DIVISION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

# Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously-funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the current Institutes guidelines, which reflect the most recent information and instructions, at https://www.neh.gov/grants/education/humanities-initiatives-historically-black-colleges-and-universities

Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Education Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: *Creating an Interdisciplinary Minor in Digital Humanities*

Institution: Grambling State University

Project Director: James Clawson and Edward Lawrence Holt

Grant Program: Humanities Initiatives at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

**Project Summary**

With support from a Humanities Initiatives at HBCUs award, Grambling State University's departments of English and History, working with other departments on campus, will design and implement a new interdisciplinary minor in Digital Humanities. Grant funding will go toward training humanities faculty in interdisciplinary techniques and in pedagogy appropriate to the Digital Humanities during planning stages for that minor.

# Narrative

## Intellectual Rationale

Even if many students resist expectations of the "digital native," today's information and artifacts of culture are increasingly born digital. When computers and computational processing power are ubiquitous, this cannot be surprising. A book may be written in a word processing application, submitted to an agent using email, typeset by the publisher on the screen, reviewed as proofs in PDF, and finally read as an ebook. What's more, research in the humanities has also adapted to the strengths of the age: Art historians use digital tools to study compositional techniques of paintings, classics scholars computationally read patterns in large collections of texts, oral historians record their work as MP3 files, and archaeologists map sites using global positioning satellites and specialized GIS software. Even when a work is not *born* digital, there is abiding enthusiasm for the digital *rebirth* and preservation of documents digitized onto websites with global access, of videos remastered and shared via online video platforms, occasionally resulting in a new genre of collaborative, crowd-sourced, preservation-cum-analysis that would be otherwise impossible without the internet.

This is the contemporary paradigm for which Grambling State University is designing an interdisciplinary minor in Digital Humanities, responding to a growing local interest in programs contextualizing the digital within a broader world. On campus, such a curriculum would take advantage, for instance, of ongoing efforts to digitize and make available extant issues of the student newspaper *The Gramblinite*, and it would pedagogically situate proposed work documenting local history of segregation-era schools with supplemental oral histories. As data and technology are integral to the education of the modern student, the university will offer students an interdisciplinary approach to studying the human experience, combining digital tools

and methods with the best practices of a tradition of humanistic inquiry. This program is being offered as a minor in order to reach a greater number of students. Those majoring in humanities fields like History and English would be clearly served by such a minor, but majors in other disciplines like Computer Science, Mass Communications, Sociology, and the university's new program in Cybersecurity would equally benefit from the training such a program would offer, gaining experience using the tools of data work as they grow in familiarity with the means of studying qualitative and unstructured data. Whether a student is coming from a background in information literacy or in the humanities, such an interdisciplinary minor bridges the gap to give more coverage than can be offered in a traditional program of study.

The need for this kind of a program is felt keenly by Grambling's student body. Incoming students arrive on campus underprepared in the humanities and often without much exposure to computers. While state admission guidelines require four years of high school classes in English and four years of classes in history and government, the university's average incoming ACT English score is 19.2 (as of Fall 2018), and students enrolled in developmental courses can be admitted with English ACT scores far lower than that. They also face disparities when it comes to the use of computers and technology. Grambling's students are typically drawn from under-resourced communities in rural north Louisiana, and 87% of those attending rely on federal Pell grants to assist with costs of tuition. While scholarship and practice shift toward digital work and analysis, many Grambling students risk being left behind, lacking as they are in experience with and confidence in using the computer for anything other than simpler tasks.

Grambling's students are proud of the university's motto to be the kind of place "Where everybody is somebody," and they often cite it. They choose to attend Grambling, and they put their trust in it, because they see it as an investment in their future lives, an important step toward

the goal of *being somebody*. As the trajectories of the world shift around us, with a new emphasis on careers in areas like data analysis, cybersecurity, and digital media, Grambling State University owes its students an opportunity to be ready for that world. This "Humanities Initiatives at HBCUs" grant would support faculty at the university, affording them the time and training necessary to develop a sufficient program worthy of students' hopes.

