

3-2014

## FALL 2014 New Writing Series

English Department

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**CULTURAL AFFAIRS/DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES**  
**GRANT APPLICATION**

I. Applicant/Organization: English Department & National Poetry Foundation

II. a. Responsible Organization Officer: Steve Evans

\$ 5,000

b. Title: Associate Professor of English, Acting Director of National Poetry Foundation

c. Campus Address (include Email and Telephone):

318 Neville Hall

steven.evans@maine.edu

581-3813 (office); 207-356-5921 (mobile & main)

III. Summary of program requiring funding (title; featured artist(s); speaker(s); scheduled date(s):

**Fall 2014 New Writing Series**

Seven Events, featuring four poets and four fiction writers

Thursday afternoons throughout the semester

Most events at Allen & Sally Fernald APPE Space, Stewart Commons

All events free and open to the public

IV. Budget Proposal Form must be attached: Standard budget and supplementary budget included

**Funding for current application is contingent upon submission of reports for any previous grant awards, including final budget and attendance figures.**

**SEND COMPLETED APPLICATION VIA EMAIL TO:**      alisha.lukas@maine.edu

For questions regarding the Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series, please contact Alisha Lukas at 1-1512.

## Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series Fund Budget Proposal Form

Applicant/Organization: English Department and National Poetry Foundation  
 Responsible Officer: Steve Evans  
 Event Title: New Writing Series for Fall 2014  
 Event Dates: Thursday afternoons between September and December

Total Program Budget: **\$14,120**  
 Amount Committed by Applicant Organization: **\$7,120**  
 Total Amount Requested from Other Funding Sources: **\$1,000**  
 Please List Sources & Amounts below:

Honors College, HON180 Cultural Odyssey **\$1,000**

**Amount Requested from CA/DLS Committee: \$6,000**  
 Revenues, if any, expected (fees, ticket sales): **\$0**

Budget Breakdown of Expenses and funds to be used:	CADLS	Other
Honoraria/Services (explain below)	<b>\$3,000</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>
Travel	<b>\$3,000</b>	<b>\$1,800</b>
Lodging/Meals	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$1,320</b>
Advertising	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$500</b>
Printing	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$500</b>
Supplies and Materials	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Other (must specify below):	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>
Div. of Marketing & Comm.		
Digital Videotaping & Archival Services, Event Documentation		
 Total Expenses from CA/DLS funds:	<b>\$6,000*</b>	
Total Expenses from other funds:		<b>\$8,120</b>
(These two totals should equal the "Total Program Budget" listed above)		

\*These amounts should be identical and should not exceed 75% of the total program/event budget – see guidelines for further information. Please note that CA/DLS funds may not be used for receptions and do not normally fund UM employee wages. If an award is granted based on this proposal, reimbursement of expenses will not exceed the total CA/DLS request and will be limited to the types of expenditures outlined above.

March 25, 2015

Dear Members of the Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series Committee,

I write to request the Committee's support for the Fall 2014 New Writing Series, an innovative literary arts program sponsored by the English Department and the National Poetry Foundation.

The amount we request—\$6,000—represents forty-three percent (43%) of the projected operating budget for the fall Series of \$14,120. The majority of the financial support for the Series will be provided by the English Department and the National Poetry Foundation. In continuation of a long-standing agreement, the Honors College will provide \$1000 in support of an Honors Odyssey event. The detailed budget appended to this letter provides an overview of projected expenses and funding sources. In accordance with the Committee's recent request, I have adopted the standard budget form and supplemented it with a spreadsheet that itemizes projected expenses.

The fall 2014 line-up will feature eight writers—four in fiction, four in poetry—in CA/DLS-supported events. As the brief biographies appended to this letter demonstrate, the writers we propose to bring to campus represent a wide range of literary activity and achievement. Trey Ellis, an African American novelist, screenwriter, professor, playwright, and essayist, and Alice Notley, a poet who has published more than twenty-five books of poetry since 1971, are among the best known of the writers we plan to host. Julia Elliott, Jeff Jackson, and Christopher Merkner are all talented and widely-recognized fiction writers. Hoa Nguyen, Dale Smith, and Dana Ward are poets who have contributed to the tradition of experimental writing that the National Poetry Foundation is committed to exploring and advancing through its publications and programming.

