



### ACS final report form

- Complete this form in no more than five pages.
- Attach your final financial report in a separate document.
- Note that portions or the entirety of your final report may be reprinted on the ACS grants webpage.

Name of project lead: Carrie Frey  
Campus: Centre College  
Project title: Pathways to Diversity: Uncovering our Collections  
Today's date: January 10, 2019

#### **I. Project summary**

*Briefly describe the purpose, intended goals, and major activities of your project.*

The overarching goal of this project, “Pathway to Diversity: Uncovering Our Collections,” is to construct an online archive of the historical experiences of African American students on Associate Colleges of the South (ACS) campuses, with the era of desegregation as our initial focus. Centre, Furman, Rollins, and Washington and Lee collaborated on the research, documentation, and sharing of archival materials related to desegregation at each participating institution. In addition, each campus collected or gave access to new materials focused on this topic, particularly emphasizing oral histories and historical essays from the community and campus partners.

At southern colleges founded long before the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, the experiences and stories of our African American students, staff, and faculty have not been systematically archived or fully understood, within the historical contexts of our local communities. This collaboration seeks to uncover and illuminate these historical moments and narratives. We hope to improve institutional understanding of our past and help our current students to comprehend the cultural, social, and ethical factors that have provided the impetus for change and growth in the area of diversity and inclusion on our college campuses. The four collaborating institutions possess the stories and retain the experiences of our African American students, staff, and faculty in sometimes hidden institutional collections and in a multitude of formats. Many of these stories and experiences are held only in the memories of the people who were here. Hence, there is a need for oral histories to be recorded and woven together with physical historical materials.

The original proposal, submitted to ACS one year ago, put forward a set of interrelated objectives to be executed over a period of three years:

1. Strategic and intentional research related to desegregation at each participating institution
2. Creation of new materials related to desegregation (e.g. oral histories and historical essays from/with community and campus partners)
3. Planning the development of a free online collaborative digital archive
4. The realization and continuation of coursework and academic research related to the important materials in this newly-compiled collection of archival resources.

The first grant period (2018) focused primarily on the first two objectives, resulting in four collections of archived materials from the four campuses, produced through the joint efforts of faculty, staff, and students. The collaboration of four institutions in four states provides a major opportunity to observe parallels between southern colleges and their communities, to identify distinct differences, and to drive discovery when new materials are found.

Grant activities during the past year centered on:

- Conducting joint faculty/student research related to desegregation at each institution and in the surrounding community in order to discover materials to be included in a future repository.
- Developing course assignments and projects to integrate archival materials into classes.
- Conducting and/or transcribing oral histories with stakeholders who were involved in desegregation at the universities.
- Planning the technical aspects of building the digital archive including selecting the digital collection management system, identifying the appropriate technologies, and establishing standards. A sub-committee specifically dedicated to this work led this planning initiative.

In the subsequent continuation grant (2019), the participating institutions will curate and describe the digital artifacts uncovered in the previous year of work. The collaborating institutions intend to pursue one final grant cycle (2020) during which an online archive will be assembled for use by campus and worldwide scholars. The technology subcommittee recommends that the platform for this final product be Omeka (see attachment for Technology Committee Report). Each institution currently possesses an instance of this product and is familiar with Omeka in its most basic iteration. The final archival collection will: (1) allow users to experience the arc of educational opportunity experienced on our campuses and in our country over time; (2) illuminate the narrow fissure of opportunity in the realm of higher education that was historically awarded to a select few based on race and class distinctions; (3) allow for the application of this historical knowledge to current social and political events centered on race and race relations, as well as classroom discussions on this topic.

In the initial year of work, students and faculty worked with librarians and archivists to uncover materials related to desegregation. These students worked in the college archives, with neighboring communities, and also engaged in publicly available repositories such as local newspaper archives. To demonstrate the impact of our grant activities on student learning, we have included faculty and student products such as course syllabi and assignments, and where applicable learning assessments from three of the campus partners: Centre College, Rollins College, and Washington and Lee University. (See attachments).