**Content and Activities**

The proposed curriculum for the interdisciplinary minor in Digital Humanities (see Appendix A) is designed to prepare students for best practices in the humanities while also familiarizing them to methods that might directly prepare them for future work, whether in the classroom or a career. Designed to embrace breadth of study, the minor will guide students through a series of six courses (18 credits): *one* new general introduction to digital humanities (3 credits), *three* courses chosen from new and existing offerings in digital methods (9 credits), *one* chosen from existing relevant courses in adjacent disciplines (3 credits), and *one* senior capstone project in existing courses (3 credits).

The strength of such a curriculum is in its breadth, but this breadth can present a barrier to faculty. In preparation for offering such a course of study, this funding opportunity will bring consultants to campus for three years, training faculty, working with faculty to use existing digital resources in the humanities, helping them to understand use cases for new methods and techniques, leading them to gain familiarity with best practices in teaching Digital Humanities, and providing context for broader consideration once the program is well underway.

For these activities, faculty are especially keen to create a community of learners across disciplines on campus and north Louisiana. Project members expect the participation of about ten

Grambling faculty members in addition to the project co-directors and core faculty. These faculty will not be limited to the core humanities departments of History and English and Foreign Languages; rather, faculty from DH-adjacent departments like Computer Science, Mass Communications, Sociology, Psychology, and others, will also be encouraged to participate. In addition to these on-campus faculty, humanities scholars from other universities in north Louisiana—including Louisiana Tech University, University of Louisiana in Monroe, Louisiana State University in Shreveport, and Centenary College—will also be invited. It is hoped that inviting participation of faculty from these other universities, all situated less than an hour away from Grambling, will help to build a network of scholars across institutions.

**First Year:** The first summer will bring to campus a digital humanities generalist who will work with Grambling and non-Grambling faculty over a week-long workshop. This workshop will serve as an intensive introduction and an opportunity to develop learning activities for new and existing classes. Over the course of the week, faculty will be introduced to existing projects—like the University of Delaware's Colored Conventions Project, St. John's University's project Ensuring Access to Endangered and Inaccessible Manuscripts, Emory's Documenting Slave Voyages project, and James Madison University's project in Circulating American Magazines—and use material from these to build coursework for traditional classes on Grambling's campus. Additionally, they will experience and learn to use tools like Voyant, Omeka, and others, and they will be provided with hands-on assistance and encouragement to incorporate some of these into appropriate projects for their classes. Finally, they may be briefly exposed to some more advanced tools, like Gephi, GIS, coding, and data visualization to encourage further learning in the future. Progress in this first workshop will be documented on a program website.

Texts for this first workshop will likely include *Debates in the Digital Humanities* (University of Minnesota, 2012), edited by Matthew K. Gold; *Using Digital Humanities in the Classroom* (Bloomsbury, 2017), written by Claire Battershill and Shawna Ross; and *Doing Digital Humanities* (Routledge, 2016), edited by Constance Crompton, Richard J. Lane, and Ray Siemens. The first of these texts has been selected because it offers a wide scope for introduction, and its essays include clear summaries and engagement with ongoing discussions in the field; moreover, a Teaching the Digital Humanities section of eight essays allows closer consideration for the role and purpose of faculty teaching courses in DH. The latter two texts are more practical, offering suggestions for direct application in teaching and research projects. (Appendix A includes some additional texts that might be considered.)

Ultimately, this first workshop should result in the creation of learning activities or courses, and the consultant will work with faculty members to move beyond the shock of the new. After the workshop in the first year, Grambling faculty will finalize proposals for some new coursework in the digital humanities, including the overview class titled Introduction to the Digital Humanities and at least one class each in History (e.g., Introduction to GIS) and in English (e.g., Methods of Distant Reading). By the end of this year, the proposal for the new interdisciplinary minor should be submitted to university bodies for approval.

**Second Year:** A shorter workshop in the second summer, open again to Grambling faculty and non-Grambling faculty alike, may focus more on some specific element, method, or tool. The decision for the topic of this second workshop may depend in part on participants' interests after the first workshop. Rather than broadly working to introduce faculty to the scope of possibilities in the Digital Humanities, this second workshop should focus more intensely on depth of some

key aspect—for instance, using Omeka to develop and curate an exhibition, spending time on plugins for mapping, annotation, networks, timelines, blogging, et cetera. Whatever the focus is chosen for this second workshop, it should result in faculty having greater familiarity in that element, method, or tool, reflected again in the creation of new learning activities.

