



Wiki Education Foundation Monthly Report, September 2016

Highlights



Executive Director Frank Schulenburg presents at the University of Mississippi.

- With 226 courses on board by the end of September, Wiki Ed's Classroom Program will have its largest term ever in Fall 2016. We're supporting a wide range of courses, including 132 so far this term as part of the Year of Science.
- The [LA Times ran a feature article](#) on Wiki Ed's work and the impact of the Year of Science in late September.

- Educational Partnerships Manager Jami Mathewson and Executive Director Frank Schulenburg visited the University of Mississippi to encourage campus faculty to use Wikipedia in the classroom. In addition to a faculty luncheon about how students can close content gaps on Wikipedia, Frank and Jami hosted a workshop to answer questions about Wikipedia and joined Dr. Bob Cummings' class about "Writing with Wikipedia."
- The Simons Foundation awarded Wiki Ed a two-year, \$480,000 grant for ongoing support for the Classroom Program's science courses.

Programs

Educational Partnerships



Students in Dr. Robert Cummings' "Writing with Wikipedia" class discuss their assignment during a campus visit to Ole Miss.

In September, Outreach Manager Samantha Weald advised new instructors in the Classroom Program as they designed Wikipedia assignments for the fall 2016 term. By the end of the month, she was consulting with more than 200 instructors to answer questions about Wiki Ed's support resources, preparing instructors both for the current term and for spring 2017. Samantha's customized support aids instructors as they set up their courses, and her expertise is instrumental in expanding the Classroom Program. As of September 30, Wiki Ed is supporting 112 courses taught by new instructors, and 63 of these courses are participating in the Year of Science, largely thanks to the work

the Educational Partnerships team has done over the last year to recruit new science instructors.

Educational Partnerships Manager Jami Mathewson and Executive Director Frank Schulenburg visited the University of Mississippi in late September to encourage campus faculty to use Wikipedia in the classroom. Thank you to Wiki Ed board member Dr. Robert Cummings for hosting Wiki Ed on campus. In addition to a faculty luncheon about how students can close content gaps on Wikipedia, Frank and Jami hosted a workshop to answer questions about Wikipedia and joined Dr. Cummings' class about "Writing with Wikipedia."

Earlier this month, Samantha and Jami collaborated with Dr. Amin Azzam and Dr. Tina Brock to record videos about the benefits of bringing academia to Wikipedia. Program participants frequently invite us to campus for presentations, and we're excited for these videos to aid them when we are unable to join.

Classroom Program

Status of the Classroom Program for Fall 2016 in numbers, as of September 30:

- 226 Wiki Ed-supported courses were in progress (113, or 50%, were led by returning instructors)
- 3,293 student editors were enrolled
- 64% of our students were up-to-date with the student training
- Students edited 966 articles and created 28 new entries.

The Fall 2016 term is well under way, and students are in the beginning stages of their Wikipedia assignments. With 225 courses in progress, we're supporting our largest cohort of courses to date. In Spring 2016, we supported 215 and in Fall 2015, 162. That means in just one year, the Classroom Program has grown by almost 40%. This rapid growth shows that more students are having the chance to engage in public scholarship while improving the quality of Wikipedia.

This term, Classroom Program Manager Helaine Blumenthal is running a series of webinars to help our instructors navigate the ins and outs of Wikipedia-based assignments. The first one, entitled "Making the Most of Your Wiki Ed Support," was held on September 30. The program was made available to instructors teaching with Wikipedia in Fall 2016, and 36 were in attendance. Co-presenters Samantha and Wikipedia Content Experts Adam Hyland and Ian Ramjohn ensured that our

participants in the Classroom Program are making full use of all that Wiki Ed has to offer.

