



## Museum Grants for African American History and Culture

Sample Application MH-245545-OMS-20

“Cataloging and Interpreting Archives in the Special Collections Department of the Frederick Douglass Library at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore”

**University of Maryland Eastern Shore  
Princess Anne, MD**

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$49,818
Amount of cost share:	\$0

The project description can be viewed in the IMLS Awarded Grants Search:  
<https://www.ims.gov/grants/awarded/mh-245545-oms-20>

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

Please note that the instructions for preparing applications for the FY2021 Museum Grants for African American History and Culture grant program differ from those that guided the preparation of FY2020 applications. Be sure to use the instructions in the Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program to which you are applying.

## Project Narrative

### Project Justification

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The University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) seeks funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services for the non-matching award of \$49,818 for a one-year project to curate, promote, sustain, and interpret the archives held in the Special Collections Room of the university's Frederick Douglass Library. The need for this project stems from the university's overarching goal to enhance and sustain its identity as a historically black, land-grant institution and to encourage its diverse population of students, faculty, and staff to become a part of this identity. By caring for the archives and by making them accessible to academic and non-academic communities, the University of Maryland Eastern Shore seeks a deeper knowledge of its past and affirms its mission to promote equity, opportunity, and diversity in higher education.

The archives housed in the Special Collections Room of Frederick Douglass Library potentially offer valuable information on the history of UMES and on the contexts in which this institution developed. Church records, for example, can offer insights into the institution's beginnings as the Delaware Conference Academy of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Extant course catalogs from AY 1937-38 to AY 1946-47 – a period of time when the institution was known as Princess Anne College – can uncover educational philosophies that informed the institution's early approaches to its mission. Photographs of the campus can show the development of the physical plant, while sports memorabilia and film records can reveal the role of sports in campus life and the surrounding community. Family papers and photographs can offer insights into race relations in the town of Princess Anne (where UMES is located) and on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Examples of archival material can be incorporated into course assignments and classroom activities, and record groups can become the focus of faculty or student research projects. However, the disorganized condition of the archives in the Special Collections Room substantially limits these rich opportunities for teaching, learning, and research.

The Special Collections Room is a climate-controlled, 21'x15'x9' space filled with tightly-packed archival material. (Supporting Document 1 shows pictures of this space). Wall-mounted shelving holds 18 linear feet of photographs and documents. Some boxes are labeled, while others are not. Three map cases containing posters are stacked on top of one another. Four flatbed book carts hold archival boxes filled with negatives and photographs. Two large tables are stacked with framed pictures and unsorted donations of papers. The exact nature of the archival material is not fully known, but a preliminary survey has identified major record groups such as photographs, church records, theses and dissertations, course catalogs, sports memorabilia, 16 mm film, and oversized portraits. Outside this room, another 864 linear feet of shelving hold archival boxes of documents from various campus offices and divisions. These documents are in a remote part of the library and are separated from other collections by stanchions and ropes. The focus of this grant application is on the material housed in the Special Collections Room.

This project targets four major goals – to curate, promote, sustain, and interpret the UMES archives. These goals are supported by activities that benefit Frederick Douglass Library and its patrons, UMES students and faculty, and larger academic communities. Curation activities will

offer library patrons access to organized, inventoried, and cataloged archival material accompanied by finding aids. Promotion activities will create opportunities for faculty and students to explore the library's new archival exhibits and to incorporate archival material into teaching and learning initiatives. Sustainability activities will ensure the short-term and long-term viability of the project and will expand the project's benefits to broader communities. Interpretive activities will encourage faculty and students who conduct archival research to share results with audiences of peers.

The activities that address the project goals thus build physical and digital capacity for Frederick Douglass Library, as well as research, teaching, and learning capacity for the campus community. As indicated in the work plan, the project activities include strategies for tracking progress and sharing results. By promoting life-long learning and by increasing access to the UMES archives as a repository of under-explored knowledge, this project also supports the goals of the Museum Grants for African American History and Culture.

The project staff roster reflects different categories of stakeholders committed to the project's success. Ms. Sharon Brooks (Project Director and Interim Dean of Library Services) and Mr. Joseph Bree (Access Services Librarian) represent Frederick Douglass Library. Ms. Brooks and Mr. Bree will supervise activities related to inventorying, cataloging, and digitizing archival material; will recruit student interns; and will serve on the search committee for the Special Collections Librarian. Dr. Marshall Stevenson (Dean of the School of Education, Social Sciences, and the Arts) and Mr. William Robinson (Director of the Office of Public Relations) represent the university administration. Dr. Stevenson will oversee the hiring of the Special Collections Librarian, and Mr. Robinson will promote the archives on campus and in the community. In addition, Dr. Stevenson and Mr. Robinson will collaborate on a sustainability and expansion plan for the archives. Dr. Kathryn Barrett-Gaines (Associate Professor of History in the Department of Social Sciences) and Dr. Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones (Lecturer in the Department of English and Modern Languages) represent the faculty. Dr. Barrett-Gaines and Dr. Vlahovici-Jones will coordinate activities related to teaching with the archives and conducting research in the archives.