By the end of this second year, Grambling faculty in English and History should have taught at least one semester of the new Introduction to Digital Humanities course, which should lead to internal evaluation of class size, student completion, and satisfaction. Additionally, in this second year, faculty will finalize proposals for at least one more class in each core humanities department.


**Third Year:** The final year of the grant will bring to campus a third consultant to offer outside opinion of the program as a kind of evaluation, with suggestions for further work. This visit will culminate in something like a round-table discussion for the campus and local community during the academic year. While the scope of Grambling's interdisciplinary minor will not be limited to African American studies, this third consultant may contextualize the Digital Humanities in an African American context for faculty and students. For this reason, the consultant invited in the third year may be a scholar associated with University of Maryland's African American History, Culture, and Digital Humanities Initiative, or someone associated with a similar program at another university.

By the end of this final year in the grant period, faculty may finalize proposals for additional coursework, or they may revise existing courses to incorporate suggestions and ongoing work. Faculty will begin identifying professional conferences to report on the work.

**Project Personnel**

Four Grambling faculty members, represented equally by faculty in English and in History, comprise the key project personnel. Collectively, they will organize on-campus workshops, including overseeing the selection of external consultants and the attendance of participants from on campus and off campus; they will follow university protocol to design and propose new courses; they will follow appropriate steps to design, propose, and administer the new minor; they will promote the new minor both on and off campus; and they will assess progress toward project goals each year, proposing changes where needed. These tasks will be shared unequally, with project co-directors undertaking greater responsibility than project core faculty members.

Project co-director **Dr. James Clawson** is Ann Petry Endowed Professor and Associate Professor of English. His research focuses on 20th c. literature and Digital Humanities, areas in which he has presented and published. His organizational experiences include a campus-wide interdisciplinary symposium in 2018, panels for national conferences, and international conferences. He has been at Grambling ten years.

Project co-director **Dr. Edward Holt** is Assistant Professor of History. His background includes extensive published research in medieval history and work in the Digital Humanities. His relevant experience includes organizing a panel for a national conference and serving as the conference organizer for international conferences. He has been at Grambling one year.

Project core faculty member **Dr. Roshunda Belton** is Benjamin A. Quarles Endowed Professor, Associate Professor, and Chair of the Department of History. She has published and presented on 19th c. British and American history. In addition to serving as department chair, she coordinates the MA program in Social Sciences; duties of these roles include enhancing curricula, so her project work is university funded. She has been at Grambling twelve years.

Project core faculty member **Catherine Bonner** is Lecturer of English. Her research interests include African American literature and history of the 20th century, including work on oral history and public history. In addition to attending NEH institutes in related areas, her relevant experience includes organizing a Louisiana Endowment of the Humanities-funded program on local civil rights history in 2018. She has been at Grambling twelve years.

With more than 35 years of combined experience on Grambling's campus, these key project personnel include both established faculty and relative newcomers. As their interests extend beyond respective departments, they constitute an ideal balance to begin a new interdisciplinary program that will outlive the project's three funded years.

## Institutional context

The humanities play a vital role in any liberal arts education, and this is no less true for Grambling State University. As part of general education requirements, students take courses in English and in history; depending on their majors, they also choose among additional courses in history, literature, writing, philosophy, foreign languages, and the humanities at large. All of these courses are served by humanities faculty in two departments: (1) Department of History, which offers a history major and a history minor; and (2) Department of English and Foreign Languages, which offers an English major and minors in English, in French, or in Spanish.

Grambling's humanities faculty members are dedicated educators, and the numbers show it. In Spring 2019, the 32 faculty in History or in English and Foreign Languages offered 117 classes, with average enrollments topping more than 31 students each. And many of these courses are sections of a small number of approved general education classes. Releasing some pressure from these courses, the proposed new introductory course in Digital Humanities should

—with approval—satisfy a general education requirement, thereby offering curricular vitality that could be taught by faculty in either department. Additionally, other courses under consideration for this new interdisciplinary minor should also satisfy elective options for respective majors, potentially attracting new students to these programs. With about 55 students majoring in History, only about 20 students majoring in English, and around 15 students minoring in either, new interest is welcome. The proposed training workshops will benefit faculty in these departments and select faculty in other departments as well.

