

**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT
FOR THE HUMANITIES**

SAMPLE APPLICATION NARRATIVE



Humanities Initiatives at Historically Black Colleges and Universities
Institution: Howard University



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National Endowment for the Humanities

Division of Education Programs

Narrative Section of a Successful Application

This sample of the narrative portion from a grant is provided as an example of a funded proposal. It will give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. It is not intended to serve as a model. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with staff members in the NEH Division of Education Programs well before a grant deadline. This sample proposal does not include a budget, letters of commitment, or resumes.

Project Title: *Advancing Humanities and Genetics Teaching and Scholarship at HBCUs*

Institution: Howard University

Project Director: Charmaine D. M. Royal

Grant Program: Humanities Initiatives for Faculty at HBCUs

Advancing Humanities and Genetics Teaching and Scholarship at HBCUs
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Summary

The GenEthics Unit of the National Human Genome Center, Howard University (NHGC GenEthics Unit), and the Tuskegee University National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care (Tuskegee Bioethics Center) seek funding for an 18-month, collaborative project. We propose to develop an interdisciplinary humanities and genetics program that is uniquely tailored to the populations served by Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's) and one that specifically addresses issues raised by the new genetics. By the "new genetics," we refer to advances in human genome research, gene therapy, and behavioral and evolutionary genetics, and to the discussions concerning these advances that increasingly dominate our intellectual and cultural landscape.

This humanities and genetics proposal utilizes the methods and content of all the humanities, including philosophy and religious studies, to address human issues that the new genetics raises. We will focus on these implications because of the intimate connection of genetics to race, the legacy of exploitation of vulnerable populations in research, and the enormous potential benefits that genetic research nevertheless holds for groups that today harbor profound suspicions of government-sponsored medical research.

We propose to advance teaching and scholarship in humanities and genetics by creating a pioneering, multidisciplinary, interuniversity collaboration between the GenEthics Unit of the NHGC and the Tuskegee Bioethics Center. Our plan is to leverage Howard University's strength in genetics and the ethical, legal, and social implications of genetic research with Tuskegee University's strengths in bioethics and humanities. The goals of the collaboration are to: 1) Develop Howard and Tuskegee faculty in the integration of humanities and genetics; 2) Incorporate humanities and genetics themes into relevant courses at Howard and Tuskegee; 3) Produce the curriculum for a humanities and genetics summer course for HBCU faculty; and 4) Plan and execute the inaugural offering of the HBCU faculty humanities and genetics course.

Additional funding will be sought for further development of the HBCU humanities and genetics program to include full implementation of the summer course and the formal establishment of a group of HBCU faculty who will teach, conduct research, and publish on issues relevant to humanities and genetics.

NARRATIVE

I. INTELLECTUAL RATIONALE

The twenty-first century has witnessed the rise of the new genetics – advances in human genome research, gene therapy, and behavioral and evolutionary genetics. Even though the Human Genome Project and the possibilities that it creates about human nature and identity are new, the issues that such possibilities raise are central ones with which human beings perennially have grappled. “Who has the birthright?” “Who is in the family?” are crucial issues in human life and the humanities from Jacob and Esau in the Bible to Cliff, the unacknowledged son, in the popular television show, “Dallas”. Even as science rapidly advances, the humanities provide mechanisms to illuminate and deepen our understanding of human life, and values cannot be left out in discussions about the new genetics.

HBCUs have played marginal roles in the evolving discussions concerning the humanities and the new genetics. Of the 102 HBCUs, only the NHGC GenEthics Unit and Tuskegee Bioethics Center have institutionalized programs that address humanities issues arising from genetics research. However, no structured interdisciplinary training programs in humanities and genetics, contextualized in the history and experiences of people of African descent, are readily available to HBCU faculty. Programs that address these issues, such as Dartmouth College Summer ELSI Institute, only peripherally focus on the humanities and only minimally put either genetics or the humanities into the context of African-American history and culture. For example these programs do not analyze in depth how the history of the United States Public Health Study of Untreated Syphilis at Tuskegee (commonly called the Tuskegee Syphilis Study) has influenced African-Americans attitudes toward genetic research. Nor do they examine how the current interest in African Americans employing DNA testing to trace their ancestral origin follow upon a long-standing theme in African American history and literature about African Americans’ search for identity. The lack of training in humanities and genetics is also related to the intellectual divisions which exist between humanities and genetics fields and the physical division which usually exists between the departments of universities which offer course work in these academic fields. Hence, there is a need for a

concerted effort to bridge these fields together. To date, there is no effort that attempts to link faculty from these fields at HBCUs.