An important product of this grant-funded research is a collection of oral histories, created by students, staff, and faculty, using a variety of campus and course parameters. Project and campus leaders worked with the alumni office at each institution to determine and contact appropriate alumni to include in oral history efforts and to develop programming that focused on outreach and dissemination of project goals. At the time of the submission of the final report, Rollins has completed one fully transcribed oral history; Centre College has obtained seven oral histories and transcribed two; Washington and Lee has collected five oral histories; and Furman has obtained two new oral histories as well as transcribing several existing oral histories from their collection.

The Technology Subcommittee has completed a report, in which they recommend that the free online collaborative digital archive be created through the construction of an Omeka website. The collaborating institutions will outsource the implementation of the planned site to an Omeka consultant in a third grant cycle in 2020. (See addendum for Technology Subcommittee Report).

## **II. Attainment of goals** - *Explain the steps you took to achieve and evaluate the success of each project goal.*

1. **Created a list of resources/bibliography of relevant resources at each institution** - A critical first step in this ambitious project was the discovery of materials and resources at participating institutions. As with all aspects of this project, the research involved collaborations between faculty, library/archival professionals, and students. Assessment: Each institution has created bibliographies of cited materials, including oral histories, newspaper articles, photographs, etc. Attached are the bibliographies of discovered materials with 150 citations from Centre College, and 54 citations from Furman University. Rollins College identified 102 unique materials in the attached bibliography and Washington and Lee identified a list of materials that includes 11 folders of correspondence and

reports, transcripts, and tapes from an oral history project from the late-1990s and early-2000s, and 75 articles from the student newspaper (see attachments).

2. **Integrate course assignments/projects into at least 1 relevant course at each participating institution** - The table below lists courses that utilized or generated materials discovered during this grant cycle (see attachments for related syllabi and assignment examples).

Institution	Faculty Name	Course Title	Term
Centre College	Andrea Abrams	Community-Based Anthropology	Fall 2018
Rollins College	Claire Strom	Researching American History	Fall 2018
Washington and Lee University	Ricardo Wilson	Race, Memory, Nation: First-year Writing Seminar	Fall 2018

3. **Conducted oral histories** - Identified key alumni as well as current campus and community members at each institution and conducted oral interviews with them, for inclusion in our future shared repository. The interview process included consent forms and dissemination agreements to make sure interviewee's stories may be made available to the public. See attachments for release forms used with both interviewees and students and for an example of a transcription of an interview.
4. **Planned the technical aspects of building the Digital Archive** - Selected a digital repository system to host the Digital Archive, and established digitization and metadata standards for the Digital Archive. See attachment for the report from the subcommittee
5. **Integrated course assignments/projects into at least 1 relevant course at each participating institution** - Student and instructor feedback (when available) as well as a sample of assignment final products will inform our future work with courses. A reflective assignment completed by most participating students was submitted at the end of each course cycle. (See attachments for reflective assignments.) Each course integrated at least one of these student learning outcomes:
  - Make connections between institutional and national history
  - Find, use and evaluate primary source material
  - Synthesize primary and secondary source materials:
  - Produce creative or analytical works that reimagine or re-contextualize primary sources and contemporary events

*Provide details regarding the tools and methods used to measure each goal and the extent to which, based on those measurements, each goal was met. See attachments for assessment results and student learning outcomes.*

Centre College students in Andrea Abram's Cultural Anthropology course completed final projects that provided a description and analysis of racial integration at Centre College. Students interviewed alumni and retired faculty who attended Centre or taught during the early years of integration, interviewed Danville community members regarding memories of desegregation of the local high school, barbershop, and other community venues, conducted media analysis of previous interviews with alumni, and identified primary archival resources in the Centre library, including newspapers and yearbooks. Centre College assessment results are included as attachments. The reflective assignments completed by the students at Centre indicate that learning occurred at a deeper level via hearing personal stories from the desegregation period, through interviews conducted by the students or held in the archives. A rubric was used to grade the reflective and student project assignments and measured how well students situated institutional history in a national context, accurately identified the primary source materials, identified criteria for evaluating primary source, synthesized multiple sources, reflected original work and intellectual and creative curiosity, made effective use of primary sources; and engaged with contemporary events. Overall, students made good connections between institutional and national history, and used primary source materials to situate this conversation. They exhibited a solid understanding of how primary sources provide the backbone of the story of desegregation on the Centre College campus and how this story mirrored the larger narrative of racial tension seen in our nation during the civil rights era and for many years afterward.