Whatever their primary genre, these writers are all highly active across the full spectrum of literary activity. They are editors, publishers, and anthologists; translators and tale-tellers; art-makers and trail-blazing scholars. Their presence on the UMaine campus will enliven our culture and animate our conversations across linguistic, ethnic, national, sexual, and other differences. It will also help sustain and extend the place of the arts and humanities on campus at a time of real transformation led by President Ferguson and the "Blue Sky" initiative.

New Writing Series programming has always been guided the principles of innovation, collaboration, interdisciplinarity, and diversity. From the start we have also worked hard to maximize the impact of real-time events within the rapidly-changing new media context. For example, the NWS blog has received more than 71,750 page views since its creation in fall 2006. Our Facebook group, created in the fall of 2007, has 192 members and reaches many more people with event and Series information. The Flickr page on which we document events has received roughly 136,000 views to date. The real-time event in front of a live audience remains our Series's anchor point, but using the web to extend brief visits into lasting on-line presences is an effective way of maximizing the return on the investment it takes to bring people to campus.

Some other reasons for supporting the NWS:

- **A cutting-edge research university with an institutional commitment to innovation deserves literary arts programming that is diverse, daring, and original.** The New Writing Series is such a program. While all modes and methods of writing fall within its ambit of curiosity, we take care to ensure that writers whose work departs from, and perhaps even challenges, dominant commercial and aesthetic assumptions are given a fair hearing. Our programming is consistently among the most diverse on the campus (and by extension in the region), foregrounding ethnic, linguistic, socio-economic, and sexual diversity (see the appended document “About the New Writing Series” for details). And our programming is original: no other institution in Maine, and only a few others in the country, have shown the kind of commitment the New Writing Series has toward the full-range of contemporary literary practice. We seek to confer recognition with our programming, not just to ratify judgments made somewhere up the literary food chain.
- **The New Writing Series does a lot with a little.** For what would be a modest honorarium if paid in a lump sum to a single celebrity on campus for one evening, the New Writing Series creates a coherent sequence of events that adds a distinctive dimension to the intellectual and artistic climate on campus and in the region. The honoraria we offer are low (between \$500 and \$1000) and we economize in every way we can on other expenses (see appended budget). Because the Series has an established identity—in terms of time (Thursday afternoons), place (the Soderberg Center Auditorium), and “look” (MaJo Keleshian’s bold designs, echoed in our electronic publicity)—we get more out of each individual event. This has been a key to our successful audience development. Inertia is the enemy of artistic creation: the New Writing Series creates momentum around the act of literary creation, stirring up lively conversations that resonate beyond the cube-like walls of the Soderberg Auditorium.
- **The New Writing Series has a strong local audience, but it also brings national visibility to the University of Maine.** The off-campus publicity for the New Writing Series always spotlights UMaine (rather than the English Department or the NPF): our goal is to keep Orono on the national map when it comes to the literary arts, and to emphasize that the UMS flagship campus is at the leading edge of literary artistic practice. No other college in the state or campus in the UM system can demonstrate the depth of commitment and ongoing excellence that the New Writing Series, with the Committee’s support, has achieved.
- **Literary culture is an important piece in the “creative economy” puzzle.** A university campus that fails to stay in touch with contemporary literary practice is depriving itself of access to the fresh thinking that writers, often in advance of

their colleagues in other disciplines, bring to the world around us. The literary arts are essential to the creation of an atmosphere of free and critical exploration of any and all aspects of contemporary existence, an atmosphere as decisive in the sciences as in the humanities.

• **The “New” in New Writing Series.** We have been fortunate to receive Committee support for the NWS in the past and we are deeply grateful for it. But the enduring institutional framework of the Series should not mask the fact that we bring new voices and visions to campus with every fresh season of the NWS. We are, in other words, offering “new programming” for the Committee’s consideration, programming that will disappear from the cultural calendar without your support.