On-campus humanities resources include the Eddie G. Robinson museum and archives of campus and local history. Currently, the library is housed in a multi-use building on campus, but the university will break ground in Fall 2019 on a new "digital" library with 500 computer stations and adding more than 50,000 square feet of learning space to campus. The digital focus of this new library will be a fitting complement to the proposed program in Digital Humanities.

**Follow-up and dissemination**

By a wide margin, students at Grambling prefer professional programs or programs with a STEM focus over those in the humanities. Whatever has caused this trend among students, many enroll at Grambling with deficiencies in their measurable English skills, and many avoid existing opportunities to address these deficits. Digital and project-based approaches that are common to study in the Digital Humanities may provide students a sufficiently new opportunity to encourage study in the humanities. Moreover, the experience gained in these Digital Humanities tools and methods can directly apply to students' future careers. It is therefore reasonable to hope that this new interdisciplinary minor may eventually attract more students than are currently enrolled as minors in all existing humanities programs.

Because external faculty from neighboring institutions will be invited to participate in workshops from the first year, project efforts will never be limited to Grambling. Faculty will share the curricular model with neighboring institutions and will be encouraged to present on the process and conclusions at professional conferences. A program website will document progress.

University administration has promised financial support extending beyond the extent of this grant period, including funding for faculty and students to present at conferences, for technical upgrades, and for inviting additional guests to campus beyond the initial three years.

**Evaluation**

Working in collaboration, the co-directors and core faculty members will design performance-based evaluation metrics using the university's existing performance assessment tool (Taskstream). Faculty who attend training workshops will receive surveys assessing their satisfaction and interest levels; responses to surveys in the first year will be taken into consideration when planning workshops in subsequent years.

By the end of the grant period, faculty will have designed a number of new courses, had them approved, and taught at least some of them: by the end of the first year, project members should submit three new courses for university approval, along with the new minor; by the end of the second year, faculty should have submitted two additional new courses and taught at least one course designed in the first year. The project will be considered successful if, by the end of the grant period, the new minor is responsible for a 50% increase in the number of students minoring in humanities programs at Grambling State University.

# Appendices

**Appendix A — Plan of Work, List of Readings, Potential Consultants, Draft**

**Curriculum, Related Programs**

### Schedule of Year One Activities

| | |
|---|---|
| **Feb. – March 2020** | Select and secure first-year consultant for summer 2020 workshop. Identify potential consultants for summer 2021 and for Fall 2022. |
| | Solidify details for on-campus summer 2020 workshop. |
| | Advertise availability of workshops to on-campus and off-campus faculty and solicit notifications of interest. |
| **April 2020** | Notify selected faculty. |
| | Finalize book list for first workshop and purchase books for participants. |
| **Summer 2020** | Planning meeting by key project faculty. Identify and divide tasks for the rest of the summer. |
| | Begin to set goals goals for the program establishing thresholds for class enrollment, student interest, improved performance metrics for student ability, and other important areas. Establish ways of measuring these to be used in future classes designed for the minor. |
| | Prepare survey to be administered after on-campus workshop. (Consider reusing material designed for students to test it with faculty participants). |
| | First on-campus workshop, 5 days, with first consultant providing a general introduction and overview for Digital Humanities work. This workshop could in theory be held the first week of August, but other options are possible. |
| | Begin preparation of proposals for three new courses (Introduction to Digital Humanities, plus one course each in History and English). |
| | Begin preparation of proposal for new interdisciplinary minor in Digital Humanities. |
| | Create website for documenting the first workshop and for advertising the program. |

### Schedule of Year One Activities

| | |
|---|---|
| **End of Summer 2020** | Administer survey to workshop participants and analyze results. |
| | Choose topic for Summer 2021 workshop. Select and secure consultant for Summer 2021. Finalize dates and begin working on details. |
| | Begin to order any necessary materials for Summer 2021 |
| **Fall 2020** | Submit proposals for three new courses to university bodies for approval. |
| | Submit proposal for new interdisciplinary minor to appropriate bodies for approval. |
| | Follow these proposals through as needed. |

