

## **Preliminary Project Proposal**

### Tribal Digital Stewardship Cohort Training: Cultural and Collaborative Curation Models and Methods

Building on the success of a previous Laura Bush 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian Program grant and a cooperative agreement with the IMLS, we are applying for a 2017 LB21 Continuing Education project grant within the Curating Collections area to extend and enhance the educational offerings of the Tribal Stewardship Cohort Program and the [Sustainable Heritage Network](#) (SHN) initiatives currently offered by Washington State University's [Center for Digital Scholarship and Curation](#) (CDSC). CDSC staff have a proven record of providing hands-on and virtual training to meet the curatorial, stewardship, and preservation needs of underserved tribal archives, libraries, and museums (TALMs) as they work to manage and sustain their digital cultural heritage. This proposal extends our current work, resources, and expertise to offer the *Tribal Digital Stewardship Cohort Training* program to fill a crucial need articulated by both tribal communities and collecting institutions to provide training, mentorship, and collaboration paths to support cultural preservation and linguistic revitalization efforts nationwide. Emphasizing the collaborative curation method developed at WSU through our work with tribes nationally, this new Cohort program expands the digital lifecycle curriculum to include methods and tools to *curate collections in partnership with non-Native repositories through ethical frameworks for sustained engagement*. The collaborative curation model emphasizes long-term engagement, sharing digital content, and enriching metadata with tribal knowledge for broad accessibility. Outcomes include: 1) an expanded tribal digital stewardship cohort training program emphasizing collaborative curation practices for two cohorts consisting of twenty-four students total, 2) a comprehensive set of open educational resources (OERs) organized into training modules and accessible freely online through the Sustainable Heritage Network (SHN) site, 3) regional and national hands-on training to participants at regional conference workshops, and 4) a tribal digital stewardship mentorship program connecting cohort members, non-Native repositories, and educational instruction providers to extend training opportunities, share and enrich digital content, and ensure sustainability.

## **National Need**

One of the greatest needs of the TALM community is continuing education and training for their current staff. It is common that Native librarians, archivists, and curators do not receive formal training, and at the same time they assume multiple duties in their institutions. While post-secondary education to tribal members through Master's degree programs has increased, the literature shows that distance to programs, family obligations, cultural needs, and financial difficulties are obstacles to increasing Native student enrollments in traditional secondary educational settings. There is a crucial need to train existing tribal staff through tuition free, hybrid in-person/virtual educational opportunities. The 2012 Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums, *Sustaining Indigenous Cultures* report found that, "according to the survey data, the best ways to train current staff are through local, state, and regional programs that are *topic-specific and use hands-on or how-to teaching methods*." Next to hands-on training, the most effective training for TALMs are, "brief distance learning programs like *webinars or short web-based modular courses*." Similarly, the national [Breath of Life Archival Institute's](#) training model demonstrates that connecting tribal professionals with their counterparts at national repositories provides the foundation for the use of collections in educational, linguistic, and cultural preservation work. Combining these active learning and web-based educational opportunities with a foundational emphasis on tribal collections management, collaborative curation of content, and local digitization needs, the *Tribal Digital Stewardship Cohort Training program* will train TALM professionals to manage, curate, and share their collections more effectively, thereby fulfilling an urgent need to serve a diverse range of library and archives professionals.

## **Past Projects and Success**

In 2013, Washington State University launched the SHN to provide educational resources in the lifecycle of digitization to Native communities and their allies with three core pillars: 1) provide free and

accessible online training resources in multiple formats, 2) offer short workshops featuring active learning in all aspects of digital stewardship emphasizing tribal needs, and 3) create a national network of Native and non-Native institutions to share resources in order to sustain the collaborative and local work of TALMs. The SHN has created 833 open educational resources covering all points in the lifecycle of digitization: from physical object care to policy building, to step-by-step guides to digitize all major content formats. These resources emphasize cultural respect and tribal values. The SHN site has a substantial reach with 35,189 unique visits and 166,322 page views, over the last two years. The SHN facilitates an emergent network of collaborators on the site through “communities” and “workbenches”—including non-Native members, such as the Internet Archive and AVPreserve—highlighting the need to bring together Native and non-Native professionals in the shared work of digital heritage management.

Recognizing the gap in the training needs for tribal institutions and professionals, in 2015 WSU launched the Tribal Stewardship Cohort Program to provide TALM professionals with *an alterative training opportunity* to enhance, extend and build their skills in digital heritage management and collections care. Filling a gap between short workshops and University degree programs, the TSCP has provided **twenty-four tribal participants from twelve tribal nations across the United States with a twelve-month training program in the lifecycle of digital heritage management.** The cohort model has proved invaluable to the success of our students and their communities. Bringing two members from each tribal institution ensures that the skills they learn are sustained upon their return to their home communities and institutions. Since the program brings together cohort members from multiple tribes, participants learn from each other and develop close professional ties across Native institutions. The curriculum we designed combines best practices in digital stewardship, preservation, and curation with a focus on cultural needs and tribal values at every stage of the lifecycle. During our first application period, we had fifteen tribes apply for six spots, in the second round we had twenty-six applicants for six spots. The demand for this type of training is only growing as tribal communities develop their own collections agendas and national bodies like the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums (ATALM) and the Tribal Colleges Library Institute (TCLI) create structures for on-going support and network building between tribal archivists, librarians and museum specialists and non-Native institutions. In November 2016, the Tribal Stewardship Cohort Program received the National Digital Stewardship Alliance’s [Outstanding Project Award](#) recognizing the national impact of our “work in providing long-term educational opportunities in digital heritage management and preservation as well as its dedication to culturally responsive and ethically-minded practices.”

### **Performance Goals, Outcomes, and Work plan**

This new *Tribal Digital Stewardship Cohort Training* program supports the specific educational and curatorial needs of TALMs by providing three avenues for *training and professional development*: 1) a certificate in **Tribal Digital Stewardship and Collaborative Curation** through the hybrid onsite/virtual cohort program at WSU, 2) attendance at regional SHN workshops at TCLI and ATALM, and 3) online access to the entire Cohort program’s curricular materials, SHN workshop curricula, and open educational resources contributed by partners. The work plan includes five outcomes directly related to the learning goals: 1) curricular updates to include the collaborative curation model 2) OER creation for all curricular modules, 3) dissemination of OERs on the SHN site, 4) delivery of training to cohort members at WSU and through the proposed mentorship program and 5) programmatic assessment. The cohort program phases include: outreach, application submission, application review, cohort selection, on site visits to cohort institutions, training at WSU, monthly virtual training sessions, and assessment. In addition, we will continue our partnership with ATALM and TCLI by providing workshops at their annual conferences and providing web-based access to conference sessions and one-on-one expert tutorials.

### **Preliminary Budget**

The total budget proposal is for \$416,007. Project costs include student support: \$160,800; salaries and wages: \$140,406; benefits: \$41,139; travel: \$21,000; and indirect costs: \$52,662. WSU and our partners will provide cost share at a 1:1 match excluding student support for a total of \$255,207.