

Hampton University

## IMLS Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Grant National Forum Proposal

### *Minority Recruitment and Retention in the LIS Field*

**Hampton University's William R. and Norma B. Harvey Library is seeking funding in the amount of \$99,980** for a national forum to support continuing education of librarians in the IMLS project category of Community Anchors. The forum will focus on minority recruitment and retention within the library and information science (LIS) field. Despite recruitment efforts, many minority librarians choose to leave the field after relatively short careers for reasons related to job dissatisfaction and other issues such as a lack of workplace inclusion. For many minorities in the library profession, the glass ceiling or early plateauing creates a cycle of frustration. Feeling marginalized, many minorities leave the profession altogether (*Using Professional Development as a Retention Tool for Underrepresented Academic Librarians*, Acree, Epps, et. Al, 2001).

Coaching and mentorship is one way to address this concern. There is minimal current research regarding the potential benefits that coaching and mentorship could provide to the LIS field. However, an independent study of grant funded programs requested by IMLS of the Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian program mentions formalized mentorship programs and professional development as key indicators of library student success <https://www.ims.gov/news-events/news-releases/results-released-assessment-laura-bush-21st-century-librarian-program>.

The proposed national forum will convene 30-40 of today's librarians, leaders and experts in the fields of library science, diversity and leadership. Participants will address the continued issues of recruitment of minorities as well as outreach efforts of libraries to recruit a more diverse workforce. Librarians will be taught how to effectively address issues facing minorities in the field. There will be presentations on preparation and training for leadership and educating others about diversity. The benefits of mentorship and coaching will be discussed and the idea of a nationwide librarian mentorship program will be introduced. Tina Rollins, Hampton University Library Director will serve as Project Director.

Whereas, the demand for diversity within the LIS field is certainly not a new topic, the number of minorities within the LIS profession still remains alarmingly low. In 1998, an ALA survey on librarian diversity showed that 10% of respondents identified as minorities <http://www.ala.org/research/librariystaffstats/diversity/raciaethnic>. The most recent demographic data from ALA (2014) shows that the profession remains largely white with only 12.9% of survey respondents identifying as minorities. This shows only a 2.9% increase in diversity over a 16-year period. Although diversity recruitment programs such as the American Society of Archivists Mosaic program (<http://www2.archivists.org/governance/handbook/section12-mosaic>), American Library Association Spectrum Program (<http://www.ala.org/offices/diversity/spectrum>), and the Association of Research Libraries diversity programs <http://www.arl.org/leadership-recruitment/diversity-recruitment#.WlohrlZ-vcs> seek to recruit minority librarians, many of these programs do little to focus on mentorship or minority socialization in a predominantly white profession.

The two- day forum will address these concerns through presentations and workshops focusing on the concepts of diversity, inclusion, leadership skills, mentoring and coaching. The first day of the forum will feature presentations from the following confirmed speakers: Mark Puente, Director of Diversity and Leadership Programs for the Association of Research Libraries; Rebecca Hankins and Miguel Juárez, co - editors of the book *Where are all the Librarians of Color? The Experiences of People of Color in*

*Academia*; Dr. Nicole Cook, professor at The University of Illinois- I School whose research interests include diversity and social justice in librarianship; Dr. Ishmail Abdullahi, professor at North Carolina Central University's School of Library and Information Science whose research includes diversity, mentorship and global librarianship and Michelle T. Johnson, author and diversity consultant. The last day of the forum will feature Dr. Angela Spranger, speaker and researcher on workplace diversity and coaching. She will conduct a workshop on mentorship, diversity and leadership utilizing learning exercises and tools. Additionally, Dr. Spranger will serve as a consultant for the planning of the coaching and mentorship network.

Outreach efforts for attendance will include postings on list-serves for committees and groups relating to minority librarianship such as The Black Caucus of the American Library Association, The National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking, The American Indian Library Association, The Asian/Pacific Library Association, and the Chinese-American Librarians Association. The list-serve postings will include information for a webinar to gauge interest and state the goals /intended outcomes of the forum with potential attendees.

Interested parties will be asked to submit an application for participation in the forum which will be available through Google Docs. This application will be used to evaluate interest in the topics as well as discuss learning benefits of attendance. Criteria for participant selection will include responses to questions regarding concepts of diversity, recommendations, and previous professional development. After selections are made, invited participants will be asked to view the forum wiki to prepare them to engage in discussion at the forum. The wiki will include research on diversity and mentorship including readings, videos, webinars and statistics.

Highlights of the proposed work plan include the following: November 1 - December 31,2017- planning, January 2018- webinar, February – April 2018- application solicitation and notification, May –July 2018 continued planning, August 2018- forum. In September, forum attendees will attend a post-forum evaluative session in Google Hangouts to discuss their overall experiences. The Google session will include the following: review of information and topics addressed during the forum, ways to continue to address diversity in the field, and research which they are looking to contribute to this topic. The session will be recorded for use as content in the white paper. October 2018 will be the beginning of formal planning for the mentorship and coaching network through webinars and Skype sessions. The white paper will also be submitted in October and will include information regarding the proceedings of the forum and planning information for the mentorship network. All grant-related activities will end on October 31, 2018.

The proposed budget of \$99,980 will request \$20,000 for salary for a Program Assistant to help plan and organize the forum, \$5,000 for participant travel costs, \$25,000 in consultant fees, \$6,000 for office supplies, printing, copying and postage costs. Funding in the amount of \$3,700 will be used for food supplied during working luncheons and presentations, \$4,900 will be utilized for equipment with the remaining balance supporting university costs for the forum.