### Schedule of Year Two Activities

| | |
|---|---|
| **Jan. – March 2021** | Finalize remaining details for second on-campus workshop. |
| | Finalize names of faculty participants. Advertise for new participants if necessary. |
| | Continue to follow proposals through as needed. |
| **April 2021** | Notify selected faculty, if necessary. Finalize purchases of materials for summer workshop. |
| **Summer 2021** | Internal evaluation by key project faculty, identifying what's working and what should change. Identify and divide tasks for the rest of the summer. |
| | Second on-campus workshop, 4 days, with second consultant providing a closer consideration for some aspect of work in Digital Humanities. |
| | Begin preparation of proposals for two new courses (one course each in History and English). |
| | Substantial update of website to accommodate the second workshop and for advertising the program. Add hooks for eventual addition of public-facing course website. |

## Schedule of Year Two Activities

| | |
|---|---|
| **End of Summer 2021** | Administer survey to workshop participants and analyze responses. |
| | Select and secure consultant for Fall 2022 workshop and roundtable. Begin selecting dates and working on details. |
| | Share course materials for Introduction to Digital Humanities (if it has been approved to be taught in Fall 2021) among participants in the first two workshops. Finalize public-facing course website. |
| **Fall 2021** | Teach Introduction to Digital Humanities if it has been approved to be taught in Fall 2021. |
| | Submit proposals for two new courses to university bodies for approval. |
| | Continue to follow any existing proposals through to approval as needed. |

## Schedule of Year Three Activities

| | |
|---|---|
| **Spring 2022** | Teach Introduction to Digital Humanities if it is being taught in Spring 2021. Potentially, teach other new courses for the minor. |
| | Continue to follow any existing proposals through to approval as needed. |
| **Summer 2022** | Internal evaluation by key project faculty, identifying what's working and what should change. Identify and divide tasks for the rest of the summer. |
| | Finalize outstanding details for Fall 2022 workshop and roundtable. |
| | Update of website to refresh material and to advertise the workshop and roundtable for Fall 2022. |
| | Evaluate curriculum goals of existing courses to modify, or work on design for new courses. Evaluate progress on goals set summer 2020. |
| **Fall 2022** | On-campus workshop and roundtable, featuring third consultant. |

### Schedule of Year Three Activities

| Dec. 2022 – Jan. 2023 | Internal evaluation. |
| --- | --- |
| | Begin identifying future conferences to report on work. |

NB: Grant-funded activities will not include project-related activities like teaching or other work completed by project personnel during an academic year.

**Lists of Readings**

Potential readings for the first workshop include the following:

> Battershill, Claire, and Shawna Ross. *Using Digital Humanities in the Classroom: A Practical Introduction for Teachers, Lecturers, and Students*. Bloomsbury, 2018.
> Crompton, Constance, Richard J. Lane, and Ray Siemens, editors. *Doing Digital Humanities: Practice, Training, Research*. Routledge, 2016.
> Gold, Matthew K., editor. *Debates in the Digital Humanities*. U of Minnesota P, 2012.
> Klein, Lauren F., and Matthew K. Gold, editors. *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*. U of Minnesota P, 2016.

Literature-related readings for other classes or later workshops may include material from the following:

> Archer, Jodie, and Matthew L. Jockers. *The Bestseller Code: Anatomy of a Blockbuster Novel*. St. Martin's, 2016.
> Da, Nan Z. "The Digital Humanities Debacle: Computational Methods Repeatedly Come Up Short." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 27 Mar. 2019, chronicle.com/article/ The-Digital-Humanities-Debacle/245986.
> Jockers, Matthew L. *Macroanalysis: Digital Methods and Literary History*. U of Illinois P, 2013.
> Moretti, Franco. *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History*. Verso, 2005.
> Underwood, Ted. *Distant Horizons: Digital Evidence and Literary Change*. U of Chicago P, 2019.

