

Fichter Award Committee

The Fichter Award Committee “will solicit applications, judge their merit, and allocate the funds available” for Joseph H. Fichter Research Grants “within guidelines established by the Executive Council. The Committee will also triennially review the topic area [for the grants] and make recommendations to the Executive Council.”

The work of the Fichter Award Committee as far as grants are concerned is quite clear cut. Guidelines for applicants are posted on the website and distributed at RRA/SSSR by the Executive Officer. The Chair of the committee may choose to distribute the guidelines elsewhere. The Chair receives the applications and distributes them to the other members of the committee. Normally the Chair is the senior member of the committee, but an incoming president may appoint someone else as Chair if s/he desires. In that case, the Chair would be a nonvoting member of the committee, except in the case of ties. Grant proposals are due by May 1, and awards are announced June 1. Because all applicants for the Fichter Research Grants must be members of the Association, the Chair should consult the ASR Member Directory on the website to verify that each applicant is a member before he/she distributes the applications to the other members of the committee.

When the committee has made its decision, it is the responsibility of the Chair to notify *all* the applicants of the committee’s decision, and to send to the Executive Officer the names of each awardee, the amount of money awarded to him/her, and a copy of all of the applications. In the Chair’s letter to the awardees, he/she should advise the awardee to contact the Executive Officer of ASR for information about how the funds will be dispersed. Neither the Chair nor the Awardees are required to attend the annual meeting, but if they are present, the Chair or another member of the committee will be asked to announce/recognize the Awardees. Normally the amount of the award is not announced.

Administration of the funds is in the hands of the Executive Officer following the policies described on the website. The Chair should make no commitment to a grantee regarding disbursement procedures.

The flow and level of grant applications varies significantly. How the grants are awarded is entirely within the discretion of the committee, hence the entire amount may be given to a single proposal or the money may be divided. Often proposals are only partially funded. At least once all of the funding was not distributed, in spite of proposals that could have used it all, because the committee felt some of the proposals were not worth funding.

The triennial review of the topic area is next due in 2015. Future reviews can be determined from that date. The topic area is currently defined as “sociological research on women in religion or on the intersection between religion and gender or religion and sexualities.” The topic area is set by Council for the triennium, after considering the committee’s recommendation.