

NEH Application Cover sheet (GG-285435)

Humanities Discussions

PROJECT DIRECTOR

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, ME 04102-1012
USA

E-mail: samaa@mainehumanities.org

Phone: 207-773-5051

Fax:

Field of expertise: Literature, General

INSTITUTION

Maine Humanities Council
Portland, ME 04102-1012

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Title: *What If ...?: Afrofuturism and the Quest for a Just, Inclusive, and Sustainable Society*

Grant period: From 2022-05-01 to 2024-04-30

Project field(s): American Literature; Literature, General

Description of project: This 24-month initiative will provide text-based humanities experiences and other unique opportunities for Mainers to read, reflect, and connect with one another and envision a future that is more just, inclusive, and sustainable. The initiative focuses on Afrofuturism and will use a variety of Afrofuturist texts to ground and propel conversation. Program activities are designed to create connections, foster a deepened sense of individual and community agency, and inspire increased civic engagement. Themes within the initiative will include: (1) Racial justice, (2) Climate justice, (3) Food justice, (4) Religion and Spirituality, and (5) Democracy and its possibilities. Our collective pursuit of the enduring shared goals of life, liberty, happiness requires ongoing imaginative community work to build a more perfect union rooted in the ideal of human equality. Community discussion of Afrofuturist texts will provide the framework and a set of conceptual and narrative tools for this work.

BUDGET

| | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|---------------------|------------|
| Outright Request | 250,000.00 | Cost Sharing | 0.00 |
| Matching Request | 0.00 | Total Budget | 250,000.00 |
| Total NEH | 250,000.00 | | |

GRANT ADMINISTRATOR

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, ME 04102-1012
USA

E-mail: samaa@mainehumanities.org

Phone: 207-773-5051

Fax:

A) Nature of the Request

The Maine Humanities Council requests a grant of \$250,000 to support a Humanities Discussions Implementation project. ***What If...?: Afrofuturism and the Quest for a Just, Inclusive, and Sustainable Society*** is a 24-month initiative that will provide shared humanities experiences and unique opportunities for Mainers to read, reflect, engage, and connect with one another to envision a future that is more just, inclusive, and sustainable. The initiative will bring intellectually rich public humanities programming to communities big and small throughout Maine.

The initiative is focused on Afrofuturism and will use a variety of Afrofuturist texts to ground and propel conversation. As with all Maine Humanities Council programs, *What If...?* activities are designed to create connections, foster a deepened sense of individual and community agency, and inspire increased civic engagement. Themes within the initiative will include: (1) Racial justice, (2) Climate justice, (3) Food justice, (4) Religion and Spirituality, and (5) Democracy and its possibilities. We believe that Afrofuturist texts will help focus community thinking and discussion on possible futures and envisioning the world(s) we want to create together. Afrofuturist texts center Black Diasporic ways of being and thinking, and invite the reader to imagine how life should be. They take on recognizable systems of oppression and flip these systems on their head. They challenge us to confront oppression and transcend boundaries. For many Mainers, this programming through the Maine Humanities Council will be a first exposure to Afrofuturist texts, and we intend to use this newness to invite participants to name some of the key challenges we collectively face and to experiment with imaginative ways of engaging with these challenges.

What If...? has been designed to employ several different program formats which, together, will (1) maximize visibility for the initiative and bring it to as many individuals and communities as possible, and (2) provide opportunity for extended, deep exploration of initiative topics and themes over the span of several months in the community. High visibility programming associated with the project includes the Readers Retreat, our major public kickoff event focusing on Octavia Butler's *Wild Seed*. To be held in May, 2022, the Readers Retreat will gather 500+ participants, in person and virtually, for a deep dive into Butler's work and an introduction to Afrofuturist literature. In addition, in each of the project's two years, the MHC will bring high-profile programming to Maine communities led by two renowned, accomplished, inspiring individuals. In the first year of the initiative, Toshi Reagon will visit three different Maine communities to lead community discussions in relation to her operatic version of Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower*. In year two of the initiative, artist and educator Daniel Minter will present public humanities programming in two different Maine communities, focusing on art and process, which will invite the public to envision a more just, equitable, and inclusive future for the State of Maine.

Throughout the initiative, the Maine Humanities Council will use tried and true public humanities program models that we have been developing and refining in Maine communities for more than 40 years. Small, community-based program formats will include:

- Multi-session facilitated reading and discussion programming through the MHC's successful *Discussion Project*. With reading groups based in workplaces, libraries, adult education programs, correctional facilities, and other community settings, participants will have the opportunity to read together and dive deep into the themes.
- Speaker programs featuring speakers from the MHC's *Maine Speaks* program, which will bring scholars and other experts to public libraries and other settings in every corner of the state to provide opportunities to learn and reflect together on the project's themes.

The initiative responds strongly to, and shares key themes with, A More Perfect Union. Our collective pursuit of the enduring shared goals of life, liberty, happiness requires ongoing imaginative community work to build a more perfect union rooted in the ideal of human equality. Community discussion of Afrofuturist texts will provide a framework and a set of conceptual and narrative tools for this work.

B) Humanities Content

"We the people, in order to form a more perfect union . . ." So begins the United States Constitution and so began a speech by then U.S. Senator Barack Obama on March 18, 2008. In the same speech, Obama named the nation's "original sin of slavery," observing that—despite the ideals of equality, liberty, and justice that the charter explicitly promises—the controversy surrounding the enslavement of people of African descent is embedded within the Constitution, in the founding document of our nation. The signers left the moral, economic, and political dilemma of slavery and its enduring ramifications for subsequent generations to reconcile in the future.

Americans in the United States often look to the founding of the nation and the principles crystallized in that dramatic era. However, the attainment of "a more perfect union" is not fulfilled by nostalgic yearning for the nation's past, in which inequities and injustices marred the cultural landscape. It is, instead, fulfilled by the continuous work of justice in the present and, importantly, the hopes and visions for the future. As Obama went on to affirm in his speech, "But what we know—what we have seen—is that America can change. That is the true genius of this nation. What we have already achieved gives us hope—the audacity to hope—for what we can and must achieve tomorrow" (2008).

The Maine Humanities Council's new *What If . . . ?* initiative invites Mainers to imagine such a tomorrow, by employing the conceptual boundlessness of Afrofuturism as a model for how to imagine futures, reimagine histories, and challenge assumptions of what is and is not possible. Previous initiatives have focused a great deal on the past and, in particular, the history of Maine's statehood. While it is essential to interrogate history, to learn the lessons that continually unfold from it, and to recognize its repercussions in the present, this orientation can often inhibit creative thinking about the future. The *What If . . . ?* initiative encourages Mainers to consider the questions "What kind of future do we want?" and "How do we create a more perfect union for ourselves and our successors?" and to begin to envision what it might take to manifest those futures. A more perfect union requires a citizenry psychologically and emotionally ready to accept a currently imperfect state, and open to imagining what does not currently exist and perhaps never will. *What If . . . ?* offers a rare opportunity to Mainers: a gentle and secure encounter with our imaginative limitations and a guided exploration of future possibilities beyond what we've dreamed of.

Despite Maine being the nation's most racially homogenous state, any telling of the state's history that does not include the peoples who are indigenous to this land and the communities of color who call it home is incomplete. From its earliest history to its most recent, the Wabanaki peoples; generations of African Americans descended from enslaved Africans; Latinx, Arab, and Asian immigrants; and immigrants and refugees from African nations have all helped to shape the cultural and social landscape of the place we now call the state of Maine. Nearly 97% of Mainers identify as white and less than 2% of the state's population is Black. Of those, nearly half are immigrants from African nations like Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo—many of whom arrived in Maine during the past two decades, seeking refuge from civil war and violence in their home countries, and re-settling in and around the urban centers of Portland and Lewiston.

Overcoming histories of hardship and trauma, with the resilience to hope and dream of a more peaceful, liberated, and thriving future is not an attribute unique to U.S.-Americans; it is a human attribute. Still, as we consider the enduring quest of this nation to create "a more perfect union," it is clear that continuously envisioning a better tomorrow for ourselves, our communities, and our world is an essential part of that endeavor. Democracy is, in part, an imaginative enterprise.

The *What If . . . ?* initiative invites Mainers to exercise the tool of imagination to ask, “What if we were all united for the cause of truly equitable access to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?”

Afrofuturism provides a productive lens through which to imagine and envision the future. Afrofuturism refers to a dynamic and broadening umbrella, designating a creative aesthetic, a methodology, and an epistemology that envisions Black people in an imagined future, despite the trauma of the past and adversity of the present. According to Ytasha Womack, author of *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci-Fi and Fantasy Culture*, Afrofuturism “intersects the imagination, technology, Black culture, liberation, and mysticism. As an artistic aesthetic it bridges literature, music, visual arts, film, and dance. As a mode of self-healing and self-liberation, it’s the use of imagination that is most significant because it helps people to transform their circumstances” (2017). Thus, though the term was coined in 1993, Afrofuturism has been in practice as both an aesthetic and methodology for as long as peoples of African diasporic cultures and communities have engaged in creative production. It encompasses the creative genres of storytelling and fiction, poetry, music, dance, and visual arts, among others. Afrofuturism is exemplified in the works of creators like fiction writers Octavia Butler, Samuel R. Delaney, Nalo Hopkinson, and Tananarive Due; poets Audre Lorde, Jayne Cortez, and Tracy K. Smith; musicians Sun Ra, Alice Coltrane, Janelle Monáe, and Outkast; and visual artists Renee Cox, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Sanford Biggers.

Among Afrofuturism’s array of instruments, Black speculative literature is often given prominence. Mainstream speculative literature has historically excluded the experiences of the African diaspora from its storylines and imaginings about the future. Afrofuturist authors seek to address these omissions by centering Black characters “to be the agent and subject of the future, and not relegated to the primeval past, used as props or pawns, or disappeared altogether” (Morris 2016, 33). Whether in the future, a reimagined present, or a reclaimed and re-envisioned past, these authors represent the textures and conditions of Black lives, ranging from the utterly dystopian to the richly utopian. Acknowledging that, for many, the notion that there are Black people and Black cultures in the future is a strange concept, Black speculative literature challenges the assumption that the future is necessarily white and western and insists that audiences interrogate the vastness of what is possible and for whom it is presumed impossible.

In its attention to technology, futuristic imagery, and speculative ideas, it would seem that Afrofuturism has less interest in the past. However, Afrofuturist creative practice profoundly attunes to the history of people and cultures of the African diaspora. As scholar Alondra Nelson points out, “These works represent new directions in the study of African diaspora culture that are grounded in the histories of black communities, rather than seeking to sever all connections to them” (2002, 9). In so doing, Afrofuturism encourages reclamation and reimagining of these pasts. Looking simultaneously forward and backward, it bridges the past, present, and future—often nonlinearly—and offers the idea of “time as another dimension through which to reimagine identity” (Womack 2017). With a mutual emphasis on the continuity and interdependence of the past, present, and future, Afrofuturism shares a conceptual overlap with the notion of Indigenous futurity, which Mvskoke (Creek) scholar Laura Harjo describes as “the enactment of theories and practices that activate our ancestors’ unrealized possibilities, the act of living out the futures we wish for in a contemporary moment, and the creation of the conditions for these futures” (2019, 5).

In working to reclaim and reimagine pasts, Afrofuturists must confront the many erasures and absences of Black voices in the chronicles of U.S. history, recognizing that this dearth does not indicate that these voices were indeed silent. As Sheree Renee Thomas explains, Afrofuturism “imagines that what was once presumed lost, forgotten, soiled, and stripped away can be found, can be reclaimed and resurrected, remixed and revived” (2016, 1). Therefore, despite the scarcity of Black perspectives, Afrofuturism employs the technologies and tenacity available in the present to uncover and fashion the stories of forebears from what historian Saidiya Hartman calls the “the scraps of the archive” (2008, 4).

As an interpretation of the expression, “I am my ancestors’ wildest dreams,” this tendency of Afrofuturism to orient toward the past is the realization of a place in a long lineage and of interrelationship with ancestors; the understanding that, in the present, we are actually our ancestors’ futures. This is also a reminder that, like us, our forebears hoped, dreamed, invented, and imagined futures more vivid and free than the lives they lived. The poet Sekou Sundiata illustrates it best: “Maybe, I can break it down to you like this: / We dreamed you Black in your badness / Made you up out of poems and lies and words to live by / And we ourselves was dreamed, most likely by some slaves / Whenever they got a little space to climb into their heads and be free / So when they closed their eyes, what did they see? / They saw you; they saw me” (2000). Likewise, Afrofuturism invites accountability to subsequent generations, as the dreams and deeds of our present inform and create the futures that they will inhabit.

As an epistemology and methodology, Afrofuturism works from the understanding that race itself is a technology (Coleman 2009; Womack 2017). Constructed to dehumanize, to bind and oppress, and to establish and maintain social hierarchies with wide-ranging repercussions, race has long been an implement of domination. Instead of being subjected to the technology of race in their creative work, Afrofuturist authors and artists seek to become agents of it; to unshackle their imaginations from projections and assumptions based on what race signifies in the present paradigm. As Lisa Yaszek observes, “While early Afrofuturists are concerned primarily with the question of whether or not there will be any future whatsoever for people of color, contemporary Afrofuturists assume that in the future race will continue to matter to individuals and entire civilizations alike” (2006, 42). Rather than imagining a future in which race ceases to exist or matter, or one in which all people—both racialized and white—are subsumed into a generic and homogenous human race, Afrofuturists reject such colorblind racial ideologies and, instead, reconfigure the technology of race to contrast the bondage of the past—and its enduring legacy in the present—with the boundlessness possible when Blackness persists in an imagined future. Though the social construct of race is a technology most often deployed to separate and subjugate, when it is blended with agency and imagination and reshaped by Afrofuturist creators, it becomes a pathway to liberation.

Using the lens of Afrofuturism, the Maine Humanities Council’s *What If...?* public humanities initiative invites Mainers to imagine the possibilities for creating a more just future within five specific themes: racial justice, climate justice, food justice, religion and spirituality, and democracy and its possibilities. By centering community programming on Afrofuturism as a path to envisioning and creating a more perfect union, we aim to give Mainers the opportunity to sit in new worlds with community and unlearn assumptions together, and to envision new possibilities for healthy societies through small and large-format public humanities programming. Through this lens, using Afrofuturist texts and visions of the future, it becomes apparent that the imagination is an implement of change and liberation, even in the midst of challenging circumstances. As Womack explains, “The imagination is a lifeline. The imagination is an extension of the resilience of the human spirit” (2017). Imagination is an essential tool—to which we have equal access—that we use to create the worlds that we want to see, to create a more perfect union.

C) Project Formats

The project has been designed to employ several different, complementary program formats, aimed at both maximizing the public awareness of the project throughout the state and providing substantial “long tail” opportunities for deep, sustained engagement with project materials. As with all Maine Humanities Council programming, *What If...?* program offerings are aimed at increasing connections among members of the community, fostering a strong sense of individual and community agency, and inspiring increased future civic engagement on the part of participants.

The initiative will focus on Afrofuturism and use a variety of Afrofuturist texts to ground and propel conversation through a variety of formats, exploring the following themes: a) Racial justice, b) Climate justice, c) Food justice, d) Religion and spirituality, and d) Democracy and its possibilities.

1. Readers Retreat: Public event kick-off

The initiative will officially begin with a public event on May 20 and 21, 2022, on the campus of Southern Maine Community College in South Portland. Readers Retreat, the MHC's longtime and much-loved "big book" event, brings engaged readers together for two days to explore an important text, connect with one another, discuss ideas, and leave inspired after a rich experience of camaraderie and conversation. Octavia Butler's *Wild Seed* will be the featured text. The event will include between four and five lectures by scholars, authors, and other experts in the field of Octavia Butler and Afrofuturism, including members of the project's scholar advisory panel; break-out groups facilitated by trained discussion leaders from the MHC's facilitator pool; and meals at which participants can connect for informal discussions. While this event will primarily serve 150 in-person participants, lectures and panelist discussions will be livestreamed and recorded for online use, including facilitated discussions in sites far from the event. With the virtual component, we expect the kick-off event to reach over 550 participants statewide.

The MHC has extensive experience offering this kind of program; it has been a popular public offering annually since 1998, drawing a consistent base of repeat attendees. In 2020, for the first time ever, the program was held virtually. It was a highly successful experiment, and provided the MHC with valuable experience with both the technical and programmatic know-how for large-scale online programming. In recent years, the text selection, as well as increased community outreach efforts, have expanded and broadened the Readers Retreat audience. Throughout 2022, *Wild Seed* will be featured in reading and discussion program offerings statewide (see below). All participants from those programs will be encouraged to attend the Readers Retreat, and will have recordings available to watch at their leisure as well. Because our reading and discussion programs are offered to a broad and diverse set of partners and participants, we anticipate that the Readers' Retreat attendees will also reflect the same level of broad diversity.

2. The Discussion Project: Facilitated multi-session reading and discussion programming

Multi-session facilitated reading and discussion programs will be an essential aspect of the sustained statewide reach of the project over the course of 24 months. Such discussions are at the heart of the Maine Humanities Council's long experience serving the people of Maine. This program format is one of the best ways we know to foster meaningful discussion among people who may not know each other yet, and to deepen connection among those who know each other well.

Each group is convened by a community partner organization and guided by an expert facilitator recruited and trained by the Maine Humanities Council. Groups typically meet once per month for four or five months. At each meeting, participants reflect together on poetry, books, stories, and discuss the ideas and questions they see at work in what they have read. Participants practice finding words for what they want to say and listening to each other carefully. They leave feeling more connected to their community, better able to appreciate its variety and to see the value of their own contribution.

Reading lists are developed in cooperation with scholarly advisors and community partner organizations. Facilitators are recruited and trained by the Maine Humanities Council to facilitate text-based conversations that emphasize close reading, careful listening, and the value of openness and curiosity. (For more information on program format, project reading lists, and facilitator training, please see Attachment 5: Walkthrough.)

The MHC will work with a wide variety of partner organizations in carrying out the project. Our partnership with public libraries throughout the state is a key resource for reaching communities across the entire state. Town libraries are community hubs for broad audiences; in many rural Maine towns, they are the only place where people congregate for humanities or other cultural community experiences. In addition, we will partner with correctional institutions, adult education programs, domestic violence agencies, and other community-based organizations to bring *What If...?* reading and discussion programming to Maine communities. As with all MHC programming, we will prioritize project resources for communities who have been historically underrepresented in public humanities opportunities. We will work with our partners to make this programming accessible to participants from as wide a range of experiences as possible.

We expect to hold 24 reading and discussion programs (four per season: fall, winter/spring, summer) over the project's two years, serving approximately 360 community members in every county in Maine.

3. Maine Speaks: Speakers Bureau

The second core element of the initiative is a speakers program to be offered to public libraries and other community-based organizations throughout the state. Designed specifically to maximize the spread of the initiative to even the most rural parts of Maine, this program will reach twelve different communities across the state, featuring speakers who have expertise on topics related to the project's themes. In recent years, the MHC has gained a great deal of experience in developing and offering this kind of programming through foreign policy lectures and discussions (particularly popular with Maine's rural libraries) and bicentennial presentations on themes related to Maine's statehood. In the past 18 months, Maine Speaks has expanded to include a roster of community speakers who speak on a broad range of pertinent and engaging topics. Examples of recent program topics include an examination of the past and present of Wabanaki voices in Maine, New England's complicity in the global slave economy, issues of race, and the question: Do we as a people *deserve* Democracy?. (Please see Attachment 5: Walkthrough for additional examples of programs to be offered as part of Maine Speaks.)

Maine Speaks fills an important niche in ensuring that *What If...?* programming is accessible to as many Mainers as possible. Over many years, the Maine Humanities Council has come to understand that not everyone is drawn to facilitated reading and discussion programming. However powerful we know that program format to be, many individuals are looking to participate in programming that does not involve a long commitment. Moreover, reading and discussion programming can be perceived as "higher risk" for participants – when someone goes to a book discussion program, they can reasonably assume that they might be asked their thoughts about the book. This isn't for everyone. With speaker programming like Maine Speaks, however, individuals can attend a talk (or access it online), without needing to make a multi-month commitment and without feeling they might be put on the spot. Maine Speaks provides a meaningful, intellectually rich, low-barrier means for participating in the initiative.

With at least 12 Maine Speaks programs offered throughout the duration of the project, we will reach at least 360 Mainers in-person, with hundreds more via live-stream and video archive.

4. Community Engagement with Toshi Reagon and Daniel Minter

The fourth major part of the initiative will feature statewide program elements led by two world-renowned, accomplished, inspiring individuals: musician, composer, curator, and producer Toshi Reagon; and artist and educator Daniel Minter.

In the first year of programming, Toshi Reagon will visit three Maine communities to lead community discussions relating to her opera *Octavia E. Butler's Parable of the Sower*. Ms. Reagon, a musician and composer of international prominence, has focused on Octavia Butler's work for many

years, including the wildly popular podcast series [Octavia's Parables](#) (created in large part to help more people engage with Octavia Butler's work—which helped, in 2020, to put *Parable of the Sower* on the NYT Bestseller list). She composed her Parable Opera, as she calls it, with the intention of drawing community together to bring this work and the issues it represents greater recognition and community awareness. Ms. Reagon will be in Maine for a fellowship at Bowdoin College's McKeen Center for the Common Good, which will enable her to stage the Portland, Maine-based performance of *Octavia E. Butler's Parable of the Sower* (which has been presented in New York, Los Angeles, Abu Dhabi, Singapore, the Netherlands, and more). For the months leading up to the performance, *What If...?* participants across the state will be reading the Parable series via our statewide Discussion Project programming. To have Ms. Reagon here will be a significant cultural moment for these groups and the state as a whole. We expect to see substantial audience interest in Ms. Reagon's MHC appearances: community conversations to be held in partnership with the public libraries in the communities of Rockport, Lewiston, and Bangor. These general public programs will also be livestreamed and recorded for future viewing. We are excited to host these community conversations outside of Portland, the primary urban setting in Maine. The majority of Maine's population lives rurally; traveling to Portland to partake in events is not a reasonable ask for most Mainers. We believe that all Mainers, regardless of where they live, should have access to the content and the connection that our programming provides.

What If...? programming featuring Toshi Reagon will be informed by the MHC's successful experience providing library-based programming in Maine during a visit to the state in 2018 by Tracy K. Smith, 22nd Poet Laureate of the United States. By connecting Discussion Project book groups and Maine Speaks audiences with themes and texts related to the larger community-wide events, we will be able to leverage the energy and engagement of *What If...?* participants from across the state to make Ms. Reagon's community conversation programs richer and deeper. Ms. Reagon is specifically interested in engaging in conversations with community-based organizers and changemakers – people who are striving towards justice and equity in their local areas. Through our programming, we have solid connections with community-based organizations, organizers, and changemakers working on water justice, food justice, racial justice, and gender justice – we are enthused about connecting them with a nationally recognized artist and scholar like Ms. Reagon.

