



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: Brandon Inabinet
Campus: Furman University
Project title: Campus Space and Rhetorics of Race—Connecting Injustice to the Liberal Arts Geography & Built Environment
Today's date: 1/5/2018

I. Project summary

Purpose:

The project pilots a campus map focused on histories stemming from inequalities, especially slavery, and brings critical analysis to campus space through the vocabulary of rhetoric—the ancient consideration of how symbols work to persuade and constitute communities. Students inventory campus settings and archival holdings, create a [Pocket Sights](#) and [Clio](#) app tour with photographic evidence and written contextualization, and connect these places in a coherent campus tour (usable for other courses & visitors). These campuses are especially similar in that they were rebuilt (from predominantly black downtowns) on beautiful suburban “lawns” to attract affluent white students from the American South. The Richmond and Furman campuses came together to become more transparent about how private southern liberal arts colleges work as symbolic conduits for race, specifically related to the legacies of slavery. Each campus is undergoing major institutional initiatives to study slavery’s impact on the college and race on campus (see [Richmond](#) and [Furman](#)).

Goals:

1. Heighten student awareness of campus histories around race and trauma.

2. Examine the archival evidence for how campus spaces were constructed materially and symbolically, and the subsequent impact on policies and memories that have taken root in the campus over time.
3. Distinguish between official narratives (in building names, monuments, and other markers of university progress) and the resistive opportunities and hidden pasts that come with deeper research and oral interviews.
4. Produce highly readable apps, while teaching students technological resources and deep theories of rhetoric that have revelatory power.
5. Collaborate to help students see similarities in regional identity and experience, and thus better discover the relationship of their experience to broader systems of power.

Activities:

1. Inventory campus, dividing campus into a reasonable grid and asking students to report using spreadsheets .
2. In-class discussion of inventory findings in terms of semiotics and rhetoric (what stands for what and how it persuades), and how this contributes to history and identity on campus. Application of course concepts to the inventory appeared on midterm exam.
3. Discern a shorter list of tour stops (in individual meetings) and discussing what is significantly “hidden” in the history.
6. Meet with archivist and digital humanities scholars to discuss their resources and introduce students to historical research and the integration of technology to make it public.
7. Use course space to have students create overarching tour narratives that are both faithful to the historical record and coherent for the tour-taker.
8. Peer review, grade, and upload the individual locations to the app. Publicize the app and track usability metrics with class to help them understand successes and failures. Keep in touch with students about authorship and edits as user information is generated or as site contacts give initial feedback.
9. Collaborate between campuses with inter-institutional video conference.
10. Use course surveys to assess student learning through the project.

II. Attainment of goals

1. *The Learning Goal* - In the Furman classes, midterm and final exam included questions about campus history, using critical terms of public memory, narrative (fidelity and coherence), and identity. For example, a promotion video from the 1960s at Furman is shown to exemplify how universities tout “progress” to the exclusion of issues regarding race, among others. Class average was 84.5% on these questions, showing most students were above expected on understanding this information. Student newspaper at Furman, [*The Paladin*](#), covered the project, boosting participation and conversation among students. Although we don’t know which percentage of users were students, from the day the tour went live, there have been 776 views of the tour, with 14 users completing the tour fully.

In the Richmond class, students critically analyzed an existing University history sold at the University bookstore alongside a broader history of the city of Richmond. Students were prompted to put these two texts together, considering their points of overlap and divergence. Students then wrote an essay that discussed whether a coherent narrative emerged from these two texts and if so, what it is. Students discussed narratives of progress, the relative absence of people of color from the University history sold on campus, and the ways in which stories of conflict and struggle were omitted. All students passed the assignment, with a B+ class average. Students in the Richmond class presented the walking tour publicly at the end of the semester, sharing their

work to an audience of approximately 35 faculty, staff, and students. Colleagues who attended the student presentations have expressed interest in using the tour in future faculty-student-staff orientations and in first-year seminar courses. Since going live on December 10, 2018, the tour has been taken 99 times.