We propose to advance teaching and scholarship in humanities and genetics by creating a pioneering, multidisciplinary, interuniversity collaboration between the GenEthics Unit of the NHGC and the Tuskegee Bioethics Center. The goals of the collaboration are to: 1) Develop Howard and Tuskegee faculty in the integration of humanities and genetics; 2) Incorporate humanities and genetics themes into relevant courses at Howard and Tuskegee; 3) Produce the curriculum for a humanities and genetics summer course for HBCU faculty; and 4) Plan and execute the inaugural offering of the HBCU faculty humanities and genetics course.

Through this approach, we seek to address the growing need for understanding the intersection between humanities and genetics and thereby strengthening and enriching humanities education and scholarship in this arena among HBCU faculty. We believe that our work could serve as a foundation to increase the number of HBCU faculty who offer courses and engage in scholarly activity relevant to humanities and genetics, which in turn would play a role in increasing the number of minority students interested in the area. We will also use this grant to strengthen the course offerings in the humanities and genetics at our respective institutions.

II. CONTENT AND DESIGN

This 18-month project (May 1, 2006 to November 30, 2007), which includes development of faculty at Howard and Tuskegee, production of a humanities and genetics curriculum, as well as the development and offering of a humanities and genetics course for HBCU faculty, will facilitate the establishment of a collaborative HBCU humanities and genetics program.

Major Themes and Content

The content we will assemble and develop for the program can be grouped initially into the following three major themes. We have included examples of some of the readings, films, and other materials that we are proposing to use for further exploration and development of these themes. Other

themes may be added, as needed, during the creation of the curriculum. (See Appendix A for preliminary list of resources):

1. History of genetics and the abuse of human subjects in research

- Eugenics (eg. Daniel Kevles' *The History of Eugenics*)
- Holocaust, sterilization programs in the US (egs. Bachrach's "*In the Name of Public Health-- Nazi Racial Hygiene*"; Wiggins' *North Carolina Regrets Sterilization Program.*)
- Scientific and personal memoirs about genetic diseases and the search for cures for specific genetic diseases such as sickle cell anemia, Huntington's disease (egs. Alice Wexler's *Mapping Fate*; Keith Wailoo's *Dying in the City of Blues: Sickle Cell Anemia and the Politics of Race and Health*)
- Abuse of African Americans and other vulnerable populations in medical research (eg. James Jones' *Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment*)

2. Human Nature - defining what it means to be human

- Various views and philosophies of human nature [(egs. Leon Kass' *Being Human: Core Readings in the Humanities on Theories of Human Nature*; Aristotle's *De Anima (On the soul)*]
- The Human and the Divine – tampering with human nature, creating monsters in the effort to become gods (egs. The Fall in Genesis; The Tower of Babel; Prometheus; Faust; Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde; Frankenstein)
- Xenogenesis – the transhuman [(eg. - Fukuyama's *Our Post-Human Future*); Many science fiction novels (eg. Octavia Butler's xenogenesis trilogy *Lilith's Brood*) and "sci fi" movies (egs. GATTACA; Artificial Intelligence; Blade Runner) also fall into this category].

3. Family, Identity, and Ancestry. Genetics implicates all the issues surrounding inheritance, birth, the birthright, who belongs in the family, the struggle to be recognized within a family, a tribe, or a nation, and the struggle to achieve political recognition and rights. The examples of relevant literature in all genres and types are vast here. Part of our task in professional development will be to show how the great works in humanities have always and continues to shed light on the issues raised by

genetics. Moreover, it becomes apparent that African American literature, precisely by virtue of the marginal status of its authors, has much to offer everyone (eg. Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*).