In Year Two, artist and educator Daniel Minter will visit the towns of Belfast and Bangor, each over several weeks, to hold art-based community conversations diverse audiences connected to our site partners in those areas. Mr. Minter has long held these kinds of visits with communities across the nation. He learns about a region and its needs, challenges, and dreams; then facilitates discussions and workshops that invite participants to learn and understand the ways that art can represent both a connection to the past and a forward-looking vision. Minter will do the same for this project, getting to know community needs and issues of concern in Belfast (a rural coastal town with challenges of gentrification and old ways versus new) and Bangor (Maine's second-largest city, a major resource for northern counties, with a vibrant historical Black population). The discussions and workshops within this grant will explore themes represented in Minter's previously created artwork. When visiting Belfast and Bangor, Minter, an expert illustrator and carver, will carry with him examples of his many carvings and paintings which contain thematic elements of Afrofuturism, using these pieces as a place to ground conversations about the significance and importance of Afrofuturism to Black Diasporic people. This humanities model—exploring community needs through discussion of a work of art—will be similar to the MHC's "Consider This" program, which focused on community reflection on artworks created by local artists. Minter is a well-known artist (and a very popular children's book illustrator) who has grounded his art and process in themes of displacement and diaspora, spirituality in the Afro-Atlantic world, and Blackness—both "ordinary" and extraordinary.

Toshi Reagon and Daniel Minter’s deep work in Rockport, Lewiston, Belfast, and Bangor will offer these communities extraordinary humanities experiences that will be remembered. In Lewiston and Bangor in particular (both are, with Portland, among Maine’s most ethnically diverse cities), the opportunity for community members to connect with these powerhouses of Black-led movements in art will inspire and help to fulfill the MHC’s program goals of connection, agency, and engagement on a very strong level. Both will do much with the “What if?…” theme to invite the public to envision a more just, equitable, and inclusive future for the state of Maine.

While we expect this program to rely primarily on in-person programming, key presentation and discussion components will be made available through online streaming to expand the potential audience and protect against possible public health-related restrictions. The MHC has had extensive experience successfully presenting this kind of programming through online means.

Over the course of the two years, we anticipate reaching thousands of Mainers through this and related programming. We also expect this programming to have long lasting effects that will have ripples and resonances for years to come. We have seen in the past that by focusing statewide efforts on a single set of themes over an extended period of time, the impact of our work can be multiplied, and it will be our intention throughout this project to connect people across the state and spark conversations that are visionary, forward-moving, and inspiring.

D) Project Resources

Chief among the resources that the MHC will bring to support the project is our broad and deep statewide network of humanities scholars, facilitators, and partner organizations. In addition, MHC program staff have long experience working with scholars and partner organizations to offer many different kinds of public humanities programming. In addition, they have vigorous extended outreach efforts to create relationships with new audience groups and new partners in fitting with our strategic priorities around diversity, equity, and inclusion. With in-house programming expertise, varied and engaged partner organizations with extensive experience working with the public, and accomplished scholars and facilitators to provide high quality humanities programming to a broad community, the MHC is well poised to succeed with the project.

Another key resource is the MHC’s experience at preparing discussion leaders for program facilitation. Part of this project will involve trainings for project scholars, presenters, and facilitators, which will include substantial orientation to both humanities content and facilitation best practices.

Finally, advisory groups composed of community leaders, scholars, and other experts will provide essential knowledge of how best to serve our audiences. This approach—close partnerships with and reliance on advisors, which has been a key part of the MHC’s program work over many years—will ensure that this project’s community reach will be strong, deep, and eagerly welcomed.

Our working bibliography for the project, including the texts providing its philosophical underpinning, are in the project bibliography (Attachment 4). In addition, sample program syllabus materials, trainings sessions, and speakers series topics are included in the Walkthrough (Attachment 5).

E) Project History

In 2016, the Maine Humanities Council carried out its first experiment to test what it might look like to present an extended, broad-based suite of humanities programming to the people of Maine based upon a single over-arching theme. That initiative, funded through the Public Programs

Division of the National Endowment for the Humanities, was “A Broad and Sure Foundation: the 14th Amendment in American Life and Imagination.” In that initiative, we engaged Mainers in text-based discussions around topics like citizenship, due process, and equal protection of the law. In 2017, we extended the experiment with the NEH-funded project, “Literature and Public Life.” Rooted in the philosophical work of American philosopher John Dewey, *Lit & Pub* used text-based discussion and other public humanities programming to promote conversation around important civic topics like healthcare, education, and domestic violence. Through these two statewide initiatives, the Maine Humanities Council has built deep experience and learned many valuable lessons about what is necessary to engage the public fully and well in discussions of topics that matter.

What If...? is the culmination of eighteen months of conversations between MHC program staff, site partners, and advisors about the changing state of the world, patterns of power, entrenched disparities and oppression, and the uncertain future. 2020 marked the bicentennial of Maine statehood, and across the state many communities had their attention focused on the past. It felt to us like the time was right to look instead to the future, and to do so in a way that would inspire creativity and imagination in facing questions of what we want our state to become.

This brought us to the question of “What if?...” as a theme for programming, a theme that would encourage hope and thoughtful forward-looking perspectives in Maine communities. Our advisors pointed us to the canon of Afrofuturist literature, which is characterized by its creative engagement with the problems of the world and possibilities of living. When we shared this approach with partners around the state, we discovered tremendous enthusiasm for the theme (which is much in line with increasing statewide requests we’ve received for humanities programs that explore racism and antiracism).

With this welcoming audience base, the Maine Humanities Council is well-poised to deliver this initiative. We offer unique connections, resources, and expertise to small nonprofits throughout Maine with a grassroots, statewide reach across cultural, educational, and social service organizations built over more than 40 years, matched by no other organization in Maine. We are unique in our tools—a broad text-based curriculum and a growing pool of trained facilitators—and have staff skilled at outreach, logistics, and data analysis collaboratively running all programs. We are confident in our staff, facilitator, and partner capacity to effectively reach every county in Maine, including our most remote communities. And while Maine’s college and universities are starting to discuss Afrofuturism and its related questions, the MHC is unique in that we’re taking those themes directly into communities statewide.

The discussions that these programs will prompt will also extend beyond the years of this initiative as communities continue to grapple with questions of power, oppression, and community in Maine. Our programming aims to connect community members, foster individual agency, and engage and empower individuals within their communities. Ongoing public engagement is sure to follow.

F) Audience, Marketing, and Promotion

Through many community-level reading and discussion programs, speaker programs, and several large public events, we will be connecting with a variety of in-person audiences across Maine. Although it is designed first and foremost as an in-person project, this initiative also provides wide opportunity to connect with audiences online, both in real time and through the re-broadcast of programs and events. Our experience broadcasting programs online during the pandemic reached over 500 people each for several single-session events. Our total primary audience estimate for in-person events, online attendance, and program re-broadcast is 3,250. We feel confident that opportunities for online attendance coupled with recent work to expand in-person program

accessibility will allow us to connect with Mainers broadly, in line with what we have accomplished in previous statewide initiatives.

This project will be promoted in a variety of ways, including but not limited to: paid and organic social media, e-newsletters, three MHC print publications, and the news media. Marketing and outreach materials will include project-branded graphics and copy, ensuring that all related programs and events are recognized as being a part of the broader project. In addition to providing opportunities for expanded audience reach, communication through on-going social media (6,697 total followers) and e-newsletters (4,679 total subscribers) will share opportunities for program engagement as well as relatable participant experiences.

Our larger public events, including the Readers Retreat as well as community discussion programming with Toshi Reagon and Daniel Minter, will offer unique programming for Maine audiences. This will give us an excellent opportunity to provide engaging stories to a variety of media outlets, including the state's two largest newspapers, statewide public radio, and community radio. Over the past several years, the MHC has cultivated strong relationships with these major statewide media outlets, and we are confident our relationships with these outlets will ensure news of these events is published and circulated in the state's primary media markets. Our experience with news media outreach resulted in three news stories and two "sold out" events when the MHC hosted former US Poet Laureate Tracy K. Smith as part of her "American Conversations: Celebrating Poems in Rural Communities" initiative. For this project we anticipate a related series of op-ed pieces and multiple newspaper stories published.

In addition to communications issued by the MHC, site partners will be provided with their own branded publicity tools—supporting a broad grassroots promotional reach across community networks throughout the state. In the past year, the MHC has partnered with 278 organizations across Maine's 16 counties, including 118 public libraries. Our 2021 Read ME program saw 72 participating public libraries access the host site publicity toolkit 198 times. Our strong statewide reputation with rural public libraries will help us draw traditional humanities audiences, while our recent outreach work to expand program accessibility will invite participation from traditionally under-resourced communities. Our outreach efforts at the height of the pandemic resulted in 76 new participants engaging in our annual Readers Retreat program. Adult Education, ESOL, and Justice-Involved audiences read and discussed the featured book while later attending the event online with other participants.

G) Evaluation of the Project's Impact

For our comprehensive evaluation plan, we will collect both quantitative and qualitative data across multiple platforms and formats. We will use the online platform Survey Monkey as our primary evaluation tool. Survey Monkey will allow us to collect extensive narrative feedback as well as easily observe and analyze trends in our quantitative data. We will track the number of communities, participants, and partners involved in this project and their geographic spread in order to assess statewide impact. Demographic information collected from participants on age, race and ethnicity, and education level will tell us whether we have been able to reach a broad and diverse audience.

In order to assess the relevance of the readings and to gauge the impact the texts have had on participants' understanding of our program themes, project participants will be asked about their familiarity with Afrofuturist texts, as well as open-ended questions about their experience with specific readings and their interaction with the Afrofuturist genre more broadly. As with all our programming, our *What If...?* initiative is designed to increase participants' sense of connection, personal agency, and engagement within their communities. We will look closely

at responses to questions intended to measure growth in these areas. Project site coordinators and facilitators will be asked to complete online reflections focused on the same aforementioned areas. In addition, we will offer small group debriefing sessions with both site coordinators and our scholars and facilitators to further assess the impact engaging with Afrofuturist texts has had on the communities hosting these discussions.

Evaluation materials are reviewed three times per year by MHC staff. We use the program data collected each season to continue to refine our program content and community outreach strategies. Our network of facilitators are then advised of relevant information gathered from our community partners so that they may continue to cultivate their facilitation practice.

H) Organizational Profile

Since 1976, the **Maine Humanities Council** has been an important presence for communities across the state of Maine. During its early days, the MHC funded major statewide grant projects and presented powerful public events, such as the state's first AIDS conference in the 1980s. More recently, the MHC has been known for its innovative programming, such as *Literature & Medicine: Humanities at the Heart of Health Care* (which it piloted in the 1990s and helped spread to a national program still running in over 20 states) and *Coming Home*, programming for Veterans (again, sparking a national model) in 2014. These days, the MHC is known for creating text-based humanities programming that is responsive to community needs and bringing Mainers together to talk about things that matter. We work hard to meet the large and growing interest in community programming about race, democracy, and climate change, among other issues. NEH-funded special initiatives in recent years have included: "A Broad and Sure Foundation: the 14th Amendment in American Life and Imagination," "Literature & Public Life: Creating the Great Community," "Hard Journeys Home: a book group for justice-involved Veterans," and "2020: Bicentennial Vision for Maine Past, Present, and Future."

Facilitated book groups are at the core of MHC programming, and have been that since the early 1990s. These rely on our strong proven relationships with public libraries, adult education departments, Veteran-serving organizations, the justice system, domestic violence and substance abuse resource centers, and other community organizations. All MHC programming depends on working closely with local partner organizations, with whom we collaboratively focus on using humanities themes to fit their communities' specific needs. MHC programming annually reaches across all of Maine's 16 counties. Our mission states: "The Maine Humanities Council, a statewide non-profit organization, uses the humanities—literature, history, philosophy, and culture—as a tool for positive change in Maine communities. Our programs and grants encourage critical thinking and conversations across social, economic, and cultural boundaries." The MHC's annual budget for fiscal year 2021 is \$1,455,215.

The key partners for the initiative will be public libraries and other nonprofit organizations around the state. We include some examples of these partners in Attachment 3. The Maine Humanities Council is a well-established and trusted partner to these networks. During the pandemic up to the last few months, we've partnered with more than 200 libraries and other nonprofit organizations in all of Maine 16 counties, an accomplishment that we feel speaks strongly to the trust that nonprofits statewide hold in our staff and our work.

I) Project Team

The project team is composed of Maine Humanities Council program staff, under the direction of Associate Director Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib. The MHC staff team will oversee the project and be responsible for successful implementation of the various program elements.

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib (she/her), Associate Director, provides strategic direction for the development and implementation of the MHC's statewide work and is staff lead for advancing the MHC's diversity, equity, and inclusion priorities. In partnership with the Executive Director, she works to support the strategic planning, budgeting, fundraising, and administrative functions of the MHC. She will oversee all aspects of this project and be the key contact for scholars. Samaa will also be the key point person for Toshi Reagon and Daniel Minter.

Jan Bindas-Tenney (they/them), Program Coordinator: Facilitation and Partnerships, leads MHC facilitator and speaker recruitment, training, and support; co-organizes partnership development; and coordinates and implements poetry programming. Jan will serve as a key point person on MHC programming involving new partners. Working as part of the Outreach and Partnerships team, they will develop new partner outreach and relationship-building strategies during the course of this grant.

Nicole Rancourt (she/her) is the MHC's Program Manager. Her primary role is to develop, coordinate, and support the processes and systems necessary to implement program and grant initiatives effectively and efficiently. She provides big-picture strategizing and analytical support to harmonize workflow and staff capacity. Nicole will work collaboratively with all program coordinators to orchestrate the overall implementation of this initiative. She will also serve as a point person for a selection of programs and continue to serve as the MHC's organizational liaison to Maine's library and K-12 school networks.

Dr. Meghan Reedy (she/her), Program Coordinator: Narrative and Content Development, leads the process to develop materials and content for use in all MHC programs. She will serve as one of the key point people on MHC Discussion Projects. Meghan also works closely with the Communications Team to describe and publicize the MHC's work and will continue to do that for this initiative.

Lizz Sinclair (she/her), Program Coordinator: Grants and Partnerships, leads the MHC's Grants program and serves as a key point person on programs involving new partners, programs, and partner-driven content. With a deep history at the MHC that has established powerful relationships with hospitals and Veterans organizations and growing relationships with the Wabanaki tribes, Lizz is a lead member of the Outreach Team, creating new partner outreach and partner relationship management strategies. Lizz also serves as the MHC's community liaison to priority communities. Lizz will focus on developing relationships with community partners and serving as the point person for programs during this grant.

J) Humanities Scholars and Consultants

Deep humanities scholarship is key to success of this initiative. Humanities scholars will be at the center of the planning and implementation, and we have sought the advice and direction of scholars from a variety of institutions and disciplines. Included among the scholars who will be advising and assisting with implementation are:

Judith Casselberry (Africana Studies, Bowdoin College) will serve as the primary advisor for the first year of the grant project, working closely with MHC and Bowdoin College's McKeene Center Fellow, Toshi Reagon, to organize and coordinate a series of community conversations based on Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* and *Parable of the Talents*. As an advisor and a collaborator, Dr. Casselberry will assist in providing supplemental materials for the community conversations, will liaise with Toshi Reagon, and will serve as a bridge between Bowdoin College

and the broader statewide community. Dr. Casselberry also serves as a speaker in our *Maine Speaks* series – her lecture entitled “Afrofuturism in 19th Century Black Spirituals” will be particularly relevant to this project. Her teaching and research agenda focus on Black American religious and cultural studies, social movements, and Black intellectual thought with particular attention to gender and liberation.

Daniel Minter (Co-Founder, Indigo Arts; Artist; Assistant Professor, Maine College of Arts) is a world-renowned artist and instructor who will serve as the primary advisor for the second year of the grant project. Minter’s work has been featured in numerous institutions and galleries, and he’s an award-winning illustrator of children’s books as well. Minter is also Founding Director of Maine Freedom Trails, where he helped to highlight the history of the Underground Railroad and the abolitionist movement in New England. For the past 15 years, Minter has also raised awareness of the forced removal in 1912 of an interracial community on Maine’s Malaga Island, an effort which was pivotal in having the island designated a public preserve. In 2019, Minter co-founded Indigo Arts Alliance, a non-profit dedicated to cultivating the artistic development of people of African descent. Minter will bring this extensive background to his community conversations that will form his involvement in the project.

Toshi Reagon (Musician, Composer, Producer) will serve as an advisor and presenter. She has been the recipient of a NYFA award for Music Composition, The Black Lily Music and Film Festival Award for Outstanding Performance, OutMusic’s Heritage Award in 2010, and a National Women’s History Month Honoree. Reagon is the co-creator and co-host of the podcast series *Octavia’s Parables*, a chapter-by-chapter analysis of Octavia Butler’s Parable series designed to inspire greater readership and thoughts around her books; and the composer/performer of *Octavia E. Butler’s Parables of the Sower*, an original opera with a history of worldwide performance. She will bring to bear her extensive knowledge of Octavia Butler’s work to the community discussions that she’ll hold in her part of this project.

Ian-Khara Ellasante (Bates College) served as a key advisor in the grant writing process. Dr. Ellasante studies the history and reclamation of Indigenous extra-binary gender systems and Two-Spirit traditions, Black and Indigenous feminisms, and the dynamic resistance inherent in Black and Indigenous trans and queer cultures. As a community-based participatory researcher, they have worked alongside and on behalf of LGBTQ+ and Two-Spirit youth communities for over a decade. Dr. Ellasante, who is also an award-winning poet, will be one of the keynote speakers for our Big Question 2021 programming, which, while not included in this NEH grant cycle, will serve as a kick-off for our exploration of “What If…” (Please refer to the walkthrough for details).

Samantha Plasencia (Colby College), also served as an advisor in the grant writing process, has expertise that includes Afrofuturism, Afropessimism, and Black Studies. She researches how language shapes perception, the psycho-somatic experience of reality, behaviors’ rhetorical motivation, and how constitutive processes directed by anti-black apparatuses and institutions of power may they be redirected. In addition to serving as an advisor through the grant writing process, Dr. Plasencia will serve as a speaker and will be a collaborative partner on a Discussion Project for Colby College students, helping MHC fulfill our goals of program outreach within younger populations.

Abigail Killeen (Chair of the Department of Theater and Dance, Bowdoin College), will serve as a bridge between Bowdoin College and the broader Maine community. Dr. Killeen will be collaborating with Dr. Casselberry to serve as a liaison between MHC and Toshi Reagon. A theater artist, working as an actor, director, and producer, her performance research generates theatrical projects that place women in leadership roles: offstage as directors and producers, and onstage outside of traditional narratives, investigating themes of grace and transformation.

Robert Morrison (Religion and Middle Eastern and North African Studies, Bowdoin College) will serve as an advisor and speaker. Dr. Morrison is the Director of the North African &

Middle Eastern Studies Program and teaches Afrofuturism texts through the lens of religion and religious studies. His research has focused on the role of science in Islamic and Jewish texts, as well as in the history of Islamic science. Dr. Morrison has contributed the chapters on Islamic astronomy to the *New Cambridge History of Islam* and the *Cambridge History of Science*.

Arielle Saiber (Romance Languages & Literatures, Bowdoin College), will be an advisor, speaker, and discussion leader. Dr. Saiber researches and teaches Afrofuturism from a global perspective and is a scholar of science fiction. She publishes on Dante, medieval and Renaissance literature and mathematics, topics in “literature & science,” and early print history, as well as on science fiction, visual culture, and experimental electronic music, and built the web-based archive, *Dante Today: Sightings and Citings of Dante’s Work in Contemporary Culture*. In 2015 she built an extensive, on-going website for the [World Science Fiction](#) course she teaches at Bowdoin.

Lori Banks (Biology, Bates College) will collaborate on a Discussion Project for her student advisor group, helping MHC fulfill our goals of program outreach within younger populations. Dr. Banks is regularly listed as among top 30 Black women scientists in the country, and uses Afrofuturist concepts and texts in her biology classroom. Her laboratory focuses on understanding the key structural features of selected microbial proteins that can be exploited in the design of new anti-microbial agents.

In addition to the scholarly advisors above, program implementation throughout the project will be carried out in large part by the scholar/facilitators listed in Attachment 3. Program facilitators for Discussion Project sites and Readers Retreat small group discussions will be drawn from our pool of trained facilitators located throughout the state. Presenters for Maine Speaks programs will include project scholars listed above, as well as other from our Maine Speaks speaker roster. The Maine Humanities Council has more than 145 active facilitators and speakers: skilled discussion leaders and presenters who have been recruited by our outreach staff and trained by the MHC.

Work Plan

Over the course of this two-year project, we will be working with scholars and our program partners to plan and offer a total of 42 programs. During the project, multiple sites will be active simultaneously across various program formats. The scholarly advisory panel will meet at least four times, twice in 2022, and twice in 2023. Items listed in the Program Workplan below will be carried out by the Maine Humanities Council's Project Team, as detailed in Section I of the application narrative.

