

**SIG Final Report Format**

**Date: August**

**25, 2015**

**A. Name & Title of Principal Investigators (include Department & College Affiliation)**

<u>Name &amp; Title of Principal Investigator(s)</u>	<u>Department &amp; College Affiliation</u>
Jesse Benjamin, Associate Professor	Sociology and Criminal Justice (SCJ)/Interdisciplinary Studies Department (ISD), College of Humanities and Social Sciences

**B. Project/Program Name:**  
**"Walter Rodney and Public Lecture Series/Classroom Pedagogy"**

**C. Project ID: ICE1503**

**D. Dates Covered by this Report:**  
**August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014, – August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**E. Type of Grant:**  
**International Community Engagement Grant (ICE)**

**F. Total Amount of Funding Awarded:**  
**\$5000**

**G. Total Amount of Funding Covered by this Report:**  
**\$5000**

**H. Report Certification:**

*I confirm that the information contained within this associated report for SIG Initiative funding is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge. I further confirm my intention to continue implementation of this award according to the policies and procedures of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia and Kennesaw State University.*

<u>Name &amp; Title of Principal Investigator(s)</u>	<u>Signature of Agreement</u>	<u>Date</u>
Jesse Benjamin	JBENJAMIN	August 25, 2015

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**Narrative:**

1. Please describe the activities completed in support of the stated goals and objectives/outcomes for this grant. If your award required quarterly reports, please describe both the activities completed in the past quarter and the overall progress made toward the stated goals and objectives.

**Final Quarter Review, Closing Speakers Series Activities:**

In the final quarter of this project, the main work involved the completion of the delivery of the Series itself, through the month of April. In addition, into May and the summer, the final work involved administration, which was primarily the settling of accounts, paying of honoraria, troubleshooting a few glitches, corresponding with speakers awaiting payment, as well as with partners regarding the end of the series and the planning for next year.

The final sessions continued our strong delivery of programming, exceeding expectations in terms of guests and panels. The final three sessions were actually three of our strongest. Scholar/activist superstar Robin D. G. Kelley providing a unique historical engagement of Rodney and his work on the Russian Revolution in an unusually approachable and intimate setting. Next, we hosted Verene Shepherd, a major star of the Caribbean academy and now also a leading figure in several UN Agencies and programs, including the recently launched UN Decade of the People of African Descent. Before her arrival, students read her powerful new afterward to the new edition of *Groundings With My Brothers*, by Walter Rodney, and then they got to interlocute directly with the author. Also directly from our syllabus were several Robin Kelley readings, including the introduction to Aime Cesaire's landmark classic, *Discourse on Colonialism*, which similarly situated and enriched his visit.

Finally, we finished strong with a special panel on Palestine in colonial context, with some last minute guests and a very strong turn out. The panel included perennial guest and international all-star, world famous feminist icon, professor Beverly Guy-Sheftall, founder and director of the Women's Research and Resources Center; Ismail Khalidi, an audacious young playwright and activist; Banah Ghadbian, Spelman College valedictorian and founder of the first Palestine Solidarity project at an HBCU; myself; and special last minute replacement guest, hip hop artist and community activist, Jasiri X. The original special guest speaker planned for that evening had been either hip hop artist Invincible, or community leader Kristian Davis Bailey, but both were unable to attend due to conflicting commitments, and both recommended Jasiri X, which ended up working out exceptionally well. This kind of unique panel, featuring engaged scholars, student leaders, community representation, and conscious hip hop artists, exemplifies the innovative and grounded pedagogy I strive for in the extended community teaching experiment. To have such an assemblage conscientiously legitimize and illustrate a perspective that unites socio-historical analyses of post-colonial global African and

Middle Eastern societies is productive of new epistemologies and perspectives that are deeply needed in the academy and society today.

