

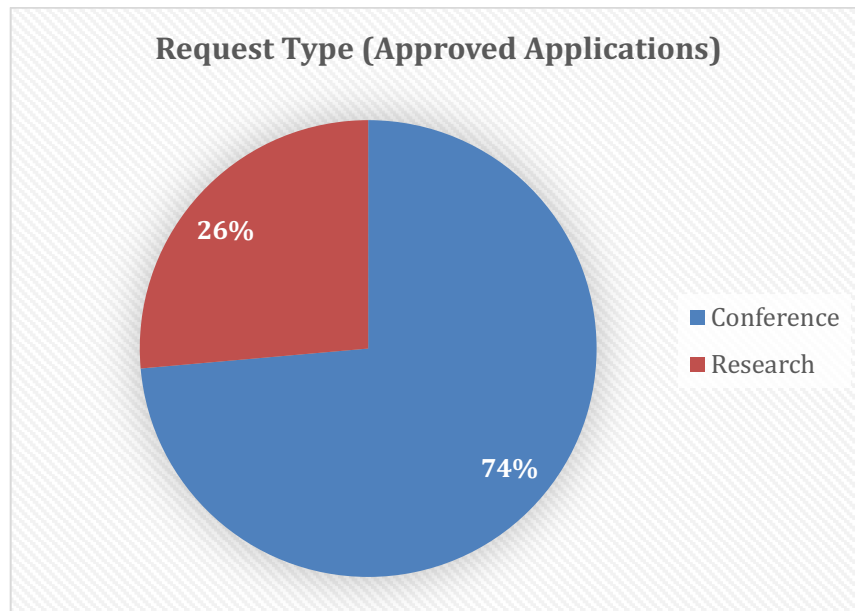


Figure 7. Types of use

If the destination of the funds is broken down by department, we notice that VPA, History, Communication and Anthropology used ASPIRE for research the most.

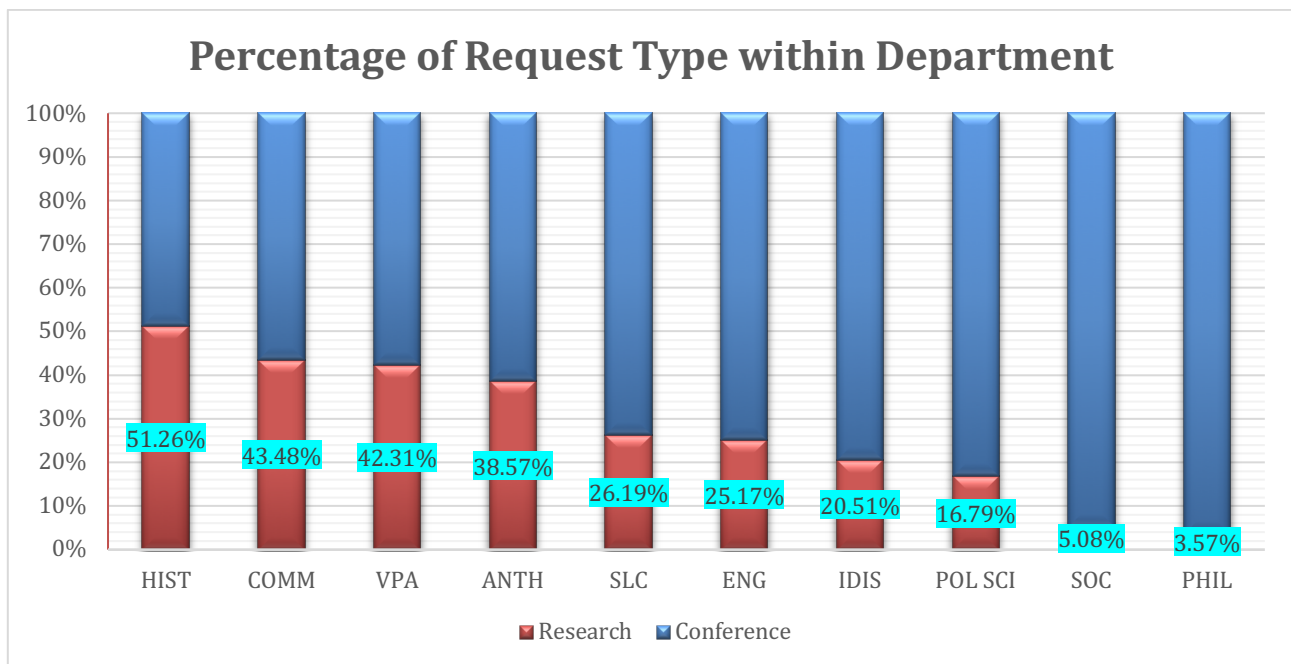
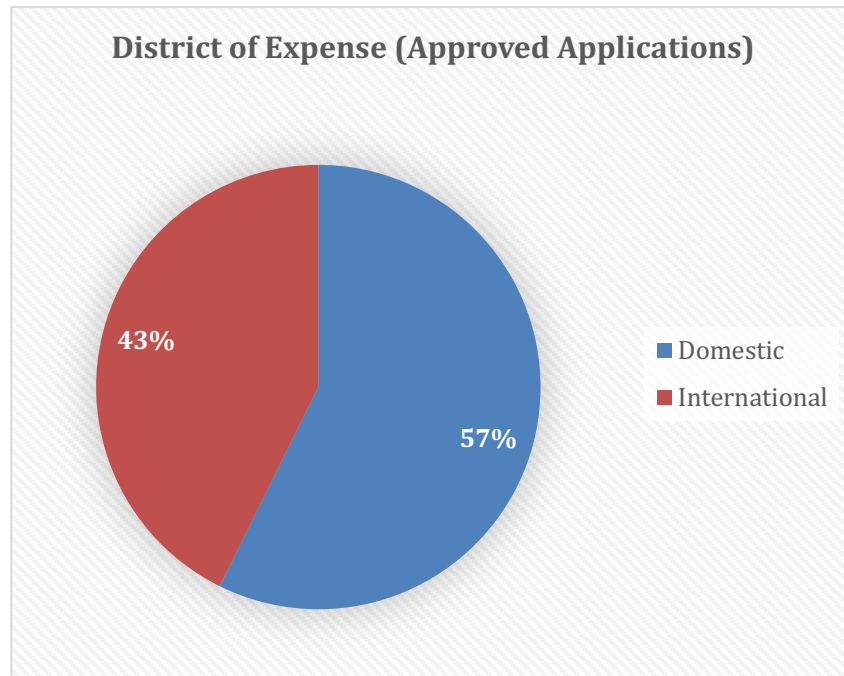


Figure 8. Type of funds used - by department

The funds seemed to be used in a rather balanced way, in terms of international versus national exposure. The split is slightly in favor of domestic trips, but this not surprising. The healthy use of 43% of the grants for international trips and research projects is quite encouraging.



*Figure 9. Destination of use*

The departmental leaders in this domain are, unsurprisingly, Languages and Cultures and Anthropology. Both demand teaching and/or field work in foreign countries. However, it is rather interesting to note that Communication and Political Science both have a rather modest utilization for international trips.

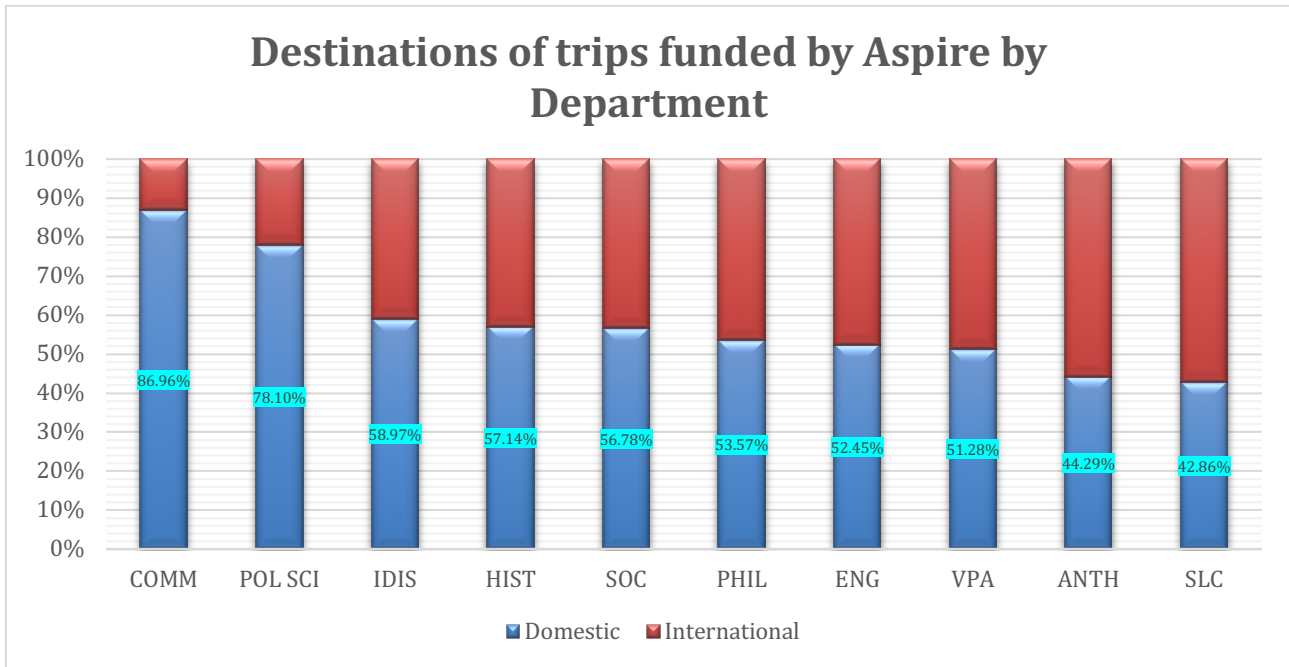


Figure 10. Destination of ASPIRE funded travels

Looking at the leading countries, we see that (besides Canada, which is present due to proximity) the leaders are European, especially the United Kingdom, France, and Spain.

