

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
February 2 - 4, 2010
Washington, D.C.**

**Action: Pursuing a Diversity Grant Proposal
(Submitted by SAA Diversity Committee)**

BACKGROUND

The Diversity Committee would like to pursue a Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (next cycle, 15 December 2010 application deadline). The proposed grant would provide internships/fellowships for minority students to gain practical, hands-on experience in an archives setting. The Committee is aware that SAA also intends to submit a proposal to IMLS for a grant to support funding of the Mosaic Scholarship. We intend for this to be a complementary process.

DISCUSSION

The grant would provide one or more fellowships for minority students to gain practical, hands-on experience in an archives setting. The grant, to be administered by SAA, should follow models such as those of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), whose ARL Minority Fellowship Program is funded by IMLS.

According to ARL's website

(<http://www.arl.org/news/pr/minority-fellowships-18jun08.shtml>), there are four components to its fellowship:

1. 12-Week Fellowship Experience
2. Mentoring Relationship
3. Leadership Development
4. Career Placement

This list gives a nice overview of how a proactive fellowship can be implemented successfully within a given time frame. It also outlines a broader experience for the fellows in that the fellows are not only given hands-on experience in the form of the fellowship and mentoring relationship, but it also gives them the opportunity to continue their professional development outside of the program through leadership development and career placement.

The ARL Fellowship gives the following criteria for eligible candidates:

- Be accepted in an ALA-accredited library school program;

- Be a member of a racial/ethnic minority group as described by the U.S. Census Bureau; and
- Have completed a minimum of 12 graduate-level credits in library and information science.

The fellowship program requires host institutions and repositories to serve on a committee that participates in the selection process. According to the ARL website, "each host institution has committed to have one designated staff member serve on the Coordinating Committee. The committee will read the entire application pool; select acceptable fellows; and then enter into dialogue about experience, professional fit (fellows' goals and desired experience), and creating a diverse group of students. The committee will then work together to create the best placement for each fellow."

Notes and Ideas for SAA Diversity Internship Grant Application

Structure

1. The internship or fellowship should be a determined set of time, 8-12 weeks. This will allow for a concentrated timeframe and would allow host institutions the opportunity to find special projects for students to work on during this time frame.
2. We should approach institutions to host candidates and be prepared to work with them in a mentorship capacity *prior* to the selection of candidates. Like the ARL model, each host institution should provide a full-time staff member to serve as mentor and to guide the fellow throughout this process. Each staff member from the host institution will also contribute in the "Coordinating Committee" to oversee the application process. In this respect, each institution will be a part of the program from its inception, allowing a smoother transition for when the student arrives. Representatives from SAA's Diversity Committee and SAA staff should, of course, be involved with the Coordinating Committee during the selection process.
3. We should consider how Leadership Development and Career Placement options can figure into the SAA internship or fellowship. This would be a nice added incentive for the internship program. The Diversity Committee would have to work with other committees on this.

Candidates

1. Like ARL, our candidate pool should be members "of a racial/ethnic minority group as described by the U.S. Census Bureau." In this respect, we can have precedent for the selection process (and this follows A*CENSUS categories as well). Of course, if a candidate feels like they are racial/ethnic minority, perhaps we can have an "Other" category from which they can write down their racial/ethnic background.
2. The candidate pool should be currently enrolled or recently graduated undergraduate or graduate students interested in archival work. The application would require transcripts, two letters of recommendation, and a statement of interest about why they are interested in archival work.
3. We do not think that candidates should be accepted or enrolled in an ALA-accredited library school program. There are too many archival programs without ALA accreditation.

Likewise, 12 credits in archival coursework shouldn't be mandatory, especially if we allow undergraduates to be allowed into the program.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the SAA Council give permission to the Diversity Committee, working in conjunction with SAA staff and with review by the Executive Committee prior to submission, to pursue a Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services for the December 15, 2010, grant proposal deadline.

Support Statement: Consistent with SAA's Diversity strategic priority, the proposed grant would provide internships for minority students to gain practical, hands-on experience in an archives setting.

Fiscal Impact: To be determined based on need to compensate one or more grant writers.