#### Overall Analysis of Grant Programming:

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Walter Rodney Speakers Series was itself a great success, continuing the tradition we started, and expanding it in several concrete and meaningful ways. We were able to attract more speakers, and specifically we were able to fund several additional high profile and international speakers, which enriched the overall strength and content of the programming. In the end, we received only \$1000 from CHSS this year, and so, together with the \$5000 from this SIG Grant, and the \$3000 from the AUC RWWL Library, we had our largest budget yet, slightly more than in the previous year, at a total of \$9000 in expenditure budget, in addition to in-kinds from RWWL and WRF.

As planned, and as was the core element of the SIG Grant proposal, I focused the bulk of the SIG grant funds on enhancing international and big-name speakers. Specifically, we started by funding, at a bargain price I might add, one of the greatest living scholars of economics, politics, gender dynamics and with the world system. Author of the classic, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, Dr. Cynthia Enloe was a contemporary of Walter Rodney's, a fellow traveler, and as we learned during her visit, spent a year in Guyana as a visiting scholar, before he himself fatefully returned, and that they had also met on several occasions in the 1960s. A long serving professor at Clark University in the northeast, Enloe captivated the audience with her engaged delivery style and a lecture on the gendered and racialized labor production of sneakers in the global economy. Her charisma and sincerity made a huge impression on students, as well as her embodiment of combined scholarship/activism in her career practices. This was one of those sessions where the audience Q and A went on so long I had to stop it eventually so the guest could get some down time and some dinner.

As noted above, we also brought renowned social scientist and engaged UN diplomat, Dr. Verene Shepherd, who has just recently contributed an important new Afterword to Walter Rodney's classic, *Groundings With My Brothers*, from 1968, recently reissued in Atlanta by Walter Rodney Press. Having a leader of the Jamaican and the entire Caribbean academy join us and enrich our weekly discussion was immeasurably important. Jamaican and Caribbean and African-Diaspora students in particular, but everyone in the end, were drawn to her presentation and spent time engaging with her afterwards.

Finally, we managed some creative changes in the budget and planning when Kristian Bailey could not attend, due to leading a delegation back to Palestine; and Robin D. G. Kelley decided to "donate" his honorarium to another speaker or back to the program, as an act of solidarity, by generously offering to cover his own expenses. This generosity and commitment, coupled with numerous consultations among many guests and colleagues of this work, resulted in the reallocation of these funds into securing Jasiri X as our final major guest, to join the final panel on Pan-African/Palestine Connections. He too gave us a greatly reduced appearance rate, as an act of political solidarity, and so I allocated the final \$1500 to him, and so added a huge draw to community members, in

someone who had personal stories to share about his recent journey to Palestine and Israel, as well as live performance and intellectual engagement with the panelists and the audience. His engaged explanations of the links between African American and Palestinian experiences were very powerful, and his medium of expression makes his impact even greater, especially but not exclusively with the youth. He has rapidly emerged as a youth leader at the national level, and has become friends with elders and leaders such as Harry Belafonte. We are lucky to be able to engage so directly with him and with these processes and movements, as they develop in our nation at this time, in what many are calling a new Civil Rights Movement.

The significance of these “headliners,” astride the scholar/activist, intellectual/celebrity spectra that are normally conceived as mutually exclusive, cannot be exaggerated, in terms of the overall pedagogic and internationally engaged aspects of this program. Beyond these three headliners, and the four or so other speakers who variously paid their own way to the Series, the majority of the remaining budget funded speakers with very small token honoraria, with six at the \$100 level, one at \$200, and a large group from Project South at a total of \$400. One other speaker, at \$1000, had to cover onward flight expenses and netted a very small honorarium en route. Covering Dr. Shepherd’s flight from Jamaica and hotel for two nights, left us able to offer her just under a \$1000 honorarium, far less than her normal speaking fee. The same was true for Dr. Enloe and Jasiri X, after their respective flights, as both received at or slightly below \$1000, far far less than what they normally would command as a fee for speaking. We were honored to have them and to host them, and they in turn, were honored to be a part of the work we were doing, most notably with and through the Walter Rodney Foundation, but also in the Atlanta community and beyond.