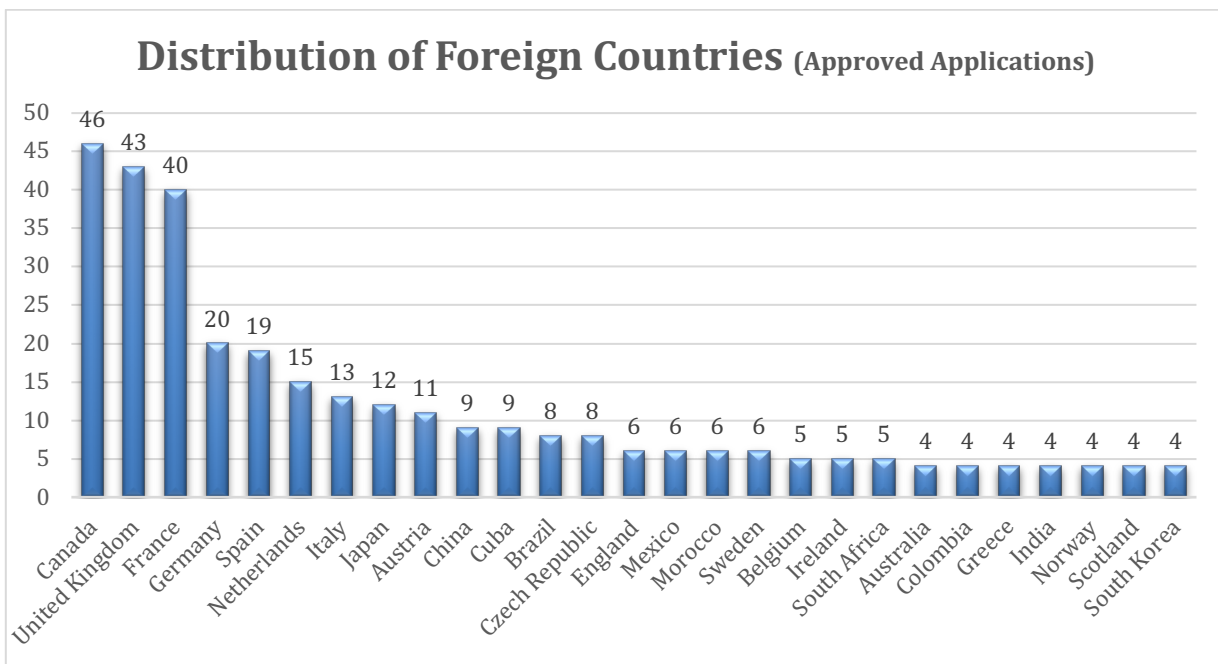


Figure 11. Top international destinations of trips funded by ASPIRE

**Subjective Evaluation of the ASPIRE Program**

Table 4. Response Rate

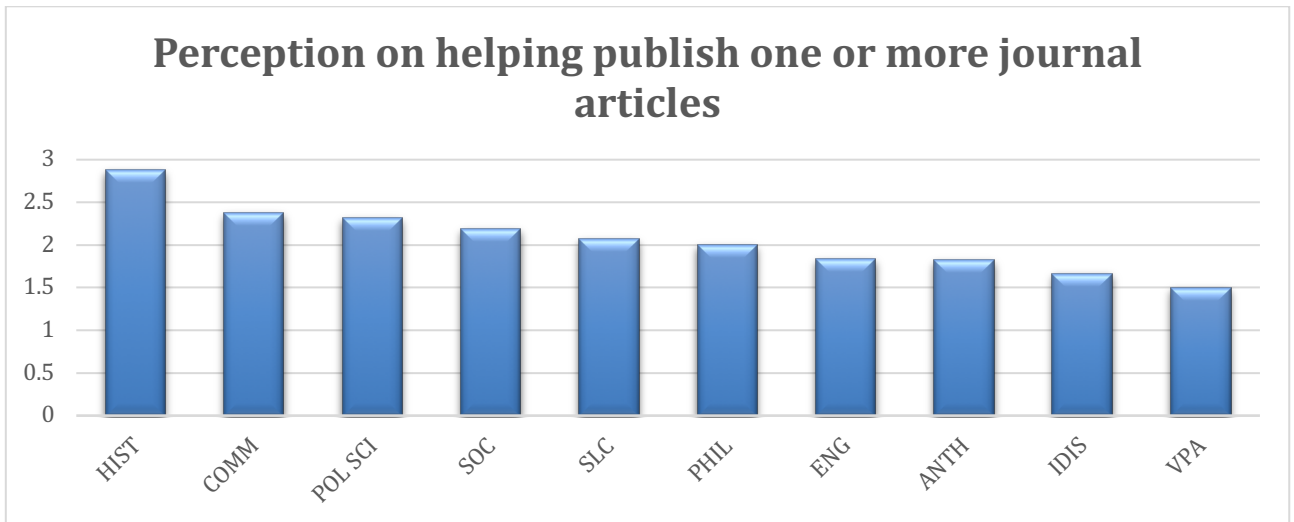
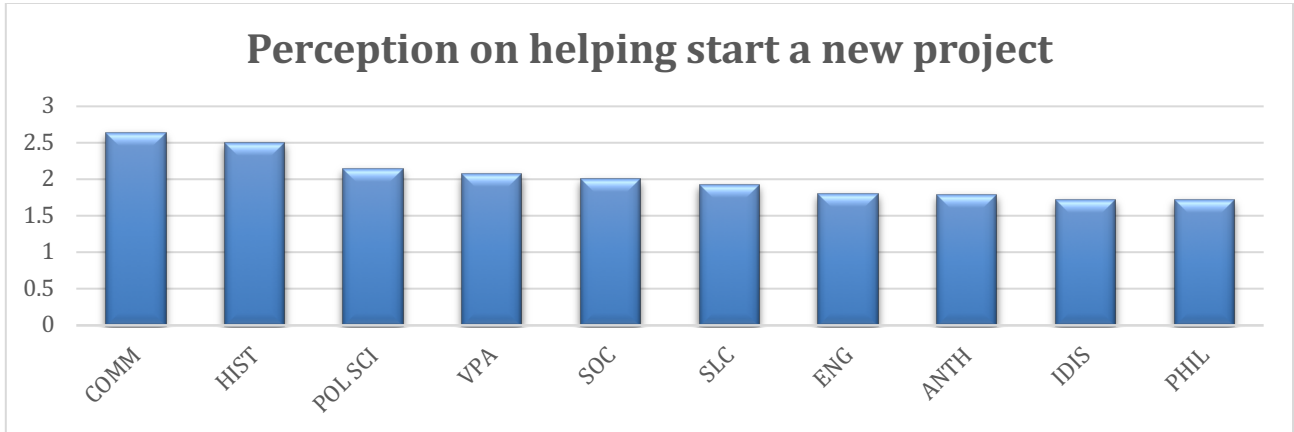
Department	# Respondents
ANTH	11
COM	8
ENGL	26
HIST	19
IDIS	7
PHIL	10
POL	16
SLC	18
SOC	17
VPA	14
Overall	146

In addition to the raw award data, we conducted a “use and satisfaction” survey among awardees. We sent the survey to 237 faculty members and received 146 valid answers, indicating a response rate of 61%. The survey asked faculty members to indicate quantitatively if the grant program helped them participate in a variety of scholarly activities, if the amount of support was sufficient, and if they were satisfied with the granting process. Faculty were also invited to associate a set of concepts with the program that tap into the goals of the grant,

and to share (in an open-ended manner) their suggestions and comments.

Overall, respondents indicated that the ASPIRE grant program contributed significantly to starting new projects and publishing new papers. On a scale of 0 to 3 (0 = Not at all, 1 = Marginal, 2 = Moderate, 3 = Significant), the impact perception scores indicated significant impact on conference presentations and moderate impact for starting new projects and publishing journal articles. Given the relatively small amounts distributed, the impact on journal articles and new projects is particularly encouraging, showing that dollars can be stretched quite far when funding is generous. This is very encouraging, given the goals of the program to serve as a springboard for future projects and to disseminate research results.

Broken down by departments, we notice that History and Communication were most likely to use ASPIRE for grant, book, and research activities. Political Science and Sociology respondents indicated that they used the grants significantly for conference presentations.



Figures 12a-c. Perception of helpfulness of ASPIRE program for various scholarly activities

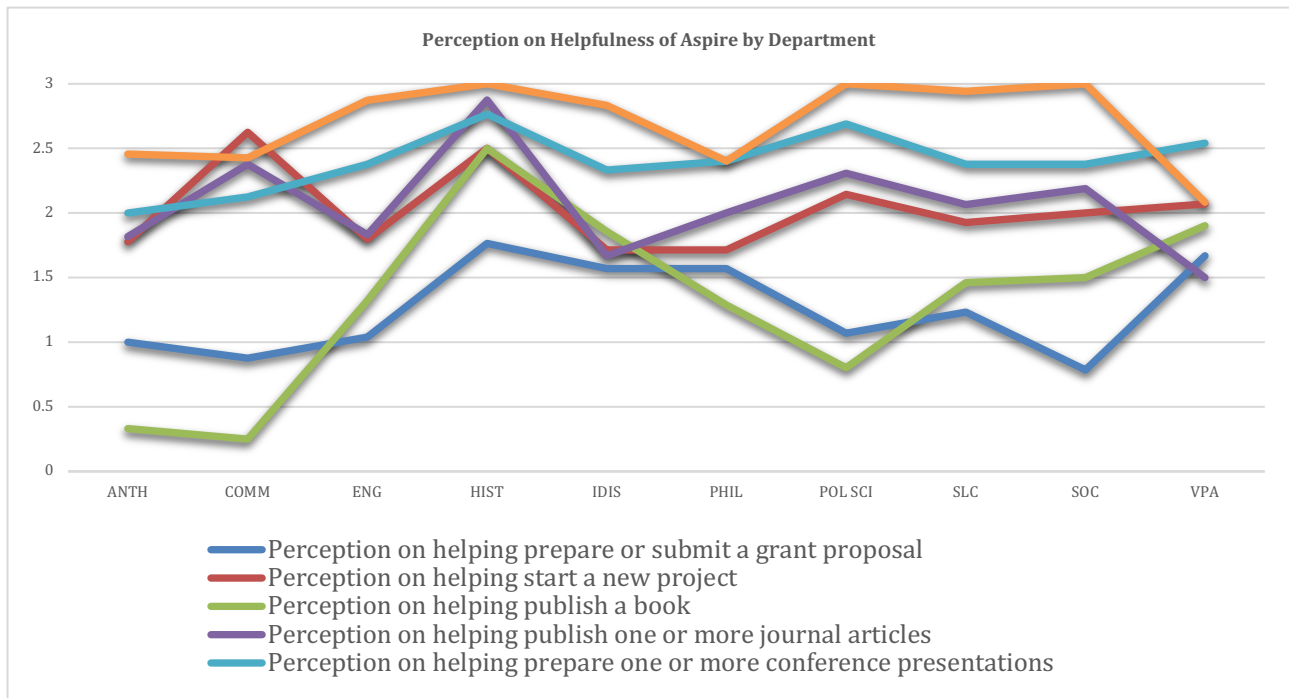
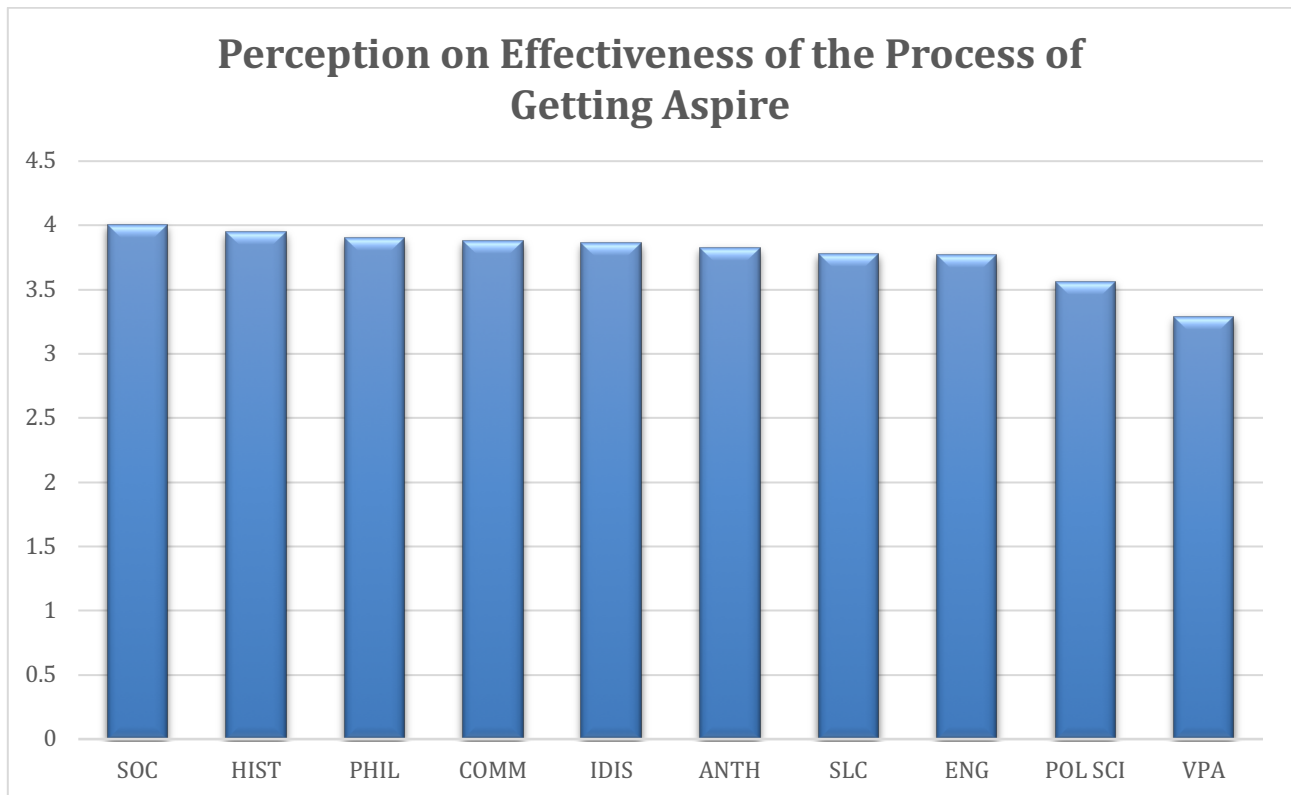


Figure 13. Perception of ASPIRE program helpfulness by Department

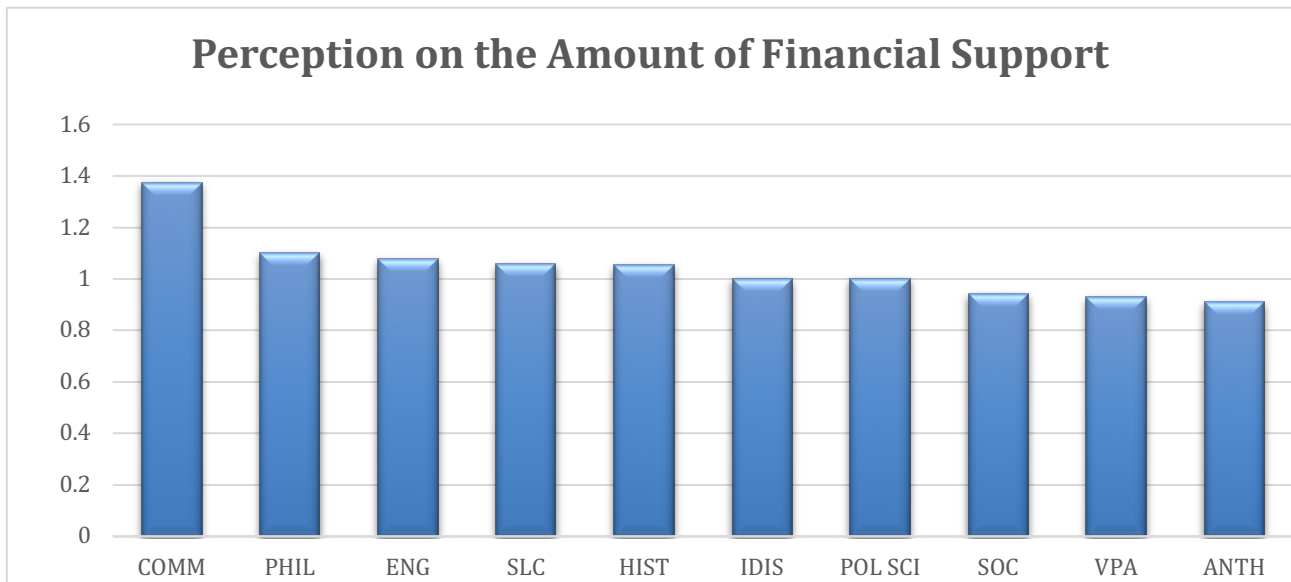
In terms of grant administration, overall the respondents indicated that it was very effective or extremely effective. Most departments were at least in the “very effective” range, while Political Science and Sociology were slightly lower, between the “very effective” and “moderately effective” range.