The [Year of Science](#) is still going strong. In all, we've supported 262 courses in the Social Sciences and STEM fields with 132 of those courses taking place in Fall 2016 so far. Since January, our Year of Science courses have contributed almost 2.5 million words to Wikipedia and contributed to almost 3,000 articles. Together, the work of our Year of Science students has been viewed over 83 million times, and our Fall courses have hardly begun. This term, our Year of Science cohort is tackling subjects ranging from [Vertebrate Anatomy](#) to [Women in STEM](#) and from [African Archaeology](#) to [Mammalogy](#).

We saw some great work from several courses:

- Students in the fall term are hard at work expanding Wikipedia's coverage of the world. Students in Catherine Lee's [Language in Hawai'i and the Pacific](#) course expanded more than a dozen articles on languages, including [Kove language](#), which was [essentially unchanged](#) from its creation as a tiny stub 5 years ago. Students also added considerably to Wikipedia's articles on the [Kedang](#) and [Kankanaey](#) languages. There are many more language articles to expand, and instructors looking to tackle linguistics on Wikipedia can use our subject specific handout, [Editing Wikipedia articles on Linguistics](#) to get started!
- Francesca Rivera's students in University of San Francisco's [Music and Social History](#) course are also filling in crucial parts of Wikipedia. Students in that class have made small expansions to 18 articles on little known musical instruments, adding context, references and information where before all Wikipedia "knew" about the subject was that it existed. Compare [Fiöla](#) to how it looked for seven years – [a short stub](#). In most cases, including on [Duhulla](#), these articles were completely unreferenced for many years until the students added to them.
- Megan Peiser from the University of Missouri is expanding coverage of [Missouri Women on Wikipedia](#) – their students are expanding several articles and have already created a few, including on [Irene Taylor](#), a journalist known for her work during the Spanish Civil War and World War II and on [Annie Fisher](#), a cook and entrepreneur. Both articles are sourced from newspapers and historical journals (among other sources) which are difficult for editors without university access to find. These students had access and a course focused on local history – their digging and researching has been well rewarded.

- Articles related to computing have received a major boost in September thanks to two classes run by Ed Gehringer: [Object Oriented Design and Development](#) and [Architecture of Parallel Computers](#). Students in the first class created articles related to JavaScript tools like [gulp.js](#) and [Grunt](#), expanded articles about [Apache Hive](#) and [eRuby](#) and created an article about the [Hoshen–Kopelman algorithm](#). Students in the latter class created articles about concepts like [thread block](#), which relates to the way in which groups of threads—small sequences of programming instructions—can be executed by a computer processor. They also made major expansions to other articles related to the way computers process information including [loop-level parallelism](#), [gang scheduling](#), and [data parallelism](#).
- The fact that people often miss small changes in the background of scenes they are viewing is an aspect of a phenomenon called [change blindness](#). This topic has real-world consequences in areas like eyewitness testimony and distracted driving. Students in Greta Munger's [Cognitive Psychology](#) class are expanding and improving the change blindness article by supplying missing references and adding sections on topics like countering change blindness and the existence of the phenomenon in other species. Other students in the class are improving other related articles, including notable expansions to the [memory span](#) and [biological motion](#).
- Despite the ongoing efforts of dedicated Wikipedians, the coverage of women scientists on Wikipedia lags behind that of men. Students in Kathryn Haas' [Women in STEM](#) class are working to fill some of those gaps. [Julia Lermontova](#) was the first Russian woman (and the third woman in Europe) to earn a doctorate in chemistry. Despite that, her biography consisted of just one short paragraph. This article has been expanded greatly by a student in the class who added information about Lermontova's life, education, and contribution to science. [Hope Hibbard](#), an American zoologist and advocate for women in science had only a one-line biography. This has also been expanded substantially by a student editor who added information about her life, education, contribution to science and advocacy for women in science. [Kathleen Culhane Lathbury](#) was a British biochemist whose biography was created by a student in the class. Although the article does not engage in advocacy, it does an excellent job of demonstrating the way that sexism can waste human talent.

