

**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT
FOR THE HUMANITIES**



SAMPLE APPLICATION NARRATIVE

Humanities Initiatives at Historically Black Colleges and Universities
Institution: Xavier University of Louisiana



NATIONAL
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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: *The Garifuna Project: A Vanishing Culture Speaks*

Institution: Xavier University of Louisiana

Project Director: Susan F. Spillman

Grant Program: Institutional Grants for Historically Black, Hispanic-Serving, and Tribal Colleges and Universities

The Garífuna Project: A Vital Culture Speaks

Mission Statement, Xavier University of Louisiana.

Xavier University of Louisiana is Catholic and historically Black. The ultimate purpose of the University is the promotion of a more just and humane society. To this end, Xavier prepares its students to assume roles of leadership and service in society. This preparation takes place in a pluralistic teaching and learning environment that incorporates all relevant educational means, including research and community service.

Project Summary Description.

The Department of Languages at Xavier University of La. seeks funding under the Extending the Reach program for preparation and development of oral history project involving the project director and three members of the Spanish faculty. The organizing principle of the project is the development of an ongoing relationship between the faculty and students of Xavier and the Garífuna community of New Orleans, an Afro-Latin American cultural group with ties to Honduras. Seeking to emphasize the unique position of the Garífuna people as a significant ethnic community among the many Latin American cultural groups of New Orleans, this proposal involves a comprehensive series of oral interviews in either Spanish or English as the individual interview subject prefers. These oral histories will serve as the basis of extensive documentation of the Garífuna culture as it exists in New Orleans, and will serve as the genesis of an ongoing interdisciplinary seminar incorporating student and faculty research. The project will also culminate in the development of a website and a CD-ROM.

Rationale.

There are over one hundred thousand Hispanic New Orleanians from many different countries and ethnic groups. Because of this cultural diversity the Spanish program at Xavier has available a considerable resource for both language and culture studies. At the same time, Afro-Latin Americans, both in the United States and throughout Central and South America, have not received the scholarly attention they deserve. This project will involve the participants in the documentation and dissemination

of significant cultural information about a cultural group whose presence in New Orleans is not adequately studied and will integrate the results of that study into an interdisciplinary seminar.

Description of informant community.

The Garífunas are an Afro-Central American ethnic group who originated in St. Vincent. They are descendants of West African, Arawak and Carib Indian people. Unlike other individuals of African descent, the Garífunas never had a history of slavery.

There are a number of explanations as to how the Garífuna people first arrived in Central America. The most common explanation is that sometime between 1635 and 1675 a vessel carrying Africans bound for slavery sank between Bequia and St. Vincent. Some of the Africans survived the shipwreck and fled to the island of St. Vincent. These so-called fugitive slaves inter-bred with the island Carib Indians, who were already present on the island of St. Vincent. On St. Vincent, the Africans quickly adopted the Carib Indian language and many of their cultural traditions. The hybrid of Carib Indian and African produced is what we now call Garífuna.

In St. Vincent, the British colonists fought with the Garífuna and the other inhabitants for control of St. Vincent. Despite the fact that the Garífuna and the other inhabitants on the island maintained separate enclaves, they had a common interest in maintaining the land. Initially, the Garífuna were successful at defeating the British. However, by 1796, the Garífuna lost the battle. Five hundred and eighty Garífuna found themselves in Roatan, Honduras. This small group of Garífuna survivors became responsible for maintaining Garífuna culture, traditions, and customs. Eventually, the Garífuna (Black Caribs) spread to Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Belize.

It is also important to note that some anthropologists and Garífunas also believe in other explanations of how the Garífuna arrived to the Americas. For example, some Garífuna believe that they are offspring of a pre-Columbian African element who made deliberate maritime voyages to the Americas between 1302 and 1307. These expeditionaries originally came from the Mandigas in West Africa. They made several deliberate voyages to the Americas to trade gold with the Europeans. This goes against the theory that the Garífuna were shipwrecked slaves. (This text is quoted from <http://www.garinet.com>)

Goals.