*Figure 14. Perception of effectiveness of the grant-getting process (0 = Not effective, 5 = Extremely effective)*

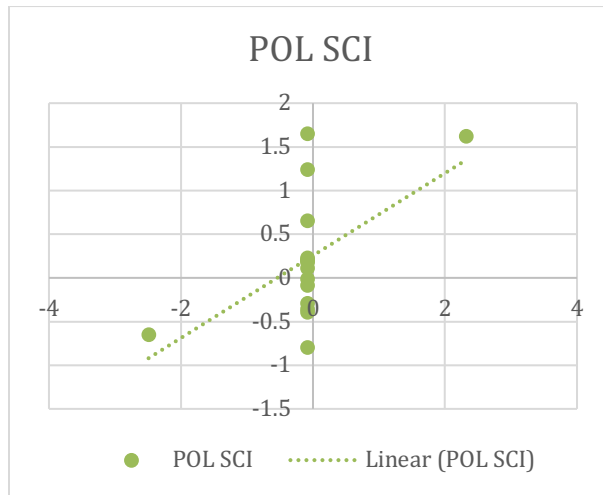
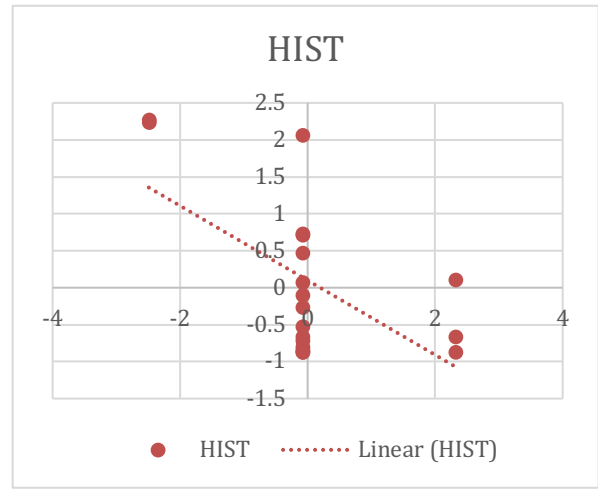
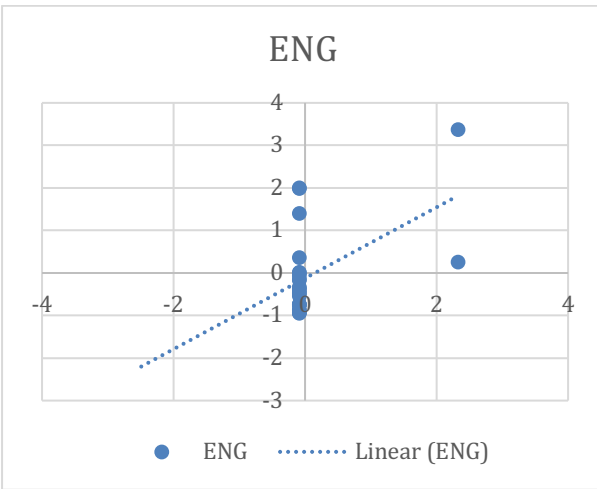
Regarding the amount of financial support, the respondents indicated overall that it was “just right.” Of all CLA departments, Communication indicated the most satisfaction with the amount, and Anthropology indicated the least satisfaction.





*Figure 15. Perception of the amount of financial support (0 = Insufficient, 1 = Just right, 2 = Generous)*

We have also correlated the amount of funding received by each individual with his or her satisfaction in regard to the level of funding. While across the entire college the variation is too large to find a significant correlation, in three departments we found strong and significant correlations. In two of them (English and Political Science), the more money a faculty member got, the more satisfied he or she was with the level of funding. In History, on the other hand, the correlation is negative. All three correlations hover around (.5).



Figures 16 a-c. Correlations between perception of support and actual support (normalized values)

One survey question asked respondents to rank-order a set of words associated with the implicit goals of the programs; these are to “open new research projects,” “help the recipients make the work better known,” “create connections,” or “get personal support.” They asked to rank the words “beginning,” “completion,” “satisfaction,” “development,” “care,” and “excellence”

The analysis of the responses uncovered that most departments identified the program with the idea of nurturing and supporting faculty development at a personal level. Faculty in five of the departments chose “Care” as the most salient attribute of the program. Looking at all top three words, on the other hand, we notice that both the “beginning” and “completion” attributes were used, which showed that faculty members appreciated the fresh start and the opportunity that the ASPIRE program provided to help “close up some loops.”

*Table 5. Top words describing ASPIRE*

Dept	Top	Second	Third
ANTH	Care	Beginning	Completion
COMM	Beginning	Care	Completion
ENG	Beginning	Completion	Care
HIST	Care	Beginning	Satisfaction
IDIS	Care	Development	Beginning
PHIL	Beginning	Care	Completion
POL SCI	Beginning	Completion	Care
SLC	Care	Beginning	Completion
SOC	Care	Beginning	Completion
VPA	Beginning	Care	Completion
<b>Overall</b>	<b>Care</b>	<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Completion</b>

In a more in-depth analysis of correlation between usefulness of funding conference presentations and actual use of funds, **Figure 17** (following page) shows that overall, the faculty members who used the program the most found it more helpful for conference presentations. In other words, there is a close association between perception and actual use of the funding. Those that were helped did see in the help a real professional asset.

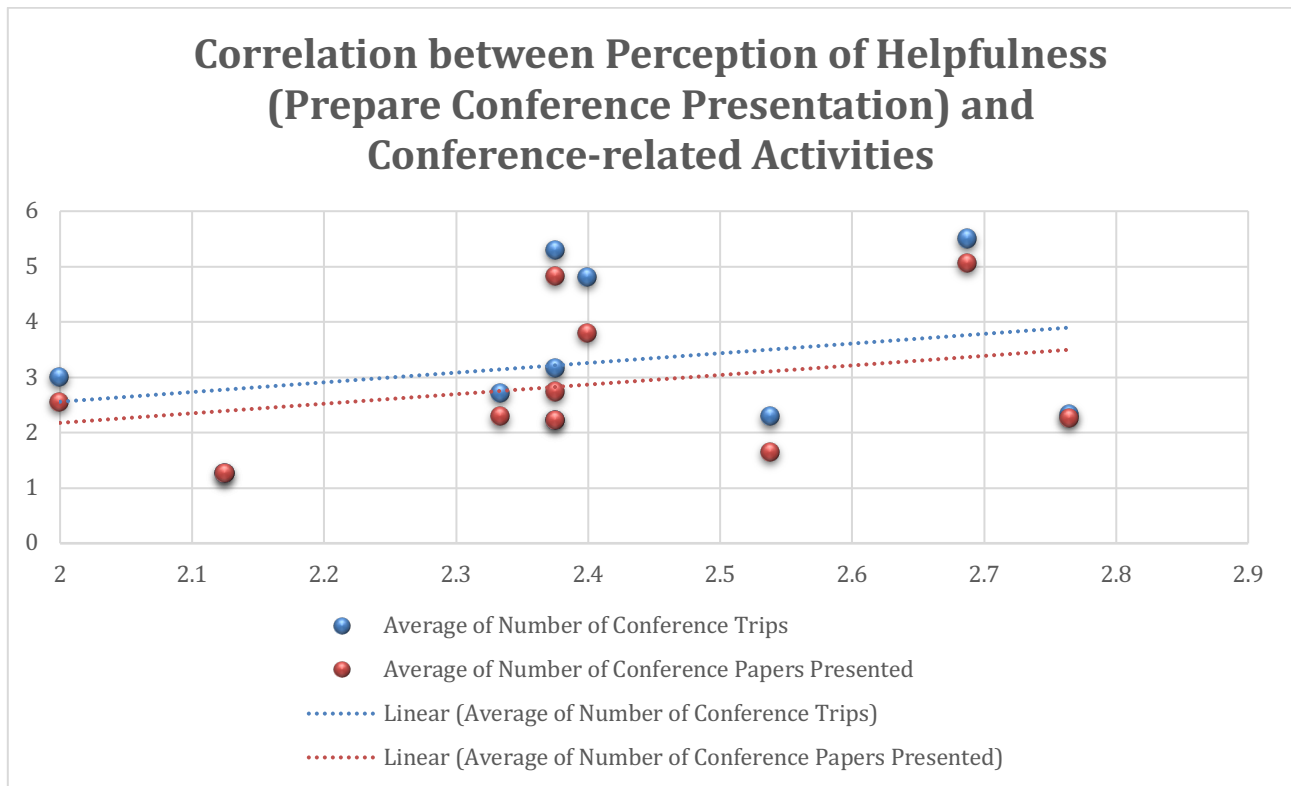


Figure 17. Correlation between perception of helpfulness and conference-related activities

Figure 18 (following page) shows that generally the “high-intensity-use” departments used the funds effectively. The red line indicates if the department used the funds over or under their numeric strength, as measured on the axis labels to the right. Spikes in the other lines indicate amount of activity, also marked on the axis to the right. The blue bars indicate perception of helpfulness, measured on the axis to the left.

The information suggests that overuse was followed by higher activity and higher perception for helpfulness. The only exception to this is the department of History, whose faculty members used ASPIRE only to a moderate degree and felt the most satisfied, but produced one of the lowest levels of conference presentations.

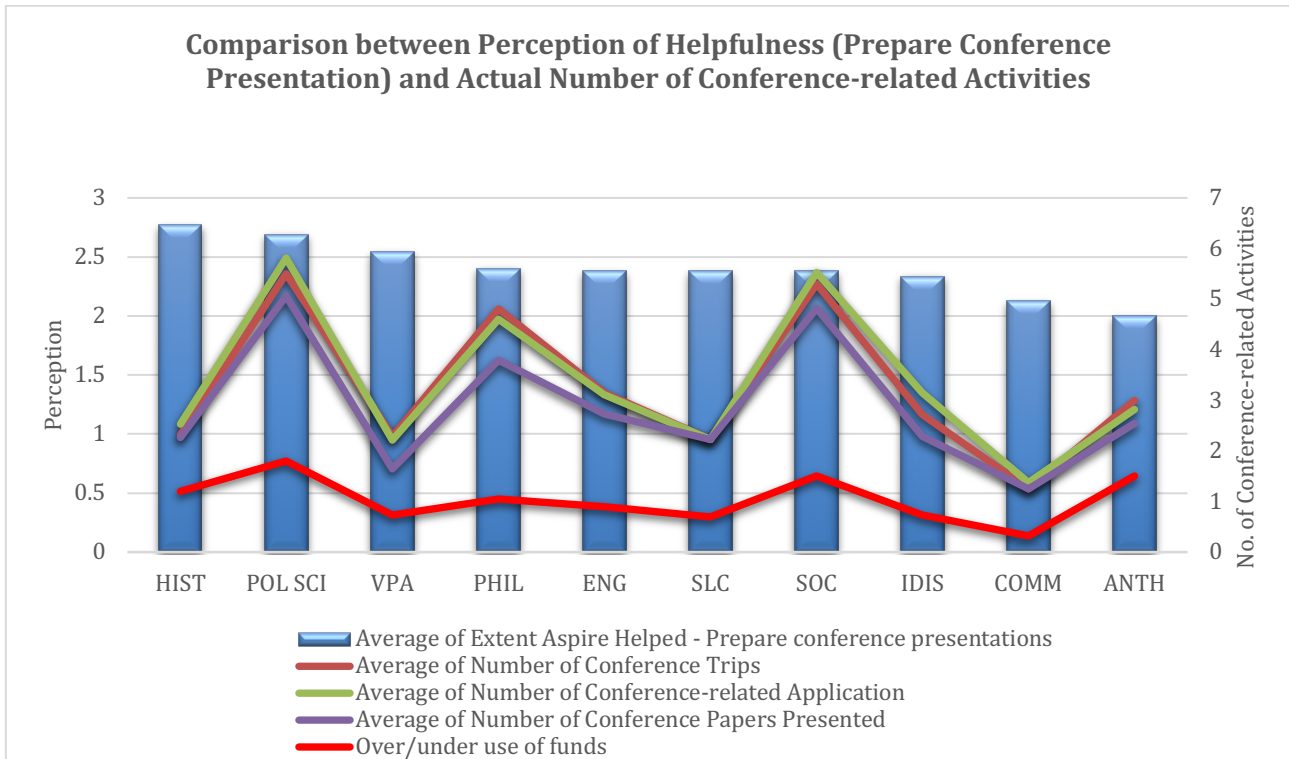


Figure 18. Perception of helpfulness and actual number of conference related activities.