What If...? Program Calendar

Winter/Spring 2022

Large Format: Readers Retreat

Summer 2022

Small Community Groups: 6 sites begin (4 Discussion Project, 2 Maine Speaks)

Fall 2022 -

Small Community Groups 6 sites begin (4 Discussion Project, 2 Maine Speaks)

Toshi/Daniel: 3 sites (Community Conversation with Toshi Reagan)

Winter/Spring 2023

Small Community Groups: 6 sites begin (4 Discussion Project, 2 Maine Speaks)

Summer 2023

Small Community Groups: 6 sites begin (4 Discussion Project, 2 Maine Speaks)

Fall 2023 -

Small Community Groups: 6 sites begin (4 Discussion Project, 2 Maine Speaks)

Toshi/Daniel: 1 site (Community Project with Daniel Minter)

Winter/Spring 2024

Small Community Groups: 6 sites begin (4 Discussion Project, 2 Maine Speaks)

Toshi/Daniel: 1 site (Community Project with Daniel Minter)

What If...? Project Workplan

Winter/Spring 2022

Discussion Project

- Scholar/facilitator recruitment and interviews
- Applications for summer 2022 due from potential program sites April 1

- Reading and discussion program sites awarded summer 2022 programs
- Summer sites connected with scholar/facilitator; programs scheduled; books ordered
- Meet with Summer Facilitator Workshop advisors, outline agenda and goals
- Featured Reads 2023 book selection committee outreach and formation

Maine Speaks

- Scholar/speaker recruitment and interviews
- Applications for summer 2022 programs due from potential program sites April 15
- Summer 2023 program sites awarded and announced
- Sites connected with scholars
- Scheduling of summer events begins

Readers Retreat

- Book distribution to partner school districts, college classrooms, collaborating organizations
- Event marketing and registration
- Finalize evaluation tools
- Event May 20-21

Summer 2022

Discussion Project

- Summer 2022 reading and discussion programs begin
- Host orientation for new scholar/facilitator
- Finalize Featured Reads 2023
- Finalize 2023 evaluation tools
- Applications for fall 2022 due from potential program sites July 8
- Reading and discussion program sites awarded fall 2022 programs
- Fall sites connected with scholar/facilitator; programs scheduled; books ordered
- Summer Facilitator Workshop in August

Maine Speaks

- Host orientation for new speakers
- Summer events publicity and evaluations on-going; full Maine Speaks data review
- Scholar/speaker recruitment and interviews
- Applications for fall 2022 programs due from potential program sites August 12
- Fall 2023 program sites awarded and announced
- Sites connected with scholars
- Finalize 2023 evaluation tools

Readers Retreat

- Program data review and debrief

Toshi/Daniel

- Planning for community conversations with Toshi Reagan

Fall 2022

Discussion Project

- Fall 2022 reading and discussion programs begin
- Summer 2022 programs close; data review
- Applications for winter/spring 2023 programs due from potential program sites November 3
- Reading and discussion program sites awarded winter/spring 2023 programs
- Sites connected with scholar/facilitator; programs scheduled; books ordered
- Scholar/facilitator recruitment and interviews
- Planning for Winter Facilitator Workshop

Maine Speaks

- Events publicity and evaluations on-going
- Scholar/speaker recruitment and interviews
- Applications for winter/spring 2023 programs due November 18
- Winter/spring 2023 program sites awarded and announced
- Sites connected with scholars
- Scheduling of winter/spring events begins

Toshi/Daniel

- Toshi Reagan McKean Fellowship at Bowdoin College begins
- Community conversations with Toshi Reagan events publicity and evaluation on-going
- Planning for winter/spring 2023 event

Winter/Spring 2023

Discussion Project

- Winter/spring 2023 reading and discussion programs begin
- Fall 2023 programs close; data review
- Applications for summer 2023 programs due from potential program sites April 7
- Reading and discussion program sites awarded summer 2023 programs
- Sites connected with scholar/facilitator; programs scheduled; books ordered
- Host orientation for new scholar/facilitator
- Planning for Summer Facilitator Workshop
- Featured Reads 2024 book selection committee outreach and formation

Maine Speaks

- Winter/spring events publicity and evaluations on-going
- Scholar/speaker recruitment and interviews
- Applications for summer 2023 programs due from potential program sites April 14
- Summer 2023 program sites awarded and announced
- Sites connected with scholars
- Scheduling of summer events begins

Toshi/Daniel

- Portland performance of Toshi Reagan's *Octavia E. Butler's Parable of the Sower*
- Full program data review and debrief

Summer 2023

Discussion Project

- Summer 2023 reading and discussion programs begin
- Winter/spring 2023 programs close; full Discussion Project data review
- Host orientation for new scholar/facilitator
- Applications for fall 2023 due from potential program sites July 7
- Reading and discussion program sites awarded fall 2023 programs
- Fall sites connected with scholar/facilitator; programs scheduled; books ordered
- Summer Facilitator Workshop in August
- Finalize Featured Reads 2024
- Finalize 2024 evaluation tools

Maine Speaks

- Host orientation for new speakers
- Summer events publicity and evaluations on-going; Maine Speaks data review
- Scholar/speaker recruitment and interviews
- Applications for fall 2023 programs due from potential program sites August 11
- Fall 2023 program sites awarded and announced
- Sites connected with scholars
- Finalize 2024 evaluation tools

Toshi/Daniel

- Planning for first Community Project with Daniel Minter

Fall 2023

Discussion Project

- Fall 2023 reading and discussion programs begin
- Summer 2023 programs close; data review
- Applications for winter/spring 2024 programs due from potential program sites due November 3
- Reading and discussion program sites awarded winter/spring 2024 programs
- Sites connected with scholar/facilitator; programs scheduled; books ordered
- Scholar/facilitator recruitment and interviews
- Planning for Winter Facilitator Workshop

Maine Speaks

- Events publicity and evaluations on-going
- Scholar/speaker recruitment and interviews
- Applications for winter/spring 2024 programs November 17
- Winter/spring 2024 program sites awarded and announced
- Sites connected with scholars
- Scheduling of winter/spring events begins

Toshi/Daniel

- First Community Project with Daniel Minter
- Planning for second Community Project with Daniel Minter

Winter/Spring 2024**Discussion Project**

- Winter/spring 2024 reading and discussion programs begin
- Fall 2023 programs close; data review
- Applications for summer 2024 programs due from potential program sites April 5
- Reading and discussion program sites awarded summer 2024 programs
- Sites connected with scholar/facilitator; programs scheduled; books ordered
- Host orientation for new scholar/facilitator
- Planning for Summer Facilitator Workshop

Maine Speaks

- Winter/spring events publicity and evaluations on-going
- Scholar/speaker recruitment and interviews
- Applications for summer 2024 programs due April 19
- Summer 2024 program sites awarded and announced
- Sites connected with scholars
- Scheduling of summer events begins

Toshi/Daniel

- Second Community Project with Daniel Minter
- Full program debrief/review

“What If?...

Afrofuturism and the Quest for a Just, Inclusive, and Sustainable Society”

Table of Contents: Résumés and Letters of Commitment

Résumés: Project Team

Samaa Abdurraqib (Associate Director, Maine Humanities Council)
Jan Bindas-Tenny (Program Coordinator: Facilitation & Partnerships, Maine Humanities Council)
Nicole Rancourt (Program Manager, Maine Humanities Council)
Meghan Reedy (Program Coordinator: Narrative & Content Development, Maine Humanities Council)
Elizabeth Sinclair (Program Coordinator: Grants & Partnerships, Maine Humanities Council)

Résumés and Letters of Commitment: Humanities Scholars and Advisors

Lori Banks (Biology, Bates College)
Judith Casselberry (Africana Studies, Bowdoin College)
Ian-Khara Ellasante (Gender and Sexuality Studies, Africana Studies, Bates College)
Abigail Killeen (Theater, Bowdoin College)
Daniel Minter (Co-Founder, Indigo Arts; Artist)
Robert Morrison (Religion and Middle Eastern and North African Studies, Bowdoin College)
Samantha Plasencia (English, Colby College)
Toshi Reagon (Singer, Composer, Musician, Producer, Curator)
Arielle Saiber (Romance Languages & Literatures, Bowdoin College)

Résumés and Letters of Commitment: Facilitators and Speakers

Virginie Akimana (Instructor, Portland Adult Education)
Paul Buck (History, Education, University of Maine at Fort Kent)
Elizabeth DeWolf (History, Women’s & Gender Studies, University of New England)
Hilary Eslinger (Director of Overdose Prevention Programs, Maine Access Points)
Ellen Goldsmith (Poet, Independent Scholar)
Joseph Hall (History, Bates College)
Mazie Hough (Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, University of Maine) (Emerita)
Kate McBrien (Maine State Archivist, Maine State Archives)
Cody Mower (Veteran, Writer)
Eugenie Mukankwiro (Education Technician, Casco Bay High School)
Monique Mutumwinka (Parent Community Specialist, Portland Public Schools Multilingual and Multicultural Center)
Eve Raimon (English, University of Southern Maine)
Darren Ranco (Native American Studies, Anthropology, University of Maine)
Paul Strickland (Independent Scholar)
Ellen Taylor (English, University of Maine at Augusta)
Adam Tuchinsky (History, University of Southern Maine)
Rebecca Webb (Freelance Writer, Editor, Workshop Facilitator)
Maya Williams (Poet, Sexual Assault Program Coordinator, Maine TransNet)
Hong Zhang (East Asian Studies, Colby College)

Letters of Commitment: Partners

Barbara Averill (Executive Director, Literacy Volunteers)
Catherine Besteman (Coordinator, Freedom and Captivity Project)
Benjamin Blackmon (Library Director, Rockport Public Library)
Cynthia Cyr (Rural Legal Services Coordinator, Partners for Peace)
Sean Faircloth (Executive Director, Maine Mental Health Connections)
Gibson Fay-Le Blanc (Executive Director, Maine Writers & Publishers)
Bill Grant (Director, Lewiston Adult Education)
Anna Guest (Program Manager, Southern Maine Agency on Aging)
Marsha Higgins (Community Programs Coordinator, Mountain View Correctional Facility)
Kelsey Halliday Johnson (Executive Director, Space Gallery)
Deborah Cummings Khadraoui (Founder, Committee to Restore the Abyssinian Meeting House)
Jeremy Lehan (Director, RSU 54 Adult & Community Education)
David McDermott (Senior Physician Executive, Northern Light Health)
Marcia Minter (Co-Founder, Executive Director, Indigo Arts Alliance)
Jason Palmer (Correctional Treatment Worker, Maine State Prison)
Alison Perkins (Teacher, Portland Adult Education)
Regina Rooney (Education & Communications Director, Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence)
Elizabeth Ward Saxl (Executive Director, Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault)
Lois Skillings (President, Midcoast-Parkview Health)
Destie Hohman Sprague (Executive Director, Maine Women's Lobby & MWL Education Fund)
Ben Treat (Library Director, Bangor Public Library)
Abbie Turner (Educator Coordinator/Teacher, Southern Maine Women's Re-Entry Center)
Amy Wischart (Director, Ellsworth Public Library)

Samaa Abdurraqib, PhD • (b) (6)

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EDUCATION

- 2010 Ph.D. in English, Specialization: Women’s Studies (University of Wisconsin-Madison)
- 2003 M.A. in English (University of Wisconsin-Madison)
- 1999 B.A. in English, Minor: Women’s Studies (Ohio State University)

CAREER

- Mar 2021-Now Maine Humanities Council, Associate Director
- Jan 2016- Mar 2021 Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence, Community Engagement Coordinator
- June 2017-2019 The Body Is Not An Apology (<https://thebodyisnotanapology.com/>), Content Writer
- 2016 Maine Family Planning, Organizer
- 2016-Now Contract Facilitator/Consultant
- 2015-2021 Maine Humanities Council, Contract/Independent Scholar
- 2013-2015 ACLU of Maine, Reproductive Freedom Organizer

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Fall 2014 University of Southern Maine, Adjunct Professor of Women & Gender Studies
- 2010-2013 Bowdoin College, Visiting Assistant Professor of Gender & Women’s Studies
- 2003-2010 University of Wisconsin-Madison, Teaching Assistant, English, Gender & Women’s Studies

FACILITATION/CONSULTING EXPERIENCE

- 2020-2021 Portland City Council – Racial Equity Steering Committee, facilitator
- 2019-Now Coach with Maine Community Foundation, Leaders of Color Initiative
- 2018-2019 Consultant with Maine Health Access Foundation, Health Equity Initiative
- 2018/2019 Consultant with Maine Initiatives, Grants For Change Cohorts
- 2017/2018 Maine Initiatives, Racial Justice Grantmaking Committee, facilitation team
- 2017 Maine Youth Action Network, staff retreat facilitator
- 2017 Maine Humanities Council, Think and Drink facilitator
“Policing, Community, Protection, and Trust in the 21st Century”
- 2015-2021 Maine Humanities Council, reading group facilitator (*a sampling*)
Book Discussion Project (Summer & Fall 2020)
“Let’s Talk About It: Muslim Journeys” series (2015 & 2017)

- 2006- 2012 Service Employees International Union, Local 32BJ New York, NY
Organizing Coordinator (Lead Organizer, Organizer, Paralegal)
- Campaign Coordinator for a multi-state service worker organizing campaigns to organize: security officers, food service workers, and cleaners to win living wages, benefits and a voice on the job.
 - Supervised a staff of 13 organizers in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the DC Area. Created a training and development program for all organizers with varying skills, experience and education levels.
 - Developed political, media, and research strategies for the campaign: policy and legislative angles, research reports, community and media outreach.
 - Recruited workers to the campaign: built relationships one-to-one and in large groups to create committees of work place leaders. Identified and developed workers with leadership potential to deliver large groups to action.
 - Recruited and developed allies to the campaign: students, professors, politicians, clergy and community leaders to take action with working people.
 - Planned and coordinated large rallies, actions, strikes, media events, town halls, and marches

- 2003-2005 Community Legal Services Philadelphia, PA
Paralegal
- Conducted Intake interviews and made referrals for city-wide legal aid program
 - Handled Student Loan cases for victims of student loan fraud to discharge debt.
 - Met with approximately 20 potential clients per day: provided support, made referrals, and moved clients through the intake process.

- 2000-2002 Student Leadership Academic Movement Poughkeepsie, NY
Tutor
- Created space for dialog and tutoring among high school students
 - Contributed in creating a bilingual options for students

Publications:

- “House Call” (poem) *Deep Water, Maine Sunday Telegram, Portland Press Herald* (June 2021) Print.
- “Our Only Boss is the Tide” (essay) *The Maine Review*. Issue 3.1 (Winter 2016) Print.
- “The Warp” (collaborative essay with Andrew Jaicks) *Gulf Coast: A Journal of Literature and Fine Arts* Issue 28.2 (Spring 2016) Print.
- “Everyday Maneuvers: On Driving Claudia Rankine to the Airport” (essay) *Essay Daily*. 13 July 2015. Web.
- “The Story of Staying” *Fracture: Essays, Poems, and Stories on Fracking in America*. Taylor Brorby and Stefanie Trout, Eds. North Liberty: Ice Cube Press, 2015. Print.
- “Paper Mill is Something Not Heard.” (essay) *Arts & Letters* Issue 30 (Spring 2015): 106-121. Print.
- “The Border Crisis in Leisureville” (essay) *Guernica: A Magazine of Art & Politics*. 08 Dec. 2014. Web.

Jan Bindas-Tenney

(b) (6)

Education

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| University of Arizona <i>MFA in Creative Writing- Nonfiction</i> | Dec. 2015 Tucson, AZ |
| Vassar College <i>Bachelor of Arts: Latin American Studies</i> <i>Graduated with Honors</i> | 2002 Poughkeepsie, NY |

Relevant Experience

| | | |
|---------------|---|--|
| 2018- Present | Maine Humanities Council Program Coordinator: Facilitation & Partnerships | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coordinate community-based literature programs across the state in prisons, jails, adult education settings, with community organizations, domestic violence resource centers, libraries, etc.• Recruit and train facilitators for multi-session reading and discussion groups across the state• Implement public poetry events in libraries | |
| 2015- 2018 | Preble Street Advocacy Director | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Directed the advocacy efforts for large anti-poverty nonprofit organization• Led large-scale advocacy and organizing projects to end homelessness, hunger and poverty in Maine• Collaborated with and facilitate the leadership of people living in deep poverty• Led research studies on the causes and impacts of poverty and hunger in Maine• Directed policy-making efforts to reduce poverty and homelessness in Maine | |
| 2013- 2015 | University of Arizona Writing Instructor Editorial Board – <i>Sonora Review Literary Journal</i> Coordinator for the INFUSE reading series | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instructor for English 101 / 102 foundation composition courses: textual and rhetorical analysis.• Instructor for Introduction to Creative Nonfiction, English 201: introductory workshop/craft focused seminar covering the fundamentals of the essay through weekly reading and writing assignments and peer workshop facilitation.• Volunteer Instructor for Creative Writing Classes at Tucson State Prison Complex• At <i>Sonora Review</i> on the nonfiction editing team: read submissions, select the best essays for publication.• At INFUSE: facilitate a monthly collaborative visual art and writing event by recruiting writers, organizing creative collaboration between writers, visual artists and art historians, planning the event. | |

- 2006- 2012 Service Employees International Union, Local 32BJ New York, NY
Organizing Coordinator (Lead Organizer, Organizer, Paralegal)
- Campaign Coordinator for a multi-state service worker organizing campaigns to organize: security officers, food service workers, and cleaners to win living wages, benefits and a voice on the job.
 - Supervised a staff of 13 organizers in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the DC Area. Created a training and development program for all organizers with varying skills, experience and education levels.
 - Developed political, media, and research strategies for the campaign: policy and legislative angles, research reports, community and media outreach.
 - Recruited workers to the campaign: built relationships one-to-one and in large groups to create committees of work place leaders. Identified and developed workers with leadership potential to deliver large groups to action.
 - Recruited and developed allies to the campaign: students, professors, politicians, clergy and community leaders to take action with working people.
 - Planned and coordinated large rallies, actions, strikes, media events, town halls, and marches

- 2003-2005 Community Legal Services Philadelphia, PA
Paralegal
- Conducted Intake interviews and made referrals for city-wide legal aid program
 - Handled Student Loan cases for victims of student loan fraud to discharge debt.
 - Met with approximately 20 potential clients per day: provided support, made referrals, and moved clients through the intake process.

- 2000-2002 Student Leadership Academic Movement Poughkeepsie, NY
Tutor
- Created space for dialog and tutoring among high school students
 - Contributed in creating a bilingual options for students

Publications:

- “House Call” (poem) *Deep Water, Maine Sunday Telegram, Portland Press Herald* (June 2021) Print.
- “Our Only Boss is the Tide” (essay) *The Maine Review*. Issue 3.1 (Winter 2016) Print.
- “The Warp” (collaborative essay with Andrew Jaicks) *Gulf Coast: A Journal of Literature and Fine Arts* Issue 28.2 (Spring 2016) Print.
- “Everyday Maneuvers: On Driving Claudia Rankine to the Airport” (essay) *Essay Daily*. 13 July 2015. Web.
- “The Story of Staying” *Fracture: Essays, Poems, and Stories on Fracking in America*. Taylor Brorby and Stefanie Trout, Eds. North Liberty: Ice Cube Press, 2015. Print.
- “Paper Mill is Something Not Heard.” (essay) *Arts & Letters* Issue 30 (Spring 2015): 106-121. Print.
- “The Border Crisis in Leisureville” (essay) *Guernica: A Magazine of Art & Politics*. 08 Dec. 2014. Web.



Experience

Program Manager Maine Humanities Council, Portland, Maine November 2020 – Present

- Analyze and understand the connections among MHC’s initiatives and staff roles to ensure MHC’s work is coordinated and efficient. This takes into consideration deadlines, review processes, major meetings, and other related operations.
- In partnership with the Associate Director, organize and support Program Coordinators in the development and implementation of processes, timelines, and systems related to program implementation; facilitator and speaker recruitment, development, and support; content development; outreach; grants; communications; data collection and review.
- Program Work Team Lead
- Coordinate a portion of MHC Discussion Projects, including facilitating planning meetings, coordinating logistics, schedules, content and approach.
- In collaboration with MHC staff, support the ongoing success of the Discussion Project through participating in ongoing planning, check-in, and debrief discussions, reviewing applications, assignment of facilitators, and review of MHC Discussion Project content/reading lists.
- Prepare annual Discussion Project budget proposal. Monitor and manage program budget.
- Liaison to Maine’s library and K-12 school networks, maintaining partnerships from previous position.

Program Officer Maine Humanities Council, Portland, Maine March 2013 – November 2020

- Develop program content in partnership with scholars/consultants, internal staff, and external partners/venues; plan, market, and manage program events; track program performance and effectiveness using survey tools or in partnership with professional evaluators.
- Lead of Library Programs, which supports Maine’s libraries as community hubs through the creation and distribution of programs created in partnership with librarians around the state, professional development opportunities, and advocacy.
- Maine State Representative for the Collaborative Summer Library Program, a consortium of states working together to provide high-quality summer reading program materials for children, teens, and adults at the lowest cost possible for their public libraries.
- Program partner for Civil Rights Team Project, a school-based preventative program through the Maine Office of the Attorney General that seeks to increase the safety of elementary, middle level, and high school students by reducing bias-motivated behaviors and harassment in Maine schools.
- Program partner for National History Day in Maine, an annual project-based learning experience for students grades 6-12 that promotes critical thinking skills and culminates in a statewide contest.
- Member of the Maine Humanities Council’s Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) Task Force, which aspires to “support Maine’s diversity and to live out our shared commitment to equity, accessibility, and inclusion in everything [MHC does].”
- Member of the Maine Council for the Social Studies Board, which connects Maine’s social studies educators; provides a forum for discussion; represents educators on matters of interest in importance to

social studies education; and offers a variety of professional services, including an annual statewide conference. (Member of the Membership and Events Committee)

Educational Teacher Leader for History Camp, January 2010 – July 2011
Maine Humanities Council

Middle Level Educator Whittier Middle School, Poland, Maine August 2005 – June 2010

- Social Studies and English Language Arts educator for grades 7 and 8

Recent Volunteer Work

Member, Maine Advisory Committee for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Spring 2020 – Present

Trustee, Auburn Public Library September 2016 – Present

- Fundraising Committee Chair

Maine Social Studies Standards Review Steering Committee 2018-2019

Museum L/A Education Advisory Committee 2017-2018

Education

University of Maine at Farmington, Farmington, Maine Degree Earned, December 2004

- Bachelor of Science: Elementary Education (K-8 certification)
- Concentration: Visual Performing Arts/Art
- Middle Level Endorsement: Social Studies
- 3.83 GPA (Graduated magna cum laude)

Up With People, World Tour Cast C June 1997 – July 1998

- Developed skills in intercultural and interpersonal relations
- Traveled and worked with an international group of 164 young adults
- Lived with 65 host families
- Attended lectures and tours, discussed world issues, shared knowledge of my country and heritage through presentations in schools around the US, Canada, and Europe
- Participated in the production and performance of a musical in 65 cities
- Toured throughout the United States, Canada, France, Italy, Germany, Austria, Slovakia, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, and Switzerland

Edward Little High School, Auburn, Maine Diploma Earned, December 1997

Skills

Dedicated, responsible, collaborative, strategic planning, subject area integration, communication, innovative, energetic, adaptive, flexible, life-long learner, organized, relationship-building, drive, humor, globally conscious, multifaceted.

Meghan · Newell · Reedy

Mailing Address

(b) (6)

Phone: (b) (6)

Email: meghan@mainehumanities.com

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy, Classics – Oxford University, UK 2007

Master of Arts with Distinction, Classics – University of Durham, UK 2000

Bachelor of Arts *Cum Laude*, Classics – Whitman College, Walla Walla, WA 1996

Languages

- Latin, Ancient Greek, German, Italian: good scholarly reading knowledge
- French, Dutch, Afrikaans: basic conversational knowledge, good reading comprehension

PUBLIC HUMANITIES

Program Coordinator, Content Development – Maine Humanities Council, Portland, ME June 2016-present

- leads the process to develop materials and content for use in core MHC programs
- works closely with the Program Team to implement the Discussion Project, and leads or supports implementation of Readers' Retreat and Big Question
- creates written content and copy about MHC and its programs for a variety of uses and audiences

TEACHING

Assistant Professor – Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA Fall 2008-Spring 2015

One of three faculty members in a vibrant undergraduate Classics department.

- Lecture classes on *Roman History* and *Ancient Worlds on Film*
- Small classes and seminars on language and literature at all levels in *Latin* and *Ancient Greek*
- *First Year Seminar: Ideas that have Shaped the World*, a writing-focused humanities seminar
- *Student Research advising*, for Classics students, and for Environmental Studies students on food.