## **Project Work Plan**

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The activities included in the work plan support the project goals and reflect the maturity level of the project, which will be in its exploratory phase at the start of the award period.

### **Goal #1: Curate the Archives**

*Activity 1: Hire a Special Collections Librarian.* By the beginning of FY 2020, Frederick Douglass Library will hire a Special Collections Librarian. The search will begin in January 2020, and the selected candidate will start in July 2020. The Special Collections Librarian will manage the tasks pertaining to the curation of the archives (such as inventorying, cataloging, and digitizing the collection) and will supervise three student interns during the AY 2020-21. (The job description is included in Supporting Document 2.) This is a permanent position funded by the School of Education, Social Sciences, and the Arts. By filling this dedicated position, the

university demonstrates its commitment to caring for its archives; the state-funded salary and benefits are therefore not included in the grant budget request.

*Activity 2: Hire Three Student Interns.* During the AY 2020-21, three student interns will assist the Special Collections Librarian with the curation of the archives. The interns will organize the collection, draft an initial inventory, place photographs in appropriate protectors and boxes, and scan portions of the collection. (The job description is included in Supporting Document 3.) Mr. Joseph Bree and the Special Collections librarian will recruit the student interns during August 2020, and the interns will start working in the archives in September 2020. The budget request for the three internships is \$14,400.

*Activity 3: Create an Inventory.* Curating the archives will start with creating an inventory. The Special Collections Librarian and the student interns will divide the collection into record groups and will move some groups from the tightly packed Special Collections Room to other rooms. After securing adequate space for examining the archival material, the Special Collections Librarian and the interns will organize the record groups and place items in appropriate protectors and containers. The interns will record the inventoried items into a spreadsheet that will be regularly reviewed and edited by the Special Collections Librarian. While the inventorying process is ongoing, the Special Collections Librarian, Ms. Sharon Brooks, and Mr. Joseph Bree will identify priority record groups that will be at the focus of cataloging and digitizing efforts during the award period. The priority groups will consist of selections from major record groups and will include archival material best suited for educational activities related to the history of UMES. (For example, priority groups may include pictures of the campus at the beginning of the twentieth century, records pertaining to the founding of the institution, or the earliest course catalogs.) This activity will take place during September and October 2020. The requested budget of \$6,058 will cover the cost of materials such as Mylar sleeves, negative print sleeves, art storage bins, page sleeves, folding wire easels, film guard, and film canisters.

*Activity 4: Catalog Priority Record Groups.* The Special Collections Librarian and the student interns will create a detailed catalog of the priority groups, starting with those groups that will be featured in archival exhibits. The Special Collections Librarian and the interns will also create finding aids that will be linked to the library's website. This process will start in November 2020 and will continue until the end of the award period. The items that will be featured in the first physical exhibit will be cataloged by mid-December 2020, and the items that will be featured in the second physical exhibit will be cataloged by mid-January 2021. Because the archives may not be fully cataloged by the end of the award period, the Special Collections Librarian will prepare a long-range plan and will submit it to Ms. Sharon Brooks by the end of May 2021. This activity does not have a separate budget request.

## **Goal #2: Promote the Archives**

*Activity 5: Create a Physical Archival Exhibit.* To make the archives accessible to faculty and students while cataloging is ongoing, the library staff will create an archival exhibit in the Jessie Cottman Smith Library Exhibit Room. The exhibit room is equipped with adequate ceiling lighting but needs additional display cases. During July and August 2020, Ms. Sharon Brooks

and Mr. Joseph Bree will order cases and supervise the room setup. At the beginning of November 2020, Ms. Sharon Brooks, Mr. Joseph Bree, and the Special Collections Librarian will select display items from the priority record groups and will identify exhibit themes. The first archival exhibit will open in December 2020. A second exhibit will open in February 2021, in celebration of Black History Month. To promote the exhibit on campus, Dr. Kathryn Barrett-Gaines will write articles for *Wingspan*, the newsletter of the School of Education, Social Sciences, and the Arts. Mr. William Robinson will write articles for *The Key*, the UMES newsletter, and will promote the exhibit across the university's social media platforms. The requested budget of \$17,032 will cover the cost of six exhibit cases: a floor-standing case, a double-slant case, two countertop cases, and two slant-front cases. In addition, the requested budget of \$1,652.40 will cover the cost a large-format printer and accessories. The large-format printer will be used to produce exhibit posters and enlarged copies of documents on display.