Goal 1: Develop Howard and Tuskegee faculty in the integration of humanities and genetics

The entire process of developing the curriculum for the HBCU faculty summer course will serve to accomplish this goal, as it will facilitate the exchange of expertise and acquisition of new knowledge among collaborating faculty at Howard and Tuskegee. This 10-member collaborative team will include the project directors, assistant project directors, and 3 other faculty from each institution, and will be the coordinating and primary teaching faculty for the inaugural HBCU summer course (See Appendix D for brief resumes). With the assistance of two external consultants (Ronald Green and Todd Savitt – See Appendix D), the collaborating faculty will review and evaluate readings and other resources indicated in this proposal, as well as identify, assess, select, and assemble additional curriculum resources. We will also further assess the state of humanities and genetics teaching at HBCUs to determine whether there may be other pertinent resources. The assembly of adequate and relevant curriculum resources will form the basis for the summer course.

Various communication methods will be used by the collaborating faculty and consultants, including email, teleconferencing, and face-to-face meetings. The first meeting of the entire project team will be a teleconference in May 2006. We will discuss the overall framework for the project, focusing on plans for the faculty development workshop to be held at Howard in July or August, 2006. In preparation for this workshop, Drs. Royal, Gamble, Payne, and Ortmann will select readings, films, and other materials based on the currently identified themes and recommendations from the collaborating faculty and consultants. These materials will be sent to all collaborating faculty and consultants by June. The 3-day workshop is intended as a forum for faculty to learn both content and pedagogy from each other, as each facilitates a session in his/her area of expertise. Drs. Green and Savitt will also participate in this workshop, sharing insights from the Dartmouth Faculty Summer Institute and the Readers' Theater, respectively. Given that there is overlap among faculty in terms of areas of expertise, the workshop will

undoubtedly generate significant discourse on these issues. It is also expected that the workshop will help in the refinement of the themes and topic areas for the curriculum.

Recognizing the challenges of sustaining collaboration between two institutions that are physically separated, following the workshop, the collaborating faculty will have teleconferences at least monthly for approximately 1-1.5 hours to discuss the development of the curriculum and summer course. In addition, Drs. Royal, Gamble, Ortmann, and Payne will have biweekly teleconferences. We will also continue to engage the consultants over the year.

Goal 2: Incorporate humanities and genetics themes into relevant courses at Howard and Tuskegee

Collaborating faculty at each institution will meet as needed to discuss existing courses that could be enhanced by the curriculum resources or new courses that could be developed. For example, Dr. Royal will begin integrating these materials into her graduate course on the ethical, legal, and social implications of genetic research in the fall of 2006 and continue to do so in the fall of 2007. Dr. Nyang and other humanities faculty at Howard might propose a course originating from one of the humanities departments related to these themes. At Tuskegee, the themes may translate into electives for a Minor in Bioethics, such as a new team-taught course for which collaborating faculty at Tuskegee will seek approval. As the humanities, sciences, and professions mutually inform each other, there will be more occasions to work collaboratively within an academic setting with professionals outside the academy.

Goal 3: Produce curriculum for a humanities and genetics summer course for HBCU faculty

Based on ongoing interaction among the collaborating faculty throughout the year, Drs. Gamble, Royal, Ortmann, and Payne will develop a preliminary curriculum that will be circulated to the collaborating faculty and consultants in November 2006 for their review. Upon receipt and review of their feedback, we will hold a teleconference to resolve discrepancies in December 2006. We will subsequently make the necessary revisions and redistribute the document to the project team as well as to other appropriate experts at Howard, Tuskegee, and perhaps other institutions, with the intent of “finalizing” it by February 2007.