Students at Rollins wrote traditional research papers and also presented to the campus community. The reflections generated by students at Rollins speak to the difficulty of using primary sources to support an argument. Students noted that they were not always able to find what they were looking for in archival records and that holdings could be spotty and incomplete. Several students also mentioned the importance of photographs and what these pictures illustrated or obscured about a particular time, place, or space.

Washington and Lee students created group video essays that used oral interviews and documents from special collections to tell stories about race at Washington and Lee. Students also completed the reflective assignment, for extra credit. Sydney Bufkin and Ricardo Wilson assessed the reflective assignment and video essays according to the rubric included in the attachment and the results indicate that students were able to achieve each of the learning outcomes (see attachment for a table of average scores). In addition, students presented their video essays in a public forum and received positive feedback from viewers across the university campus. Unfortunately, the professor who was to work with Jeff Makala at Furman took a leave of absence, so a course was not included in the work completed at this institution.

All four institutions met the goal of discovering materials previously unseen in our archives. We have four well-developed bibliographies of materials that we will curate and display in an online collection. These materials include newspaper articles, photographs, previous oral histories, student research papers, administrative documents, yearbooks, and other miscellaneous materials. Centre College has discovered and annotated 149 distinct materials; Furman has a bibliography of 54 materials, Rollins found 102 unique materials, and Washington and Lee has identified several large collections that are devoted to desegregation of the college. In the next grant cycle, one of our goals will be to connect the narratives from the four institutions to tell a collective story about desegregation at small southern schools during the civil rights era and to focus on the experiences of the individual students who integrated our institutions. Each institution also completed at least one oral interview and an associated transcription. Centre College completed seven oral interviews and transcribed two; Furman completed and transcribed three oral interviews; Rollins conducted two oral interviews and transcribed these; and Washington and Lee completed five interviews and transcribed one lengthy one, which was transcribed in two parts. A positive outcome of the project worth noting, one that was not articulated at the outset, is that each institution has developed policies and procedures for working with archival materials and oral histories that will serve us well for this project and for future endeavors.

### **III. Impact of project**

*Explain the impact your project had on relevant constituencies (e.g., students), structures, (e.g., a major program), processes (e.g., community engagement), and/or relationships (e.g., consortial partnerships).*

Students, as seen in their reflection assignments, were impacted positively by conducting primary research at their home institutions. From conducting personal interviews to poring through archival collections, students were moved by the struggles of previous students of color and confronted with the realization that inclusion was often hard won at these southern institutions. African American students who integrated the college faced challenges ranging from social isolation to outright discrimination on campus and in the surrounding community. Critical thinking and reflection were a necessary part of the process for students as they encountered personal student accounts and read contradictory administrative records from the same time period, often focused on matters of importance to the institution rather than the individual student, such as retention or financial issues.

This project allowed for many opportunities to engage the community. Centre College and Furman University each held a Special Collections Open House during Homecoming weekend on their respective campuses. At the Centre College Open House, alumni and students were invited to stop in to share stories and take a look at archival collections. Washington & Lee developed an exhibit for black alumni, and students held a public viewing of their video essays. Centre College also hosted a Black Alumni Celebration, where information about the ACS project was shared informally with the alumni present. Rollins College hosted a series of end-of-semester student presentations, which were promoted and open to the public, to encourage broader engagement with student work. This grant work also resulted in new and shareable resources for all participating institutions including comprehensive bibliographies, newly developed policies and procedures, and common best practices for library and archival communities.