I have included an itemized budget (using an Excel spreadsheet to supplement the also provided standard form) for the fall 2014 New Writing Series. In keeping with CA/DLS policy, we strive to offer the lowest honoraria compatible with a writer’s reputation and standard fee. I will note that our typical “ceiling” of \$1000 is well below what some poets and most fiction writers (and their agents) will consider. Air travel expenses are based on best estimates of market rates (which continue to rise for our “off-hub” airport). We always work with individuals to minimize travel expenses whenever possible. Accommodations are provided by University Inn in Orono and are estimated at the appropriate seasonal rates. Meal and reception expenses do not factor into our request for Committee support. In those cases where scheduling or other difficulties prevent a proposed writer from participating in the Series, we seek replacements of comparable rank and reputation to fill the slot. I believe that the other items should be self-explanatory, but I am more than happy to answer any questions that may arise.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Steven R. Evans  
Associate Professor of English  
New Writing Series Coordinator (1999-present)  
Acting Director, National Poetry Foundation (2009-present)

### Proposed Lineup for Fall 2014 New Writing Series

**Julia Elliot's** fiction has appeared in Tin House, The Georgia Review, Conjunctions, Fence, Puerto del Sol, Mississippi Review, and other magazines. She has won a Pushcart Prize and a Rona Jaffe Writer's Award. Her short story collection "The Wilds" will appear in the fall of 2014, and her novel "The New and Improved Romie Futch" will follow in 2015 (both with Tin House Books). She is currently working on a novel about Hamadryas baboons, a species that she has studied as an amateur primatologist. She teaches English and Women's and Gender Studies at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, where she lives with her daughter and husband. She and her spouse, John Dennis, are founding members of Grey Egg, an experimental music collective. Elliott read in the NWS in April 2008.

**Trey Ellis** is an Emmy-nominated screenwriter, an American Book Award Winning novelist, and playwright. He has written screenplays for, among others, Columbia Pictures, Touchstone Pictures, HBO and Showtime. Along with the Emmy nomination, his HBO film, *The Tuskegee Airmen*, also went on to win a Peabody Award and several NAACP Image Awards. His screenplay for the Showtime film *Good Fences*, which starred Whoopi Goldberg and Danny Glover and was produced by Spike Lee, was shortlisted by PEN West for best teleplay and premiered at the Sundance Film festival. Mr. Ellis is both an alumnus of the Sundance Institute and a Sundance international mentor. He was the subject of a half-hour PBS documentary and was featured in the book, *Why We Write: Personal Statements and Photographic Portraits of 25 Top Screenwriters*. Mr. Ellis' first novel, *Platitudes*, was published in the United States and in France, followed by the novels, *Home Repairs* and *Right Here, Right Now* which won an American Book Award and was named one of the notable books of the year by The Washington Post. He is also author of the memoir, *Bedtime Stories: Adventures in the Land of Single-Fatherhood*. His first play, *Fly*, was produced by The Lincoln Center Institute and performed at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. His second play, *Kansas City Swing*, premieres in 2013. When Mr. Ellis was a recent graduate of Stanford University, he published the essay, *The New Black Aesthetic*. Since then it has been reprinted dozens of times, cited in over sixty academic texts, and the term "New Black Aesthetic," along with "cultural mulatto," also coined by Mr. Ellis, are now routinely cited by scholars. He is a 2012 recipient of the Fletcher Fellowship and a non-resident fellow at Harvard University. Ellis is an Associate Professor at Columbia's School of the Arts film program.

**Jeff Jackson** is the author of the novel *Mira Corpora*, published by Two Dollar Radio. It's a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize and appeared on "Best of 2013" lists in Salon, Slate, Flavorwire, Lit-Reactor, and more. His short fiction has appeared in *Guernica*, *Vice*, and *The Collagist*, the anthology *Userlands*, and been performed in New York and Los Angeles by New River Dramatists. He edited the literary anthologies *Topograph: Fiction from the Carolinas and the Landscape Beyond* and *The Portable Lentricchia*. Five of his plays have been produced by the Obie Award-winning Collapsible Giraffe theater company in New York City, including *Botanica* which was selected by the New York Times as "one of 2012's most galvanizing theater moments."

He also served as director for the NoDa Film Festival and founder of the popular jazz website Destination: Out.

**Christopher Merkner** teaches creative writing at West Chester University. His work has appeared in *Black Warrior Review*, *Cincinnati Review*, *Fairy Tale Review*, *Gettysburg Review*, *New Orleans Review*, and *Best American Mystery Stories*. His first book *The Rise and Fall of the Scandamerican Domestic* was published in 2014 by Coffee House Press.

**Hoang Nguyen** is the author of eight poetry books and chapbooks, including *As Long As Trees Last* (Wave), *Hecate Lochia* (Hot Whiskey), and *Your Ancient See Through* (Sub Press). With her partner Dale Smith she edited ten issues of the little magazine *Skanky Possum*. She lives in Toronto, Ontario where she teaches poetics at Ryerson University and curates a reading series.