Community Engagement

This month we are happy to announce a new opportunity for a Visiting Scholar at San Francisco State University, through the Paul K. Longmore Institute on Disability. Associate Director Emily Smith Beitiks noted that while Wikipedia articles about disability do a good job of covering the medical aspect, they often neglect social, cultural, historical, economic, and political aspects. Working with a Wikipedian is a way to support the Institute's mission by helping to improve public knowledge about disability on Wikipedia, using the rich resources collected at the university to build well-rounded multidisciplinary articles. Read more about the position in our [blog post from September 29](#).

Community Engagement Manager Ryan McGrady is focused on recruiting experienced Wikipedians for the open Visiting Scholars positions. Three positions have been filled and are ready to start pending university administrative action. He also continued to work with several prospective and current sponsors at different stages of the onboarding and recruitment processes.

The current Visiting Scholars continued to create and improve high-quality articles. [User:M2545](#), Visiting Scholar at Rollins College, has been particularly prolific, continuously improving dozens of timeline articles (M2545 is responsible for most of the timelines of city histories on Wikipedia). Examples from this month include [Memphis, Tennessee](#), [Atlanta, Georgia](#), and [Havana, Cuba](#). Gary Greenbaum of [George Mason University](#) brought his article about the United States Senator from Idaho, [William Borah](#), to Featured Article status, while his [Cleveland Centennial half dollar](#) article is currently a Featured Article candidate. Meanwhile, McMaster University Visiting Scholar Danielle Robichaud made substantial improvements to the article on the [Canadian Indian residential school system](#), working toward a possible Good Article nomination. The article is about a system of government-funded boarding schools, operating from 1876–1996, intended to assimilate Indigenous Canadian children into the dominant Canadian culture.

Program Support

Communications

On September 20, the LA Times published [an extensive story](#) chronicling the work of Wiki Ed's program participants during the Wikipedia Year of Science.

Communications Manager Eryk Salvaggio drafted material for a subject-specific handbook for students editing topics in political science courses. Eryk also crafted changes to Wiki Ed's student training modules, particularly improving the training for student editors who add images to Wikipedia articles for their class assignments.

Eryk left Wiki Ed in mid-September, but thanks to his hard work on crafting a stockpile of great posts, his byline will continue to appear on our blog over the next several months. We thank Eryk for all his excellent contributions to Wiki Ed's materials over the last two years.

Blog posts:

- [5 ways you can help Wiki Ed](#) (September 1)
- [Join our webinar on unlocking scientific knowledge on Wikipedia](#) (September 7)
- [Sharing science and preparing students for careers at the Allied Genetics Conference](#)(September 8)
- [The Roundup: Clouds in your coffee](#) (September 12)
- [Monthly Report for August 2016](#) (September 14)
- [Science students become science communicators through Wikipedia](#) (September 15)
- [Visualizing article history with Structural Completeness](#) (September 16)
- [The Roundup: Truth and Reconciliation](#) (September 19)
- [SFSU opening access to library resources for Wikipedian interested in disability studies](#) (September 29)

External Press:

- [Library searches for Wikipedian](#) (September 6)
- [College students take to Wikipedia to rewrite the wrongs of Internet science](#) (September 20)

Digital Infrastructure

In September, we had an uptick in contributions from outside developers, including the first major Dashboard improvement by Wikimedia's Community Tech team, which is supporting the global Programs & Events Dashboard (outreachdashboard.wmflabs.org) instance of the dashboard system. With guidance from Product Manager Sage Ross, the Wikimedia Community Tech team updated the Dashboard to allow specific start and end times for a program. This will allow users running edit-a-thons, in particular, to generate dashboard statistics for just the exact time period of an in-person event.

In preparing for Fall 2016 instructor surveys alongside the ongoing Student Learning Survey, Sage improved on the survey administration tools so that Wiki Ed staff can easily create and update custom survey invitation messages for each new survey.

We continued fixing a few of the most pressing usability problems for new instructors, including some significant improvements to the way the Dashboard handles course dates. Sage also launched our first experimental tool for visualizing the development of articles over time: [Structural Completeness graphs](#).