The project also afforded its participants a chance to engage with relevant scholarly communities. Representatives from Centre College and Rollins College, Carrie Frey and Rachel Walton, presented in a panel at the 2018 Society of Georgia Archivists' Meeting titled "Pathways to Diversity: Strategies for Documenting the African American Experience at Historic Southern Colleges." Andrea Abrams and Carrie Frey will also be presenting the project on the

Centre College campus at Friday Faculty Hour in the spring. Rachel Walton plans to share project goals and outcomes in an upcoming presentation at the Society of Florida Archivists Annual Meeting (May 2018); she will focus her discussion on how the grant work allowed her to embed archival instruction in a course and increase information literacy skills for participating students by illustrating how primary source materials are a critical piece of the research process. Sydney Bufkin shared project goals and outcomes at a public presentation of the student projects generated in Ricardo Wilson's course.

#### **IV. Consortial (ACS-wide) value of the project**

*Describe how your project results can or will strengthen ACS, e.g., via the dissemination of a final report, the future training of campus leaders, or the building of an inclusive community of practice.*

The 'Pathways to Diversity' project has given us the chance to build a community of practice and to compare narratives by stitching together research from our students as well as outside scholars about the common experience of desegregation at small, liberal arts colleges. This work highlights an important time in our shared histories, fraught with missteps and challenges. The experiences related to desegregation have not been sufficiently exposed or documented. Importantly, much of what we've uncovered in our collections speaks to the experiences that current students of color may still relate to, especially those attending small, majority-white campuses in the southern U.S. For this reason we see these materials not only as historically important, but also highly relevant to today's campus conversations about diversity. In addition, the project has strengthened our collective resolve and future plans for outreach to other ACS institutions that could partner in this work and contribute to a shared repository of collective historical moments, with stories that have previously been hidden or unrecognized.

#### **V. Lessons Learned**

*Describe the surprises, challenges, and lessons learned during the project, e.g., is there something you are very glad you did or would do differently? Did you face obstacles that called for creative problem-solving? What would have made the project even more successful?*

Scaling the project back to include only one course on each campus was crucial and we are very thankful to the foresight of the ACS funding committee for recommending this step. We developed very fruitful relationships among the partner schools and among the faculty and staff involved in the project, as well as with our alumni and other offices on each campus. Each campus experienced personnel issues during the grant cycle and had partners who had to step away for one reason or another, which presented some challenges in terms of the flow of the project and the scope of what we were able to accomplish in terms of discovering materials and conducting interviews. Good documentation for building on the project and the development and implementation of needed policies and procedures were also positive outcomes. We found great value in the power of our in-person meetings as we were able to accomplish a great deal and build on the energy in the room. We had some challenges in communicating information among faculty and staff and between institutions when the academic term became busy for everyone. Our interviews, at times, shed an unflattering light on some constituencies of the institution during a time that the nation was struggling with racism. There were some politically charged moments on each campus as the collaborators and the administration sought to deal with these weighted moments in a fair and honest way.

#### **VI. Next Steps**

*Explain what you intend to do with/how to you intend to use or build on the results of your project.*

This is ongoing work. We plan to add to our list of resources, conduct more oral interviews, and discover other primary source materials to add to our online collections and/or institutional repositories. The overriding goal is a shared online hub focused on the grant's thematic topic - the history of integration at southern colleges. We have received support from ACS in the form of a continuation grant to begin the process of curating and describing the materials we've discovered in this grant cycle and to prepare them for the web.

#### **VII. Feedback/suggestions for the ACS grant program (optional)**

We would like the ability to apply for multi-year grant cycles at the beginning of the grant submission process. There is not enough time to complete the work, especially when there are many collaborators. Could we incorporate students as researchers by giving academic credit or summer compensation for a summer intern? All of our campuses have been working to include students as equal research partners, but funding is a barrier. The due date for the final report is difficult to meet in a complete and reflective manner, especially when incorporating student assessment information.