Goal 4: Plan and execute the inaugural offering of the HBCU faculty humanities and genetics course

We will advertise the course to all HBCUs in January 2007, with the intent of selecting six faculty (during our March 2007 teleconference) to participate in the week-long summer course between June and July 2007 at Tuskegee. We will target Humanities and Science departments at all HBCUs, through professional connections with their faculty members, and via the websites for the NHGC GenEthics Unit (<http://www.genomecenter.howard.edu/units/genethics/default1.htm>) and Tuskegee Bioethics Center (<http://www.tuskegee.edu/Global/category.asp?C=35026>). Interested faculty will submit applications for the course. The application process will include submission of a statement of interest, resume, and letter of commitment to developing a course related to humanities and genetics from their department chair. The basic structure of the course will be developed by January 2007 (See Appendix C for preliminary schedule) and the plan finalized by March 2007. The course will be held for one week (Sunday to Saturday) between June and July 2007, and will be facilitated by the collaborating faculty. It will comprise lectures on the major themes of humanities and genetics as dictated by the curriculum, a review of related courses developed by collaborating faculty, and demonstration of approaches to teaching these courses. Each attending faculty will receive a stipend of \$500.

III. INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Howard University and Tuskegee University were founded in response to racial segregation and went on to produce some of the most influential figures in American history including Thurgood Marshall and Ralph Ellison. Both Howard and Tuskegee have missions to develop and support faculty and students, through research, teaching, and service who are committed to the quest for solutions to human and social problems in the US and throughout the world. The work of the NHGC GenEthics Unit and the Tuskegee University National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care closely follow missions of their respective universities. The NHGC GenEthics Unit engages in activities (research, education, and policy development) relevant to ethical, legal, and social implications of genetic research. Howard students are able to benefit from the work of the unit by participating in these activities and /or taking a

course offered by Dr. Royal which focuses on these issues. Howard has multiple undergraduate and graduate programs in the humanities and other fields which will likely benefit from this project. The mission of the Tuskegee Bioethics Center is to promote equity and justice in health and health care for African Americans. It is the only bioethics center that is located at an HBCU and committed to increasing the number of minority bioethicists. The Bioethics Center has developed a Bioethics Minor that is the only one offered at a HBCU. Tuskegee undergraduates must take 19 hours of humanities and faculty from the Bioethics Center are actively involved in the humanities undergraduate curriculum. Although there are sections of courses, for example the medical ethics course, that focus on ethical issues in genetic research, there are currently there are no courses that focus on the humanities and genetics in the humanities. This project would strengthen the current offerings at Tuskegee.

IV. STAFF AND PARTICIPANTS

(See Appendix D for Brief Resumes and Appendix F for Commitment Letters)

Project Staff

Project Director – Howard University

Charmaine D. M. Royal teaches, conducts research, lectures, and publishes on the ethical, legal, societal, and psychosocial implications of human genetics/genome research, particularly as they relate to African Americans and other peoples of African Descent. Together with Dr. Gamble, she will be responsible for oversight of the project. She will also oversee administrative and technical aspects.

Project Director – Tuskegee University

Vanessa Northington Gamble is an internationally recognized expert on the history of race and racism in American medicine, racial and ethnic disparities in health and health care, cultural competence, diversity, and bioethics. She is a recipient of the prestigious Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health Investigator Award to write a book of essays on the history of race and racism in American medicine. Along with Dr. Royal, she will play a leading role in all aspects of the project.

Assistant Project Director – Howard University

Perry W. Payne, Jr. – His current research interests are focused on the ethical, legal, and social implications of using racial/ethnic Census Categories as a classification system for humans. He will organize faculty workgroup meetings at Howard, work with faculty to develop a curriculum for the summer course, and develop/assess evaluations of the project.

Assistant Project Director – Tuskegee University

Leonard Ortmann is a Bioethics Center Senior Scholar and Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Tuskegee University, where he teaches ethics and humanities. He will work closely with Dr. Gamble in management of the project at Tuskegee.

Administrative and Technical Assistance

The Administrative Unit of the NHGC at Howard University will provide administrative support for this project. **Mr. Bodger Johnson** (Research Administrator) will be primarily responsible for overall management of the budget as well as faculty compensation (salary and stipend), while **Ms. Tamra Pollard** (Administrative Assistant) will coordinate teleconferences, travel, meeting logistics, purchases, and other project-related matters. The Network Services Unit of the NHGC will also provide any technical expertise necessary for the implementation of the project. Compensation for these persons is provided by the NHGC and Howard University.