The project goals are taken from the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning as the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages articulates them. These standards are as follows: (1.) COMMUNICATION, Communicate in Languages Other Than English; (2.) CULTURES, Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures; (3.) CONNECTIONS, Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information; (4.) COMPARISONS, Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture; and (5.) COMMUNITIES, Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home & Around the World. Although all five of the standards are applicable to the project, communication, cultures and communities have been selected as the specific goals of the present work. They are to be developed as follows:

- a. Communication--Through their work in carrying out the interviews, faculty and students will develop taped presentations, which will serve as the basis for communication in Spanish in their classes. This project will also enhance contacts among students and members of the Garífuna community through special activities which will be outgrowths of the current effort;
- b. Cultures--Both in their documentation of the Garífuna community and their implementation of the interdisciplinary seminar, participants will gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures and will transmit their findings to their students;
- c. Communities--As the ACTFL description indicates, the project will serve as the genesis of a long-term engagement of faculty, students, and the multilingual Afro-Latin American Garífuna community.

Description of activities.

The project is divided into four phases, with NEH funding sought for the second, third and fourth phases: (1.) participation by the project director in an intensive oral history workshop at Dickinson College at Carlisle, Pennsylvania; (2.) one semester of organizational work, research, contacts with members of the Garífuna community, and ongoing training of faculty participants by project director; (3.) an intensive summer of oral interviews, with transcribing and translating (where needed); and (4.)

evaluation and dissemination of results through scholarly presentations, multimedia, and a website. These activities will culminate in the development of an interdisciplinary seminar; funding is not sought for implementation of the seminar, since the grant period ends after the second summer, when actual planning for the course will take place. Faculty participants will receive a stipend of three thousand dollars (\$3000.00) for the first summer, five hundred dollars (\$500.00) for one semester of the academic year 2003-2004, and one thousand dollars (\$1000.00) for the summer, 2004, during which time a one-week intensive workshop in preparation for the seminar will take place.

During the first phase, in preparation for the project, the director will participate in the Oral History Workshop at Dickinson College with Profs. Kim Rogers, Mary Marshall Clark (Director of the Oral History Institute at Columbia University), and Alessandro Portelli of the University of Rome. This workshop will take place from July 6-13, 2002. Beginning in January 2003, she will carry out the second phase of the project, doing research, making the contacts and working with faculty and students who will do the interviews. In lieu of seeking release time, the project director will contribute her services as in-kind. Three students will be recruited to participate in the summer 2003 phase; they will not receive monetary compensation but will be enrolled in a senior-level seminar course. Comprising the third phase of the project, an orientation workshop will take place at the beginning of the summer, followed by the actual oral history interview sequence. Three members of the Spanish faculty will carry out the interviews; the project director, who also speaks Spanish, will serve as an advisor and will be in charge of taping. After the taping has been completed, each faculty member and a student who works with her will prepare an index of subject matter discussed in the interviews they taped and will transcribe the complete text of each one. Interviewees will have the option of speaking either Spanish or English. The initial transcription phase will be done only in the language spoken by the subject; if translation is necessary, it will be done during the fall semester, 2003.

After completing the taping and transcription, all members of the project will work together throughout the academic year 2003-2004 to develop the fourth phase of the project, documentation from which will be derived scholarly presentations for conferences and a website with photos, texts, and

streaming video. The project director will implement the technological phase including the website and a possible CD-ROM with support from the Center for the Advancement of Teaching, which has agreed to make available both the resources of the production laboratory and the camera as well as the support of the staff. If the project team decides to prepare a CD-ROM, the director will make application for funding under the Rich Media Projects program of the Center.

Preparation for the implementation of the interdisciplinary seminar will take place during the summer, 2004. During the summer of that year, the faculty who have participated in the project will develop a model for the interdisciplinary seminar, which will be offered in the spring, 2005. The participants will order books and journals, which will become part of the permanent collection of the Xavier University of La. library. The project director will complete implementation of the website and the group will make a presentation to the Xavier community concerning their efforts.

Relationship of goals and activities to the mission of the institution.

In its mission statement, Xavier University of La. defines its ultimate purpose as the creation of a more just and humane society. Because of its commitment to the recognition and empowering of language communities, especially those in southern Louisiana, the Department of Languages carries out scholarly and pedagogical activities that incorporate cultural awareness of the richness and diversity of the linguistic and ethnic heritage of the region. This learning is proactive, and students are required to acquire for themselves much of this knowledge through cultural contacts. The Garifuna project will provide for students and faculty "a pluralistic teaching and learning environment that incorporates all relevant educational means, including research and community service."