Visiting Assistant Professor, Classical Studies – Dickinson College; 2007- 2008

Ad Hoc Teaching, Classical Studies – Oxford University 2004-2006; Leiden University 2004

CAMPUS & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

COMMITTEE SERVICE at Dickinson College

- Academic Program and Standards Committee (APSC) (elected, Fall 2014-Spring 2015)
- APSC Subcommittee for Academic Standards (Fall 2014-Spring 2015)
- Steering Committee for the Center for Sustainability Education (CSE) (Fall 2010-Spring 2015)
- CSE Subcommittees for Curriculum & Baird Fellows selection (2011- Spring 2015)
- Job Search committees for Writing Program Director (2008), Assistant Dean of Advising (2012), Director of Education Abroad (2014)
- Judicial Committee hearing panel (Fall 2010-Spring 2013)
- Planning & Budget *ad hoc* Subcommittee on 21st Century Challenges (appointed, Spring 2011)

COLLABORATION & COMMUNITY BUILDING

- Faculty Advisor to *Eta Sigma Phi*, the Classics honor society for undergraduates (Fall 2008-Spring 2014)

- Initiated Dickinson College's *Common Lunch* program, an informal opportunity for cross-departmental faculty connection
- Member of faculty study groups initiating Certificate Programs in Sustainable Innovation and Entrepreneurship and in Food Studies (Summers 2014, 2015)
- Member of the Interdisciplinary Faculty Seminar on Water (spring semester 2014)
- Assistant instructor in the Classics department's annual Latin Workshop for high school teachers (Summers 2007-2013)
- Inaugural member of the Board of Directors, **Farmers on the Square**, Carlisle's producer-only weekly farmers' market. (Vice-President 2009-11, Treasurer 2011-12, Secretary 2015):

PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

- Essays on Selections from Vergil's *Aeneid*, *Dickinson College Commentaries* (dcc.dickinson.edu), 2016
- *A Manifesto for Hand Sewing*, forthcoming; typeset and letterpress printed by Emily Larned for ILSSA's spring 2015 *Quarterly*.
- *The MANIFESTATIONS of Apple Elder Rose: a preliminary fascicle*, a limited edition handbound chapbook. February 2015.
- Judd D. Kimball Lecture in Classics, Whitman College: 'What's the Point of a Love Poem? Emotional Display in Propertius and Why it Matters', October 2011
- Commissioned review of Gian Paolo Giardina's critical edition and Italian translation, *Properzio. Elegie. Revised Edition.*, *Classical Review* 61 (2011) 474-6.
- 'On the Ordering of Propertius 2.33b.23-6,' *Classical Quarterly* 60.1 (2010) 23-25.
- Commissioned review of Thomas Saunders' book, *Bucolic Ecology: Virgil's Eclogues and the Environmental Literary Tradition*; *The Classical Bulletin* 85.2
- American Philological Association annual meeting: 'Drink first, then oblivion: A note on Propertius 2.33.23-6', January 2008

Awards

- Clarendon Fund Scholar 2002-5
- Overseas Research Scheme Award holder 2002-5
- American Friends of Christ Church Scholar 2002-3
- Rhodes Scholarship state finalist 1996
- Rall Scholarship for the Humanities (inaugural recipient) 1996
- Phi Beta Kappa member since 1996
- Rod Alexander Award for service to the theatre 1995

Elizabeth B. Sinclair

(b) (6)

| elizabethbsinclair.com

Relevant Work Experience

Program Coordinator, Grants & Outreach, Maine Humanities Council | Portland, ME 2021-present

- Lead on Grants Team (work with applicants, grants committee, outreach, reviewing proposals)
- Create and nurture partnerships within Maine communities as a member of the Outreach Team, especially focused on Tribal communities and organizations
- Work with staff, facilitators, and site partners on public programs
- Evaluation Team member, creating goals and objectives for programs, and assessing programs
- Maine's liaison to the National Center for the Book of the Library of Congress
- Staff liaison for Board committees: Grants; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Director of Programs, Maine Humanities Council | Portland, ME 2013– 2020

- Create and nurture partnerships within Maine communities
- Work with MHC staff, consultants, scholars, and community and national partners in: developing programming, creating goals and objectives for programs, and assessing programs
- Supervise/mentor program staff
- Co-lead on MHC's grants program (work with applicants, reviewing proposals)
- Part of MHC staff working on joint Arts & Humanities grants offered with Maine Arts Commission
- Staff liaison for Board committees: Program; Grants; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Assist with preparing grant proposals and reporting to National Endowment for the Humanities
- Maine's liaison to the National Center for the Book of the Library of Congress

Program Officer, Maine Humanities Council | Portland, ME 1998–2013

Helped develop these programs:

- Veterans Book Group. These book groups funded by NEH provide space and time for Veterans to connect and reflect with one other. Veterans have said they feel more connected with other Veterans and gain perspective on their service experiences. Groups have been offered in partnership with Veterans, Vet Centers, libraries and correctional facilities across Maine and in 10 other states.
 - Designed program with help from Veterans, VA Health and Vet Center staff, and scholars
 - Work with scholars and Veterans to create syllabuses
 - Created handbook for humanities councils offering the program
 - Designed evaluation and analyzed data with evaluation consultant and Veteran partners
 - Built relationships to implement the program across Maine and in other states
 - Recruitment and ongoing support for partners and facilitators
 - Reporting to granting organizations; assisting with grant proposals
- Literature & Medicine: Humanities at the Heart of Health Care. These national, NEH funded book groups allow health care professionals to reflect on their work with diverse groups of colleagues through the lens of literature. Participants say they experience increased sense of empathy, job satisfaction, and communication. Groups have been offered across Maine and in 25 other states.

- Co-lead in developing program with health care professionals, policy makers, and scholars
- Work with Maine partners and humanities councils in implementing the program
- Work with scholars and partners to create syllabuses
- Recruitment and ongoing support of hospitals and scholars
- Reported to granting organizations; assisting with grant proposals
- Planned organizing statewide conferences; national scholars training institutes; national conferences with colleagues and partners; trainings for state humanities councils
- Expansion of program to Domestic Violence Resource Centers, VA Health system, and Hospice

Teacher, Think Tank & board member, SPIRAL Arts, INC | Portland ME 1998–2005

Taught drawing, clay tile making, painting, community mosaic making, and co-taught “The Art of Living & Dying” for this now much missed community art organization. SPIRAL Arts asserted the arts are a powerful vehicle of progressive social and spiritual change. It believed they help people find inner resources that bring new meaning, hope, and happiness into their lives, their families, and communities.

Art in Service Director, Maine College of Art | Portland, ME 1997–1999

- Guided & supervised students in working as visiting artists with local non-profits to bring art-making opportunities to under-served populations.
- Co-designed academic course for students in using arts to mentor middle school students deemed at-risk
- Assisted in grant proposals for funding, helped report to funders.

Independent Artist and Teacher 1985–present

Community artmaking with people of all ages as well as drawing, painting, puppet making, books, clay tiles, mosaics, mask making, theater design, set construction, sculpting, and mandalas.

Other Relevant Experience

Maine Wabanaki REACH (partner, workshop participant, facilitator in training) **2015–present**

National Endowment for the Humanities

- Grant Reviewer, Public Programs “Standing Together” category **2017**
- “Standing Together with American Veterans” Washington, DC (panelist) **2016**
- “Literature & Medicine in Veterans Administration Hospitals” White House, Washington DC. Program Recognized for outstanding service to Veterans. (co-presenter) **2011**

Federation of State Humanities Councils Conferences

- “Evaluation 101 Workshop” co-presenter w/ Christina Citino, UMass Donahue Institute **2016**
- “Innovative Humanities Programs in Rural Areas” (panelist) **2013**

Helped plan and organize

- “Domestic Violence” staged reading & discussion statewide of scenes from *A Streetcar Named Desire* with theater group Outside the Wire and Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence **2013**
- “End of Life” and “Theater of War” statewide programs w/ Outside the Wire **2011**
- “After Shock: Humanities Perspectives on Trauma” National Conference on incorporating the humanities into work with people who have experienced trauma, Washington, DC **2010**
- “Caring for the Caregiver” Literature & Medicine Conference, Manchester, NH **2007**

Lori D. Banks, Ph.D.
lbanks@bates.edu

Employment

| | |
|--------------|--|
| 2019-Present | Bates College Assistant Professor Department of Biology Research: <i>Structural and Biochemical Basis for Rotavirus NSP4 Viroporin Activity</i> Courses: Research and Seminar (Microbiology and Biochemistry), Microbiology, Cellular Biochemistry, STEM Scholars, Lab-Based Biological Inquiry: Living in a Microbial World (Cheese Extravaganza), Cellular Basis of Life |
| 2018-2019 | Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) Staff Scientist Department of Molecular and Cell Biology Mentor: Nicholas Mitsiades, MD and Salma Kaochar, PhD |
| 2015-2019 | Baylor College of Medicine Human Genome Sequencing Center (HGSC) Pre-Graduate Education Training (PGET) Program Consultant and Instructor Curriculum Design and Postbaccalaureate Instructor |
| 2018 | University of Houston (Main Campus) Adjunct Professor Department of Biology and Biochemistry Intro to Biological Science I Lecture |
| 2018 | Baylor College of Medicine Postdoctoral Associate Department of Pathology Center for Drug Discovery Mentor: Martin Matzuk, M.D., Ph.D. |
| 2016-2018 | University of St. Thomas-Houston Adjunct Professor Department of Biology Intro to Population Biology Lecture, Biochemistry Lab |
| 2015-2017 | Baylor College of Medicine Research Education and Career Horizon- Institutional Research and Academic Career Development Award (REACH-IRACDA) Postdoctoral Research, Teaching, and Curriculum Design Fellowship |

Department of Molecular Virology and Microbiology (MVM)
*Restitution of the Infant Gut Microbiome Following Rotavirus Infection;
Structural Basis for NSP4 Viroporin Activity*
Mentor: Joseph M. Hyser, Ph.D.

2014-2015 alliantgroup, LP
Senior Associate
R&D Tax Credit Study Project Manager & Technical SOP Manual Consultant

2011-2014 University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth)
Postdoctoral Fellow
Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics
*Role of the Phosphotransferase System in Bacillus anthracis Virulence Gene
Regulation*
Mentor: Theresa M. Koehler, Ph.D.

Education

Graduate

2005-2011 Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX
Doctorate of Philosophy- Molecular Virology and Microbiology
Biochemical Characterization of Metallo- β -Lactamase Activity
Mentor: Timothy G. Palzkill, Ph.D.

Undergraduate

2004-2005 Human Genome Sequencing Center (HGSC) Pre-Graduate Education
Training (PGET) Program Postbaccalaureate Fellow
Department of Pediatrics, Section of Infectious Diseases
BCM, Houston, TX
Role of Toll-like Receptors in Bacterial and Viral-Induced Cardiac Injury
Mentors: Jesus G. Vallejo, MD & Debra Murray, Ph.D.

2000-2004 Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU), Prairie View, TX
Bachelor of Science-Biology
Minor in Chemistry

Honors and Awards

2021 Arthur Vining Davis Foundations Periclean Faculty Leader in STEM and
Social Sciences
2020 Cell Mentor 1,000 Inspiring Black Scientists in America
2015-2018 BCM REACH-IRACDA Fellowship
2017 MVM Retreat Book Cover Contest Winner
2016 1st Place Postdoc MVM Departmental Retreat Poster Presentation
2016 BCM Postdoc Seminar Series Finalist
2010 3rd Place Poster Award BCM Graduate Student Research Symposium
2009-2010 Gulf Coast Consortia/Keck Center Pharmacoinformatics Training Program
Fellowship
2009 American Society for Microbiology Corporate Activities Program Student
Travel Grant

Department of Biology

July 22, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am writing to enthusiastically support the upcoming “*What If...?*” program of the Maine Humanities Council. The program’s focus on Afrofuturism texts provides a unique and exciting opportunity for members of the community to envision worlds beyond what we see, within the context of our own culture(s). As a faculty member who works with students who frequently don’t see themselves in the professions that they dream to pursue, I believe that the thought experiment gifted by the genre is an important moment of detoxification and freedom from reality. Many of my students will be the first and/or only of some category, in their professions, and require a degree of confidence and imagination to succeed in those spaces. With these considerations in mind, I look forward to working with the you and the Council to implement guided discussions of selected texts into some of my coursework with STEM students. Overcoming the cognitive dissonance of perceived belonging within science, technology, and medicine, and one’s own cultural identity, are some of the most complex hurdles we face as educators in this area. Our collaborations will undoubtedly increase the success of these students, by providing an optimistic lens for the students to see themselves in all of their facets.

I am happy to support the program in any way that I can. Please also, don’t hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori D. Banks". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lori" being the most prominent part.

Lori D. Banks, PhD
Assistant Professor of Biology and Africana
lbanks@bates.edu

JUDITH S. CASSELBERRY

Associate Professor, Bowdoin College
Africana Studies Department
Brunswick, Maine 04011
Phone: (207) 798-4340
jcasselb@bowdoin.edu

EDUCATION

May 2008 **Yale University** Ph.D. African American Studies and Anthropology
May 2005 **Yale University** M.A. African American Studies
Dec. 2003 **Yale University** M. Phil. Anthropology
May 1999 **Wesleyan University** M.A. Music, Ethnomusicology
May 1990 **Berklee College of Music** B.M. Production and Engineering (*magna cum laude*)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2016-present **Bowdoin College**, Associate Professor of Africana Studies
2012-2013 **Harvard Divinity School**, Women's Studies in Religion Program, Research Associate and Visiting Assistant Professor of Women's Studies and African American Religions
2009-2016 **Bowdoin College**, Assistant Professor of Africana Studies
2008-2009 **Princeton University**, African American Studies, Research Associate and Lecturer in African American Studies and Anthropology.
2006-2007 **Barnard College**, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Africana Studies
2004-2005 **Barnard College**, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Africana Studies
2002-2009 **New York University**, Visiting Instructor at Tisch School of the Arts, Performance Studies Department, Summer Institute.
1999-2001 **Vassar College**, Adjunct Instructor of Music and Africana Studies
1999-2000 **Wesleyan University**, Visiting Instructor of African American Studies

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AND HONORS

2017-2018 **Bowdoin College** Faculty Research Award
2017-2018 **Bowdoin College** Faculty Leave Supplement
2012-2013 **Harvard Divinity School**, Women's Studies in Religion Program, Postdoctoral Fellow
2012-2013 **Ford Foundation** Postdoctoral Fellow
2012-2013 **Louisville Institute** First Book Grant for Minority Scholars
2012-2013 **Bowdoin College** Faculty Leave Supplement 2012-2013 (declined)
2008-2009 **Princeton University**, Center for African American Studies, Postdoctoral Fellow
2005-2006 **Ford Foundation** Doctoral Dissertation Fellow
2005-2006 **Louisville Institute** Honorary Doctoral Dissertation Fellow
2005-2006 **Yale University** Dissertation Fellowship
2005-2006 **Louisville Institute** Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship (declined)
2005-2006 **American Association of University Women** Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship (declined).
2005-2006 **Charlotte W. Newcombe** Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship (declined)
2001-2004 **Yale University** Fellowship
1999 **James T. Koetting Memorial Prize**, Northeast Chapter of the Society for

- Ethnomusicology.
1997-1999 **Wesleyan University** Graduate Assistance-ship Award.
1986-1990 **Berklee College of Music**, Professional Music Scholarship
1986-1990 **Massachusetts State Scholarship Program**, Massachusetts State Scholarship
1989 **Berklee College of Music**, Yamaha Music Technology Award

AWARDS

- 2019: Pneuma Book of the Year award from the Society for Pentecostal Studies for *The Labor of Faith: Gender and Power in Black Apostolic Pentecostalism* (Duke University Press 2017)

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Published Work

Books:

- 2019 *Spirit on the Move: Black Women and Pentecostalism in Africa and the Diaspora*, Co-editors Judith Casselberry and Elizabeth Pritchard (Religious Culture of African and African Diaspora Peoples Series, Duke University Press)
- 2017 *The Labor of Faith: Gender, and Power in Black Apostolic Pentecostalism* (Duke University Press)

Articles and Chapters:

- 2019 “‘The Kingdom in the Midst’: Sounding Bodies, Aesthetic Labor, and the End Times.” *Spirit on the Move: Black Women and Pentecostalism in Africa and the Diaspora*, Co-editors Judith Casselberry and Elizabeth Pritchard (Religious Culture of African and African Diaspora Peoples Series (Duke University Press)
- 2017 “Black Women’s Holy Ghost Work: Then and Now” in *Black Perspectives*, published by African American Intellectual History Society (AAIHS). <http://www.aaihs.org/black-womens-holy-ghost-work-then-and-now/>
- 2014 “Harvesting Souls for Christ: Black Pentecostal Women’s Labor at the Altar.” *Harvard Divinity Bulletin*, Vol. 42, nos. 1 & 2, (Winter/Spring 2014), pp. 33-43.
- 2013 “The Politics of Righteousness: Race and Gender in Apostolic Pentecostalism,” *Transforming Anthropology: Journal of the Association of Black Anthropologists*, Vol. 21, Number 1, pp. 72–86.
- 2012 “Were We Ever Secular?: Interrogating David Brown on Gospel, Blues, and Pop Music” *Theology, Aesthetics, and Culture: Responses to the Work of David Brown*, Robert MacSwain and Taylor Worley, editors (Oxford University Press, 2012).
- 2005 “Koko Taylor.” *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History: The Black Experience in the Americas*, 2nd edition. Colin Palmer, Editor in Chief. Macmillan Reference Books, USA: Michigan.

BOWDOIN COLLEGE

July 27, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am pleased to confirm my commitment to serve as a scholar advisor in support of the Maine Humanities Council two-year programming initiative, “*What if...?*” MHC’s visionary decision to explore the paths to “a more perfect union” through Afrofuturism is particularly insightful. From its inception as a genre of creative-intellectual output, Afrofuturism wrote Black people into science fiction, which had been dominated by futures absent their presence. Internationally acclaimed Afrofuturist author Octavia Butler began writing Black people into the future in the early 1970s. As she told the *New York Times* in a 2000 interview: “When I began writing science fiction, when I began reading, heck, I wasn’t in any of this stuff I read. ... I wrote myself in, since I’m me and I’m here and I’m writing.” Prior to Butler’s literary contributions, musicians incorporated Afrofuturistic philosophy and aesthetics into composition and performance—one of the earliest being Sun Ra—creating an amalgamation of a diasporic past, present, and future. A cursory interpretation might lead one to think Afrofuturism can be reduced to representation. Nothing could be further from the truth.

At its core, Afrofuturism speaks to imagination and liberation and has become a framework for examining the philosophical, theoretical, aesthetic, and cultural strategies brought to bear by Black people through reoccurring cycles of flourishing, crisis, survival, and thriving. UCLA Professor Shana Redmond put it this way. “There’s been a whole re-centering of the scholastic enterprise of Afrofuturism through the route of fiction and of music making... We understand how much value we [as African-descended peoples] hold as a creative force in the world. If we can begin to take that seriously and train toward something different, then the alternative world will follow.” Afrofuturism demands that we think and act across boundaries—of time, academic disciplines, creative genres, and assumptions of identity—enlarging our capacity to see ourselves, each other, and our environment as inextricably connected in our strivings toward freedom and democracy. Today, we as Mainers and national and global citizens face numerous crises—all point to our unhealthy relationships with each other and the planet. The expansive approach of Afrofuturism allows all who engage to imagine new possibilities, new relationships, new futures.

Twelve years of experience teaching in the Africana Studies Department at Bowdoin College, a predominately white institution, fuels my enthusiasm for the potential impact of

DEPARTMENT OF AFRICANA STUDIES

7200 College Station • Brunswick • Maine 04011-8472 • Tel 207.725.5150 • Fax 207.725.3023

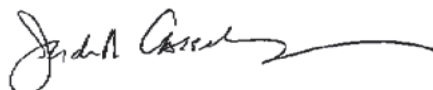
BOWDOIN COLLEGE

the “What If..?” initiative in Maine, an overwhelmingly white state. Each semester I encounter students with little or no exposure to the experiences of African Americans and the philosophy, social, and cultural theory they have produced. Each semester I witness students make profound connections between the values in Black intellectual-creative production and founding principles of democracy. As a result, students see possibilities for bettering all of society. One student put it this way at the end of the semester. “There is so much unlearning we have to do in a racist society, and so getting to see African Diasporic peoples’ resilience and acts of resistance or rebellion was inspiring. It is important in understanding the other systemic issues we have in America.” MHC’s bold decision to center community programming on Afrofuturism as the path to envisioning and creating a more perfect union will give Mainers the opportunity to 1) sit in new worlds with community and unlearn assumptions together; and 2) envision new possibilities for healthy societies through small and large-format public humanities programming.

Under my leadership, Bowdoin College is advancing campus and community programming around *Octavia E. Butler’s Parable of the Sower*, an opera by Toshi Reagon and Bernice Johnson Reagon. Planning that began in 2019 (before the pandemic) is now coming to fruition. During the 2022-2023 academic year, cross-curricular programming will address key themes from Butler’s text—religion, societal inequality, crisis, and solutions— and culminate in a performance of the opera. Cross-curricular programming will be enhanced by campus visits from Toshi through Bowdoin’s McKeen Center for the Common Good. I am so very excited by MHC’s serendipitous focus on Afrofuturism. The possibility of collaborating with MHC in state-wide community programming will extend the reach of these critical topics far beyond mid-coast Maine. How thrilling!!

I am excited to bring my interdisciplinary training and expertise in music, ethnomusicology, African American studies and anthropology, with a focus on African American religious and cultural life, into service for MHC’s “What If...?” initiative. As well, my years as a performer, producer, and educator have honed my skills in creative bridge-building, which I trust will serve MHC in formulating and activating much needed community conversations.

Sincerely,



Judith Casselberry
Associate Professor
Africana Studies Department
jcasselb@bowdoin.edu
207-798-4340

DEPARTMENT OF AFRICANA STUDIES

7200 College Station • Brunswick • Maine 04011-8472 • Tel 207.725.5150 • Fax 207.725.3023

IAN KHARA ELLASANTE, PhD

Assistant Professor
Programs in Gender and Sexuality Studies and Africana
Bates College
iellasan@bates.edu

EDUCATION

- 2019 Ph.D., University of Arizona
American Indian Studies, Minor in Gender and Women's Studies,
Certificate in College Level Teaching
Dissertation: "'We Are *This* People and We Intend To Endure as Such': Black
and Indigenous Peoplehood and Persistence"
- 2013 M.A., American Indian Studies, University of Arizona
- 2005 B.A., Sociology and English, Minors in Spanish and Biology, *magna cum laude*
University of Memphis

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2019-Present Bates College, Lewiston, ME
Assistant Professor, Gender and Sexuality Studies and Africana
Courses Taught: Race, Ethnicity, and Feminist Thought
 Transgender Studies
 Gender Traditions and Transformations in the Americas
 Queer Indigenous Studies
 Trans Narratives
 Gender in American Indian Literature
- 2018 Washington & Jefferson College, Washington, PA
Visiting Scholar and Artist in Residence
- 2016-17 True Colors Fund, New York, NY
Chief Program Officer
- 2011-16 University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ
Southwest Institute for Research on Women
Assistant Research Social Scientist
- 2008-11 Wingspan LGBTQ Community Center, Tucson, AZ
Youth and Family Programs Manager

PUBLICATIONS

Ellasante, I.K. (2021) Radical sovereignty, rhetorical borders, and the everyday decolonial praxis of Indigenous peoplehood and Two-Spirit Reclamation. *Journal of Ethnic and Racial Studies*. (Forthcoming)

Ellasante, I.K. (2020) Dear Trans Studies, Can you do love? *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 7(3), 421-426.

Wheeler, C., Price, C., & Ellasante, I. (2017) Pathways into and out of homelessness for LGBTQ2S youth. In A. Abramovich & J. Shelton (Eds.) *Where Am I Going to Go? Intersectional Approaches to Ending LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness in Canada & the U.S.* (49-61). Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness.

Powell, C., Ellasante, I., Korchmaros, J.D., Haverly, K., & Stevens, S. (2016). iTEAM: Outcomes of an affirming system of care serving LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness. *Journal of Contemporary Social Services Families in Society*, Vol. 97(3), 181-190.

PUBLICATIONS: POETRY

"turn to sugar Diana" and "on forgetting Diana when i cannot see the moon," forthcoming in *Nat. Brut*, November 2021

"let me tell you: Diana" and "are you kidding me Diana," in *We Want It All: An Anthology of Radical Trans Poetics* from Nightboat Books, November 2020. Lambda Literary Awards Finalist

"grandfather: a dialect of water," *New Millennium Writings*, Winner of the 49th New Millennium Award for Poetry, July 28, 2020

"Diana: impending," *The Feminist Wire*, February 2016

"a dialect of water," "earth, water, and what is built," and "pale grandfathers," *Hinchas de Poesia*, Issue 12, April 2014

"Three Poems by Ian Ellasante," *The Feminist Wire*, June 2013

"hinge: tongue | poems and poetics," *The Volta: Evening Will Come*, December 2012

"the grand dole," *cur.ren.cy: poetry and prose for hard times*, December 2011

Bates

Program in Gender and Sexuality Studies

July 27, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I write to express my enthusiastic support of the Maine Humanities Council's new "*What If...?*" initiative, inviting Mainers to imagine "a more perfect union" and a brighter tomorrow. As a poet, educator, and scholar of cultural studies, particularly in the areas race and gender, I would be happy to serve as an advisor for this important project. As a person living, working, and building community in Maine, my gratitude for the ideas motivating this project is heartfelt. I very much look forward to participating in these exciting programs.