## PROMISE AWARD REPORT

Promoting **R**esearch **O**pportunities to **M**aximize Innovation and **S**cholarly Excellence,  
College of Liberal Arts Graduate Student Research Support Program

### PROMISE Program Description

The College of Liberal Arts PROMISE program is intended to enhance institutional excellence and to promote all areas of intellectual inquiry. PROMISE promotes research opportunities to maximize innovation and scholarly excellence in graduate education. Building upon the model established with the ASPIRE Research Enhancement Grants for faculty, PROMISE supports CLA graduate student research, scholarly activity and conference travel (up to \$750 for domestic; \$1,500 for international). Applications are funded and managed by the CLA Dean's Office.

Dean David Reingold allocated \$100,000 for this program for FY16, and the Provost authorized the use of \$75,000 from the ASPIRE program for PROMISE. In FY17, the College allocated \$300,000 in funding for the PROMISE Program. For FY18 and FY19, PROMISE has received a \$200,000 allocation each year with \$150,000 of the allocation coming from the College and the other \$50,000 coming from the Provost's Office. The demand for this program continues to be very strong. These resources are critical for expanding conference participation and enhancing research activities among our students, whose stipends and research funds are often very constrained.

From 2015 to Jan 22, 2019, we approved 859 PROMISE Awards for a total of \$834,319.72. The majority of awards were for conference travel (636 or 74.0% of the total for \$593,561.42); 223 awards (26.0%) were allocated for research/creative activity (\$240,758.30). The awards were distributed across graduate students at different levels in their programs. 363 of the

859 awards went to Ph.D. candidates, 362 to pre-ABD Ph.D. students, and 134 awards went to MA/MS (Ph.D. Track) or MFA students.

In terms of amounts of funding by department, **Table 1** (below) indicates that the highest recipient was English, with almost \$200,000 in funding, followed by Interdisciplinary Studies (\$122,000) and Languages & Culture (\$112,000).

*Table 1. Amount of PROMISE funding by department*

Dept	Count of Funding	Amount of Funding (\$)
ENG	231	199015.50
IDIS	123	122787.20
SLC	104	112757.40
COMM	82	77556.21
HIST	75	77348.81
SOC	76	70779.30
POL SCI	54	53126.81
ANTH	43	49319.87
PHIL	47	48208.00
VPA	24	23420.64
<b>Total</b>	<b>859</b>	<b>834319.70</b>

### Funds Distribution by Tier and Department

As shown by **Figure 1** (following page), the distribution of the grants across tiers indicates that a majority of grants funded were Tier 1 (expenses related to scholarship/creative activity including domestic research or conference travel for graduate students to present original scholarship/creative works), up to \$750.

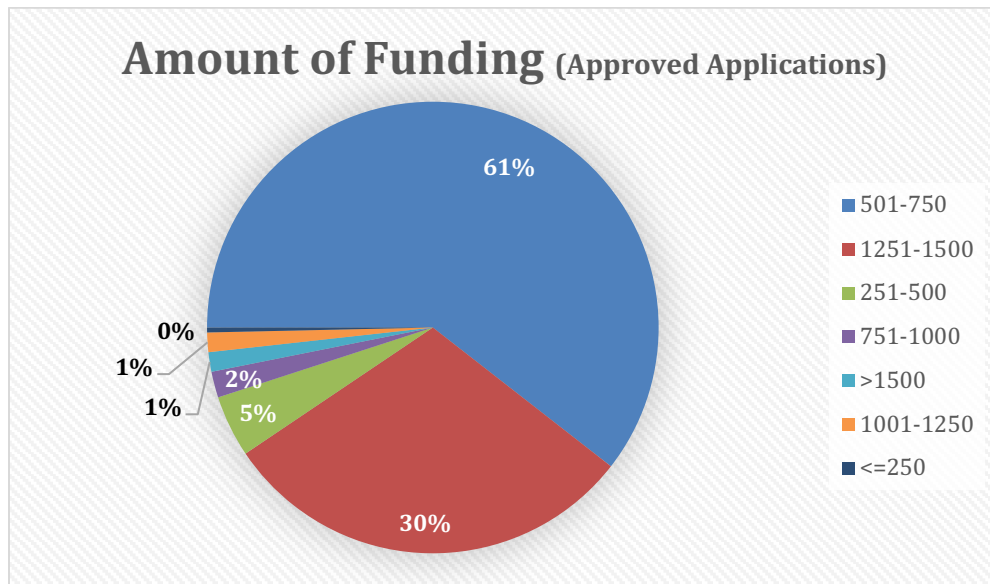


Figure 1. Amount of PROMISE funding distribution

More instructive, however, is the distribution by departments. Figure 2 (below) indicates that the largest beneficiaries were - in order - English, Interdisciplinary Studies, and Language and Culture, with VPA at the bottom of the ladder.

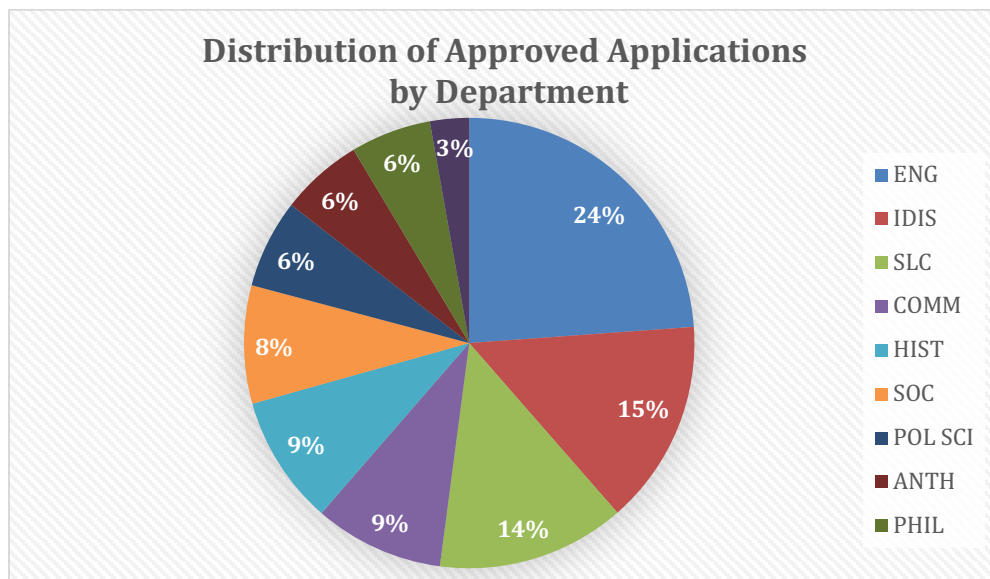


Figure 2. Distribution of PROMISE amounts by department



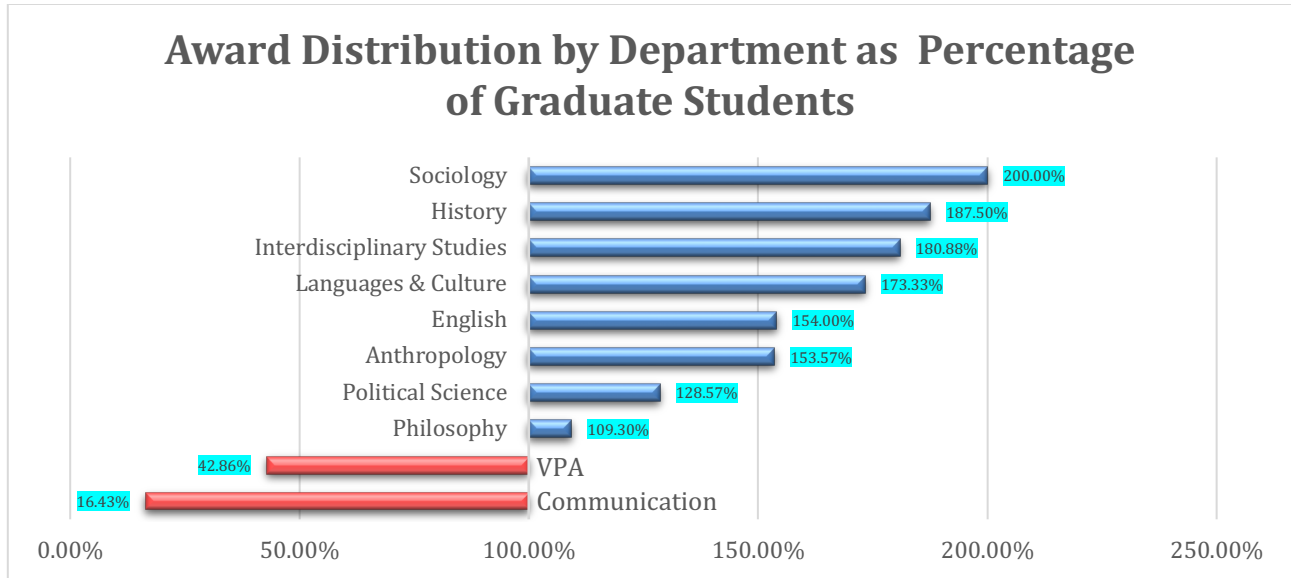
**Table 2** (following page) shows the distribution of the PROMISE awards by award type and department. Graduate students commented on how essential the funding has been to their ability to attend conferences and complete their research in a timely manner. This is particularly true given how constrained their budgets are – with stipend levels and funding trends within CLA disciplines leading to very little faculty grant money available for graduate student use. Their conference presentations and attendance expanded on their work with their advisors, and enhanced their networking and community building, which is so important for further career development as well as job placement.

The research funds acted as “seed money” in some cases (e.g., for pilot projects) or allowed completion of dissertation research in other cases. The demand for this funding is very high. Typically, the funds are exhausted by mid-March, more than three months before the end of the fiscal year. The funds appear to have been very well spent and should contribute to enhanced graduate student and faculty scholarly productivity and professional development for our students.

*TABLE 2. January 2015 to January 2019 PROMISE Award Distribution*

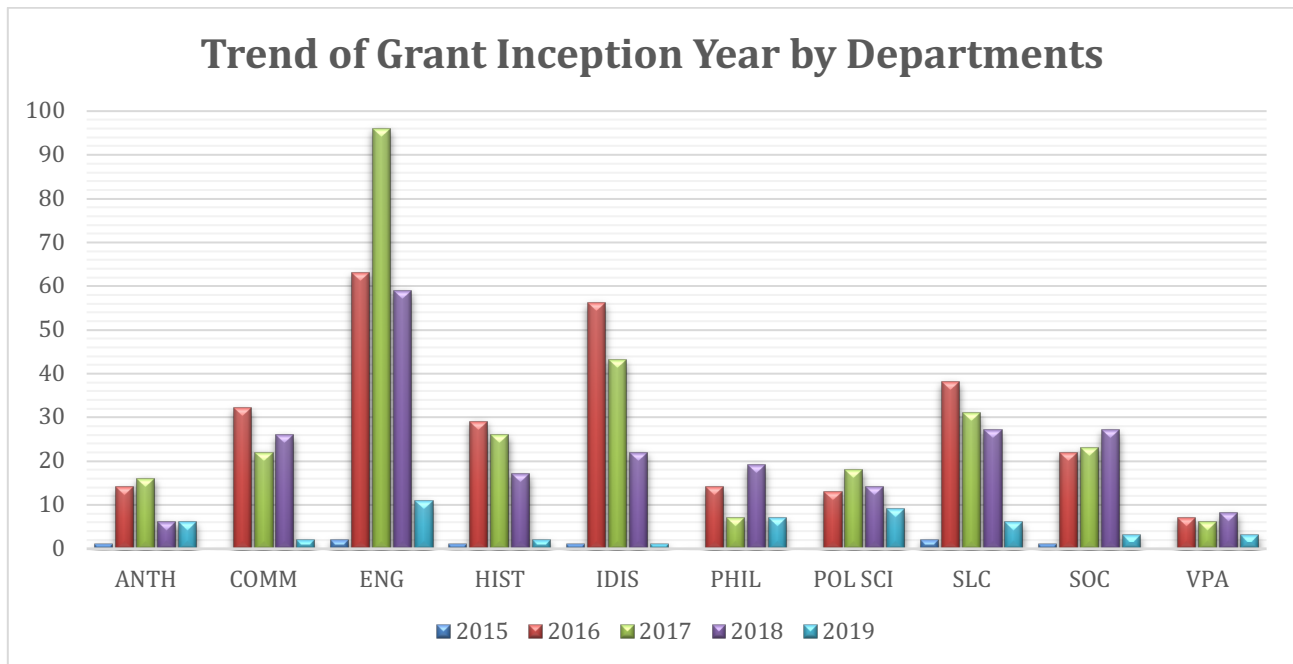
Department	Conference	Conference %	Research	Research %	No. Awards	No. Grads	Percent Awards/Grads
Sociology	64	0.0745	12	0.014	76	38	200.00%
History	34	0.0396	41	0.0477	75	40	187.50%
Interdisciplinary Studies	85	0.099	38	0.0442	123	68	180.88%
Languages & Culture	79	0.092	25	0.0291	104	60	173.33%
English	212	0.2468	19	0.0221	231	150	154.00%
Anthropology	25	0.0291	18	0.021	43	28	153.57%
Political Science	50	0.0582	4	0.0047	54	42	128.57%
Philosophy	43	0.0501	4	0.0047	47	43	109.30%
Visual & Performing Arts	14	0.0163	10	0.0116	24	56	42.86%