Related Activities That Will Help Fulfill These Goals.

These goals will be achieved through the following activities which are described in greater detail above:

1. Development of a comprehensive series of taped interviews in English and Spanish, which will be transcribed and edited for publication;
2. Development of a website, with streaming video and written documentation of the project;

3. Production of a CD-ROM, containing video clips and transcriptions;
4. Implementation of an interdisciplinary seminar, involving student research, faculty collaboration, language practice, and documentation. This seminar will have as its first subject the Garífuna community in New Orleans but will be expanded to include many other cultural groups in New Orleans and South Louisiana. This seminar will be modeled after the highly successful American Mosaic project at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. As a Historically Black College, Xavier University of La. will adapt the Dickinson model to our own resources and the instructional needs of our institution and our student population.

All activities of the project will help to fulfill the goal of creating "a pluralistic teaching and learning environment." Interviews concerning traditional cultural practices and mores, the loss of traditions due to assimilation into the larger Hispanic culture and the Euro-American context of modern America, extensive communication in Spanish concerning project themes, and the documentation in print and electronic media concerning the results of the study will bring about a validation of Garífuna culture among language professionals and the greater academic community.

Evaluation Plan.

In addition to the participants in the workshop, a committee composed of faculty and student members from other departments and three guests from the Garífuna community will review all documentation developed during the summer of 2003 at a special session hosted by the project group. Faculty and students will contribute their efforts as campus service; each of the Garífuna participants will receive an honorarium of five hundred dollars (\$500.00). This session, which will include lunch, will consist of a presentation of taped interviews and transcriptions and an overview of conclusions. The Garífuna participants will be asked for critiques and will be invited to become part of a year-long assessment group which will meet at the end of the fall semester, 2003 and in May of 2004 to review the ongoing efforts of the program developers. Spanish faculty members who have worked on the project will collect comments from each non-language faculty member and each Garífuna speaker; these will be compiled into a written report to be submitted to NEH and to Xavier.

Each time the seminar is presented, students will do the traditional course evaluation in addition to another evaluation developed specifically by the project director. The following questionnaire will be completed in May 2004 by the evaluation committee described above and will be modified as is appropriate for use in the seminar when it is taught. For those who prefer to complete it in Spanish, the questionnaire will be translated. Documentation of responses to the questionnaire will form the basis of revision activities during the summer, 2004.

Please choose the number which best indicates your response:

1 Strongly agree	2 Agree	3 No opinion	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree--this should be considerably revised or omitted	
The project documentation is comprehensive.	1	2	3	4	5
The printed materials and Web-based exercises are clear and easy to understand.	1	2	3	4	5
The documentation is varied in subject matter.	1	2	3	4	5
The interviews are appropriate in subject matter.	1	2	3	4	5
The videos are of appropriate length.	1	2	3	4	5
The transcriptions are accurate.	1	2	3	4	5
The project avoids stereotypes.	1	2	3	4	5
The interview subjects represent diversity of gender, age, and work .	1	2	3	4	5
The project provides ample opportunity for language skills development.	1	2	3	4	5
The subject matter of the website is attractive and varied.	1	2	3	4	5
Topics discussed on the site are diverse and interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
The hyperlinks (where appropriate) are varied and sites are significant.	1	2	3	4	5
All visuals are of high quality.	1	2	3	4	5
There is a correlation between the project					

goals and the activities carried out.	1	2	3	4	5
The project is well designed in all phases.	1	2	3	4	5
This project provides appropriate authentic documents for language practice.	1	2	3	4	5
All documentation and media incorporate an appropriate variety of language resources.	1	2	3	4	5
I would recommend the documentation and site to anyone interested in learning more about Afro-Latin American culture.	1	2	3	4	5
This project is a contribution to dissemination of knowledge about Afro-Latin American culture.	1	2	3	4	5

Conclusion.

The Garífuna community is a significant Afro Latin-American cultural group within the diverse Hispanic population of New Orleans. Because it is underrepresented in both African-American studies programs and language curricula, its importance has not been adequately recognized. Carrying out this study will make it possible for Xavier University of La. to make a significant contribution to ethnocultural studies and to broaden knowledge of the humanities.