Based on prioritizations set in discussions with the Rodney Foundation and our other allies in the project, and based on projected budget estimates, we were able to cobble together yet another incredible line up of speakers and panels. These included: professor Michael West of Binghamton University, Babacar M’bow the Director of Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami (MOCA-NOMI), professor Beverly Guy-Sheftall of Spelman College and Ismail Khalidi an independent playwright for a panel on Pan-African/Palestine ties; three excellent KSU professors: Akanmu Adebayo, Lucie Viakinnou-Brinson, and Ryan Ronnenberg; two leading professors from the AUC, Dr. Kurt Young, Chair of Political Science at Clark Atlanta, and Dr. Samuel Livingston, Chair of Africana Studies at Morehouse. We developed a closer relationship with Project South, and their YCAP Youth program, which hosted our opening Panel on police brutality in the Atlanta school system, and then provided the physical host cite for our Spring Break panel with KSU professors on Africa and Rodney’s legacy in their scholarship. We were also graced by the presence of one of the greatest Pan-African intellectuals and leaders in the world today, hailing from decades of community work in Venezuela and now a former Ambassador to several African nations, and current New Orleans Consul General from Venezuela, Jesus ‘Chucho’ Garcia. The presence of Ngugi wa Thiong’o, truly a living legend of the African worldwide Diaspora, at the Walter Rodney Symposium, which was embedded into our Speakers Series during the 3<sup>rd</sup> week

of March, as is the annual tradition, was just another added moment in another incredible Spring.

We produced a really beautiful poster for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Series, which is attached. The final line up of speakers and panels was truly audacious, and I am proud to say that we are providing something unique in Atlanta, valuable intellectual engagement of critical social issues, from leading thinkers and practitioners across a broad range of disciplines. We are beginning to manifest a plan to publish some of the proceedings of the Series, in the form of peer reviewed journal essays and/or other kinds of writing, which is also a plan long in works. Our list of community partners also grew prodigiously, as can be seen vividly at the bottom of the poster, to what is now a total of 15 sponsors. Our initial social media plans, mainly through facebook, but also instagram and twitter, was very successful, with a facebook page that is highly active, regularly has posts that reach 500-2000 people, and has recently reached the milestone of 1000+ likes.

Given that this is a project that aims to serve the community, and to bring communities together in the service of critical consciousness raising (as they said in the 60s), the support of this grant was and is deeply appreciated, for all that it enabled us to do, and for the synergy it undoubtedly added to our new and growing tradition. It truly meant a lot to myself, and to all of the partners, the students, and the public who repeatedly were informed that this great weekly event was made possible by grants from, and was organized out of, Kennesaw State University. That this was said repeatedly, in a space where KSU is somewhat new to tread, is I believe, important new inter-communal trailblazing in the service of international communication, pedagogy, and social justice.

2. What impact did your grant make toward advancing KSU's Strategic Plan for Internationalization? If your award required quarterly reports, please describe both the impact this past quarter as well as the overall impact.

This grant enabled the critical expansion of a premier international event at KSU and in the community, which positions KSU as a purveyor and participant in cutting edge intercultural engagement with the Atlanta and Georgia communities, and with the rest of the world. Bringing together top international scholars, together with UN officials, Consul Generals, and internationally engaged local activists and community leaders is itself an accomplishment. Doing so with a KSU base of support and students at the undergraduate and graduate levels, but then taking this on the road, to the AUC Woodruff Library, in the heart of the HBCU Center, is simply uncharted territory. While the late Vincent Harding pioneered this pedagogical model at the AUC around the life and work of his friend Martin Luther King, my engagement of KSU, as a socially diverse State University located in suburbia, makes my model unique. Like Harding's pilot class at Morehouse, I also invite the public to attend, and they account for more than half the audience most weeks. Similarly, I have engaged high school student leaders, through my partner Project South, which was very active in several events this year.