Communication	30	0.0349	52	0.0605	82	499	16.43%
Grand Total	636	74.04%	223	25.96%	859	1024	



*Figure 3. PROMISE distribution by department indicating over- or under-use compared to size of graduate student size*

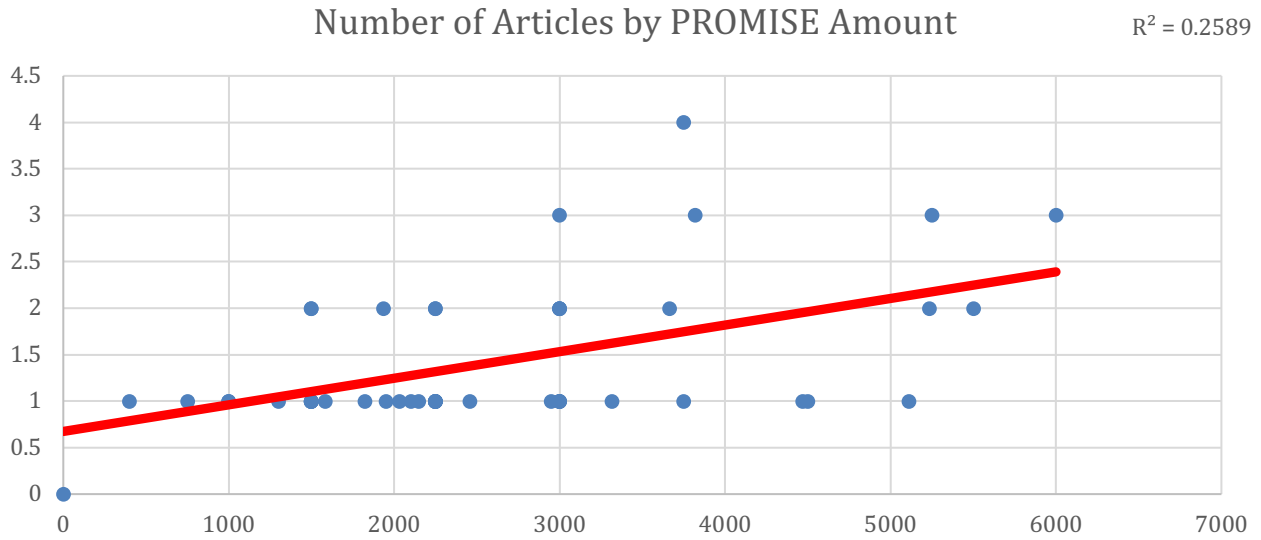
Looking at the trend of grant inception year by department in **Figure 4** (following page), notice that the most intense user – English - peaked in 2017, while Sociology saw an increase in use. Communication, Philosophy, and Political Science saw a dip in 2017, with an increasing trend in 2018. On the other hand, History and Interdisciplinary Studies saw a net decrease in PROMISE funds use.



*Figure 4. Overtime use of PROMISE funds by department*

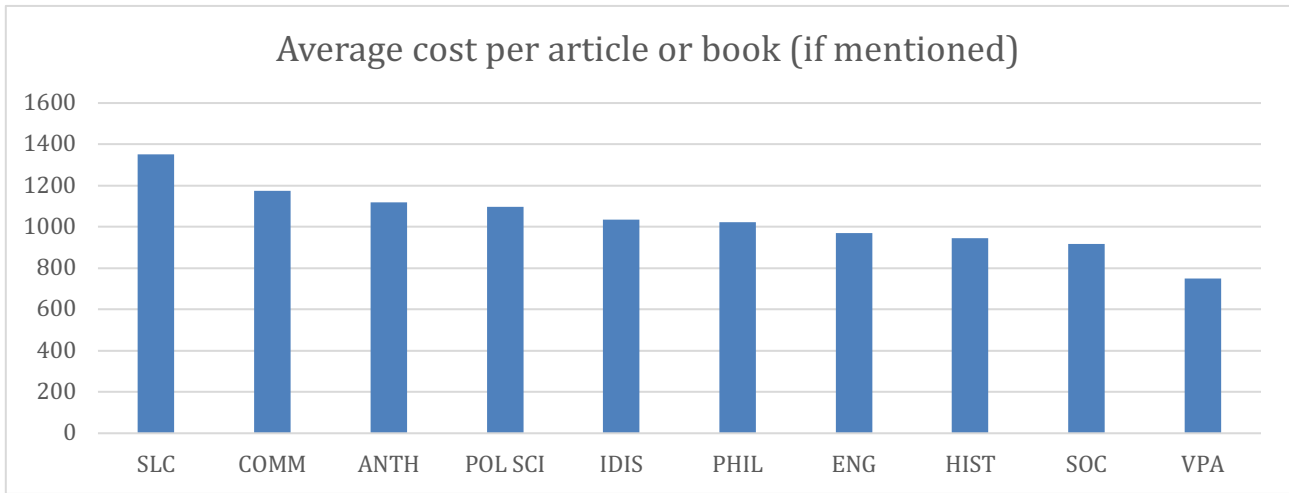
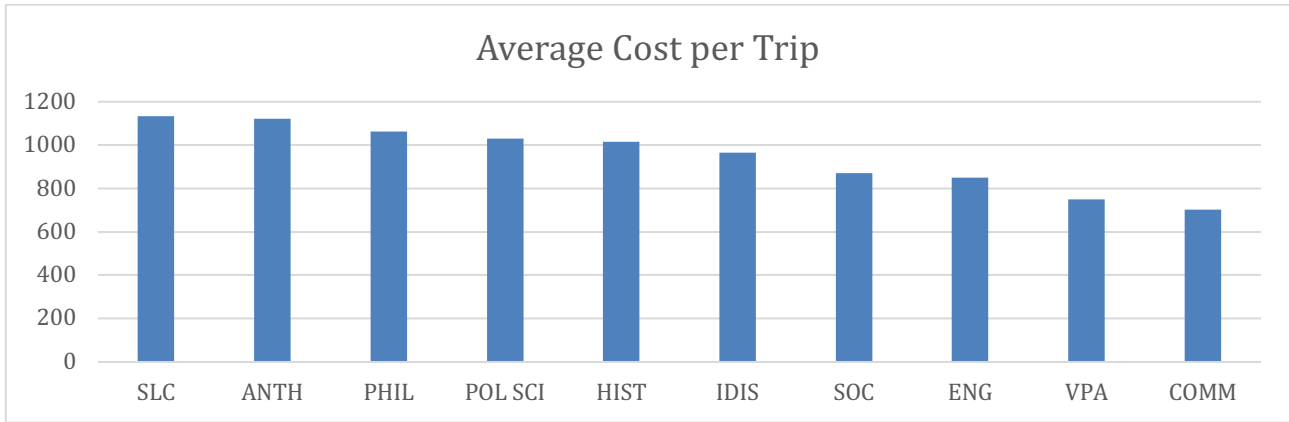
### PROMISE Program Impact

Overall, PROMISE funds have been used in their majority for conference travel (\$595,773.42). However, a significant number (\$241,508.30) was used for research. This breakdown of fund use, seen in **Figure 5** (following page), suggests that graduate students as a whole focus their attention mostly on conference presentations and professional development. This might also suggest the need for a graduate student research support program. At the same time, the amount spent on research had a tangible impact. The correlation between PROMISE awards and article publication record is positive, and of moderate impact ( $r = .5$ ). While similar in direction to the ASPIRE program, the effect of the investment is smaller, albeit still significant. A full one-quarter (25%) of the variance in the number of articles published comes from the variance in the amount of PROMISE awards.



*Figure 5. Number of articles by PROMISE amount*

Similar to the cost-effectiveness analysis for the ASPIRE program, we estimated (on the basis of the survey responses) the average cost per conference trip or article published by the graduate students funded by PROMISE. The average was about \$1,000. Sociology, English, VPA, and Communication students were the most effective in terms of average trip costs. The least effective were students of Language and Culture as well as Anthropology students (for trips), and students of Language and Culture as well as Communication students (for publications).



*Figure 6a-b. Cost effectiveness of PROMISE funds by department: trips vs. articles*

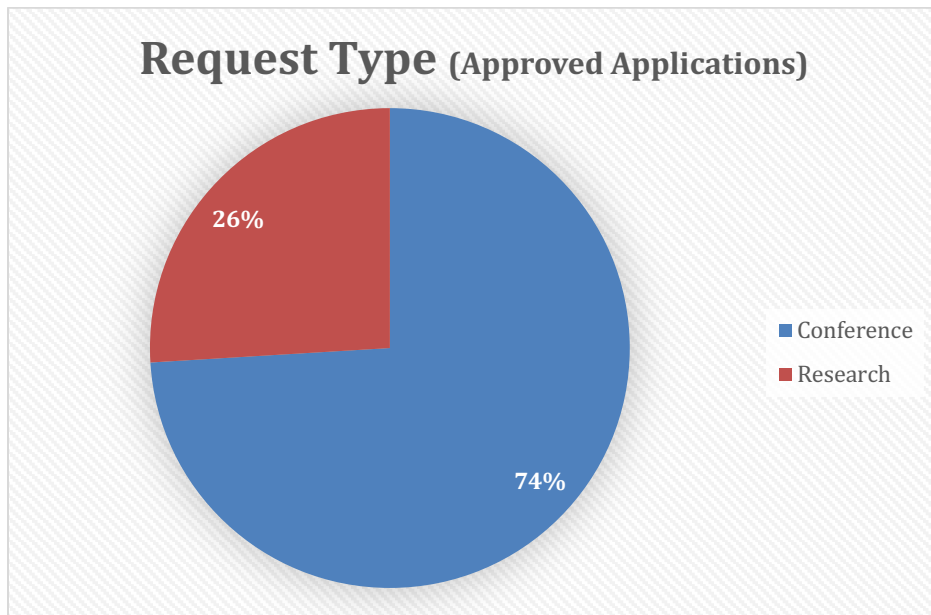


Figure 7. PROMISE fund use by type of expense

### Program Funds Use by Type

When the destination of the funds is broken down by department, as seen in **Figure 8** (below), it is noted that utilizing PROMISE funds for research dominates in Communication and History. In contrast, Sociology, Philosophy, English, and Political Science used a majority of their funding for conferences.

