

Proposal for Regional Development Grant

Regions Committee
American Academy of Religion

Dear Committee Members:

In order to advance the agenda of the American Academy of Religion's (AAR) Committee on the Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession, the executive committee of the AAR's Mid-Atlantic Region (AAR-MAR) is proud to present its members, along with the combined presence of members from the New England-Maritimes Region (NEMAAR) and the MAR-SBL, with the opportunity to participate in a plenary meeting and break-out session with Dr. Miguel De La Torre. Our commitment to provide a plenary and break out session at the 2011 MAR annual meeting (March 17th and 18th) reflects a shared priority with the AAR and the Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Profession Committee whose charge is to promote and assure the full access and academic freedom of racial/ethnic minority persons within the academy. Dr. De La Torre has committed to providing the workshop. In order to defray the cost of this important event, the executive committee of the MAR is requesting a regional development grant of \$ (see budget breakdown below).

The topic of the plenary meeting will be diversifying higher education with integrity, which is conceived of as a plenary targeted towards all meeting participants. The break out session will be geared more specifically towards scholars of color seeking to successfully navigate higher education, and will include strategies for finding and securing a position and strategies for successfully publishing in top-tier peer reviewed journals. Each of these events will draw on Dr. De La Torre's first-hand experience in academia, the salient features of which are recorded in the AAR's Career Guide for persons of color, which he helped to produce. Overall, it is his own experiences that provided him with a knowledge base of how to survive and flourish as a man of color within the academy; and so we are excited to have him share this knowledge in person with our members.

The objectives we in the MAR have for these events are two-fold. On the one hand, that Dr. Miguel De La Torre brings his own expertise and experience to bear on the relationship between, and the pressing issues surrounding, race and the academy, promises to benefit the professional lives of MAR-NEMAAR members. On the other hand, his presence at our annual meeting will strengthen the region overall by providing a.) information that is germane to graduate student members and junior faculty of color who are looking for guidance/insight on how to be successful, and thrive, in the academy; b.) a forum for better understanding and awareness raising of the continuing disparity in higher education's employment and retention of persons of color; and c.) a platform for the creation of a supportive network among all MAR members.

In order to promote this event for adoption by other regional groups, the executive committee of the MAR plans to produce a video-recording of the event that will be posted to the MAR webpage along with a link to the career guide manual produced by Dr. De La Torre and his fellow committee members.

We are asking for a grant of \$ to cover the following items:

- A. \$ to cover Dr. De La Torre's travel expenses
- B. \$ honorarium to Dr. De La Torre
- C. \$ for promotional brochures/fliers and mailing

It is the hope of the MAR's executive committee that our colleagues in the Regions Committee of the AAR will recognize the importance of our planned events, and to support our commitment to insuring that all members of the academy, and not just in the MAR, will be treated with the fairness and integrity that human dignity requires. The members of the executive committee of the MAR are asking to be provided a regional development grant for this worthy endeavor.

Sincerely,

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