2. *The Archival Goal* - Archival use was high at both campuses, with each site using 3-4 sources at a minimum (some Richmond posts use 10-12 source citations). There are 23 sites in the current Furman campus map, 19 in the two old Furman campuses, and 12 at Richmond, bringing the total to 54 sites. All told, several hundred citations of primary source documents have made this a robust use of campus archives. Major findings of “narrative work” in which unexpected results were found by students and archivists:

At Furman, in inventorying campus statues and building names, students found zero represented non-white persons. On building names, women are almost always represented with a man. Perhaps most spectacularly, the leading academic of the Greenville Woman’s College, Mary Judson, had a building named for her on the old campus. In the 1950s when Furman moved, she was grouped with her brother, Charles Judson. An archivist found that the bell rung by an enslaved person to signal class changing for decades still exists in a hidden archive under the Alumni House.

At Richmond, in inventorying campus statues and building names, students similarly found zero represented non-white persons. Student researchers, however, pursued further inquiry into sites that are currently unmarked on campus. After learning that bones were unearthed on campus in the 1930s, students undertook additional research to begin uncovering the names of the enslaved people who labored on the University grounds. This is new research for the UR campus.

3. *The Resistive Narratives/Identity Goal* - At Furman, the project lead has connected the dots between campus moves to launch a fairly strong argument about *why* campus moved in each case, with race as a strong causal factor, as well as a “black geography” of Furman—how enslaved and freed laborers lived and worked for the campus. Students discovered moments of resistance for almost every site, including women being allowed to perform oratory on the lawn of the old campus in an era when it was improper; and historical forgetting in others, including the poor historical preservation associated with women’s and minority’s history.

At the University of Richmond, where the tour focused around self-determination and resistance, students sought to de-center the whiteness of the campus through particular rhetorical and narrative moves. For instance, students discussed Freeman Hall, named after Pulitzer-Prize winning historian, Lee biographer, and purveyor of Lost Cause ideology Douglas S. Freeman, as the site where the University’s first black residential student, Barry Greene, lived throughout his time at UR.

4. *The Technical Goal* - Both institutions’ projects combined visual and narrative to great effect and applied concepts from rhetorical studies “behind the scenes” to explore what isn’t being said explicitly in campus symbols and spaces. By using PocketSights, a streamlined user experience is highlighted with the Furman project. By using Clio, citation and context for each historical artifact are privileged at Richmond. Furman students in Intro to Rhetoric (mostly sophomores with no other communication courses) created the stories in the Furman app, necessitating strong editing by a senior independent study student in the fall and the project lead in the spring semester. Meanwhile, at Richmond with upper-level students, the project shows direct student research-level writing. And so, the style of the Furman maps are fluid storytelling with low citational counts. At Richmond, students are citing materials as with research papers (with sources of varying quality from internet encyclopaedias up to peer-reviewed books and journal articles). When faced with a technical glitch, Dr. Maurantonio switched apps. Learning

PocketSights and Clio, between the two institutions, allowed us to explore the technology in more depth than if we had just relied on the paid service of PocketSights.

5. *The Collaboration Goal* - After a Zoom teleconference conversation that established basic contrasts and comparisons between the two projects, students shared in conversation with students to explain differences and similarities. For example, students who had thought top-tier liberal arts colleges “just exist” were able to understand the way that racial politics of the mid-twentieth century had boosted some southern white colleges that were deemed “safe” (moving outside of downtown’s mixed spaces to the white suburbs). Campus landscapes with gates and ponds could be read in their context, rather than just as the taken-for-granted background. Similarly, Furman could discuss how the focus on women in the university’s past had risen as a central focus, despite the initial focus on race—which at Richmond remained the core focus of the project (partly due to Richmond’s place of prominence in southern history, as opposed to the “backcountry” Greenville where odd things like progressive women’s education could happen).

III. Impact of project

1. Constituencies:

- a. Student Participants – Students have published material online that they have authored, identifying with issues of race and other contested identity. In surveys students expressed their appreciation for the project. Many students wanted more specific rubrics (from the professor) rather than engaging outside constituencies on their needs, which probably demonstrates the need for more projects like this!
- b. Student Peers – Several reported peer conversations, which give students access to the “inner workings” of major university initiatives, gaining support at sites students pass every day.
- c. Campus Visitors – Already several conferences have used the PocketSights tour to discuss complex issues in the university’s past, including the Alliance for the Advancement of Liberal Arts College (AALAC).
- d. Special Collections and Archives & Fellow Faculty & Staff – Materials have been significantly enhanced and better catalogued and indexed for future research, with the PocketSights as initial prompts for further research.