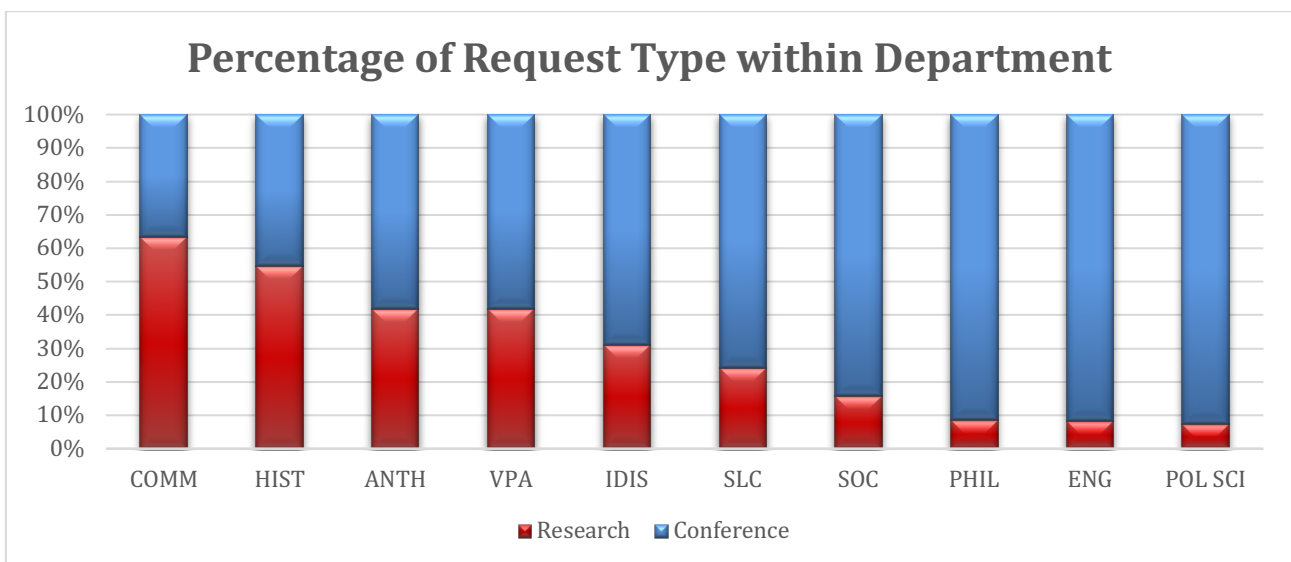
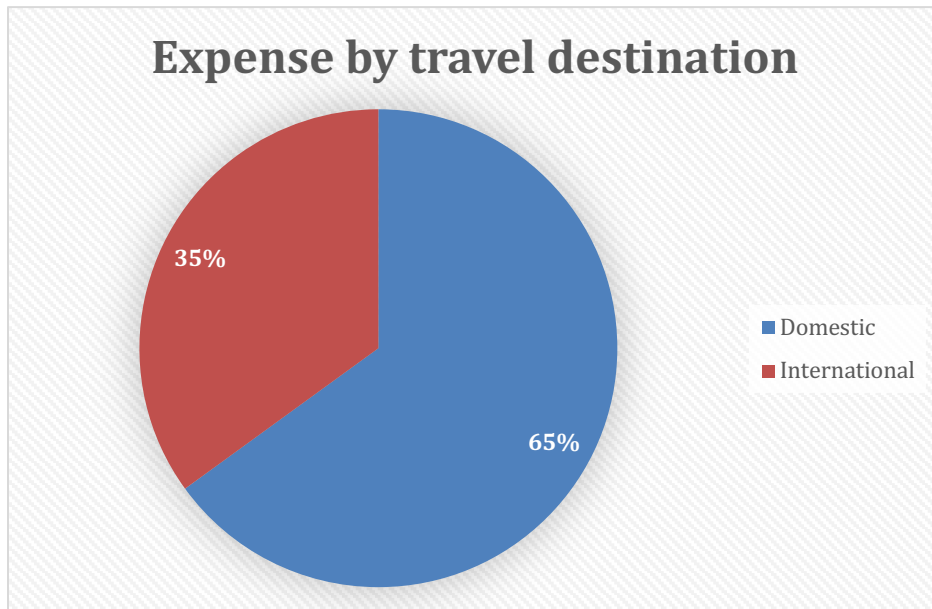


Figure 8. PROMISE fund use by type and department

Overall, a nearly two thirds (65%) of fund expenses were allocated to Tier 1 domestic travel as seen in **Figure 9** (following page). By department, as shown in **Figure 10** (following page), the trend remains that a majority of funds were allocated to domestic travel – with the exception of the Anthropology department.



*Figure 9. Expense by travel destination*

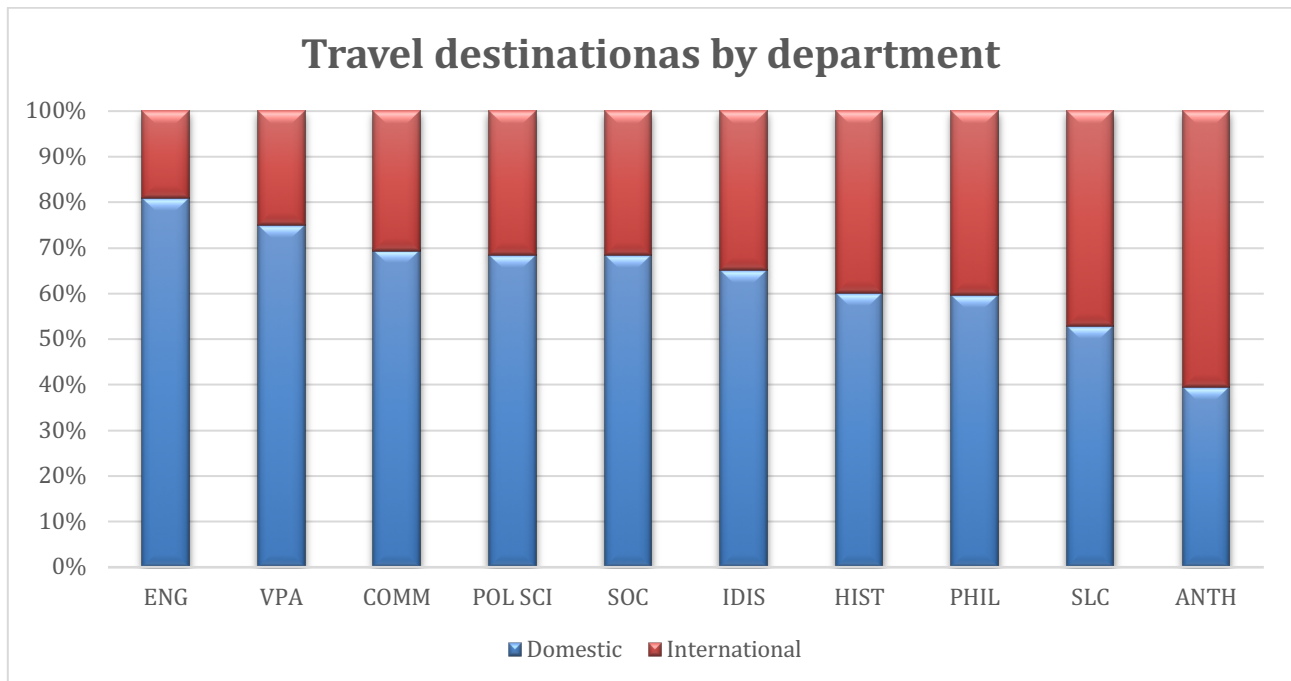


Figure 10. Travel destinations funded by PROMISE by department

The most visited countries by students funded by PROMISE are just like those visited by the faculty funded by ASPIRE in Europe.

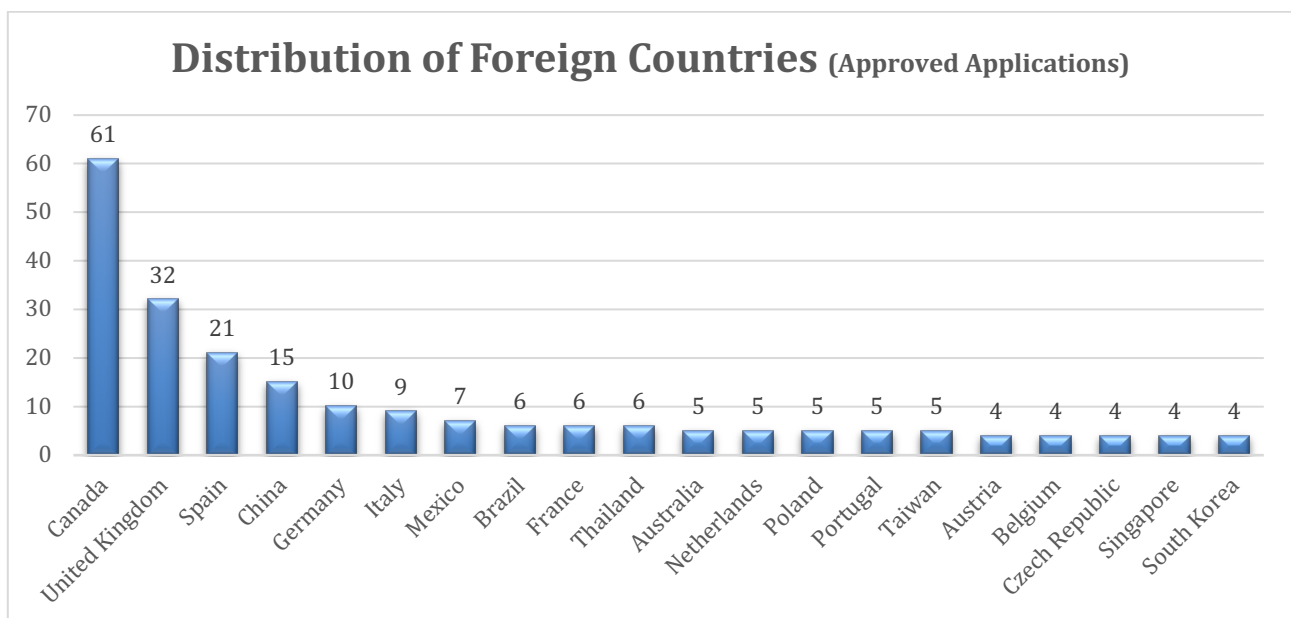


Figure 11. Countries most visited by the users of the PROMISE fund



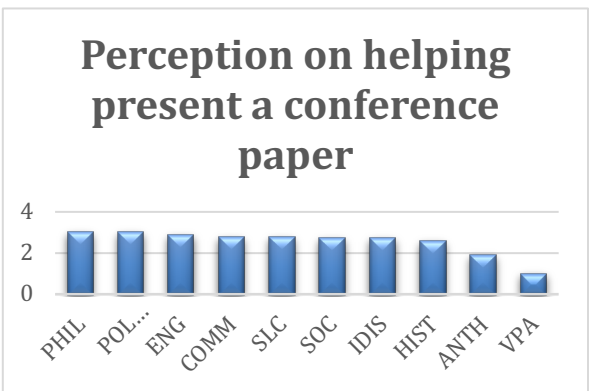
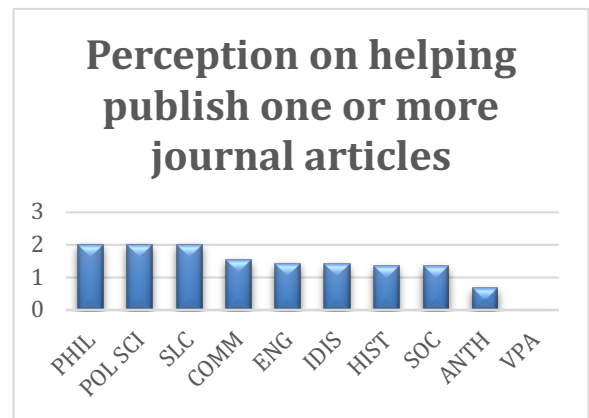
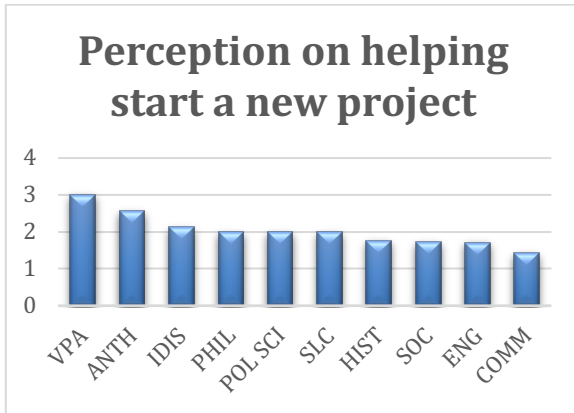
*Table 3. PROMISE Outcome Survey*

Department	Number of Respondents
ANTH	9
COMM	14
ENG	46
HIST	14
IDIS	18
PHIL	6
POL SCI	12
SLC	14
SOC	11
VPA	2
Overall	146

An outcome survey was distributed among PROMISE fund recipients to gauge their perception of the grant’s helpfulness. There were 147 total respondents out of the 497 invited to complete the PROMISE Outcome Survey, making the response rate 30%.

Just like the ASPIRE respondents, the PROMISE recipients were asked to evaluate the helpfulness of the program overall, their satisfaction with the funding, and their qualitative evaluation of the program.

Overall, the students found the program most effective for funding conference presentations and moderately helpful for starting a new project and publishing a journal article. Broken down by department, it is notable that Political Science, Philosophy, and SLC students are most likely to find PROMISE useful for conferences, while VPA, Anthropology, and IDIS find it most useful for starting new projects. The cleavage suggests, again, that graduate student research support might need to be boosted for social science students, and conference or exhibition presentation support should be increased for VPA students.