This public humanities initiative employs the conceptual boundlessness of Afrofuturism as a model for how to imagine futures, reimagine histories, and challenge assumptions of what is and is not possible in a time to come. Americans in the United States have often looked to the founding of the nation and the principles crystallized in that dramatic era. However, the attainment of "a more perfect union" is not fulfilled by nostalgic yearning for the nation's past, in which inequities and injustices marred the cultural landscape. It is, instead, fulfilled by the continuous work of justice in the present and, importantly, the hopes and visions for the future. While it is essential to interrogate history, to learn the lessons that continually unfold from it, and to recognize its repercussions in the present, the "*What If ...?*" initiative encourages Maine communities to creatively consider the future, with questions like "What kind of future do we want?" and "How do we create a more perfect union for ourselves and our successors?" and to begin to envision what it might take to manifest those futures.

The "*What If...?*" initiative promises to be a powerful endeavor; drawing together Mainers throughout the state to engage a tool to which we all have equal access: our imaginations. Opportunities to share reading, reflection, and discussion will surely help to unify communities in Maine. I am thrilled to offer my full support to this initiative.

Sincerely,



Ian-Khara Ellasante
Assistant Professor
Gender and Sexuality Studies and Africana
iellasan@bates.edu

Abigail Killeen
Department of Theater and Dance
Bowdoin College
akilleen@bowdoin.edu

(207) 708-4172 (Office)

(b) (6)

Academic Appointments

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Bowdoin College, Department of Theater and Dance | Brunswick, ME |
| Professor of Theater | 2021-present |
| Chair of Theater and Dance | 2019-present |
| Associate Professor of Theater | 2016-present |
| Assistant Professor of Theater | 2010-2016 |

Education

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| Brandeis University Professional Actor Training Program MFA, Acting *Ira Gershwin Award | Waltham, MA 2005 |
| New York University, Tisch School of the Arts BFA, Acting *Founder's Day Award | New York, NY 1997 |

Professional Awards & Nominations/Grants & Fundraising/Recognition

Awards & Nominations

2019 Nora, *Doll's House Part 2*, Good Theater, Portland, Maine
Best Actress Nomination, BWW "Broadway World" Awards

2018 Babette's Feast, Off Broadway
Most Unique Theatrical Experience, Off-Broadway Alliance Nomination
Critic's Pick, New York Magazine
Critic's Pick, New York Newsday

2018 Babette's Feast, Portland Stage, Portland, Maine
Portland Phoenix's "Best of Theater" List

2015 Director, *Hamlet*, Fenix Theatre, Portland, Maine
Portland Phoenix's "Best of Theater" List, 2016

2015 Producer and Solo Performer, *The Amish Project*, Portland Stage Studio Theater
Portland Phoenix's "Best of Theater" List, 2016

2012 Lady Macbeth, *Macbeth*
Best Actress, Portland "PEER" Award

Grants & Fundraising

Lead Fundraiser, *Babette's Feast* Off Broadway, \$600,000 commercial raise
Lead Fundraiser, *Babette's Feast* Portland Stage, \$150,000 commercial raise
Chief Investigator, Maine Arts Commission (a subsidiary of the NEA) Project Grant for *The Amish Project*

Recognition

Affiliate Artist at Portland Stage Company
By invitation only, professional. peer-reviewed appointment

Member, National Alliance of Acting Teachers
By invitation only, professional, peer-reviewed membership status

Member, Actors Equity Association
The labor union representing American actors and stage managers in the theater

Professional Producing

2018 *Babette's Feast* Portland, Maine and New York, Off-Broadway
Co-Lead Producer

2015 *The Amish Project* Portland Stage Studio Series
Lead Producer

Professional Acting (2010-2020)

Professional On-Camera:

Southern Women, Union Spies. Elizabeth Van Lew (Lead) in the Emmy-Nominated *America's Hidden Stories*. Lone Wolf Productions for the Smithsonian Channel. February 1, 2021 release.

More Or Less I Am. Ensemble. Compagnia de' Colombari Filmed Production. June 2020 release, International Festival of Arts and Ideas.

Wayfair Commercial. (Lead) US national release, 2019.

Showers of Happiness. (Supporting) Independent Short Film, 2011. Official Selection: LA International Women's Film Festival, Ireland International Film Festival, Garden State International Film Festival. "Best Short" GIAA Film Festival.

Professional Stage:

The Mother. (world premiere) *The Mother Before*, Dramatic Repertory Company, Portland, Maine (2020)
Lisa Muller-Jones, dir.

The Clean House. Lane, Portland Stage Company, Portland, Maine (2019), Cait Robinson, dir.

A Doll's House, Part 2. Nora, Good Theater, Portland, Maine (2019). Stephen Underwood, dir.

Babette's Feast. Martine, Theatre at St. Clement's Off-Broadway, New York, (2018). Karin Coonrod, dir.

Babette's Feast. Martine, Portland Stage Company, (2018). Portland, ME. Karin Coonrod, dir.

The Merchant of Venice. Nerissa, Compagnia de' Colombari, New York (2017). Karin Coonrod, dir.

The May Queen. Jennifer, Good Theater, Portland, ME (2017). Brian Allen, dir.

Sofonisba. Sofonisba, Dramatic Repertory Company, Portland, ME (2016). Sally Wood, dir.

Nina, Helen, The Theater Project, Brunswick, ME (2016). Lisa Muller-Jones, dir.

Everything That Rises Must Converge, Ensemble, Compagnia de' Colombari, New York (2014). Karin Coonrod, dir.

Brighton Beach Memoirs, Blanche, Portland Stage, Portland, ME (2014). Sam Buggelin, dir.

Uncle Vanya, Yelena, The Theater Project, Brunswick, ME (2014). Christopher Price, dir.

As You Like It, Jacques, Fenix Theatre Company, Portland, ME (2014). Peter Brown, dir.

Rancho Mirage (National New Play Network world premiere), Louise, New Repertory Theater, Boston, MA (2013). Robert Walsh, dir.

Love/Sick (world premiere), Woman/Celia/Kelly/Meg/Sam, Portland Stage, Portland, ME (2013). Sally Wood, dir.

Death By Design (professional premiere), Sorel, Good Theater, Portland, ME (2013). Brian Allen, dir.

July 30, 2021

Dr. Hayden Anderson
Executive Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, ME 04102

Dear Dr. Anderson:

It is with enthusiasm I offer my support as a scholar/artist in service of the Maine Humanities Council's NEH grant. MHC's plans to launch robust, state-wide programming that centers Afrofuturism as a lens through which we can consider urgent needs of our time, namely: racial justice, climate justice, food justice, the role of religion and spirituality, and democracy and its possibilities are exciting, thoughtful, and timely. An examination of Afrofuturist works is a fitting and hopeful response to the times in which we find ourselves - a world ravaged by Covid-19 and a nation reckoning with its systems of oppression along with challenged democracy.

As a professor of theater practice I teach from a firmly-held guiding principle: artistic practice, at its best, reflects the world as it is while simultaneously offering a vision of the better future we hope to create. By doing so, artistic practice sows hope without ignoring truth, and harnesses our collective imagination toward the good, the true, and the beautiful. Afrofuturism supports this guiding principle, and I can think of no better response to the last sixteen months than to delve into this rich genre. In your words, Afrofuturist works "invite the reader to imagine how life should be. They take on recognizable systems of oppression and flips these systems on their head. They challenge us to confront oppression and transcend boundaries." This strong alignment with my teaching approach and classes invite many opportunities for collaboration, not the least of which is the MHC's plans to incorporate artists like Toshi Reagan and Daniel Minter into their programming. When the arts and humanities inform and enrich one another, transformation becomes possible.

In 2020 the Washington University in St. Louis released a statement on the value of the humanities in times of crisis. The authors (chairs and directors across the university) assert: "humanistic inquiry offers at least two productive responses in our contemporary moment: that of a pathway of personal and collective regeneration in the face of trauma, challenge and change, and also a range of options for critical reflection as we evaluate both our near and longer-term futures."¹ The arts and humanities teach us how to be the people we want to become. Organizations like the MHC further the work of the humanities by extending the invitation beyond the academy and into the community.

¹ Allman, Jean, et al. "A Statement on the Value of the Humanities in Times of Crisis." www.wustl.edu. June 2, 2020. <https://humanities.wustl.edu/news/statement-value-humanities-times-crisis>

If funded, the MHC anticipates making Afrofuturism and its redemptive point of view available to thousands of Mainers through their tried-and-true community programs, bridging the severe economic and educational disparities in our state. The MHC's forty-year history of programming in workplaces, libraries, adult education programs, and correctional facilities (among others) assures me that Mainers of all different backgrounds will be given the potential to encounter Afrofuturism in a contextualized, specific, and powerful way - many for the very first time.

It is unfair to demand a better future from citizens without giving them the tools to imagine it. This two-year project gives Mainers access to the tools they need. Opportunities for study and reflection should not just be relegated to the academy. MHC has a proven record of charting a measurable and meaningful course for communities all over our state, and it is my wholehearted belief this initiative should be funded.

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Abigail Killeen', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Abigail Killeen
Professor of Theater and Chair of Theater and Dance
Bowdoin College
Brunswick, ME

Daniel Minter

(b) (6)

DMINTER@MECA.EDU

DANIELMINTER.NET

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SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 "Rootwork", Lynden Sculpture Garden Galleries, Milwaukee, WI
- 2020 "STATES OF...?", Greenhut Galleries, Portland, Maine
- 2019 "Othered: Displaced from Malaga", Soren Christensen Gallery, New Orleans, LA
- 2018 "Othered: Displaced from Malaga", University of Southern Maine Art Gallery, Gorham, ME
- 2017 "A Distant Holla", Soren Christensen Gallery, New Orleans, LA
- 2017 "CARVING", Northwest African American Museum, Seattle, Washington
- 2015 "Water Road", Soren Christensen Gallery, New Orleans, Louisiana
- 2014 "The Art of Daniel Minter", Reed Fine Art Gallery, University of Maine, Presque Isle
- 2012 "A Shallow Home", Soren Christensen Gallery, New Orleans, Louisiana
- 2011 "A Heavy Grace, A Shallow Home", Hammonds House Museum, Atlanta, Georgia
- 2010 "Beyond the Waves", The BackStage Gallery at Deertrees, Harrison, Maine
- 2008 "A Shallow Home", Northwest African-American Museum, Seattle, Washington
- 2008 "A Shallow Home", Museum of African Culture, Portland, Maine
- 2005 "A Heavy Grace", Running With Scissors Gallery, Portland, Maine
- 2005 "A Heavy Grace", Bates College, Lewiston, Maine
- 2001 Buell Children's Museum, Bolder, Colorado
- 1997 Bambara Gallery, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
- 1996 "Crossing Paths" MIA Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 1994 MIA Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 1993 "Mixed Media Paintings on Carved Wood," Northview Gallery, Portland, OR
- 1992 "Cross Currents," Index Gallery, Clark College, Vancouver, WA
- MIA Gallery, Seattle, WA

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2020 "Stories of Maine: An Incomplete History", Portland Museum of Art, Portland, ME
- 2020 "Queen", The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit, MI
- 2019 "New Aquisitions Exhibition", Portland Museum of Art, Portland, ME
- 2019 "Framing Maine": Artist's Perspectives on Place. University of Maine Orono
- 2018 Portland Museum of Art Biennial, Portland, ME
- 2018 "Our Voice" Celebrating the Coretta Scott King Awards, NCCIL, Traveling Exhibit
- 2017 Greenhut Galleries, Portland, ME
- 2017 "A Distant Holla", Abyssinian Meeting House, Portland, ME
- 2016 8th Biennial Invitational Portland Show, Greenhut Galleries, Portland, ME
- 2014 7th Biennial Invitational Portland Show, Greenhut Galleries, Portland, ME
- 2013 "Go Figure" Show, Greenhut Galleries, Portland, ME
- 2012 "The Material Calls", The Hedreen Gallery, Seattle, WA
- 2012 6th Biennial Invitational Portland Show, Greenhut Galleries, Portland, ME
- 2010 "Painters, Players&Poets" Traveling exhibit, Maine, Canada
- 2008 "Our Stories," Block Print Images, Museum of African Culture. Portland, ME
- 2008 "Linear Perspectives," Maine College of Art June Fitzpatrick Gallery, Portland, ME
- 2006-2008 "This is Our Land", Meridian International Center, Washington, DC

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS CONTINUED

- 2007 “Printmakers”, Gallery 170, Damariscatta, Maine
- 2006 “Maine Printmakers:1980-2005”, Center for Maine Contemporary Art, Rockport ME
- 2005-2008 “Picture Stories”, Smith Kramer Fine Art Services, Traveling Exhibit: Various Cities
- 2003 “DOCET - Idee e materiali per l'educazione e la didattica”
“II Pianeta Variopinto - Illustratori dal Mondo” Bolonga, Italia
- 2001 “The National Black Fine Art Show”, NY, NY”
- 2000 “Edwin T. Pratt Memorial Exhibit,” Seattle, WA
“The National Black Fine Art Show”, NY,NY
- 1999 “Edwin T. Pratt Memorial Exhibit,” Pratt Gallery at CoCA, Seattle, WA
“The National Black Fine Art Show”, NY, NY
- 1998 “Altered Beliefs”, City Gallery East, Atlanta, GA
“BWAC Pier Show 6”, Brooklyn, New York
- 1997 “Twenty Years in the Arts: Selected Works by Pratt Alumni”, Seattle, Wa
Mia Gallery Artist: A Group Exhibition, Seattle, Wa
- 1996 “Edwin T. Pratt Memorial Exhibit,” Pratt Fine Arts Center, Seattle, WA
- 1994 Galleria Casa do Indio, Salvador-Bahia, Brazil “Cultura Negra Atraves Das Artes” Museu da Cidade, Salvador-Bahia,Brazil
Galleria Portal da Cor, Salvador-Bahia, Brazil “I Bienam-Bienal Internacional Afro-Americana de Cultura,”
Museu da Cidade, Salvador- Bahia,Brazil
- 1994 “Bienal Internacional Afro-Americana de Cultura,” Universidade Federal Da Bahia a
Escola De Belas Artes, Salvador-Bahia, Brazil
- 1994 “A Matter of Colors III,” Pacific Arts Center, Seattle, WA
- 1994 “Face of the Gods: Art and Altars of Africa and the African Americans,” Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA
- 1993 “The Art of Microsoft,” Henry Gallery; University of Washington, Seattle, WA

PERMANENT COLLECTIONS | PUBLIC ART

- Bates College Museum of Art, Lewiston, Maine
- Northwest African American Museum, Seattle, WA
- Portland Museum of Art, Portland Maine
- The David C. Driskell Center for the Study of the Visual Arts and Culture of African Diaspora, University of Maryland
- Seattle Arts Commission, Seattle, WA
- Microsoft Corporation, Seattle, WA
- Arts In Embassies— Gabon, West Africa
- 2011 Kwanzaa Stamp, United States Postal Service
- Malaga Island Freedom Trail, Maine
- Portland Freedom Trail, Portland, ME
- “Mothers Garden”, Portland, ME
- 2004 Kwanzaa Stamp, United States Postal Service Sixteen
- Paths, Seattle Arts Commission
- Art That Heals, Seattle Art Museum
- Lavizzo Water Play Park, Pratt Park, Seattle, WA
- Poets Way, Boulder, CO

GRANTS + AWARDS

- 2021 The Joyce Foundation 2021 Joyce Award
- 2019 Recipient Honorary Doctorate of Arts, Maine College of Art
- 2018 University of Southern Maine Artist In Residence
- 2016 Residency, Hewnoaks Artist Colony, Maine
- 2013 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor, Ellen’s Broom
- 2011 Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil, Artist Exchange Project
- 2010 Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Artist -in- Residence, Sapelo Island, Georgia
- 2008 James Washington House and Studio, Artist -in- Residence, Seattle WA
- 1997 Seattle Arts Commission, Seattle Artists 1997 Visual Arts Category, Artist -in- Residence,
- 1994 Tacoma Art Museum, Artist -in- Residence, Pacific Arts Center
National Endowment for the Arts and Arts International, Travel Grants Fund for Artists, Salvador Bahia
Brazil



Daniel Minter

July 27, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
647 Brighton, Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I'm writing to you to express my full and enthusiastic support for the Maine Humanities Council's 2-year focus on Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism by way of the theme *What If...?* As a genre, Afrofuturism over a century of creative expression, including literature, music, and art. As an academic field, it is interdisciplinary in nature, and attracted scholars working in the fields of religion, science, film, music, literature, fine arts, and history (to name a few). Bringing the Afrofuturism to the attention of all Mainers in this particular moment brings Mainers into conversations that have been happening all over the country and all over the world as people have been looking towards texts like Octavia Butler's *Parables* series and other Afrofuturist texts to help them find a way forward in these current times. Afrofuturist texts are a perfect way to reflect on the idea of *A More Perfect Union*, because the writers, artists, and musicians who are rooted in the genre are all using their creative work to explore a more just and equitable future for Black Diasporic people and, by extension, for all people.

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danielminter.net

(b) (6)

For me, the purpose of art is to give people ways of using their culture to solve everyday problems. And, as I see it, Afrofuturism is an expression of this very thing: African Diasporic people digging into their histories, legacies, and cultures to imagine/re-imagine new possibilities. For me, the purpose of art is to give people ways of using their culture to solve everyday problems. And, as I see it, Afrofuturism is an expression of this very thing: African Diasporic people digging into their histories, legacies, and cultures to imagine/re-imagine new possibilities. As a visual artist my work begins as personal narrative, the subject can seem broad but revolves around my interpretation of a forty year old dream where using a natural manipulation of sub-atomic particles I am able to connect with all of the organism and materials on our planet. This also gave me a connection to specific ancestors and thus they gained vision through me and the future. This inner-mind experience helped me to re-examine and reinterpret some of the African American lore of the south that I learned as a child. I would loosely apply spiritual, biological and “scientific” concepts to that lore as well as historical events that I might represent in my artwork.

I look forward to serving as an advisor for the second year of this grant project. I am excited to spend time getting grounded and rooted in two Maine towns with a rich tradition of engagement in the arts and humanities - Belfast and Bangor. I'm looking forward to establishing meaningful connections with people and organizations who are collaborative partners with the Maine Humanities Council. The community conversations that I will plan and facilitate will invite people to engage with the rich culture and history of Black Diasporic people through Afrofuturist themed art. It is my hope that the people I engage with during this project will come to understand the radically inclusive Afrofuturist vision African Diasporic people have of the world and will use what they see expressed in this art to help them create more inclusive and sustainable communities.

Sincerely yours,

Daniel Minter

Artist

(b) (6)

danielminter.net

(b) (6)

Robert G. Morrison
Religion Department
Bowdoin College
Brunswick, ME 04011
office: (207) 798-4237
home: (b) (6)
electronic mail: rgmorrison@bowdoin.edu

Employment

July, 2008- present

Bowdoin College: George Lincoln Skolfield, Jr. Professor of Religion (July 1, 2017-); Professor of Religion (July 1, 2015-); Associate Professor of Religion with tenure (2008-15).

August, 2001- August-2008

Whitman College: Assistant Professor of Religion (2001-7) and Associate Professor of Religion, with tenure (2007-8). Courses included Arabic language.

August, 2000- August, 2001

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign: Visiting Assistant Professor of Religious Studies.

August, 1999- May, 2000

Cornell University: Lecturer of Arabic. Fall courses: **Advanced Arabic, Elementary Qur'anic and Classical Arabic.** Spring courses: **Elementary Qur'anic and Classical Arabic, and Elementary Arabic.**

Education

September, 1991-October, 1998

Columbia University: Ph.D. in Middle East and Asian Languages and Cultures. Dissertation entitled: *The Intellectual Development of Nizam al-Din al-Nisaburi (d. 1329 A. D.)* **M. Phil** awarded May, 1994.

June, 1992- June, 1993

Center for Arabic Study Abroad at The American University of Cairo: Full-year fellow. Audited philosophy courses at **Cairo University.**

September 1987- June, 1991

Harvard University: A.M. and A.B. (magna cum laude) in History of Science.

Books

Islam and Science: The Intellectual Career of Niẓām al-Dīn al-Nīsābūrī (Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2007; paperback 2011); 301 + viii pp. Awarded a 2009 World Prize for the Book of the Year of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Islamic studies.

Reviewed by: Julio Samsó in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (2010): pp. 344-6

Nahyan Fancy in *Journal of Islamic Studies* (2010): pp. 421-4

Scott Trigg in *Isis* (2011): pp. 561-2

John Walbridge in *The Journal of Mind and Behavior* (2012): pp. 119-22

The Light of the World: Astronomy in al-Andalus. Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 2016. 429 + xiv pp. In the series on post-classical Islamic thought.

Reviewed by: Ruth Glasner in *Nazariyat* III, 2 (2017): 146-9

Noel Swerdlow in *Journal for the History of Astronomy* (2017): 358-61

Ilana Wartenberg in <https://readingreligion.org/books/light-world>
Bernard Goldstein in *Aleph*

Monograph-length Journal Article

“Qutb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī’s Hypotheses for Celestial Motions,” in *Journal for the History of Arabic Science* XIII (2005): 21-140

Co-Edited Book

Texts in Transit: Intellectual Exchange in the Eastern Mediterranean, co-edited with Y. Tzvi Langermann. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016. 264pp.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

- "Conceptions of the Soul in Abraham Ibn Ezra's Poetry," *Edebiyat* XI (2000): 239-59
- "The Portrayal of Nature in a Medieval Qur'an Commentary," *Studia Islamica* XCIV (2002): 115-38
- "The Response of Ottoman Religious Scholars to European Science," *Archivum Ottomanicum* XXI (2003): 187-95
- "The Role of Portrayals of Nature in Medieval Qur'an Commentaries," *Arabica* LII (2005): 182-203
- "The Solar Model in Joseph Ibn Nahmias' *The Light of the World*," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* XV (2005): 57-108
- "Science and Theodicy in Q 2:6/7," in Jitse M. van der Meer and Scott Mandelbrote (eds.): *Nature and Scripture in the Abrahamic Religions* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2008); This chapter was subject to three external reviews
- "Discussions of Astrology in Early *Tafsīr*," *Journal of Qur'ānic Studies* XI (2009): 49-71
- "An Astronomical Treatise by Mūsā Jālīnūs alias Moses Galeano," *Aleph: Historical Studies in Science and Judaism* X/2 (2011): 385-413
- "Natural Theology and the Qur'ān," *Journal of Qur'ānic Studies* XV (2013): pp. 1-22
- "A Scholarly Intermediary Between the Ottoman Empire and Renaissance Europe," *Isis* CV (2014): 32-57
- "The Position of the Jews as Scientific Intermediaries in the European Renaissance," accepted by *Science in Context*; withdrawn to be part of F. Jamil Ragep and Rivka Feldhay (eds.): *Before Copernicus* (McGill-Queens University Press, 2017): 198-214
- "Religion and Science in the Eastern Mediterranean," *Isis* XVII (2016): 579-82
- "Mūsā Cālīnūs' *Treatise on the Natures of Medicines and Their Use*," in *Nazariyat* III,1 (2017): 77-136
- "Cosmology and Cosmic Order in Islamic Astronomy," in *Early Science and Medicine* (2019): 340-66
- "Tables for Computing Lunar Crescent Visibility in *Adderet Eliyahu*," *SCIAMVS* XX (2019): 157-201
- "Cosmology, Cosmography, and *Kalām* from Samarqand to Istanbul," *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World* (2020): 1-30 (published online in advance), and 9 (2021): 308–337
- "Cosmic Order in the Microcosm: Ethical Guidance in Post-Classical Astronomy Texts," forthcoming in *Oriens*

Bowdoin College

July 24, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib:

I am writing to convey my enthusiasm for the Maine Humanities Center's (MHC hereafter) grant application to support programming on Afrofuturism. I have supported MHC in the past by doing public lectures on the contemporary Middle East. I look forward to lending my support, in any way possible, to this project as Afrofuturism provides compelling answers to the question 'what if?'

