**Graduate Student Project Funds Application : Entry # 1157**

**Requestor Information**

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**Name of Requesting Student:**

Christian Herrera

**Requesting Organization:**

Cognitive Neuroscience of Meditation Reading Group

**Contact Email Address:**

c.herrera@uci.edu

**Contact Email Address (repeated):**

c.herrera@uci.edu

**General Program/Event Information**

**Program/Event Name:**

Neural Correlates of Meditation & Dialogues about Meditation, Mind and Consciousness

**Description of Program/Event:**

The Neural Correlates of Mediation

Meditation is a form of cognitive training that affects performance in attention (Lutz et al. 2008; Brefczynki-Lewis et al. 2007) and modulates cognitive and affective states (Brewer et al. 2011; Davidson et al. 2012). This ancient contemplative practice has been the subject of recent scrutiny using the tools of the cognitive sciences, cognitive neurosciences and health sciences.

In particular, it has been shown to provide an effective form of reducing and managing the effect of daily life stressors. For graduate students, stress can be particularly debilitating, and this form of cognitive training might be a unique alternative to other resources on campus (e.g. counseling).

Our unique group explores both the literature of the neural correlates of meditation, and the active contemplative practice, combining the theoretical with the practical.

The sessions for the reading group and the meditation group are separate, so the student body can decide to take both, or just one.

This ongoing meditation practices require a cushion to sit for extended periods of time.

The meditation session, and the cushions will remain available for the students for the duration of the Academic year.
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To kick start our group, we will hold a day of dialogues, named Meditation, Mind and Consciousness. We will have at least one representative from the contemplative tradition, Geshe Lama Ahbay Rimpoche, talk with faculty and students from all schools about their understanding of how meditation works to produce the kind of changes we observe in practitioners.

Ideally, this will spark (1) Awareness of Meditation as an option to deal with stress for students, (2) interest in what might be common ground between the two approaches to study the mind, the scientific third person, and the contemplative first person approach.

Location of Program/Event:
Graduate Resource Center

Date of Program/Event:
05/27/2014

Start Time of Program/Event:
03:00 pm

Expected Attendance

Number of UCI Graduate Students Expected to Attend:
20

Number of UCI Undergraduate Students Expected to Attend:
20

Number of UCI Admin/Faculty/Staff Expected to Attend:
5

Number of Other People Expected to Attend:
5

How are you predicting the attendance numbers listed above?

We have been holding regular meetings once a week for the last 18 months with a regular weekly groups of 6-8 students mostly form the Cog Sci department, but also from Engineering and other schools.
We have never been advertised to the general student body, and our members know about us through word of mouth.
We have been funded in the past with a small $500 grant for Reading Groups.
Meditation is an effective way of reducing and dealing with stressors concomitant to graduate student life (and
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student life in particular). Once the group goes public, we expect the number of attendants will rise quickly.

Planned Methods of Advertisement:

1. Event "Dialogues about Mind and Consciousness" (May 27, 2014) with Geshe Lama Ahbay Rimpoche, visiting Tibetan scholar from India under the UC Irvine - Tibet initiative.
2. Quarterly Ring Road Meditations (we meditate on different locations of the Ring Road to have visibility and create awareness of Meditation as a tool to reduce/manage stressors).
3. Departmental mail through the School of Social Sciences.
4. Booth in the Health Week
5. Wayzgoose
6. Grad weekly
7. Paper posters through campus
8. Contact and distribution of material to centers: Counseling, Student Health, Graduate Resource Center, Susan Samueli, etc.
8. Contact with Club Organizations to disseminate electronically to their members.

Request and Budget

Amount of funding requested from AGS Project Fund:

1400

How much do you expect the event to cost in total?

1400

Are you receiving other funding for this event?

No

Itemized Budget for Program/Event

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items w/ Description and Quantity</th>
<th>Cost (in dollars)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zafu Meditation Cushion, 20</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zabuton pillow, 20</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea for 40</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper cups for tea</td>
<td>10</td>
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Has your organization received AGS Projects Funding in the past?

No