**Alice Notley** is the author of *Culture of One* and *Songs and Stories of the Ghouls* among many other books of poetry. She has edited *The Collected Poems of Ted Berrigan* and *The Selected Poems of Ted Berrigan* with her sons Anselm and Edmund Berrigan. She lives and writes in Paris, France. Notley read in the *New Writing Series* in the fall of 2001 and 2004.

**Dale Smith** is a writer now living in Toronto, Ontario. He spent most of his life in Texas, with brief jaunts to the Middle East, the Pacific Northwest, and Northern California. Currently he teaches rhetoric and poetics at Ryerson University. He is the author four books of poetry and prose, published by boutique presses. His poems, essays, and reviews have appeared in *Best American Poetry*, *Bookforum*, *Chicago Review*, *The Colorado Review*, *Jacket*, and elsewhere. *Poets Beyond the Barricade: Rhetoric, Citizenship, and Dissent after 1960* addresses the role of poetry in public discourse, and was recently published by the University of Alabama Press. His creative and scholarly work examines the intersections of personal and public tensions in the ongoing negotiations and clarifications of contemporary life.

**Dana Ward** is the author of a number of chapbooks: *New Couriers* (2006), *Goodnight Voice* (2008), *The Drought* (2009), *Typing 'Wild Speech'* (2010), and the full-length *This Can't Be Life* (2012). Influenced by the work of Alice Notley, Jack Kerouac, and others, Ward's poetry is densely patterned and highly allusive; he is known as a skilled reader of his own work. Ward lives in Cincinnati, where he hosts readings, collaborates with artists, advocates for adult literacy, and is editor of Cy Press books.



<b>Event Expenses</b>									
writer	honorarium	travel by	travel from	fare	accommod	total			
Julia Elliott [fiction]	\$500	air	Columbia SC	\$600	\$158	\$1,258			
Trey Ellis [fiction, film & tv]	\$1,000	air	Westport CT	\$600	\$158	\$1,758			
Jeff Jackson [fiction]	\$500	air	NYC	\$600	\$158	\$1,258			
Christopher Merkner [fiction]	\$500	air	Philadelphia	\$600	\$158	\$1,258			
Hoa Nguyen [poetry]	\$500	air	Toronto	\$600	\$158	\$1,258			
Alice Notley [poetry]	\$1,000	air	New York	\$600	\$158	\$1,758			
Dale Smith [poetry]	\$500	air	Toronto	\$600	\$158	\$1,258			
Dana Ward [poetry]	\$500	air	Cincinnati	\$600	\$214	\$1,314			
total	<b>\$5,000</b>			<b>\$4,800</b>	<b>\$1,320</b>	<b>\$11,120</b>			
<b>Fixed Expenses</b>									
unit or agent	expense								
Div. of Marketing & Communications	\$1,000			Digital Video					
Div. of Marketing & Communication	\$1,000			Photography					
Publicity - posters, advertisement	\$1,000								
total	<b>\$3,000</b>								
<b>Total Series Expenses</b>									
Event Expenses	\$11,120								
Related Expenses	\$3,000								
total	<b>\$14,120</b>								
<b>Overview of Funding Sources</b>									
English Department	\$4,500								
National Poetry Foundation	\$2,620								
Honors College	\$1,000								
<b>CA/DLS Request</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>	<b>43% of total</b>							

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From:  **Heidi Carlow**  
Subject: Cultural Affairs Award  
To:  **Steven Evans**

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Friday, April 11, 2014 9:11:52 AM



Dear Professor Evans,

Thanks very much for submitting an application to the March 2014 Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series funding competition. This round was particularly difficult for the committee, as we had many excellent proposals asking for a total of over \$38,000 in CADLS support. We had only \$15,000 to award, so were unable to fund some proposals at all, while the rest received less than requested. We wish we had more funds for all of the great events brought forward to the Committee.

In its meeting on April 10, the CADLS Committee awarded \$5,000.00 for your project. Because this is less than requested, I would be very grateful if you could indicate whether your event or program can still be held.

Heidi Carlow  
Administrative and Fiscal Coordinator/Scheduler  
University of Maine  
President's Office  
200 Alumni Hall  
207-581-1717