Afrofuturism is a contemporary movement in literature, cinema, and music that interrogates past racial and economic inequalities through imagined futures. Afrofuturist perspectives are critical for the present because Afrofuturism encourages us to be open to better ways of doing things. The potential of Afrofuturism to contribute to current discussions of race and inequality became clear to me when, during the past academic year, I taught Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower in Religion, Nature, and the Environment*. I found that the novel, though a bracing read, succeeded beyond my wildest dreams because Butler shifted the reader's focus to the future. Since a core aspect of the grant proposal is to have Toshi Reagon speak to audiences in Maine about her operatic adaptation of the novel, I would like to say more about why *Parable of the Sower* had such an impact on me and my students.

As a specialist in Islam and science, I developed the course *Religion, Nature, and the Environment* to show students that the way they think about nature and the environment is religious in that we long for a cooler past in which Edenic nature was less despoiled. While modern environmentalism has religious dimensions, we found that religion has also contributed to environmental degradation in the past. At times, Christianity, the desire to dominate women, and exploit the environment for economic gain were intertwined. Christianity was not always the problem, nor have, say, Asian religions always been the solution. Because Butler, in *Parable of the Sower*, reflects at length on religious institutions and religious doctrines, and their relationship to economic inequality and racial injustice, the reader learns much about how concepts of gender, economics, and the environment affect racial dynamics. *Parable of the Sowers* emphasizes to the reader that, as we seek to imagine a better future, everything is related. The same socio-economic forces that feed racial oppression and economic inequality also endanger the livelihoods of so many Mainers. Moreover, the apocalyptic portions of *Parable of the Sower* portray the all-too-real consequences of pretending that existing structures do not need to change.

Department of Religion

Bowdoin College

The current manufactured outrage over critical race theory is, of course, insidious. Even if that misinformation can be beaten back, I am concerned that the broader conversation will become one-dimensional. Because I take a historical approach in my teaching and research, critical race theory has given me numerous insights into the past. But Afrofuturism reminds us that it's all about the future and that the future can be better for *all* of us than the present. The novel teaches the reader that individuals have the power to shape their own societies and religions and, hence, their futures. *Parable of the Sower* was a successful part of my course because it came near the end, after we studied religion and the environment in the past and present. I can't wait to Toshi Reagon talk about her operatic version of the novel!

Several years ago, in addition to my work with the MHC, I led a discussion on Alan Lightman's *The Accidental Universe* as the 'Fall Science Read' at the Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick. One way in which I might contribute to MHC's programming around 'What If' would be to lead book groups about either *Parable of the Sower* and/or the sequel *Parable of the Talents*. I would be very interested in seeing how communities in Maine respond to Butler's vision for the future and believe that we all would benefit from a sustained engagement with her challenging, but expansive outlook. Book groups demand a commitment that attending a lecture does not.

I am also mightily impressed by the expertise, vision and imagination of the authors of the grant proposal and would be thrilled help out in any way they see fit.

Sincerely,

Robert G. Morrison
George Lincoln Skolfield, Jr. Professor of Religion
Chair, Department of Religion

Department of Religion

7300College Station • Brunswick • Maine 04011-8473 • Tel 207.725-3465 • Fax 207.725-3495

SAM PLASENCIA

Colby College
Department of English
4000 Mayflower Hill
Waterville, Maine 04901

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Email: splasenc@colby.edu

CURRENT POSITION: Visiting Assistant Professor, 18th-and 19th-Century Transatlantic Literatures

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in English, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign IL, 2020

M.A. in English, University of Florida, Gainesville FL, 2011

B.A. in English and Women's and Gender Studies, Rutgers University, New Brunswick NJ, 2008

RELEVANT TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Colby College, 2020-current

| | |
|------------|---|
| 2022 | Phillis Wheatley and Her Literary Afterlives |
| 2021, 2022 | Kendrick Lamar's Religious Rhetoric |
| 2022 | Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom |
| 2021, 2020 | Principles of Writing: The Coloniality of Writing Instruction |
| 2021, 2020 | Early African American Literature: An Inscription of Fugitivity Existence |
| 2021 | Black Speculative Fiction |
| 2021 | US Protest Writing: Revolutionary War to the Black Panthers |

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 2013-2020

Graduate Instructor (full instructional responsibility)

| | |
|------------|---|
| 2019 | Early African American Literature: Black Fugitivity |
| 2018 | Introduction to Fiction: Fiction and Race |
| 2016, 2017 | Principles of Writing: The Coloniality of Writing Instruction |
| 2013-2016 | Writing and Research: The Politics of Rhetoric |
| 2014 | Introduction to English Literature: Gender Contestations |

GUEST LECTURES & TEACHING

Two classes on Sylvia Wynter's "No Humans Involved: An Open Letter to My Colleagues" for a class entitled *Incarceration and Human Rights*, sponsored by Colby College's Oak Institute for Human Rights. March 30 and April 6, 2021. Virtual

"'Slave wom[en] ought not to be judged by the same standard as others': Ethical Judgment in Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*." Eng255 Survey of American Literature I. December 2, 2020, and December 6, 2017. Virtual and Face-to-Face Guest Lecturer for Justine Murison.

"'Oh! My Coloured Brethren, All over the world, when shall we arise from this death-like apathy?': Melville's Concept of the Political." Eng255 Survey of American Literature I. November 18, 2015. Guest Co-Lecturer with Andrew Santana Kaplan for Derrick Spires.

"Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette* and Early National Politics." Eng255 Survey of American Literature I. February 26, 2014. Guest Lecturer for Justine Murison.

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

- forthcoming “Teaching Phillis Wheatley Through Black Liberation Theology.” *Early American Literature* (Winter) 2022
- forthcoming “Metalinguistic Analysis in the Orations on the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1808-1823.” *Early American Literature*. Vol 57. No 2 (July) 2022
- forthcoming “The Year In Conferences—2020.” Co-authored. *ESQ: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century American Literature and Culture*.
- “The Black Radical Tradition in *The Age of Phillis*.” *Studies in Religion and the Enlightenment*. Vol 2., No. 2 (Spring) 2021. 22-26.
- “The *Age of Phillis* in Forms, Found and Free.” Co-authored with Jenny Factor. *Studies in Religion and the Enlightenment*. Vol 2., No. 2 (Spring) 2021. 27-31.
- “Staging Enfleshment: Towards Lines of Flight in Harriet Wilson’s *Our Nig; or Sketches from the life of a Free Black* (1859).” *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers*. Vol 37. No. 2 (December) 2020.
- “Lost in Translation: Reclaiming the Past for the Future of Psychoanalysis.” *Kritik*. Official Blog of the Unit for Criticism and Interpretative Theory at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. 2019

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Research

| | |
|---------|--|
| 2021 | Rare Book School, Discretionary Directors’ Scholarship |
| 2018 | UIUC, English Department, Fellowship |
| 2016-19 | UIUC, English Department, Travel Award |
| 2014 | UIUC, English Department, Summer Fellowship |
| 2013 | UIUC, English Department, Travel Award |
| 2007 | Toni Cade Bambara Prize in African American Literature |

Teaching

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 2022 | Freedom and Captivity Humanities Lab, \$3000 Course Development Grant |
| 2021 | Teaching and Learning @ Colby (TAL@C) Fellowship |
| 2017-2018 | List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent by Their Students |
| 2015 | List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent by Their Students |

SERVICE COMMITMENTS

| | |
|------------|--|
| Fall 2020 | Ad-hoc Committee for C19 POC Mutual Aid |
| 2020-2023 | Anti-Racist Pedagogy Committee (Colby) |
| 2016-2017 | English Graduate Student Association, Grievance Committee (UIUC) |
| 2013-2016 | Student Rhetoric Conference, Judge, (UIUC) |
| Sumer 2014 | Formal Departmental Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (UIUC) |
| 2013-2014 | Development of First Year Writing Student Learning Outcomes (UIUC) |



COLBY COLLEGE
5250 Mayflower Hill
Waterville, Maine 04901-8852
TEL 207-859-5250
english@colby.edu

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

July 16, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am thrilled to offer my services as a scholar in support of the Maine Humanities Council's two-year initiative of public humanities programming entitled "*What If...?*" I am especially excited that MHC has decided to inspire visions of a more perfect union through Afrofuturism, a transdisciplinary method of thought and creative writing that recovers repressed racial histories in order to image alternative futures. As Professor Sheeree Renée Thomas argues, Afrofuturism "imagines that what was once presumed lost, forgotten, soiled, and stripped away can be found, can be reclaimed and resurrected, remixed and revived." Put differently, this is both a project of excavation and invention: a method of re-collecting diverse human histories so as to build a future where resources are more equitably distributed, the arts are valued and funded, environments are respected, healing is nurtured, and all lives are structurally cherished.

This project promises to be especially significant for Maine, the most racially homogenous state in the US, with 96.9% of its population identifying as white. Such sameness has wide-ranging consequences—most significant, for this project, is the way racial uniformity shapes our cognitive and imaginative capacities. Robin DiAngelo has convincingly argued that living and studying in racially homogenous neighborhoods and schools generates "white fragility": a lack of psychological and emotional tolerance for any discussion about race. The recent public outcry against a strand of critical legal studies that is rarely taught in undergraduate settings—let alone K-12 schools—demonstrates that as a country we have a painfully low threshold for honest conversations about our history. Yet, without this rigorously honest reckoning we cannot, in good faith, make the structural changes needed for a genuinely equitable and just society. A more perfect union requires a citizenry psychologically and emotionally ready to accept a currently imperfect state, and open to imagining what does not currently exist and perhaps never has. The MHC initiative would introduce Mainers to a form of thought and writing that can expand the horizon of our imaginations.

As a scholar of African American intellectual history and western racial formation, I believe in the importance of MHC's initiative. Indeed, it mirrors the kind of work I have been doing in college classrooms for over a decade. I understand my responsibility to students as two-fold: I offer learned exposure to texts and histories that are too often held behind pay walls, and gently encourage a confrontation with how our ability to think and manifest societal transformation has been delimited by western norms. A public humanities initiative like MHC's brings this labor of love to



COLBY COLLEGE
5250 Mayflower Hill
Waterville, Maine 04901-8852
TEL 207-859-5250
english@colby.edu

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

publics for whom higher education might be inaccessible—this project thus promises to practice what it preaches.

I am eager to offer my expertise in Black writing and passion for teaching to the MHC's "*What if...*" initiative. Although this is my first formal engagement with public humanities, the arc of my intellectual journey has always bent in this direction. Since before I knew public humanities existed, I have been organizing reading groups and offering my expertise (including book recommendations, mini-lectures, and written analyses on current events) to my varied networks of friends and families on multiple media platforms. The prospect of doing this work with a formal organization—and one that has a record of exceptional programming, like MHC—is invigorating. I look forward to working with MHC's leadership and other project advisors to design reading lists, organize collaborative learning environments, and deliver interactive presentations. My understanding of how the west invented race and deployed it as a tool of domination and cultural homogenization, alongside my extensive experience teaching literature—Afrofuturism included—enables me to help expand MHC's successful history of discuss-based public programs beyond classical literatures.

This program series offers a rare opportunity to Mainers: a gentle and secure encounter with our imaginative limitations and a guided exploration of future possibilities beyond what we've dreamed of.

I wholeheartedly support the democratic, ethical, and cognitive significance of this initiative and am excited to play the fullest possible role in planning and bringing this exciting line of public programs to Maine.

Sincerely,

Sam Plasencia
Visiting Assistant Professor
English Department
Colby College
splasenc@colby.edu

(b) (6)

TOSHI REAGON Singer/Composer/Musician/Producer/Curator

SELECTED CURATORIAL WORK/PRODUCER OF LIVE EVENTS

2020 Sacred Transmission, NYUAD Arts Center
2021 Sowers + Seeds A Right Now Conversation w/ Octavia E Butler's Parable of the Sower (Film Presentation)
2021 Toshi Reagon and BIGLovely, Octavia E. Butler Conference (Film Presentation)
2020 Toshi Reagon Post Election Show Live Streamed from Joe's Pub
2020 President's Series: Octavia E. Butler's Parables: A Music Talk with Toshi Reagon, Pasadena, CA
2019 Soul Mechanism, Carnegie Hall Migration Festival
2019 The Alchemy of Change: A Parable Becoming, UNC Carolina Performing Arts, Chapel Hill
2017- Octavia E. Butler's Parable of the Sower, Wise Reagon Arts, Currently Touring
2016-Sacred Revolution, The Music of Mahalia Jackson, Mavis Staples, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Schomburg Center, NY
2014 Post Valentines Day LoveFest, Joes Pub, NY, NY
1985-Present Toshi Reagon Birthday Concerts

LIVE PERFORMANCE

Selected Music Festivals

Apollo WOW Festival
Black Lily Music and Film Festival, Philadelphia, PA
Celebrate Brooklyn, Brooklyn, NY
Clearwater's Great Hudson River Revival, Croton, NY
Damrosch Park Bandshell, Lincoln Center Out of Doors, NYC, NY
Earthdance Festival, Laytonville, CA
Edmonton Folk Festival
Highmark Blues and Heritage Festival, Virtual Performance
Hopkins Center for the Arts, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH
Les Nuits de Fourvière, Lyon, France
Mary Lou Williams Jazz Festival, Kennedy Center, Washington DC
Melbourne Arts Festival, Melbourne, Australia
Moers Festival, Moers Germany
Newport Folk Festival, Newport RI
Playboy Jazz Festival, Hollywood Bowl, Los Angeles, CA
Sisterfire Festival, Takoma Park, Md
Schomberg Center Women's Jazz Festival, NYC, NY
Strawberry Music Festival, Yosemite National Park
Summer Stage, NYC, NY
Under the Radar Festival, The Public Theater, NYC, NY
Vancouver Folk Festival, Vancouver, BC
Vancouver Jazz festival, Vancouver, BC
Winter Jazz Fest, New York, New York

THEATER/DANCE

Selected Theatrical Tours

Octavia E. Butler's Parable of the Sower. Co Composer, Music Director, Musician, Vocalist, Producer. 2017-present
Arts Emerson, Boston MA
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor MI
Krannert Center, Champaign-Urbana, IL
The Strathmore Center and The Wolly Mammoth, Washington, DC.
Center for the Art of Performance, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA
The O'Shaughnessy at St. Catherine's University
The Public Theater, Under the Radar Festival, NY, NY
The Holland Festival, Amsterdam, NL
Singapore Festival of the Arts, Singapore

AWARDS and FELLOWSHIPS

2021 Herb Alpert Award in the Arts
2021 APAP Award of Merit For Achievement in the Performing Arts
2020 The Met Civic Practice Partnership
2019 Creative Futures Fellowship, Carolina Performing Arts, UNC Chapel Hill, NC
2018 United States Artist Fellow
2017 Andrew W. Mellon DisTil Fellowship, Carolina Performing Arts, UNC Chapel Hill, NC
2015 Board Recommended Grant, Nathan Cummings Foundation
2015 Ford Foundation Art of Change Fellow
2015 McCormack Residency Artist- Scholar, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY
2010 OutMusic Heritage Award
2007 National Women's History Month Honoree
2007 Black Lily Music and Film Festival Award for Outstanding Performance
2004 NYFA Fellowship for Musical Composition

RECORDINGS

2021 Beautiful World
2021 Long Water Song, Marine Mammal Meditation w/ Alexis Pauling Gumbs
2018 SPIRITLAND. Self Release
2011 There and Back Again. Self Release
2009 Lava: We Become. Self Release
2008 Until We're Done. Self Release
2005 Have You Heard. Righteous Babe Records
2004 I Be Your Water. Self Release
2002 TOSHI. Razor and Tie
2001 Africans in America Soundtrack w/Bernice Johnson Reagon, Various artists. Ryco
1999 The Righteous Ones. Razor and Tie
1997 Kindness. Smithsonian Folkways
1994 The Rejected Stone. self-released
1990 Justice. Flying Fish Records

July 29, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am writing to confirm my commitment to working with the Maine Humanities Council on your *What If...* initiative and to express my support for your grant application to the National Endowment for the Humanities. Using the genre of Afrofuturism as a lens to explore the ways we can collectively work to create a more just, equitable, sustainable society is both historically relevant and highly relevant to this current moment. I am excited to serve as an advisor and a facilitator for the first year of this grant.

I will be visiting Maine several times in 2022-2023 as part of a fellowship with the McKean Center at Bowdoin College. During my time in Maine, I look forward to facilitating a total of three community conversations for the MHC in different Maine towns. These conversations will be grounded in Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower*, and will serve to explore the themes and lay some groundwork for the run of the stage performance in Portland in the spring of 2023 of *Octavia E. Butler's Parable of the Sower Opera*, which I co-authored with my mother, Bernice Johnson Reagon.

The *What If...* community conversations will bring the themes present in the *Parable* text into context with Maine and Mainers – allowing them to consider their lives, their activism, their work, and the equity, justice, and change they are attempting to create in the world.

I am thrilled that these conversations are going to be happening in towns outside the population center of Portland. I know that Maine is a large and mostly rural state – I am interested in learning what social justice work and community looks like in these places. I know that there are communities in Maine that are working towards food justice, climate justice, and racial justice in innovative ways that make sense in their own community contexts, and I look forward to hearing from the folks doing this work. I also know that change that happens in community takes time and takes steadfastness – I am very much looking forward to moving outside of the Bowdoin College community and into communities where people are rooted and grounded for a longer haul.

Sincerely,

Toshi Reagon

Toshi Reagon
Singer/Composer/Musician/Producer/Curator

ARIELLE SAIBER

Professor of Romance Languages & Literatures

Department of Romance Languages & Literatures
Bowdoin College
Brunswick, ME 04011
asaiber@bowdoin.edu

EDUCATION

| | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| Yale University | Ph.D., Italian Literature | 1999 |
| Yale University | M.A., Italian Literature | 1994 |
| Hampshire College | B.A., Philosophy | 1993 |
| Università di Bologna | Four courses in Philosophy | 1991 – 1992 |

EMPLOYMENT

| | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Speroni Chair in Medieval & Renaissance Literature & Culture | UCLA (Fall 2018) |
| Professor of Romance Languages & Literatures | Bowdoin College (2017 –) |
| Associate Professor of Romance Languages & Literatures | Bowdoin College (2006 – 2017) |
| Distinguished Visiting Professor of Italian | UCSC (Jan. 2006) |
| Visiting Assistant Professor of Italian | Yale University (Fall 2005) |
| Assistant Professor of Romance Languages & Literatures | Bowdoin College (2001 – 2005) |
| Visiting Assistant Professor of Romance Languages & Literatures | Bowdoin College (1999 – 2001) |

PUBLICATIONS

Monographs

- *Measured Words: Computation and Writing in Renaissance Italy*. University of Toronto Press, 2017.
 - The Scaglione Publication Award (Modern Language Association, 2016)
 - The Weiss-Brown Publication Award (The Newberry Library, 2017)
 - The Bridge Book Award (American Initiative for Italian Culture, 2018)
 - The Kendrick Book Prize (Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts, 2018)

Italian translation: *Parole su misura: Calcolo e scrittura nel Rinascimento*. Tr. Davide Grossi. Rome: Salerno Editrice. Forthcoming.

- *Giordano Bruno and the Geometry of Language*. London: Routledge Press, 2005.

Edited Volumes

- *Italian Science Fiction*. Ed. with U. Rossi and S. Proietti. *Science Fiction Studies* 126.42.2 (2015) [206pp.]
- *Italian Sound*. Ed. with D. Shemek. *California Italian Studies* 4.1 (2014). [403pp.]
- *General Issue*. Ed. with D. Shemek. *California Italian Studies* 4.2 (2014). [329pp.]
- *Longfellow and Dante*. Ed. with G. Mazzotta. *Dante Studies* 128 (2010). [371pp.]
- *Mathematics and the Imagination*. Ed. with H. S. Turner. *Configurations* 17 (2009). [195pp.]
- *Images of Quattrocento Florence: Selected Writings in Literature, History, and Art*. Ed. and Trans. with S. Baldassarri. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000. [350pp.]

Articles & Book Chapters

- “*The Lantern of the World Rises to Mortals by Varied Paths: Paul Laffoley (1935-2015) and Dante.*” *Forum Italicum*. Forthcoming. [approx. 10,000 words]
- “*Paradiso 28: Entrusting the Image.*” *Reading Dante through Images*. Ed. Matthew Collins. *Visual Lectura Dantis* Vol. 1. Belgium: Brepols. Forthcoming. [approx. 12,000 words]
- “*The Song of the Return: Paradiso XXXIII.*” *Lectura Dantis: Paradiso*. Ed. Anthony Oldcorn, and Charles Ross. Berkeley: University of California Press. Forthcoming. [approx. 12,000 words]
- “*‘Adrenaline Pulse in the Cables of Reality’: A Brief Introduction to Italy’s Connettivisti Collective.*” *Simultanea: The Journal of Italian Pop Culture*. 1.2 (2020): 1-19.
- “*Textual Nonhumans of Renaissance Humanism*” *California Italian Studies*. *California Italian Studies*, Vol. 10.1 (2020): 1-15.
- “*Quadrivial Comedy in Alberti’s Musca.*” *Albertiani* 23.n.s.V.2 (2020): 191-205.
- “*Hell, yes! Dante in Contemporary American Satire.*” *Dante Satiro: The Concept of Satire in the Middle Ages and in Dante’s Works*. Ed. Fabian Alfie and Nicolino Applauso. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020: 171-186.
- “*Laffoley and Dante’s Other Worlds.*” *The Essential Paul Laffoley*. Ed. Douglas Walla. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016: 20-29, 295-296.
- Introduction to *Italian Science Fiction*, with Umberto Rossi. Ed. Umberto Rossi, Arielle Saiber, and Salvatore Proietti. *Science Fiction Studies* 126.42.2 (2015): 209-216.
- “*Niccolò Tartaglia’s Poetic Solution to the Cubic Equation.*” *Journal of Mathematics and the Arts* 8 (2014): 1-11.
- “*Coda: Experimental Electronic Music and Sound Art in Italy.*” *California Italian Studies*, Vol. 4.1 (2014). 5pp.
- Introduction to *Italian Sound*, with Deanna Shemek. Ed. Arielle Saiber and Deanna Shemek. *California Italian Studies*, Vol. 4.1 (2014). 12pp.
- “*The tre giri of Paradiso XXXIII,*” with Aba Mbirika. *Dante Studies* 131 (2013): 237-272.
- “*The Game of Love: Caccia di Diana.*” *Boccaccio: A Critical Guide to the Complete Works*. Ed. Victoria Kirkham, Michael Sherberg, and Janet Smarr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013: 109-117.