Collaborating Faculty

(These faculty will participate in faculty, curriculum, and course development, as well as the teaching of the summer course.)

Howard University

Georgia M. Dunston's molecular genetics research interest in human genome sequence variation in disease susceptibility has been the vanguard of current efforts at Howard University to build national and international research collaborations focusing on the genetics of diseases common in African Americans and other African Diaspora populations.

Sulayman S. Nyang teaches in the Department of African Studies and has written extensively (including books, book chapters, and journal articles) on African, Islamic and Middle Eastern affairs. His most widely known book is "Islam, Christianity and African Identity."

Charles Rotimi's long-term scientific interest is directed at understanding the patterns and determinants of common complex diseases including diabetes, hypertension, and obesity in populations of the African Diaspora.

Tuskegee University

A. Caroline Gebhard's research and teaching interests include American literature, African-American studies, Women's Studies, and Bioethics and Humanities. She received an NEH Faculty Research Grant for her work on African American poet Paul Laurence Dunbar and served as co-project director for another NEH Grant, "Interdisciplinary Collaboration in the Humanities at Tuskegee University."

Isaac Mwase is Associate Professor of Philosophy with Project EXPORT and the National Center for Bioethics in Research and Health Care. After participating in an NSF/NEH faculty institute on ELSI at the University of Puget Sound in 1996, he inaugurated a faculty ELSI lecture series at Ouachita Baptist University.

Connie Price's teaching and research interests are bioethics from a Continental perspective, philosophy of science, philosophy of film, philosophy of mind, evolution, Africana philosophy, and feminist philosophy.

Consultants

Ronald M. Green has been a member of the Religion Department at Dartmouth College since 1969, and also directs Dartmouth's Ethics Institute. Professor Green served on an interim basis as Director of the Office of Genome Ethics at the National Human Genome Research Institute of the National Institutes of Health. His research interests are in genetic ethics, biomedical ethics, and issues of justice in health care allocation.

Todd L. Savitt is an historian of medicine who teaches history of medicine and medical humanities at East Carolina University's Brody School of Medicine. His primary research interest is African American

medical history, and he has written or edited five books and a number of articles on topics in this area. In 1988, Dr. Savitt organized and continues to coordinate ECU's medical readers' theater program.

V. EVALUATION

The professional and curriculum development processes will be assessed every three months by the collaborating faculty in order for the project directors to make appropriate changes. In addition, faculty will assess the effectiveness of consultants. The development of new lectures or courses in humanities and genetics at HBCUs will be used as an outcome measure of the success of the course. Faculty who create new courses will be asked to send their syllabi and any related course evaluations by students. Another outcome measure will be the publication of papers relevant to humanities and genetics.

Course participants will evaluate the course. This information will be analyzed and used to inform further evaluation and modification of the course. We will integrate the final plan for the course into applications for continued funding.

VI. FOLLOW-UP AND DISSEMINATION

Monthly follow-up will occur with HBCU faculty who attend the summer course until the end of the grant period. Follow-up will include checking on the progress of course and lecture development at their institutions and any publications or research projects that are resulting from knowledge gained from the course. The summer course syllabus and lectures will be placed on the websites of the NHGC GenEthics Unit and Tuskegee Bioethics Center in order to make these resources publicly available. Drs. Gamble and Royal will also present information on this grant to the HBCU Faculty Development Network, an existing organization committed to promoting effective teaching and student learning through a variety of collaborative activities that focus on faculty enhancement. Prior to the ending of this grant period, Drs. Royal, Gamble, Ortmann, and Payne will also apply for funding in order to facilitate continued development of the HBCU humanities and genetics program to include full implementation of the summer course and the formal establishment of a group of HBCU faculty who will teach, conduct research, and publish on issues relevant to humanities and genetics.