In October, we'll continue to work with the Community Tech team at Wikimedia to build out features for organizing Campaigns on the Dashboard. This will let Wiki Ed more easily provide custom course and event templates for partnerships, event series, and experiments with new assignment types. We also plan to upgrade the Dashboard's application framework (Ruby on Rails) to the latest version, which will help us maintain the software in the long term.

Research and Academic Engagement

In September, we continued to roll out Phase I of the research. After feedback from Wiki Ed board member John Willinsky and survey experts, we decided to add an Amazon gift card drawing to incentivize student participation, which was approved by the University of Massachusetts IRB. Research Fellow Zach McDowell continued to work on improving the survey tools, and at the end of the month submitted the final tools as a protocol update to IRB.

Sage and Zach worked together to assemble the final instructor survey tools, ensuring that the information gleaned for the research was separate from the Wiki Ed retention and advertising questions, as requested by the IRB.

In rolling out the focus group phase of the research, Zach identified fifteen courses within a few hours' drive of his location in Massachusetts. He has contacted them and is scheduling focus groups for October through December, depending on the end of the course.

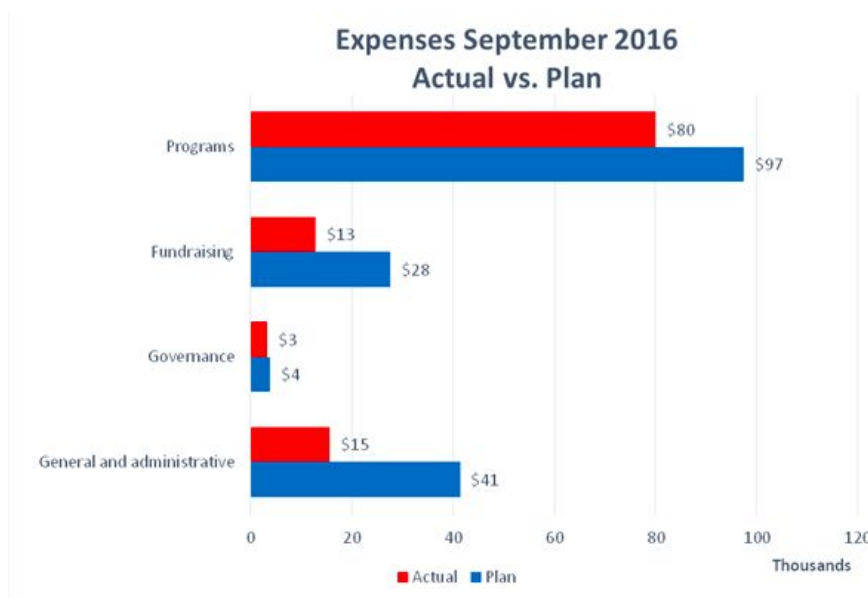
Finally, Zach has continued to plan out the dissemination of the research. Zach submitted a talk to the SoTL (Scholarship on Teaching and Learning) Commons Conference, and is partnering with Matthew Vetter on a co-authored paper intended for the Composition, Rhetoric, and English disciplines.