BOWDOIN COLLEGE

July 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

It is with great enthusiasm that I write in support of the Maine Humanities Council's proposal for two-years of educational programming on the theme of *What If...? What If...?* sets its focus on an artistic movement, Afrofuturism, which emerged in the United States well before its late twentieth-century naming, and the parallel movement, Africanfuturism. MHC's project aligns beautifully with the NEH's *A More Perfect Union* initiative to create a more just, inclusive, and sustainable present and future. Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism—which encompass literary fiction, visual art, music, theater, comics, film, gaming, as well as philosophical writing and critical theory—are both engaged in the speculative act of imagining the future of Africa, Africans (residents of the continent and African diaspora), and African culture. Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism have long been committed to speculating on the future/s of race, gender, sexuality, class, the environment, spirituality, late-stage capitalism, and both the dangers and benefits of technoscience.

For over a decade, one of my primary areas of research and teaching has been science fiction; in particular, science fiction produced outside of America and the English language, and *not* produced by white American males, which has been, since the late nineteenth century, the genre's dominant voice in imagining the future. I developed a "World Science Fiction" course in 2015, which I have taught multiple times, I publish on science fiction, and I lecture often on this genre for academic and general audiences. While African and African-American authors, musicians, and artists have always been part of teaching and research, the last few years has been an incredible time for lesser-known Black artists to come to light, and newer Black artists to emerge *en force*. I have been tracking and archiving this explosion on my Facebook blog entitled "[World SF 2015 -](#)" (currently a closed group, but could be made public) and am also writing essays on a number of Black speculative fiction writers and artists. In 2015 I created a [website](#) (google "World Science Fiction Course Bowdoin") that archives and organizes much of this material.

I would be thrilled and honored to lend my expertise in science fiction studies to MHC's projects. I would be delighted to discuss with general audiences not only the seminal producers of Afrofuturist and Africanfuturist art, but some of the lesser-known African and Black American writers, artists, and musicians. While many people have seen Ryan Coogler's *Black Panther* (2018), few know of the Kenyan Wanuri Kahiu's brilliant water-crisis film *Pumzi* (2009). While many know the magnificent, visionary science fiction of Octavia Butler, Samuel Delany, N. K. Jemisin, Nalo Hopkinson, Nnedi Okorafor, few know of the many Black and African authors currently under the radar; or of anthologies dedicated to Black science fiction (see, for example, the 2021 *Black Sci-Fi Short Stories*, edited by Tia Ross; and Talabi's *Africanfuturism: An Anthology*), or that W. E. B. Du Bois wrote a science fiction short story. Many know of the subgenre of "apocalyptic" science fiction, but few know that there is now a subgenre called "optimistic" science fiction, which aims to imagine solutions to our problems and flaws, and which Afrofuturists and Africanfuturists have long contributed. Everyone has heard of cyberpunk, but who

knows about solarpunk? Big names in experimental jazz like Sun Ra, in rock like Jimi Hendrix, and in contemporary pop like Janelle Monáe, as well as The 5th Dimension, Earth, Wind and Fire, and Parliament (among many others) have all created music with Afrofuturist lyrics and sounds; so have Beverly Glenn-Copland, 4Hero, Dj Spooky, Space Afrika, Low Leaf, and so many others. I could continue highlighting well-known and lesser-known Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism within the visual arts (e.g., Osborne Macharia, Cyrus Kabiru), comics (e.g., Ayodeji Makinde), animation (e.g., Disney just invested in producing a large number of African animation series), video/RPF/tabletop gaming, and other media, but that would take forever! I would, however, be remiss if I did not note that one of the most venerable speculative fiction magazines in the US, *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, named Sheree Renée Thomas as its new editor in 2020.

As a scholar of science fiction, I know and collaborate with many science fiction scholars around the country and abroad. One of the US's most respected scholars of Afrofuturism is Lisa Yaszek (Georgia Tech), and I would be happy to reach out to her, and many others on behalf of MHC. As a reader and teacher (and rabid fan!) of Octavia Butler, I would be thrilled to participate in the discussions surrounding Toshi Reagon's operatic adaptation of Butler's *Parable of the Sower*. While Daniel Minter's brilliant artwork is relatively new to me, I would love to support his work and discussions of his work in any way I can. And besides giving a talk for Maine Speaks, as mentioned above, I would love to involve my Bowdoin students in *What If...?* in some way. I could image, for example, each student selecting a historic or contemporary Afrofuturist or Africanfuturist to explore and for whom they would create a webpage (with accompanying critical essay). I could then add their pages to my World Science Fiction website and publicize on my Facebook blog.

Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism, like many "futurisms" worldwide, is about imagining futures: ones to avoid and ones to create. More than many speculative fictions from other places and times, twentieth and twenty-first Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism have intricate, far-reaching, highly innovative plans for better more equitable societies, with greater care for the planet and all its diversity and all of its species. Maine, a predominantly white, rural state, but one that also has also attracted over the past century highly progressive people thinking about DEI, the environment, and better futures for all peoples and species, would benefit greatly from MHC's initiative, *What If...?* With the ocean, islands, forests, and lakes as our backdrop, Mainers have natural beauty and abundance to contemplate and work to preserve. While the ways in which Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism have engaged the natural world and society may look different from how Mainers have lived and imagined future living, there are a great many points of contact I believe Mainers will quickly find familiar. I am confident that many Mainers will realize—if they haven't already—that thinking together, in community, about how to build bridges to healthy, thriving futures for all who reside in Maine and beyond is not only a necessity, but a gift we can give to the future.

It is with the utmost pleasure that I support MHC's *What If...?* initiative. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.



Arielle Saiber, Professor of Romance Languages & Literatures
asaiber@bowdoin.edu

(b) (6)

RESUME

I. PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION

First Name Virginie
Last Name Akimana
Address
Telephone
E-mail
Nationality Rwandese
Date of birth
Marital Status
Gender
Religion

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

II. EDUCATION/QUALIFICATIONS

2019: Professional Teacher Certificate, ADULT ED. English/Language Arts (December 30, 2019- December 30, 2024)

2019: Professional Conditional Teacher Certificate, ADULT ED. English/Language Arts - Grade 7-12

2016-2017: TRAPCA, "Executive Postgraduate Diploma in International Trade Policy and Trade Law, Advanced Level"

2012-2013 Kigali Institute of Education (KIE)--Rwanda, **PGCLTHE** (Post Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education)

2009-2011 AMITY UNIVERSITY (India), MBA in International Business
Specialization: Marketing Management

2004- 2008 Kigali Institute of Education (KIE)--Rwanda, Bachelor of Arts with Education
Combination: English-Literature with Education (ELE)

1999-2002 A' Level in Secretarial Studies at
GS Notre Dame de Lourdes BYIMANA-Rwanda

1996-1999 O' Level at ACEJ KARAMA-Rwanda

1989-1995 GACURABWENGE Primary School-Rwanda

III. SKILLS

1. Interpreting and Translation
2. Computer and Internet
3. Communication Skills of English and French
4. Arts of Public Speaking
5. Trade Negotiation Skills

IV. TRAININGS

- 2020 (August): The New England Institute for Teacher Education, EDSN 525: Teaching the Exceptional Child in the Regular Classroom (Earned Grade: A+).
- 2019 (May-June): Southern Maine Community College (SMCC), Community Interpreting, Certificate of Completion
- 2019: Certified as an Advanced Mid Speaker of English and French by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)
- 2018 (August): Alibaba Global eCommerce Talent Program, Train the Trainer Graduate, held at University of Rwanda
- 2018 (February 15): Certificate of Participation "Research Transparency and Evidence Workshop" (Kigali Rwanda)
- 2017: STEP (Student Training for Entrepreneurial Promotion) Training-of-Trainers Workshop between August 29 - September 01, 2017 in Kigali (Rwanda) - Certified STEP Trainer
- 2017: A week training on Library Sources (University of Rwanda-College of Business and Economics)
- 2015 (November) TRAPCA, Certificate in E-Learning Course on "Trade Policy and Gender"
- 2014 (December) TRAPCA, Certificate of Competence in "International Trade Law and Development"
- 2014 (November) TRAPCA, Certificate of Competence in "International Trade Policy and Development"
- 2014 (November) TRAPCA, Certificate of Competence in " Quantitative Trade Policy Analysis"
- 2014 (March) TRAPCA (Trade Policy Training Center in Africa--Arusha-Tanzania), **PG_CITD** (Post Graduate Certificate in International Trade and Development)
- 2011: A week workshop on "Modules Writing"
- 2009: A week workshop on tourism "Tour Operation Management"
- 2009: A two-day workshop on tourism "E-Commerce"
- 2008: A week workshop in journalism on a topic entitled "Rwanda Now: One Story at a Time"
- 2005: A week workshop prepared by National Unity & Reconciliation Commission (NURC) "Conflict Management and Resolution"
- 2003: Solidarity Camp (INGANDO) from June to August

Virginie Akimana
Phone: (b) (6)
Email: (b) (6)
ESOL Instructor
Portland Adult Education
(b) (6)

July 18, 2021

Dr. SamaaAbdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am writing in support of the Maine Humanities Council's proposed "**What If ...?**" project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. I am so happy to learn about the Maine Humanities Council's plans to offer Discussion Project programming using *Afrofuturist* texts to foster discussions about creating *a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society*. I am enthusiastic to serve as a program speaker for this great and promising initiative.

Speaking about such a constructive topic will be a wonderful contribution to the community's learning and unity. The topic I intend to develop and present is: "Naïveté, Me and The Rest of the World!" Naïveté plays a very big role in people's lives from decisions to their consequences. Naïveté can lead to learning and change for better. Naïveté connects with "What If ...?" themes in the sense that the community can only be just, inclusive and sustainable if people talk about what they deserve, what is good for them and how they can achieve that in harmony. Humanities-based efforts like this one to envision and shape the future are exceptional because the community feels involved and valued.

I am so glad to be part of MHC team to voice these crucial themes and contribute to the community building. Thank you so much for this golden opportunity.

Virginie Akimana
ESOL Instructor
Portland Adult Education

PAUL F. BUCK II, Ph.D.

(b) (6)

paul.buck@maine.edu

EDUCATION

University of Maine, Orono, Maine

Ph.D. in History (Canada & U.S.), May 2008

Dissertation: *L'identité et l'altérité dans les programmes et quatre œuvres didactiques d'histoire du Canada destinés aux écoles secondaires de langue française du Québec : 1955-1967 (Identity and Otherness in the Programs and Four Didactic Works of Canadian History Intended for Québec French-Language Secondary Schools: 1955-1967)*

Committee: Dr. Jacques Ferland, Advisor, Canadian and Franco-American History

Dr. Scott See, Canadian and Borderlands History

Dr. Richard Blanke, European History

Dr. Raymond Pelletier, French Language and Literature

Dr. Susan Pinette, Franco-American Studies and French Language and Literature

Grade Point Average: 4.00

Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont

M.A. in Spanish, August 1997

Grade Point Average: 3.53

Saint Lawrence University, Canton, New York

B.A. in Canadian Studies/Multi-Language (French, German, Russian), July 1992

Language of Concentration: French

Grade Point Average: 3.74 (Magna cum Laude)

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

• **Fulbright Scholar Applicant (France)**, "Multiculturalism and Cross-Border Cooperation: A Selective Diachronic and Synchronic Analysis of Northern Catalonians and Northern Maine Acadians," Université de Perpignan, Université de Paris-IV La Sorbonne, July 2017 (did not receive)

• **Fulbright Campus Liaison**, University of Maine at Fort Kent, May 2015-present
--Advocating for Fulbright program, coordinating Fulbright Outreach Lectures

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- **Associate Professor of History and Education**, University of Maine at Fort Kent, Fort Kent, Maine, September 2015-present
--Tenured 1 year early (5 years instead of 6); teaching courses (4+4+2 load) in U.S. history, St. John Valley history, Canadian history, current trends in education, multicultural curriculum design (teacher education), L2 teaching methods (French), elementary Spanish in face-to-face and online modalities
- **Assistant Professor of History and Education**, University of Maine at Fort Kent, Fort Kent, Maine, September 2010-August 2015
--Tenure-track position; taught courses (4+4+2 load) in U.S. history, St. John Valley history, world civilizations, multicultural curriculum design, L2 teaching methods (French), elementary Spanish in face-to-face and online modalities
- **Adjunct Professor of History, French, and Spanish**, University of Maine at Fort Kent, Fort Kent, Maine, September 2009-August 2010
--Taught courses (2+3+3 load) in U.S. History, French for nurses, elementary Spanish in face-to-face and online modalities
- **Middle/High School French Teacher**, Wisdom Middle/High School (MSAD #33), St. Agatha, Maine, August 2008-June 2009
--Taught French in public school program to students from 11 to 18 years old in district where French is first language of approximately 90% of those born before 1980
- **High School History Teacher**, Brewer High School, Brewer, Maine, June 2002-August 2002
--Taught U.S. History (1865-1980) on one-time basis to students from 15 to 18 years old in public school summer program
- **Middle/Lower School Modern Language Teacher**, Indian Creek School, Crownsville, Maryland, August 2000-June 2001
--Taught Spanish to students from 9 to 13 years old in private school program
--Taught Wolof to students from 11 to 14 years old as non-graded activity
- **Upper School Modern Language Teacher**, Friends School of Baltimore, Baltimore, Maryland, August 1999-June 2000
--Taught French, Spanish on one-year basis to students from 13 to 17 years old in private school program
--Acted as academic advisor to 10 students



Phone: 207-834-7500
1-888-TRY-UMFK
Fax: 207-834-7503
TDD: 207-834-7466
www.umfk.maine.edu

23 University Drive
Fort Kent, Maine 04743-1292

July 28, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102-1012

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I would like to take this opportunity to support the Maine Humanities Council's proposed "What If...?" project, as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. I am quite pleased to know of the MHC's intention of offering Discussion Project programming that will utilize Afrofuturist texts to encourage discussions about creating a society that is more sustainable, just and equitably accessible. As a person of African-American heritage, I realize the ineffable complexity of sociocultural approaches and orientations, of which Afrofuturism is one, that seek to promote greater knowledge and appreciation of the vastly varied African diaspora within the American public at large. I look forward to learning more about Afrofuturism myself, should the MHC earn this grant from NEH. While I cannot guarantee that I would be able to participate in this particular discussion project as a facilitator due to greatly increased service and teaching commitments this year in my work as an associate professor at the University of Maine at Fort Kent, as I will be teaching five courses per semester and will be the chair of our Peer Review Committee, I would like to voice my very strong support for the project and for the grant application at hand.

I am very grateful for the MHC's faith in me as a facilitator and presenter. Over the last two to three years, I have participated in three MHC projects in person or remotely: Let's Talk About It, the World in Your Library, and a recent ad hoc facilitation session for a number of people connected with administration of the Maine State Museum in Augusta. First and foremost, I hope that those with whom I have interacted either as a presenter or as a facilitator through the auspices of the MHC have felt comfortable, heard, and valued. I also hope that I might bring new and fresh perspectives to those who made the time to interact with me and that I might promote an informal, kind, engaging, approachable, yet academically rigorous spirit of critical thinking throughout our discussions. In writing this letter on behalf of the grant proposal for this MHC project on Afrofuturism, I hope to do my very small part in promoting an optimistic, inclusive, and more civil road forward for our society. Everyone with whom I have worked at MHC has been culturally aware, flexible, understanding, knowledgeable, and welcoming. Because of my own personal and professional experience with the institution, I know beyond any doubt that MHC is the proper organization to carry forth this project on Afrofuturism.

I very much look forward to the immense privilege of continuing to collaborate with MHC and to bring my Northern Maine and St. John Valley perspective to our ongoing statewide conversations on a panoply of social, cultural, and linguistic topics important to Mainers. The Maine Humanities Council has shown itself to be impressively resilient and flexible since the beginning of the Covid pandemic and I am convinced that this resilience and flexibility will continue forward, hopefully with this upcoming program on Afrofuturism as one of many additional elements. Thank you so much for taking the time to read this letter and I look forward to hearing news on the progress of the grant application.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul F. Buck II". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "P" and "B".

Paul F. Buck II, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of History and Education

ELIZABETH A. DEWOLFE

University of New England
School of Arts & Humanities
11 Hills Beach Road
Biddeford, Maine 04005

Office Phone: 207-602-2322
E-mail: edewolfe@une.edu
Website: elizabethdewolfe.com

Current Positions: Professor of History
Affiliated Faculty and Co-founder, Women's & Gender Studies Program

EDUCATION

Ph.D., American and New England Studies, Boston University, 1996.

- *Dissertation*: "Erroneous Principles, Base Deceptions, and Pious Frauds: Anti-Shaker Writing, Mary Marshall Dyer, and the Public Theater of Apostasy" A study of anti-Shaker writing, 1780-1860.

M.A., Anthropology, State University of New York/Albany, 1985.

A.B., Social Science, Colgate University, 1983.

- Degree awarded *cum laude* and with High Honors in Social Science.
Interdisciplinary study in anthropology, art history, and astronomy.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE [See teaching addendum, following c.v.]

At the University of New England:

Professor of History, 2008 - present.
Associate Professor of American Studies (tenure granted 2002), 2002-2008.
Assistant Professor of American Studies and Anthropology, 1996-2002.

Adjunct positions, 1987-1994: Westbrook College (Fall 1994), Bridgewater (Mass.) State College (1993-94), Univ. of New England (Spring 1989), Univ. of Maine/Augusta (Fall 1988), and Univ. of New York/Albany (Spring, Summer 1987).

Teaching Areas: 19th-century American Culture, Women's History, History Research Methods, Public History Exhibits

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

Faculty Director (acting), Maine Women Writers Collection, Special Collections, University of New England, 2021-2022
Director, Liberal Studies Program, University of New England, 2014 – 2016.
Chair, Department of History & Philosophy, University of New England, 2005-2015.
Co-Director, Women's & Gender Studies Program, University of New England, 2004-2007, 2008-2009.
Program Coordinator, American Studies Program, University of New England, 1997-2008.

MAJOR HONORS, AWARDS, GRANTS, and RESIDENCIES

Teaching & Service Awards

Excellence in Academic Advising Award, University of New England, 2015.
Ludcke Chair of Liberal Arts & Sciences (rotating endowed chair), University of New England, 2008-2009.
Kennally Cup (Distinguished Service Award), University of New England, 2004.
Honorary Alumni Award, Westbrook College Alumni Association, 2004.
Outstanding Faculty Member Award, presented by Student Govt. Assoc., UNE-Westbrook College Campus, 1999.
Mary Rines Thompson Award for Teaching Excellence, UNE/Westbrook College Campus, 1997.

Research/Scholarship Awards

2008 Outstanding Book Award, New England Historical Association, for *The Murder of Mary Bean*, 2008.
Peter C. Rollins Book Award, Northeast Popular Culture Assoc./American Culture Assoc., for *Mary Bean*, 2008.
Silver Medal - True Crime, *ForeWord* magazine Book of the Year Award, for *The Murder of Mary Bean*, 2008.
Bronze medal- True Crime, Independent Publishers Book Awards, for *The Murder of Mary Bean*, 2008.
Fairfield Award for Saco History, Dyer Library Association & Saco Area Historical Society, 2004.
Outstanding Publication Award, Communal Studies Association, for *Shaking the Faith*, 2003.
Junior Faculty Research & Scholarship Award, UNE College of Arts & Sciences, 2002.
Starting Scholar Award, presented by the Communal Studies Association, 1995.

Grants and Fellowships

Osher Map Library Teaching Fellowship, Univ. of Southern Maine, 2020.
Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance, Non-Fiction Scholarship to SLICE Literary Conference, Sept. 2017.
UNE Office of Research & Scholarship, Mini-Grant: 2016-17 (\$3500); 2012-13 (\$3000).
Research Fellowship, Kentucky Historical Society, 2012.
Maine Humanities Council Grant, with the Saco Museum, for *Voyages* collaborative exhibit, 2011.
UNE College of Arts & Sciences Research Grants, 2001-2002, 2002-2003, 2009-2010 (avg. \$500).
Faculty Research Grants, University of New England, 1999-2000, 2001-2002, 2004-2005, 2006-2007.
Summer Research Grant, National Endowment for the Humanities, 1997.
Bingham Faculty Enrichment Grant, University of New England, 1997.
Faculty Development Grants, University of New England, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006.
Dissertation (Final Year) Fellowship, Pew Program in Religion & American History, 1995-1996.
Katherine O'Connor McLaughlin Scholarship, Boston Univ. Women's Guild, 1994-1995.
Research Fellowship, Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum & Library, Summer 1994.
Boston University Graduate School Assistantship & Scholarships, 1992-1995 [covered fees, tuition].
Herbert Lehmen Graduate Fellowship [for graduate study in NY State], 1984-1987.
State University of New York (Albany), research & travel grants, 1985 & 1986.
Thomas J. Watson Fellowship (funded independent travel and research in Europe and Mexico), 1983-1984.
Colgate University, Alumni Memorial Scholar 1979-1983 [selective academic scholarship].

Residencies and Workshops

Objects Lessons Workshop (competitive NEH Institute), selected participant, March 2018.
Pattison Artists and Writers Residency, Otisfield, Maine, July 2016.
Key West Literary Seminar, Writer's Residency, Key West, FL, June 2015.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Current Projects

The Ten-Week Detective (narrative non-fiction): The Gilded Age adventure of Wiscasset (Maine) native Jane Armstrong Tucker, undercover detective for a US Congressman, spying on his mistress.

(b) (4)

Publications

Books

Domestic Broils: Shakers, Family and the Narratives of Mary and Joseph Dyer (Univ. of Mass. Press, 2010). Digital edition, DUNE: Digital UNE, February 2021: https://dune.une.edu/history_facbooks/2/

The Murder of Mary Bean and Other Stories (Kent State University Press, 2007); Audible audio book (University Press Audio Books, 2017).

Outstanding Book Award, New England Historical Association, 2008.

Peter C. Rollins Book Award, Northeast Popular Culture Assoc./American Culture Assoc., 2008.

Silver Medal - True Crime, ForeWord magazine Book of the Year Awards (2008).

Bronze medal- True Crime, Independent Publishers Book Awards (2008).

Shaking the Faith: Women, Family, and Mary Marshall Dyer's Anti-Shaker Campaign, 1815-1867 (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

Communal Studies Association Outstanding Publication Award, 2003. Paperback edition, 2004.

Such News of the Land: American Women Nature Writers, Thomas S. Edwards and Elizabeth A. De Wolfe, editors.

(University Press of New England, 2001; Digital edition, DUNE: Digital UNE, August 2019,

https://dune.une.edu/history_facbooks/1/

Essays and Articles

"Recovering Single Biography: Jane Armstrong Tucker, Illness, and the Single Life," *Single Lives*, eds. Katherine Fama and Jorie Lagerwey, Rutgers University Press, forthcoming 2021.

"Female Labor and Industrial Growth in Nineteenth-Century American Bookbinding," *Suave Mechanicals*, with co-author Todd Pattison, forthcoming 2021.

"Agnes Parker, Miss Johnson, Jane Tucker, and Me: Archives, Reassembly, and Hiding in Plain Sight," *Paper Trails: The Social Life of Archives and Collections*, ed. Andrew Smith, UCL [University College London] Press 2021.