*Activity 6: Create a Digital Archival Exhibit.* To make the special collections accessible to the larger academic community, the Frederick Douglass Library website will host a digital archival exhibit. To create the exhibit, the Special Collections Librarian and the interns will digitize selections from the priority record groups identified during the inventorying process. The student interns and the Special Collections librarian will scan photographs and other records, save them on external hard drives, and then upload them on Internet Archives. Because Internet Archives currently hosts the library's [yearbook collection](#), the digitized records will be added to the same platform and linked to the library's website. Digitization will start in November 2020 and will continue until the end of the award period. The budget request for this activity is \$2,674.96, which will cover the cost of a flatbed scanner and two external hard drives.

### **Goal #3: Sustain the Archives**

*Activity 7: Assess Progress.* Because work plans formulated at the start of the project may have to be adjusted to address new needs or unanticipated barriers, internal and external assessments of progress will ensure that all activities related to curation and accessibility efforts meet the project goals. Internal assessments will consist of monthly reports prepared by the Special Collections Librarian and submitted to the project director, Ms. Sharon Brooks. The reports will identify what goals were set at the beginning of the month, what processes were followed, whether the goals were achieved, and whether the processes require adjustments. In addition, external assessments will determine whether the work plans are followed or adjusted effectively and whether additional efforts are necessary. The external assessments will be conducted during November 2020 and February 2021 by a team of archivists from the Maryland State Archives. There is no budget request for this activity.

*Activity 8: Create a Sustainability and Expansion Plan.* To ensure the project's enduring benefits, a team consisting of Ms. Sharon Brooks, Mr. Joseph Bree, the Special Collections Librarian, Dr. Marshall Stevenson, and Mr. William Robinson will create a sustainability and expansion plan, which they will complete by the end of May 2021. The plan will identify what future physical, digital, budgetary, and advertising needs must be met for the archives to accept and process donations, attract the interest of scholars and community members, and support rotating exhibits. The grant application does not include a budget request for the creation of this plan. However, the budget includes the required \$3,000 for travel to IMLS-designated meetings.

Project staff who travel to IMLS meetings will seek feedback on aspects of the sustainability plan and will learn about strategies for supporting the project's ongoing success.

### **Goal #3: Interpret the Archives**

*Activity 9: Prepare and Deliver a Faculty Workshop.* The “Teaching with the UMES Archives” workshop will encourage faculty members to incorporate archival material into course curricula. During November and December 2020, Dr. Kathryn Barrett-Gaines and Dr. Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones will prepare sample assignments and activities that involve archival material and serve the needs of various disciplines. Dr. Barrett-Gaines and Dr. Vlahovici-Jones will place particular emphasis on challenging Freshman Experience students to learn about the history of UMES and discover aspects of this institution's past. In addition, Dr. Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones will prepare the *Teaching with the UMES Archives* Blackboard organization, where faculty members will have access to workshop-related documents and online discussions. Dr. Kathryn Barrett-Gaines, Dr. Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones, and Mr. Joseph Bree will conduct the workshop in January 2021, prior to the start of the spring semester. At the time of the workshop, Dr. Kathryn Barrett-Gaines and Dr. Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones will recruit faculty members interested in supporting the Student Symposium. These faculty members will encourage students to present archival research projects and will moderate presentation sessions. The grant application does not include a budget request for this activity.

*Activity 10: Hold the Student Symposium.* To stimulate interest in the archives among faculty and students, the Student Symposium will showcase academic work of students who interpret archival material as part of course assignments. The Student Symposium is an annual event organized by the Department of English and Modern Languages in collaboration with the UMES chapter of the Phi Kappa Phi International Honor Society. This one-day event takes place during the last week of April and consists of concurrent sessions of student presentations and student-led workshops. In Spring 2021, the Student Symposium will focus attention on the archives by giving priority to archival research presentations. Students from the Media Studies Program will record these presentations and download the video files on a shared Google Drive. Dr. Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones will link those videos to the *Teaching with the UMES Archives* Blackboard organization, where they can serve as models for future projects. Because the symposium is sponsored by the Department of English and Modern Languages and the UMES chapter of the Phi Kappa Phi International Honor Society, the grant application does not include a budget request for this activity.

