

Support Welcomed For Polanyi Society Travel Fund

The assumptions and paradigms that Michael Polanyi brilliantly challenged in the middle of the twentieth century still, sadly, dominate much of academic thinking to this day. Nearly half a century after the publication of his major epistemological and social works, it is not at all unusual to receive blank stares from philosophers, social scientists, and physical scientists—even in major colleges and universities—at the mention of Polanyi’s name.

For several decades the Polanyi Society has devoted its efforts, through its journal and its annual meetings, and – more recently – through its internet discussions and website, to the dissemination and further development of Polanyi’s seminal ideas. Many of those who have taken a lead in these efforts find themselves in the ranks of graying emeriti and are acutely aware of the urgency of reaching out to more young people – undergraduates, graduates, and post-graduates – to assure the perpetuation of Polanyi’s rich legacy.

To promote this effort, the Society has established a modest Travel Fund to assist those young people who have an interest in attending its annual meetings but whose financial conditions make this difficult. Recently, as we have attempted to spread the word regarding the availability of this fund, an unprecedented number of prospective beneficiaries of this assistance have been brought to our attention.

This is a most encouraging development in terms of the Society’s central objective of furthering Polanyi’s influence within academia and the larger society. However, it appears that we may end up this year with considerably more eligible candidates than available funds. We can think of few projects more worthy and in-line with our common purpose than the expansion of the resources of this fund.

Any contributions, however modest, that Polanyi Society members would care to make to this fund will be welcomed. They are fully tax-deductible. Checks for this purpose should be made out to the “Polanyi Society Travel Fund” and sent to Walter Mead, the coordinator of this fund, at the address below, for deposit in the Society’s fund account. If you wish to consolidate a contribution to the Travel Fund with a check for annual dues or a general contribution to the Society, be sure that you clearly identify your intentions. Questions can be addressed to Walter Mead by regular mail (4 Kenyon Court, Bloomington, IL 61701) or e-mail (wbmead@ilstu.edu).

Procedure For Applying For A Polanyi Society Travel Grant

The purpose of the Polanyi Society Travel Fund is to assist those with a strong interest in Michael Polanyi—especially undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate students—who have an interest in attending the Society’s annual meeting in November but whose financial conditions make this difficult.

Although the Society is interested in providing funding sufficient to make attendance at its annual meeting possible for eligible candidates, because of the modest amount of funds available, the Society must be selective in awarding a limited number of travel grants. The decision to award a grant and the amount of that grant will depend upon an evaluation of the following information to be provided by the applicant:

- (1) the applicant's institutional affiliation, mailing address, e-mail address, and phone number (in each case, alternate summer addresses and phone numbers should also be supplied);
- (2) the estimated cost for traveling to and from the Polanyi meeting by the most cost-efficient means (perhaps a shared automobile, where distances are short);
- (3) the most affordable housing for one night's lodging between the two days of Society meetings;
- (4) the degree to which the applicant and/or the applicant's institution can contribute to these costs; and
- (5) a brief statement (300-500 words) indicating (a) the applicant's program of studies and/or research, (b) any background of reading or courses relating to Michael Polanyi's ideas, (c) the particular interest the applicant has in attending the program of meetings, and (d) the applicant's present or future career plans.

In addition, the applicant should request someone acquainted with his or her interests and qualifications to provide *directly* to the Fund Coordinator, by e-mail, a brief letter of reference. The writer should indicate that his or her assessment of the applicant has not been shared with the applicant. All materials will be held confidentially by the Polanyi Society Board of Directors.

Applicants are encouraged to submit their requests as early as possible in order to be able to secure the most economical travel and overnight accommodations and to assure the availability of funds. Deadlines for application for the following November annual meeting are: March 1 (results to be announced by April 1) and, given the further availability of funds, August 1 (results to be announced by September 1) and, again, given the availability of funds, October 1 (results to be announced by October 15).

The Board of Directors of the Polanyi Society will collectively decide on the awarding of grants. Some applicants for either the March 1st or the August 1st deadlines may be designated as "stand-bys" for consideration in the following round of evaluations.

The above information, including letter of reference, should be received by e-mail no later than the intended application deadline. All materials (and any questions) should be e-mailed to (Fund Coordinator) Walter B. Mead (wbmead@ilstu.edu).