The Davies Forum: The Search for Values in Contemporary America

Call for Proposals

In 1982, Louise M. Davies, a San Francisco philanthropist and trustee of the University, established The Davies Forum. Mrs. Davies, in founding the Forum, wrote that “we seem to have lost our ideals of a more just and ethical society. Our leaders in government and private institutions seem to be only concerned with short-range goals and accomplishments. There are few leaders today whose lofty ideals stimulate and elevate us to greater goals outside of our self-satisfaction.” Consequently the Forum was established to give students and faculty the prospect to engage in ‘the search for values in contemporary America,’ the regular and continuous theme of all Davies seminars. At its heart, the Forum, engaging broad issues of morals and ethics, seeks to instill in students and faculty a strong sense of right and wrong, by giving them the opportunity to discover and encounter themes of the utmost relevance to contemporary society. Thus transformed, we hope that new leaders and new kinds of leaders – individuals of expansive vision with the dedication and ability to shape the future by actions founded on a devotion to humanity – will step forward to ‘change the world from here.’

The Davies Forum is traditionally organized as a semester-long seminar, supplemented by one or more major public lectures offered by distinguished guests. These, the Davies Fellows, chosen for their prominence in the unique subject area offered each seminar, will visit the campus, taking part in seminars with Davies Scholars, conducting colloquia with faculty, and delivering a major public address for the benefit of the Bay Area community. Those students enrolled in the seminar are selected from among undergraduates across the University, and thus, the Forum should be designed with the goal to give the Davies Scholars an opportunity to grow and distinguish themselves beyond their own disciplinary background.

Always retaining the theme of ‘the Search for Values in Contemporary America,’ the Davies seminars have covered a wide variety of topics, ranging from Dorothy Kidd’s “Digital Democracy” and Benjamin Wells’ “Math and Mysticism” to Keally McBride’s “Democracy and Citizenship in a Globalizing San Francisco” and Kevin Chun, Eileen Fung and Rebecca Chiyoko King’s “Re-Orienting Asian America.” To complement the seminar, Davies Professors have brought to campus a great number of exciting speakers, including political leaders like McGeorge Bundy and Henry Steele Commager, artists and writers like Isabel Allende and Arundhati Roy, academics like Robert Bellah and Ivan Illich, and public figures, including Dusty Baker, Betty Friedan, and Pierre Salinger.
We encourage you to develop a Davies Forum proposal, and are now accepting applications for the next academic semester. Typically, Davies faculty bring two to four speakers to campus during a semester, with a provided budget of up to $20,000. Outside speakers or complex co-curricular activities are not necessary, but if you do propose to bring speakers to campus please provide a focused list of outside speakers. Below is a series of guidelines to help you craft your proposal.

If you would like more information or wish to view past proposals, please contact the Davies Forum Office at x6894 or the members of the Davies Advisory Board:

Pamela Balls Organista, Associate Dean for Social Sciences
Martin Claussen, Professor of History
Dorothy Kidd, Professor of Media Studies
Hwaji Shin, Professor of Sociology
Tami Spector, Professor of Chemistry

**Guidelines for development of a Davies Forum proposal:**
(Proposals are typically no longer than ten double-spaced pages and describe as best as possible a potential list of outside speakers and co-curricular activities)

A Davies Forum proposal should include the following:

1. State the proposed seminar title and the semester you would like to offer it. Please include your name, academic rank, and departmental affiliation.
2. State the general goals of and specific objectives of your course, and be sure to explain the relation of your course to the Davies Forum program and its particular goal.
3. Give a rationale explaining the importance, significance, and timeliness of the specific topic to undergraduate students across various disciplines.
4. Offer a brief overview of no more than a page of your qualifications to teach the seminar you are proposing, and suggest how you might professional benefit from the Davies Forum.
5. Submit a sufficiently detailed course description or syllabus, including
   - the major topics to be covered on a weekly basis;
   - examples of major readings and other instructional materials;
   - specific course requirements and methods of student evaluation;
   - opportunities to raise and discuss issues of inequality and difference, including race/ethnicity, gender, social class and sexuality, and celebrate cultural diversity inside and outside the U.S;
   - and opportunities to exercise critical thinking and writing skills
6. List probable speaker(s) and events