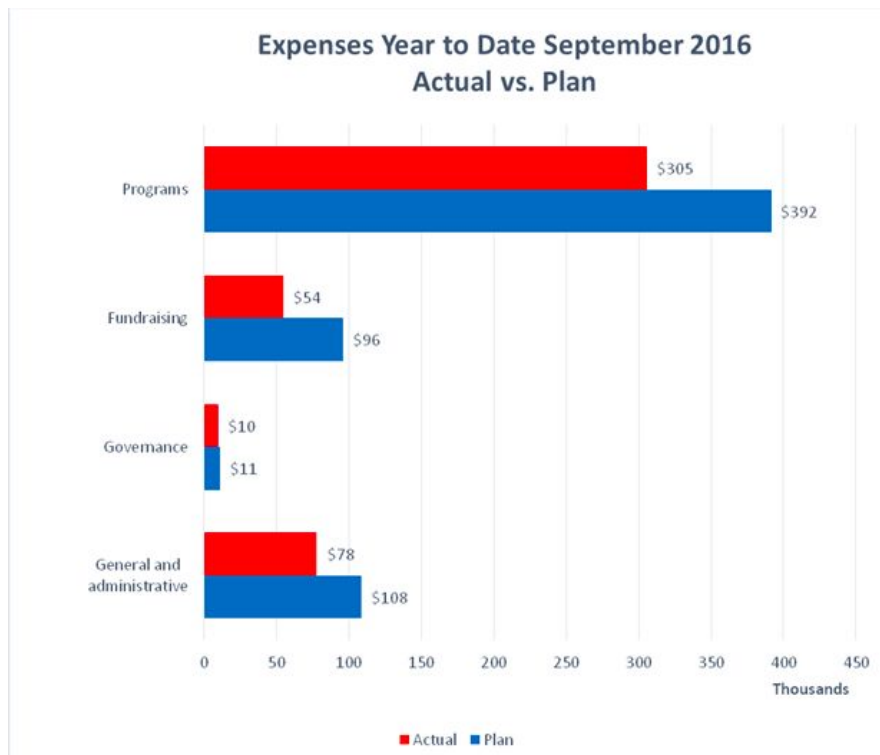
Finance & Administration / Fundraising

Finance & Administration

For the month of September, expenses were \$111,345 versus our approved spending of \$169,955. The variance of \$59k was primarily due staff vacancies (\$31k); the timing of professional services (\$15k); cutbacks and savings in travel and marketing (\$10k) expenses.

Our year-to-date expenses are \$447,117 versus our planned expenditures of \$606,631. Much like the monthly variance, the year-to-date variance of \$159k is also the result of staff vacancies (\$46k); the timing and deferral of professional services (\$64k); and the cutbacks and savings in other expenses including travel and marketing (\$49k).





Fundraising

- The Simons Foundation has awarded the Wiki Education Foundation a two-year, \$480,000 grant in ongoing support for the Wiki Education Foundation and the Year of Science initiative. This grant will support our core operations along with outreach for the Year of Science. The Simons Foundation's Education & Outreach programs seek to stimulate a deeper interest in and understanding of science among the public.
- Director of Development Tom Porter is executing a plan to increase the number of institutional funding prospects with both private and corporate foundations. The primary objective is to secure invitations to request new support for Q3 2016 and Q1 2017.
- Tom has also been working with Frank to monitor and track the performance of an ongoing, in-house major donor acquisition campaign.
- On September 28, Tom Porter attended the Development Executives Roundtable panel discussion "Beyond the Application: Building Corporate Partnerships." The panel consisted of three Bay Area corporate social responsibility leaders.

Office of the ED

Current priorities:

- Securing funding
- Preparing for the strategic planning process
- In August, Frank supported Wiki Ed's fundraising efforts by reaching out to potential major donors, researching additional development opportunities, and reviewing grant proposals and reports. With two institutional donors committing to support our organization with multi-year grants and an increasing number of new relationships with prospects we're on a good path toward ensuring financial stability for this fiscal year.
- Frank also continued to prepare for the upcoming strategic planning exercise, doing extensive research about how to potentially position our organization with regards to trends in our external environment.
- Finally, at the end of the month, Frank joined Jami on her trip to the University of Mississippi in Oxford. Although the main purpose for this trip was to not getting out of touch with "what's happening on the ground", Frank also used the opportunity to meet with Chancellor Jeff Vitter, Senior Associate Provost Noel Wilkin, Corporate & Foundation Relations Officer Katie Morrison, and members of Ole Miss' Career Services team. The meetings focused on ways to deepen Wiki Ed's relationship with Ole Miss and on how to showcase employability skills that students gain through taking a Wikipedia assignment. Together with Jami, Frank presented at a luncheon attended by about 50 faculty members and engaged in a presentation with the title "I'm a Wikipedian, ask me anything".

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