2. Structures

- a. The Seeking Abraham Project at Furman would not have been possible without the campus inventory performed in February 2018 at Furman. It served as the basis for discussions about the recommendations made in the report, approved by the trustees and to be scheduled in detail by May.
- b. The Race & Racism project at Richmond gained further evidence of the current campus history that will be important for continued archival work there. The Presidential Commission on University History and Identity, named in November 2018 by University of Richmond President Ronald Crutcher, builds on the momentum of the Race & Racism Project.

3. Processes

- a. Coming to the Table, a national group devoted to racial repair of trauma through acknowledging historical harms, has lauded the project as the starting point for racial reconciliation at college campuses across the nation.
- b. Area institutions that were asked for their needs going into the project, including the Greenville County Library System and Upcountry History Museum, have expressed excitement about publishing and promoting the project for their patrons, as an example of the university’s commitment to community engagement.

4. Relationships

- a. Through ACS grants, Sewanee, Richmond and Furman have come much closer together in conjunction with Universities Studying Slavery. We are excited if Sewanee is interested in

using this project in the future; we know that there will continued collaboration around this grant and another working with HBCUs.

- b. Communication departments at Furman and Richmond are more aware of one another than previously. It has been a special joy that when Paul Achter needed to back away, Nicole Maurantonio was able to lead the project there to completion. We envision continued guest lectures and collaborations going forward between the departments.

IV. Consortial (ACS-wide) value of the project - Presentation at AAC&U of the project in January will give more public significance. A prior presentation at Universities Studying Slavery (USS) attracted attention for the project and ACS was lauded for making the project possible. Sewanee, Richmond, and Furman are in conversation about ways to widen the network. The web resources developed through that relationship will likely bring in other ACS institutions.

V. Lessons Learned

1. Very glad for the inventory process and archival visits. Massively successful.
2. Technology facilitators were unnecessary at Furman, given the ease of using PocketSights in the Greenville area. PocketSights proved difficult for the Richmond group, which led to the move to CLIO. By piloting this project with a different app, however, we were able to work with a platform that will soon have audio capabilities. Also, CLIO's collaborative interface encourages development of these resources over time. Given access is a priority at Richmond, we are excited by the prospect of using a platform that enables opportunities to update easily as new documents are uncovered.
3. If done again, we would cancel classes more often for walking tour and visiting sites to take photographs and discuss plans. This was taken away due to unusual snow days both semesters. Further, we would begin the actual tour development earlier in the semester.
4. The plan to have multiple-level classes at one institution collaborate was too difficult. Given grading was involved in the project, it was difficult to envision interventions of the more senior students in the junior class without real careful planning.
5. Obviously, with the change of faculty on the project at Richmond and the delay of it until fall semester, we were able to build the project further based on the spring pilot (more sites and tours, stronger experience and examples to show students), but we weren't able to build collaborative websites over the summer.

VI. Next Steps

1. Breaking the longer (first Furman) tour in half will be necessary going forward. With only 14 people completing the tour (out of nearly 800 visits to the webpages), it is obviously too long in its current form. The walk around classroom spaces will primarily be devised as a teaching tool, and will be edited to read more like Richmond's tour. The sites around the lake will be oriented toward visitors and will become even more fluid for touring.
2. Nicole and Brandon will see each other regularly over the coming months, including a Sewanee-ACS hosting in Atlanta, and USS at William & Mary. This will be a great time to debrief on the tours and make stronger plans for promotion of the projects. One obvious way will be QR codes for download of the app at strategic locations on campus. News coverage of the projects will also be discussed. More funding to drive these conversations forward will be necessary.
3. Enriching the audio experience, through personal interviews. The default in PocketSights is a robotic reading of the text input, which can be frustrating for users in pace and clarity. At Furman, a documentary project will be a linked supplement to the tou. The Race & Racism Project has begun to collect oral histories and intends to incorporate them more intentionally in future iterations of this work.