Figures 12a-d. Perception of PROMISE usefulness by dept

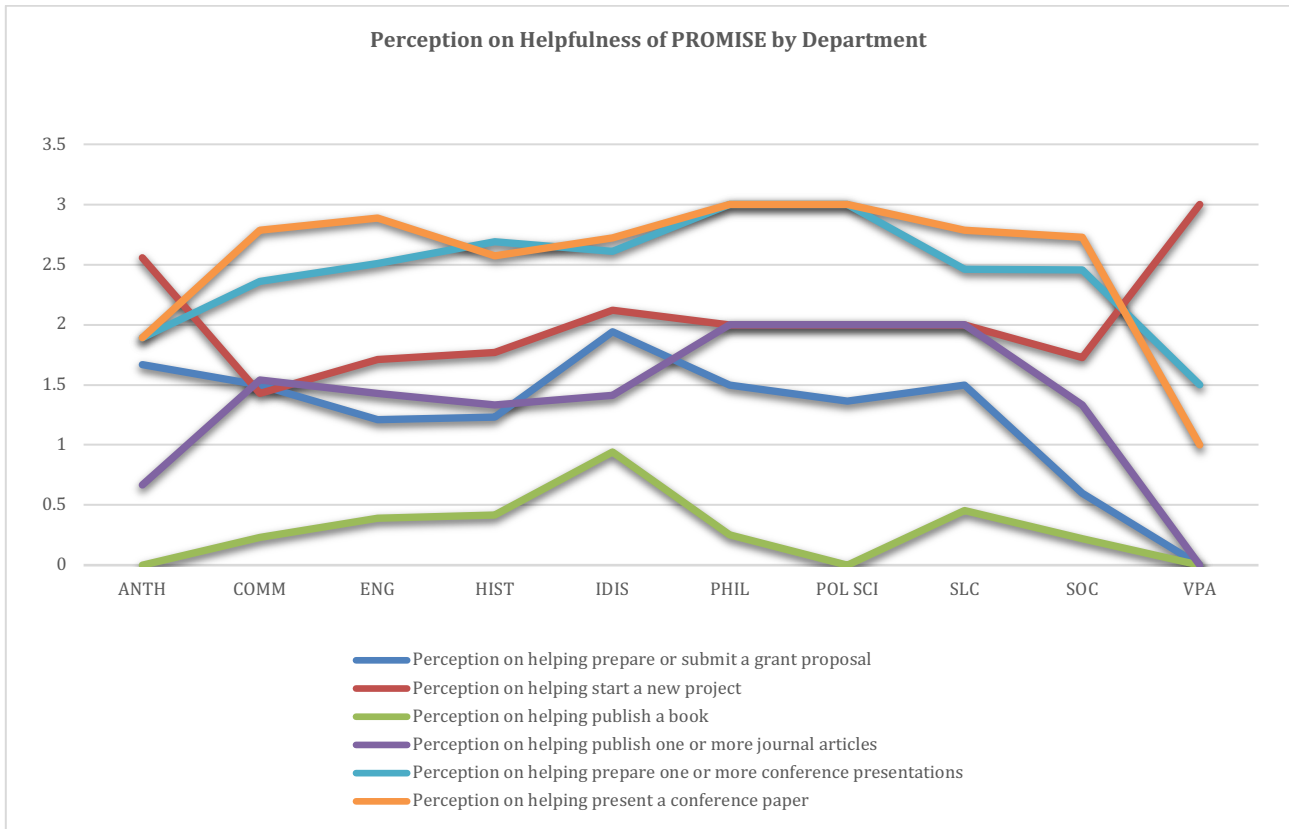


Figure 13. Level of helpfulness for all departments and all activities, combined

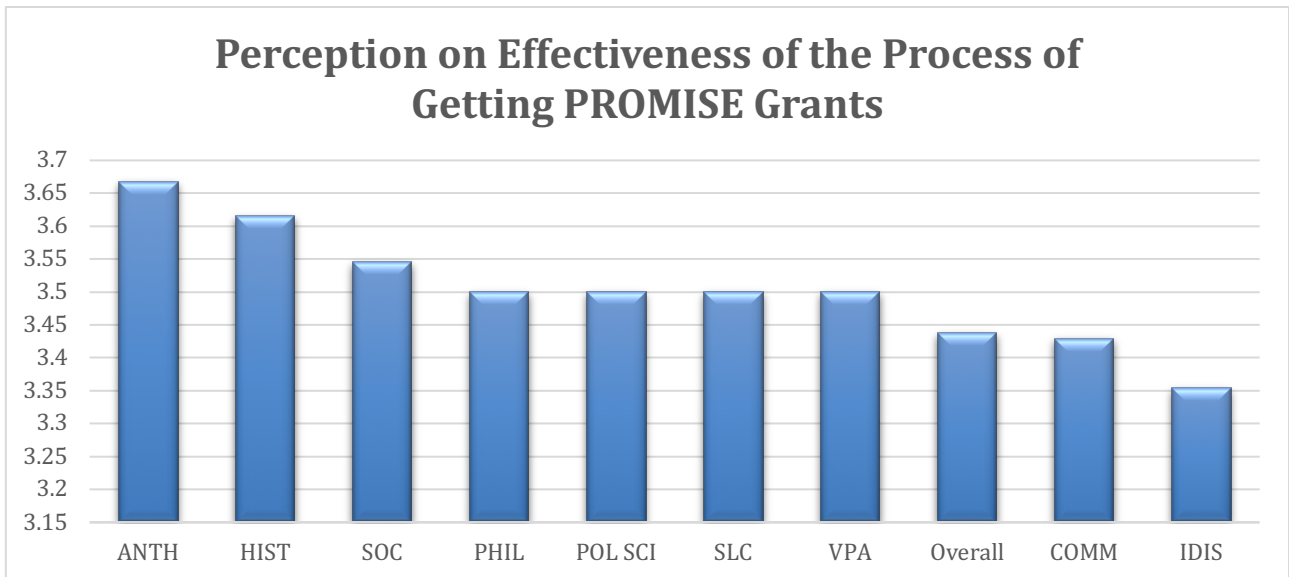


Figure 14. Effectiveness of Grant Giving Process by Department

In terms of effectiveness of the grant-giving process, the score was 3.4 on a scale of 0 to 4, where 4 is “Extremely Effective.” At the same time, in terms of amount of support (also across all departments), the students found the amount “just right.”

Broken down by departments, although all groups were situated above “very effective,” the graduate students in Anthropology rated the effectiveness of the process of getting PROMISE funding highest. The Interdisciplinary Studies were at the lower end (Figure 14, previous page). In terms of appropriateness of amounts, Figure 15 (below) shows the ranking, led by Communication students (relatively satisfied) and Philosophy students (under-satisfied). It is interesting to note that, on average, Philosophy students got some of the highest awards, while Communication students received the lowest (Figure 16, on the following page).

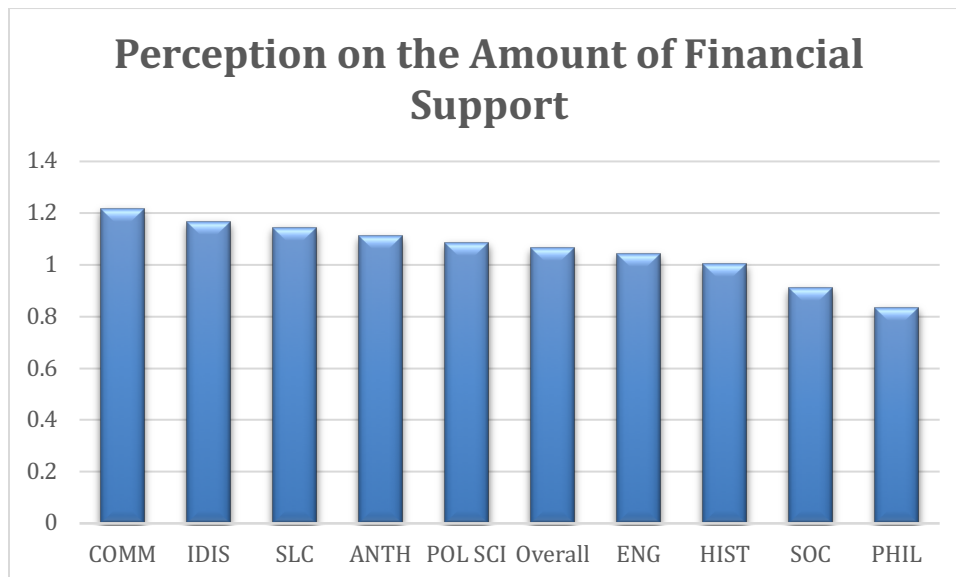


Figure 15. Perception of amount of support by department.

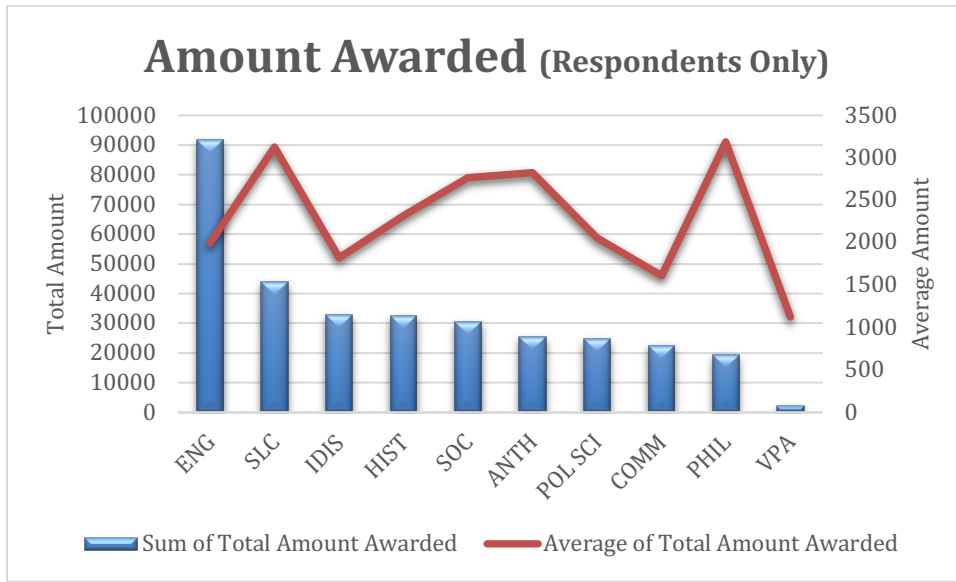


Figure 16. Amount of support by department

While, across all departments, there was no significant correlations between amount of support and satisfaction, there was a negative correlation – as demonstrated in **Figure 17** (below) – between amount of support and satisfaction with amount in Political Science.

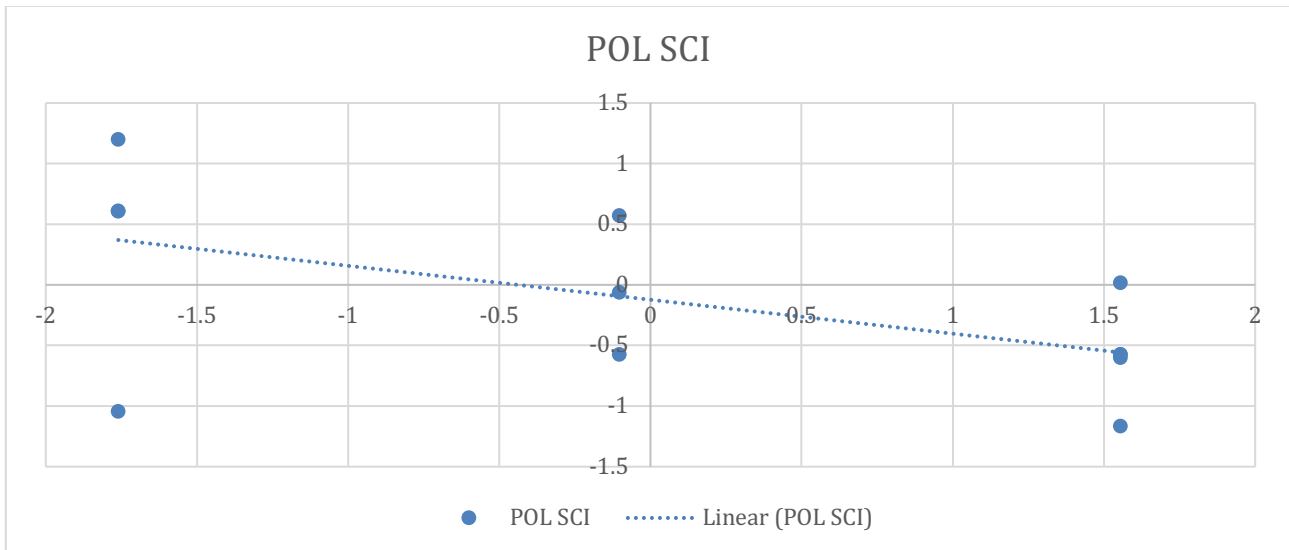


Figure 17. Correlation between average amount of support and satisfaction with amount of support

Zooming in and looking at the use of the PROMISE awards, we first notice that students took advantage of the program at least every other year. Each respondent to the survey took at least two trips over the period of interest. Broken down by departments, Sociology students took - on average - three trips, followed by Philosophy students.