*Activity 11: Lead Faculty Reading Circle.* This activity will encourage faculty members to explore research opportunities afforded by the UMES archives. Currently sponsored by the Office of Academic Affairs, the [Faculty Reading Circle](#) is an ongoing program that brings together a small, inter-disciplinary group of faculty members who meet three-to-five times a semester to discuss readings of common interest. During Fall 2020, Dr. Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones will lead a reading circle focused on conducting archival research at UMES. The reading material will consist of academic articles addressing methodologies and challenges of archival research, and the meetings will take place in the library. The Faculty Reading Circle Program currently requires participants to produce a one-page meeting summary, which is posted on the Academic Affairs website. In addition to preparing the required summary, reading circle

participants will propose a panel presentation at the annual UMES Teaching and Learning Conference, which takes place at the beginning of June. To sustain and expand faculty interest in archival research, Dr. Vlahovici-Jones will invite one of the participants in the fall reading circle to lead a similar reading circle in the spring. The grant application does not include a budget request for this activity.

*Activity 12: Award Travel Funds.* The travel awards will encourage faculty members who engage in archival research at UMES to share the results with scholars in their respective fields. Eligible faculty members will be reimbursed up to \$1,000 for travel to conferences or professional meetings where they were accepted as presenters. (The application procedures are outlined in Supporting Document 4.) At the beginning of September 2020, a committee consisting of Dr. Kathryn Barrett-Gaines and Mr. Joseph Bree will announce the faculty travel awards. The committee will then evaluate applications and distribute awards on a rolling basis, until the funds are exhausted. The grant recipients will be invited to contribute to the workshop “Interpreting the UMES Archives,” which will be offered in August 2021, prior to the start of the AY 2021-22. The requested budget for this activity is \$5,000.

These proposed activities address the project goals as well as potential risks. The Special Collections Librarian, for example, ensures that the archives are maintained and expanded after the conclusion of the award period. The assessments of progress address risks associated with potential changes in work processes and schedules, and the Sustainability and Expansion Plan prevents a loss of direction after the conclusion of the award period. In addition, the activities related to teaching and research have follow-ups that promote continued interest in the archives. The Student Symposium, for instance, builds on interest generated during the faculty workshop. The spring reading circle, the panel proposal for the UMES Teaching and Learning Conference, and the summer faculty workshop are designed to motivate faculty to create interest in the archives among peers.

The project activities also create multi-faceted opportunities for sharing results. The physical exhibit shares results of the inventorying and cataloging processes, and articles in *Wingspan* and *The Key* promote the results of the physical exhibit. The digital exhibit hosted by the library’s website will present the outcomes of the digitization efforts. The *Teaching with the Archives* Blackboard organization will disseminate results of the workshop (such as assignments and activities created by faculty members), and of the Student Symposium (such as videos of student presentations). The panel presentation at the UMES Teaching and Learning Conference will share the outcomes of the Faculty Reading Circle, and the summer faculty workshop will publicize the benefits of the travel grants. Overall, the project activities are designed to draw from one another without interfering with one another’s progress.

## **Project Results**

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The project results target positive changes in the material conditions surrounding the archives, as well as in knowledge of the archives, skills in caring for the archives, and attitudes towards the archives as sources of knowledge. Goals #1 and #2 target a change in material conditions by ensuring that, by the end of the award period, the archival material in the Special Collections Room is professionally organized, housed, cataloged, and displayed. Goals #1, #2, and #3

increase the knowledge and skills needed for the short-term and long-term work of curating, promoting, and sustaining the archives. The Special Collections Librarian will bring archival expertise to the institution. In addition, the student interns will learn skills related to inventorying, cataloging, and digitizing archival material. Furthermore, the library and university administration will develop sustainability strategies with input from consultants. Goal #4 targets a change in the knowledge generated by the archival material and in attitudes towards the archives as a research and teaching resource. By the end of the award period, the four major goals will have ensured substantive progress towards the overarching goal of enhancing the identity of University of Maryland Eastern Shore as a historically black institution.

The activities that advance the major project goals will also result in tangible products, and their success will be measured by data collection. Tangible products include the physical and the digital exhibit, assignment documents involving the archives, abstracts of faculty research, and recordings of symposium presentations. Data collection tools include inventory spreadsheets, workshop evaluations, evaluations of symposium presentations, and the number of visitors to the physical exhibit.

The activities that advance the major goals also support the project's sustainability. For example, the work of the Special Collections Librarian will continue with input from the Sustainability and Expansion Plan. The Jessie Cottman Smith Library Exhibit Room will display archival exhibits annually. The digital exhibit will include new archival material, as informed by the assessments of progress and by the Sustainability and Expansion Plan. The faculty workshops and the reading circles will continue every semester, and the Student Symposium will continue every year. Although the travel awards are restricted to the FY 2020-21, the project staff is committed to finding other funding sources for faculty archival research.