Thus, this project enhanced KSU's international reputation, especially in the underserved and under-engaged communities of South Atlanta and its HBCU cluster, the largest such

cluster in the United States. It helps KSU students engaged internationally, by engaging the complexity of Atlanta, and of Atlanta’s Pan-African and other global linkages historically and in the present. It innovated international curriculum and syllabi, as well as innovation by combining schools and grade levels.

3. Were there any unanticipated results, either positive or negative, that you have not already described above or in previous quarterly reports? If yes, please describe the implications as well as possibilities for follow-on programs/projects.

No unanticipated results per se, but there were numerous unexpected connections, networking and organizational opportunities that presented themselves, many of which are already concretizing into specific plans for the next Speakers Series, in Spring 2016. Some of these include the following: While talking with Robin Kelley, during his visit to the area earlier in the year, I connected with famed labor historian and publisher, David Roediger, who expressed regret at not being able to attend our February speaker during his brief visit to Atlanta, but then agreed to make it up to us by speaking in the coming year’s Series, and likely at his own expense, as an act of solidarity. Needless to say, this is very exciting. Similarly, two of our esteemed guests have helped make contacts with Frantz Fanon’s daughter, as a potential future guest, which also is extremely exciting.

**Budget Report**

*\*This is not a request for payment. This report should only reflect costs already submitted for payment through IGI and how the actual cost of items may have differed from the expected costs listed in your proposal.*

<b><u>Item</u></b>	<b><u>Expected Cost</u></b>	<b><u>Actual Cost</u></b>	<b><u>Funds from Other Sources</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
Dr. Enloe	\$1400	1400		\$1400
Dr. Shepherd	\$1800	1800	WRF – In Kind	\$1800
Dr. Robin Kelley	\$1000	-		
Kristian D Bailey	\$500	-		
Jasiri X	-	\$1500		\$1500
Printing	\$300	\$300		\$300
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5000</b>	<b>\$5000</b>		<b>\$5000</b>

In addition to the \$5000 provided by the SIG Grant from KSU DGA, I also received funds from the RWWL Library, and the Dean of CHSS. Below is an itemization of the three revenue streams, into a total budget of \$9000, and broken down into individual units:

**Overall Budget (3 Revenue Lines):**

\$5000	Budget Stream I. - SIG Grant – DGA, Kennesaw State University
\$3000	Budget Stream II. - AUC RWWL
\$1000	Budget Stream III. - CHSS Dean
<b>\$9000</b>	

**Budget Stream I: SIG/DGA – KSU (5000)**

1. Verene Shepherd (WRF)	1800
2. Cynthia Enloe	1400
3. Jasiri X	1500
4. Printing	300
<b>Total:</b>	<b>5000</b>

**Budget Stream II: AUC RWWL (3000)**

5. Akanmu Adebayo	100
6. Ryan Ronnenberg	100
7. Lucie Viakinnou-Brinson	100
8. Samuel Livingston	100
9. Kurt Young	100
10. Banah Ghadbian	100
11. Beverly Guy-Sheftall	200
12. Firoze Manji (WRF)	500
13. Ismail Khalidi	1000
14. Expenses	300 (gas, video tapes, miscellaneous)
15. Project South Team	400
<b>Total:</b>	<b>3000</b>

**Budget Stream III: CHSS (1000)**

16. Babacar M'bow	1000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1000</b>

**Budget Narrative**

Use this space to explain clearly your use of funds for the duration of this program/project, as well as how and why your actual use of funds differed from your expected use of funds.

The expenditures and their logic are already explained above in the general narrative. It was a pretty simple budget for the SIG portion of the grant. Larger honoraria for three speakers were paid for, which included their hotel and travel and left a small token, sub-market value fee for these top-notch speakers. The two remaining revenue streams, though smaller, were stretched to invite many additional speakers and panelists, a few who paid their own way, and many who appeared for little or no incentive, out of commitment to the project and the issues we address. Printing covered large 11x17 posters of the attached line-up, which were distributed all over KSU, Kennesaw and Marietta, and mainly in Atlanta.