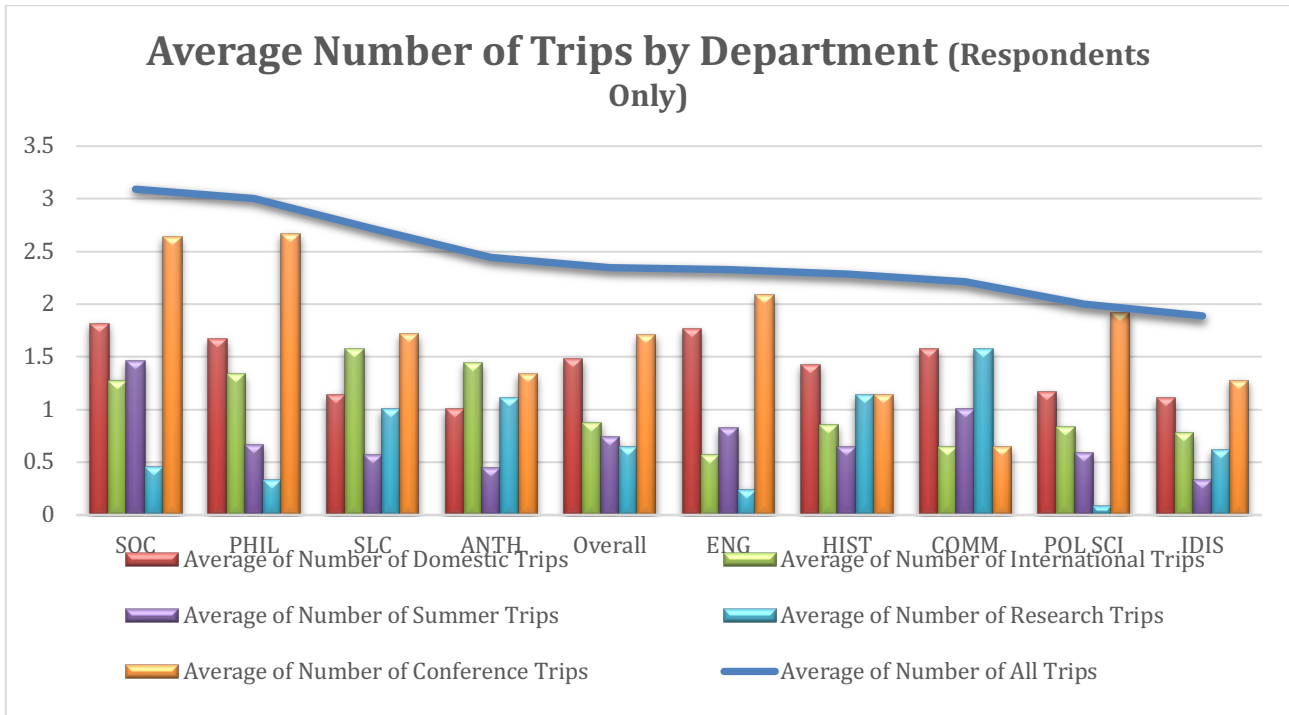


Figure 18. Number of trips by type and department

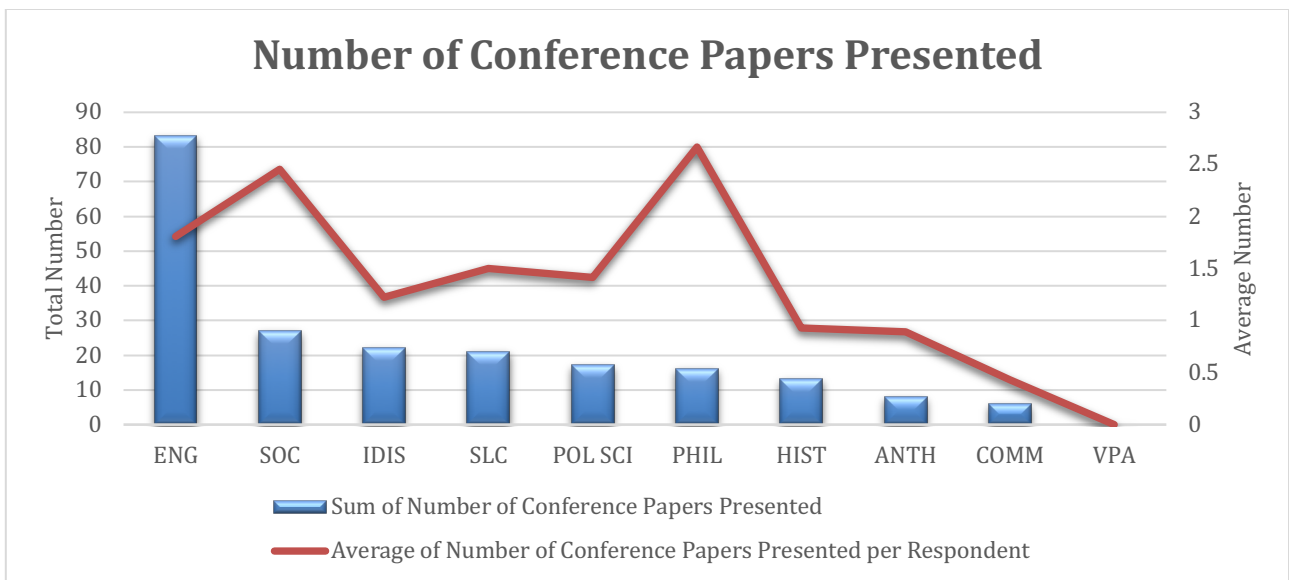


Figure 19. Number of conference papers presented by department (total and average)

Figure 19 (previous page) reveals, at the same time, that philosophy students had the highest number of average papers presented, almost one per year, followed by Sociology students. At the same time, the English Department has the highest total number of conference papers presented.

How does the perception of helpfulness intersect with actual support? Generally, we found that at the department level, the more support a department got, the higher the evaluation of helpfulness was for conference papers.

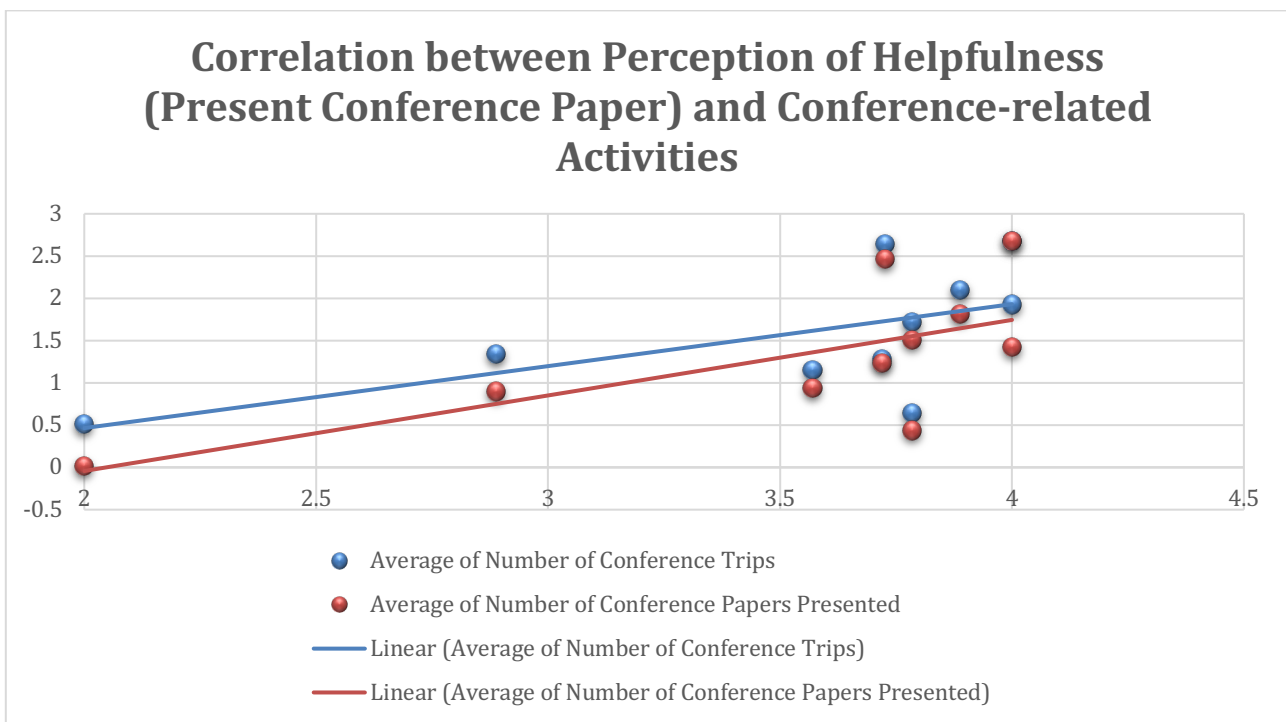


Figure 20. Correlation between perception and real support at department level

*Table 4. Top Words describing the PROMISE program*

Dept	Top	Second	Third
ANTH	Beginning	Care	Completion
COMM	Beginning	Care	Completion
ENG	Beginning	Completion	Care
HIST	Care	Beginning	Completion
IDIS	Beginning	Completion	Care
PHIL	Beginning	Completion	Care
POL SCI	Beginning	Completion	Care
SLC	Completion	Beginning	Satisfaction
SOC	Care	Beginning	Completion/ Satisfaction
VPA	Beginning	Completion	Care
<b>Overall</b>	<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Completion</b>	<b>Care</b>

Finally, similar to the ASPIRE program survey, we asked the respondents to rank-order a set of words associated with the implicit goals of the programs (which are to open new research projects, help the recipients make the work better known, create connections, and/or get personal support). They were asked to rank the words “beginning,” “completion,” “satisfaction,” “development,” “care,” and “excellence”

The analysis of the responses uncovered that, overall, the students identified the program with the idea of opening new paths; the highest ranked word across units being “beginning.” The words “completion” and “care” were selected second and third, without much variation across units. The results indicate that the students saw that both ends of the research process are covered by the program, and that they appreciate the personal care they felt they got through it.



## Conclusions

### *Impact*

The report indicates a healthy engagement with resources, as well as tangible results. Remarkably, the faculty - especially those in Communication and Political Science - have used the grants not only to travel, but also to start and publish articles and books. Similarly, the graduate students have used the PROMISE program to the same end. Overall, a faculty article costs \$2,000 and a student article costs \$1,000. Equally remarkable is the associations recipients made with the words “beginning” and “completion,” indicating that the programs are more than routine funding sources for current needs. Furthermore, looking at survey respondents, actual use of the funds increased with perception of helpfulness. Finally, higher use of the funds led to higher productivity.

Given the limited amount of time (and a lack of a solid time series to ascertain the connection between investment and production), we are not currently at a point where we can put a specific productivity value on dollars invested. During our next round of investigation - to be conducted in two years - we plan to collect more data and look at the association between investment-over-time and productivity at the scholar, research track, and department levels. This will allow us to determine correlation as well as causation.

### *Lessons learned and future actions*

The most important lesson learned is this: although the program was designed at a lower level of investment to support many routine activities, it has - in fact - turned into a strong and productive method for jumpstarting new research activities or completing existing ones. This suggests that the idea of a generalized investment strategy pays off, and can lead to productive responses. Looking forward, we would like to *optimize the distribution of investment*.

Right now, assistant professors have unlimited drawing rights, associate professors, two, and full professors, one opportunity to use the funds each year. Given that the program seems to lift many boats, we will consider increasing the allocation for associate professors to three allocations. Also, the numbers indicate that very few assistant professors draw on the program more than five times per year; we will cap the lower end at five, so that we protect them from over-commitment (and also free more funds for the mid-career professionals who are very eager and ready to invest time in smaller-scale projects).

A second lesson we learned is that the funds for graduate students tend to be exhausted relatively early in the program. We would like to consider increasing the total amount available for PROMISE grants by at least 10% per year. We are considering a variety of courses of action, including external fundraising and budgetary allocations from salary savings, if grant proposal activities pick up.

A third lesson is that success varies widely across departments. CLA administration will work closely with department heads, and with faculty at large, to equalize the success variation across departments.

### *Dissemination*

The results of this report may improve and direct the faculty and graduate student PROMISE and ASPIRE investment strategies. To facilitate this process of institutional learning from the activities funded by the two programs so far, we will disseminate the results through three main channels.

First, we will disseminate the findings among the department heads. The findings will be presented at a department heads meeting, which will provide them close and deep understanding of the data. The heads will be encouraged to use the report and the presentation slides for their own departmental presentations.

Next, the report will be presented at the CLA senate meeting in the fall - with a request to participants to share findings with their colleagues. For even wider dissemination among faculty and graduate students, we will condense the report into an illustrated brief for faculty and graduate students, which will be dissemination via email and CLA-specific websites and social media channels targeting our own faculty and graduate students. Finally, we plan to organize a workshop with past recipients and prospective recipients to disseminate the most effective means to use the funds.

The College of Liberal Arts faculty and graduate students have greatly benefited from these programs, which we consider invaluable tools in our arsenal of research support. We are committed to improving the use of the PROMISE and ASPIRE funds to facilitate excellence in research.