Additional readings for other classes or later workshops may include material from the following list specializing in digital history:
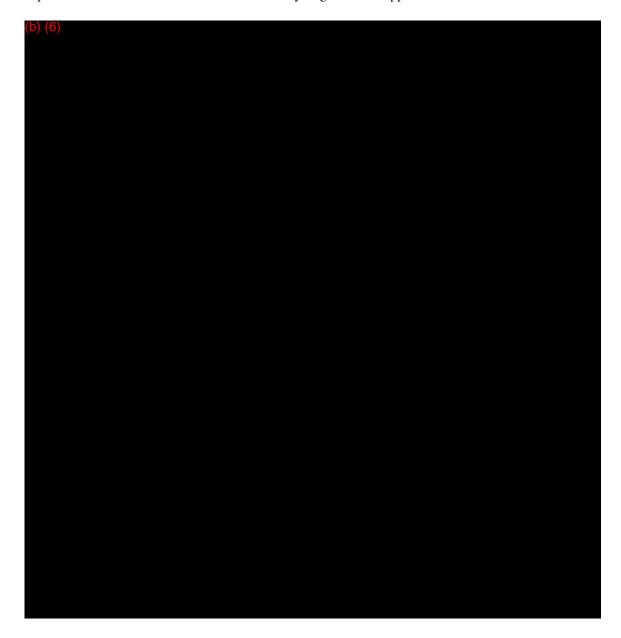
> Brügger, Niels. *The Archived Web: Doing History in the Digital Age*. MIT P, 2018.
> Cohen, Daniel J., and Roy Rozenzweig. *Digital History: A Guide to Gathering, Preserving, and Presenting the Past on the Web*. U of Pennsylvania P, 2006.
> Dougherty, Jack, and Kristen Nawrotzki, editors. *Writing History in the Digital Age*. U of Michigan P, 2013.
> Noble, Safiya Umoja. *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*. NYU P, 2018.
> Wernimont, Jacqueline. *Numbered Lives: Life and Death in Quantum Media*. MIT P, 2019.

**Partial Draft List of Potential Consultants for Workshops**

When informally approached, she expressed preliminary willingness to serve as a consultant for one of the workshops:

(b) (6)

Not yet approached formally or informally to serve as a consultant for one of the workshops, this partial list of potential consultants is one from which faculty might start to approach scholars:

(b) (6)

(b) (6)



## Minor in Digital Humanities (Draft Curriculum)

An asterisk indicates a class that is not yet offered by the university; each of these would also serve related majors.

- **Overview (3 credits)**
    - * HUM XXX - Introduction to Digital Humanities

- **Digital Methods (9 credits; select three courses):**
    - CS 112 - Introduction to Big Data
    - MC 335 - Web Writing and Development
    - * HIS XXX - Introduction to GIS
    - * HIS XXX - Introduction to Public History
    - * HIS XXX - Methods of Oral History
    - * ENG XXX - Introduction to Text Analytics
    - * ENG XXX - Introduction to Electronic Literature
    - * ENG XXX - Methods of Distance Reading

- **Electives (3 credits, select one course):**
    - selected courses in Digital Arts
        - ART 200 - Introduction to New Media Art
        - ART 332 - Introduction to Digital Art

    - selected courses in Computer Science and Computer Information Systems
        - CIS 120 - Problem Solving
        - CS 110 - Computer Science 1
        - CS 115 - Foundation of Cybersecurity

    - selected courses in Mass Communications
        - MC 100 - Introduction to Mass Communication

- MC 103 - Intro to Multimedia Journalism
- MC 225 - Mass Media Writing and Editing
- MC 230 - Social and Mobile Media
- MC 260 - Audio Production

- **Digital Humanities Project (3 credits; projects with instructor approval)**
  - HIS 490 - Senior Research
  - ENG 451 - Special Topics in Language and Literature

**<u>Potential Projects on Campus Supporting the Interdisciplinary Minor</u>**

Digitizing *The Gramblinite*

The student newspaper has served the campus since 1935, but not without interruptions to its print run. While the university has slowly been working to digitize and make available the surviving issues of the newspaper, the majority of these past issues are now lost forever. As part of the new minor, faculty could offer coursework and training in the methods and techniques of digital preservation. Moreover, past issues of the newspaper, once available, would provide the program and the broader public useful content for studying and understanding, whether for close reading in context or for distant reading via methods of text analytics.

Preserving Local History

The integration of schooling made a great impact on the culture of North Louisiana. But since then, as years pass, memories fade, and generations of graduates pass away, the histories of many of these black-serving schools risk being lost. With a sufficient curriculum to support them, students trained in oral history could collect and manage an archive of interviews from attendees at these schools. Moreover, public history classes might each focus on a school as a project, documenting buildings before they crumble and pulling together the relevant interviews onto the same web page.