<https://ucldigitalpress.co.uk/BOOC/Article/3/102/> [open-access book]

"Shaking the Faith at 25: Reflections on Shaker Research in the Digital Age," *American Communal Societies Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (April 2021):102-110.



UNIVERSITY OF
NEW ENGLAND

July 29, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib:

I am pleased to offer my support of the Maine Humanities Council's proposed initiative, "What If ...?", as outlined in the application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. It is exciting to learn about the Maine Humanities Council's plans to offer a suite of programming using Afrofuturist texts as a conceptual foundation. This thematic vehicle will foster engaging and powerful discussions about creating a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society.

I have been a speaker for the Maine Humanities Council's *World in Your Library* program for three years, giving talks on Maine women's labor history, on the Shakers, and on the experiences of textile mill operatives. Each talk gives me the opportunity to share an often-overlooked aspect of this state's vibrant past. Participants have shared with me how they have gained a new perspective not only on a particular moment in history, but also on their own connections to that past via gender, religion, ethnicity, race, or class (or an intersectional grouping thereof).

While I am, regrettably, unable to participate in the coming year in this program, as a historian and founder of the University of New England's Women & Gender Studies Program, I do want to offer my enthusiastic support. This program has several key benefits. First, the program introduces readers to AfroFuturist writers and Afrofuturism, which offers an introduction to how elements of Black history and culture can be evaluated and examined in order to conceive of a different, better future. In addition, a program that asks the question "What if..." can interrogate, and invite, multiple perspectives. It not only acquaints individuals with present disparities in and beyond the state of Maine—such as that based in racial and socioeconomic divisions—but asks individuals to imagine a different situation. This program is founded on the proposition that there IS a better future possible. Especially for younger participants, this program invites all to imagine a different path; indeed, it reiterates that there is no preordained path. The past is but a prologue, not a prescription. This is the lesson of the humanities — we can learn from our past, evaluate the present, and move forward with new ideas.

I look forward to seeing this problem develop and enthusiastically support the application to the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Elizabeth DeWolfe", written in dark ink.

Elizabeth DeWolfe, Ph.D.
Professor of History
Affiliated Faculty, Women's & Gender Studies Program

(b) (6)

Education

Masters of Social Work, October 2013
Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS

BS, Social Work and Women's Studies, May 2009
University of New Hampshire (UNH), Durham, NH

Professional Experience

Director of Overdose Prevention Programs, July 2019- Present

Maine Access Points, Brunswick ME

- Engage in grant-writing for funding opportunities
- Track spending and maintain reporting needed for grants
- Order and track supplies and maintain inventory
- Collect data from all naloxone distributors and monitor for accuracy/issues
- Assemble naloxone kits and disseminate to community distributors across the state in person and via mail
- Process timesheets for employees
- Coordinate community naloxone trainings
- Provide aftercare to MAP participants and community distributors
- Develop and coordinate program expansion and harm reduction services
- Coordinate consultation serviced with outside agencies including and not limited to naloxone and overdose prevention training, agency overdose protocol development, as well as guidance with internal program development and harm reduction services
- Build and maintain effective information dissemination through social media, program literature, media outlets, word of mouth, and other means possible
- Coordinate and develop community advocacy opportunities

Clinical Intake Coordinator, 2018-2019

Maine Behavioral Health, McGeachey Hall Portland, ME

- Completed program intakes for the Partial Hospitalization Program from outpatient facilities, inpatient hospitalization, and community.
- Completed registration and scheduling for all outpatient mental health patients referred for care
- Developed intake policies and procedures

Supervisor, 2016-2018

Preble Street Resource Center, Portland, Maine

- Developed, facilitates, and maintains documentation of a naloxone distribution clinic.
- Provided MSW supervision and instruction for interns and casework staff.
- Attends multi-weekly team meetings regarding case coordination, client updates and problem solves case concerns.
- Developed program policies and procedures
- Engaged in advocacy and policy work at the city and state level
- Developed and facilitates agency Harm Reduction trainings

Volunteer, January 2014-Present

I AM HERE Outreach Team, Portland Needle Exchange, Portland, Maine

- Developed mobile outreach program
- Engaged in weekly, mobile needle exchange and overdose prevention in the community

(b) (6)

- Organized and provided community naloxone and overdose prevention trainings and distribution
- Organized and facilitated annual Overdose Awareness March and Vigil
- Engaged in advocacy and policy work at the city and state level regarding rights for active drug users, needle exchange programming as well as overdose prevention

Trainings and Certification

MHRT C, 2014

Amethyst Training and Consulting, Inc. South Gardiner, Maine

SOAR-Trained Caseworker, 2012

Alfred, Maine

July 28, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
[674 Brighton Avenue](#)
[Portland, Maine 04102](#)

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am writing in support of the Maine Humanities Council's proposed *What If...?: Afrofuturism and the Quest for a Just, Inclusive, and Sustainable Society* project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. It is incredibly meaningful to hear about Maine Humanities Council's plan to offer Discussion Project programming using Afrofuturist text to foster discussions across the state and I look forward to acting as a facilitator in this project.

It has been a gift to be part of the Maine Humanities Council facilitator team and engage in powerful conversation with neighbors in Maine. These discussion groups provide community to many individuals who experience isolation. Be it the isolation of covid, geographic isolation, or that which exists from incarceration, Maine Humanities Council offers connection to many. Coming together each week, participants build a collective imagination exploring the possibility of a just, inclusive and sustainable society. The team at Maine Humanities Council provides the education, training and support to facilitators to hold meaningful and transformative dialogue through the exploration of texts. Through their commitment to agency, connection and engagement Maine Humanities Council will hold this project with a strong vision.

I look forward to being part of this project and the expertise that Maine Humanities Council will bring to this work.

With Respect,



Hilary Eslinger

ELLEN GOLDSMITH

(b) (6)

Professional Experience

- 1977 – January 2007 New York City College of Technology, English Department
Director, Center for Intergenerational Reading (1989 – 2007)
Professor Emeritus
- 1973 – 1977 John Jay College of Criminal Justice
Communication Skills Counselor

Education

- 1983 Teachers College, Columbia University
Ed.D., Educational Psychology
- 1981 Teachers College, Columbia University
M.A., Reading
- 1969 City College
M.A., English
- 1965 Queens College
B.A., English, cum laude

Honors and Awards

- Creative Incentive Awards for poetry from PSC-CUNY Research Award Program: 1989, 1991, 2001
- Outstanding Service Award, National Association of Developmental Educators, 1995
- Developmental Educator of the Year, New York Metropolitan Association of Developmental Educators, 1990
- Scholar on Campus, New York City Technical College, 1990
- Women Helping Women Award, Soroptimist International of Brooklyn, 1990
- Phi Beta Kappa

Publications

Poetry

Books

Left Foot, Right Foot, Maine Authors Publishing. 2021

Where to Look, Broad Cove Press. 2013

Such Distances, Broad Cove Press. 2009

No Pine Tree in This Forest Is Perfect. Slapering Hol Press. 1997

Journals and Anthologies

- *Antiphon, Connecticut River Review, Dash, Earth's Daughters, The Healing Muse, Mount Hope, Intima, Off the Coast, Rhino, Third Wednesday, Tipton Review* and *The Westchester Review*
- *Wait: Poems from the Pandemic* and *Enough: Poems of Resistance and Protest*

Pedagogy

Reading Starts With Us. New York, New York: Scholastic, 1998. (co-authored with AnnMarie Tevlin)

Family reading: An intergenerational approach to literacy. Syracuse, New York: New Readers Press, 1990. (co-authored with Ruth D. Handel)

Community Service

Docent at the Farnsworth Art Museum, 2011 – present

Member of Community Event Community for the Camden Conference, 2014 – present

July 25, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am writing to support the Maine Humanities Council's proposed "What If ...?" project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. I am encouraged that the Maine Humanities Council is seeking to introduce texts that will expose readers to new experiences and other ways of looking at life and society. "What If..." is such a rich speculation encompassing past, present and future.

I have a connection with the Maine Humanities Council as a long-standing attendee of Winter Weekend where I benefited from the perspectives speakers brought to the reading and also from the wide ranging and deep discussions with fellow participants. Just before COVID shut things down, I facilitated three sessions of the *Where Am I?* series at the Bristol Area Library. At those discussions, I was struck by the interplay between personal experience and learning something new. These experiences deepened my conviction that we learn and change with the back and forth of ideas with others.

These days, it feels particularly important to extend the boundaries and borders of personal experience. I suspect that for most Mainers, Afrofuturist texts are unfamiliar and would not make their way into these readers hands without the Maine Humanities Council's book discussion groups. Further, the open and supportive yet also exploratory approach to discussion of the Maine Humanities Council will make the program a positive learning experience for all, discussion leaders as well as participants.

As a person who wants a more just, inclusive and sustainable society, I am eager to see this program implemented in Maine and to serve as a Discussion Project facilitator.

Sincerely,

Ellen Goldsmith

Ellen Goldsmith

Joseph Hall
Department of History
Bates College
4 Andrews Road
Lewiston, ME 04240
(207) 786-6462
Email: jhall2@bates.edu

EDUCATION

- 2001 Ph. D., History, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
Principal fields: Early North American and Native American history.
Minor field: Latin American history.
Dissertation: "Making an Indian People: Creek Formation in the Colonial Deep South, 1590-1735." Dissertation advisor, Professor Charles Cohen.
- 1995 M.A., History, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
Master's thesis: "What's in a Name?: Anglo-Creek Relations and the Redefinition of Creek, 1765-1774."
- 1991 B.A., History, Amherst College.

TEACHING

- 2008-Present Associate Professor of History, Bates College
2002-2008 Assistant Professor of History, Bates College.
2001-2002 Assistant Professor of History, SUNY Fredonia.

COURSES TAUGHT

History 140: Origins of the New Nation, 1500-1820
INDS 211: US Environmental History
History 241: America in the Age of Revolution, 1763-1789
American Studies/History 244: Native American History
History 249: Colonial North America
History 294: The Revolutionary Black Atlantic, 1770-1840
Africana/History 301E: African Slavery in the Americas
Environmental Studies/History 301M: Maine: Environment and History
History 399: Historical Methods
History s28: Wabanaki History in Maine
History s40: Historical Methods

SELECTED WORK IN PROGRESS

"Founded by Abolitionists, Funded by Slave-Grown Cotton: A Bates College Paradox."
Research done in partnership with students that seeks to change how the college tells its history of egalitarianism and also how it addresses questions of equity in the present.

(b) (4)



REFERREED PUBLICATIONS

- 2016 “Was the ‘S’ for Silent?: Edmund S. Muskie and the Maine Indian Land Claims,” *Maine History* 50,1 (January):4-29. Winner of the James Phinney Baxter Prize for best article in *Maine History* for 2016.
- 2015 “Glimpses of Roanoke, Visions of New Mexico, and Dreams of Empire in the Mixed-Up Memories of Gerónimo de la Cruz,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 72, 2 (April).
- 2009 “Anxious Alliances: Apalachicola Efforts to Survive the Slave Trade, 1660-1704,” in *Indian Slavery in Colonial America*, ed. Alan Galloway (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press).
- 2009 *Zamumo’s Gifts: Indian-European Exchange in the Colonial Southeast*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press).
- 2007 “Between Old World and New: Oconee Valley Residents and the Spanish Southeast, 1540-1621,” in *The Atlantic World and Virginia, 1550-1624*, ed. Peter Mancall (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

POPULAR PUBLICATIONS

- 2019 “Auburn Indigenous History,” *Lewiston Sun Journal*, February 24 (<https://www.sunjournal.com/2019/02/24/joseph-hall-auburns-indigenous-history/>)
- 2017 “Remember the Deep Roots of Racism and Violence,” *Lewiston Sun Journal*, August 27 (<http://www.sunjournal.com/news/columns-analysis/2017/08/27/remember-deep-roots-racism-and-violence/2186472>)
- 2016 with Ben Aicher (’18), Max Milavetz (’20), Andrew Segal (’17), and Francesca Steiner (’19), “Then and Now, America’s Greatness Lies in Recognizing the Voices of All,” *Portland Press Herald*, November 9 (<http://www.pressherald.com/2016/11/09/maine-voices-then-and-now-americas-greatness-lies-in-recognizing-the-voices-of-all/>)
- 2016 “Penobscots Can’t Just Move on From Chemicals that Poisoned Their River,” *Bangor Daily News*, March 7 (<http://bangordailynews.com/2016/03/07/opinion/contributors/penobscots-cant-just-move-on-from-chemicals-that-poisoned-their-river/>)
- 2015 With Donald Soctomah, Micah Pawling, Maria Girouard, and Bates College students in History s28 (Wabanaki History in Maine), “Wabanaki Place Names of Western Maine,” including explanatory text by Joseph Hall (<http://androscoggin.bates.edu/home/culture-history/wabanaki-place-names-of-western-maine--introduction>)
- 2015 “My Father’s Day Wish to LePage: Support Wabanaki Families,” *Bangor Daily News*, June 20 (<http://bangordailynews.com/2015/06/18/opinion/contributors/my-fathers-day-request-for-lepage-support-for-wabanaki-families/?ref=moreInopinion>)
- 2015 “The Penobscots Are Fighting for Their Culture,” *Lewiston Sun Journal*, March 15, p. C10 (<http://www.sunjournal.com/news/columns-analysis/2015/03/15/joseph-hall-penobscots-are-fighting-their-culture/1666271>).

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AND AWARDS

- 2020 Short Term Research Fellowship of \$2000 (the W. B. H. Dowse Fellowship) for research at the Massachusetts Historical Society.
- 2018 Short Term Innovative Pedagogy course release to create History 294: Revolutionary Black Atlantic.
- 2017 Harvard Center Faculty Award for Outstanding Community-Engaged Work.
- 2009 Kroepsch Award for Excellence in Teaching, Bates College.

Bates

Department of History

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

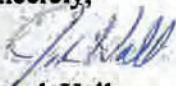
I am delighted to know you are part of a new proposed project at the Maine Humanities Council called "What If ...?" As I have learned from a colleague at Bates who studies Afrofuturist fiction, this genre of literature has the power to reframe our present by asking us to consider how much we are willing to imagine a more just and antiracist world. Because Afrofuturist literature asks those questions within worlds built from what we know but also shaped by invention, we are not talking directly and uncomfortably about ourselves. Ideally, by looking at ourselves somewhat indirectly, we can talk a little more openly about who we are and where we would like to be. As a teacher of history, including the United States's long history of slavery and racism, I would love the opportunity facilitate these conversations about imaginary futures and, perhaps, real futures we might build together.

I have facilitated three different discussion groups for the MHC over the last several years. They have all been incredibly rewarding experiences. Because I have guided many classroom discussions in my 20 years as a college professor, I think discussion participants gain an opportunity to think in the company of someone who can manage a conversation well and who can (sometimes) draw on background knowledge that can help it move forward. What we all gain is a chance to sit down as fellow citizens to find ways to live more thoughtfully and more purposefully. What is especially powerful about basing this work in the humanities is that we can ground our discussions in the imagined and lived experiences of our authors combined with our own very relevant experiences. We understand a little better the world we experience differently but still share together.

A state like Maine needs these conversations. We are politically diverse (my Auburn neighborhood split evenly and sharply in the last presidential election) and, despite being one of the "Whitest" states in terms of racial demographics, we are increasingly racially diverse. The Maine Humanities Council is one of the best (if not the best) institution to promote these conversations because it has connections to a variety of local institutions, including libraries and prisons. The MHC knows how to connect Mainers to each other, and—through this proposal and other equity and inclusion work it is doing—it is also looking to further diversify both who is involved and what we are talking about.

It is for these reasons that I am proud to work with the MHC. It is also why I hope this proposal receives the review committee's most careful consideration.

Sincerely,



Joseph Hall
Associate Professor of History, Chair of Environmental Studies

Mazie Hough

(b) (6)

Education

Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA. B.A. 1970. Distinction. English Literature.

University of Maine, Orono, Maine. M.A. 1990.

University of Maine, Orono, Maine. Ph.D. in History. 1997.

"I'm a Poor Girl in Family and I Want to Know If You Be Kind': The Community's Response to Unwed Mothers in Maine and Tennessee, 1876-1954."

Recent Employment

Associate Professor of History and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Maine Emerita

Director, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program, January 2012-2016

Project Director, "The Somebody Else Was Us: An Oral History of Spruce Run", funded by the Maine Humanities, Council, 1993-1996;

Founding member of the Interdisciplinary Somali Narrative Project.

Founding member of the Feminist Oral History Project

Selected Publications

"Buckaroo Stew and Before: Four Generations of Kurtz Family Recipes" In *Backstories: The Kitchen Table Talk Cookbook: Grand Forks, North Dakota: The Digital Press@the University of North Dakota*, 2021.

"Least Productive of any Public Benefit" *Women of Maine in 1820* with Jen Pickard umainetoday.new.umaine.edu/stories/2019/maine-turns-200/

"The Changing Nature of Abortion in Rural Maine, 1904-1931" *Maine History* #51 (Winter 2016-2017).

Sex, Sickness, and Slavery: Defining Illness by Marli Weiner with Mazie Hough.

University of Illinois Press, 2012. Republished in paper back 2014.

Kim Huisman, Mazie Hough, Kristin Langellier, and Carol Toner, *Somalis in Maine: Crossing-Cultural Currents*. North Atlantic Books, 2011.

Rural Unwed Mothers: 1870-1950: An American Experience. Pickering & Chatto, 2010

"In Place of Her Own Kin': A Rural Response to Unwed Mothers in Bangor, Maine" In *Of Place and Gender: Women in Maine History*. Edited by Polly Kaufman and Marli Weiner. University of Maine Press, 2005.

"To Conserve the Best of the Old': the Impact of Professionalization on Adoption in Maine." *Maine History* (Summer, 2002)

Ann Schonberger, Nancy Lewis, Mazie Hough, and Leslie King, "Teaching What We're Not: Using Videos to Diversify the Women's Studies Curriculum" *Women's Studies Quarterly* 30 #1/2 (Spring-Summer 2002): 285-295.

"Spruce Run and the Politics of Empowerment." Co-authored with Ann Schonberger and the Feminist Oral History Project. *NCADVoice* (Spring, 1999).

"Are You or Are You Not Your Sister's Keeper?: A Radical Response to Unwed Mothers in Tennessee" in *Before the New Deal: Essays in Southern Social Welfare History* edited by Elna Green. University of Georgia Press, 1999.

In-house publications:

Somali Narrative Project, "Bits and Pieces: Stories of Young Somali Women in Maine." Orono: University of Maine, 2009

"Voices from Stevens Hall." UMaine Humanities supported publication of articles written by students in HTY498. University of Maine, 2014.

Book Reviews

Troublesome Women: Gender, Crime, and Punishment in Antebellum Pennsylvania by Erica Rhodes Hayden, *Journal of American History* forthcoming

Women Medical Doctors in the United States before the Civil War:

A Biographical Dictionary by Edward C. Atwater. *Journal of the Social History of Medicine*. 31 #4 (November 2018) Special Issue: 883-884.

Voting Down the Rose by Anne B. Gass. *Maine History* 51 #2 (Summer 2017).

Regulating Women and Justice for the Poor: A History of Legal Aid, 1863-1944 by Felice Batlan. *Journal of American History*. Fall, 2016: 77.

Regulating Passion: Sexuality and Patriarchal Rule in Massachusetts, 1700-1830 by Kelly A. Ryan. *Journal of American History*. 1 #2 (September 2015): 547-48.

Jean Paton and the Struggle to Reform American Adoption by E. Wayne Carp. *American Historical Review* V. 20 #2 (April 2015): 66.

Selected Presentations

"Gender and the Law: Criminal Justice in Transition in Maine, 1878-1916"
National Women's Studies Association Conference San Francisco, November 14, 2019

"'We Would Most Respectfully Petition Your Excellency and Honors': The Shifting Meaning of Masculinity as Reflected in Pardon Petitions, Maine, 1845-1870"
New England Historical Association, Portland, Maine, April, 2019

Moderator: Panel on Women and Resistance. Marxist Socialist lunch series. University of Maine. March 14, 2019

Panel Presentation: Health Care in Maine from the 18th century to today. Bangor, Maine. Maine Science Festival. March 16, 2019

"Socialist Women of Maine", Old Professor Bookstore Colloquium. Belfast, Maine. March 16, 2019

"Men's Role in Feminism" WGS pop up panel. University of Maine. March 16, 2019

"If you go to her home you know where she is coming from': An Oral History of the Rural Birth Control Movement in Maine, 1967 to 1983" Rural Women's Studies Association Triennial Conference, Ohio State University, May 17-19, 2018

"Deborah Could Not Have Been Pregnant Without My Having Observed It': Physicians and the Role of the Expert of the Female Body in Nineteenth-Century Maine" American Association of the History of Medicine, Minneapolis, MN, May 1, 2016. (in absentia)

Department of History



5774 Stevens Hall, Room 255
Orono, Maine 04469-5774
Tel: 207.581.1907/1908
Fax: 207.581.1817
UMHist@maine.edu
umaine.edu/history

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am pleased to support the Maine Humanities Council's application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities for the funding of a Discussion Project entitled, "What if ...? Afrofuturism and the Quest for a Just Inclusive and Sustainable Society." This Project builds on work that the staff has been engaged in for several years and reflects the Council's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. I am eager to serve as a Discussion Project facilitator as a part of this initiative.

I am currently the Chair of the Council and have served as a facilitator for many years. It was my experience with the Discussion Projects which led me to first join the Board. I have followed with great interest as the Council has built upon its long-standing tradition of text-based discussion to gently and persistently encourage our predominantly white but increasingly diverse state to think in new ways.

From my very first experience as a facilitator, I was struck by the way the participants were willing to listen to others as well as share their thoughts in process. In almost every one of the many discussions I have engaged in, someone (often me) changes their mind about the meaning of the readings or in their understanding of the issues. I have watched as quiet people gained their voices and as outspoken people stopped to reflect—teaching all of us in the process.


The strength of these projects, I believe, lies in the well-chosen content of the readings, the support provided to the facilitators, and the structure of the discussion sessions themselves. The readings are always diverse and challenging—the perfect combination to engage participants and to encourage them to think in new and different ways. The staff regularly offers workshops both on facilitation practice and on resources and is always ready to listen. It is the community-based structure of the groups however, that is the most important. The Maine Humanities Council always ensures that the facilitator either is or is paired with someone from within the community. This immediately creates a bond of trust which works to encourage everyone to speak freely and to listen without defensiveness. This is the magic.

It is a commonplace that the humanities foster empathy and imagination. What is so powerful in this proposed project is that it asks participants to take a step into the unknown, guided by members of the African diaspora. By stepping into this new world with others, participants will not only envision the future, but will also, having participated in a collaborative process and paid attention to others, help to create it.

This past year the Humanities Council staff hosted a readers' retreat in which they invited Mainers to read and reflect on Chinua Achebe's *Thing Fall Apart*. I am a historian, with a particular interest in African refugees, and yet I was struck by how much I had to learn. I found the experience eye-opening and inspiring. The whole two-day program seemed seamless and simple—but on reflection, I understood how well-crafted it was. The Afrofuturist Discussion Project promises to take this discussion one step further and a large number of people—through the wide-ranging discussions which preceded the readers' retreat—will have been prepared for it.

I hope you will consider funding this project and I look forward to participating with the Maine Humanities Council in its implementation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mazie Hough". The ink is dark and the signature is written in a fluid, personal style.

Mazie Hough, Assoc. Professor, History and
Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Emerita, University of Maine

KATHERINE (KATE) MCBRIEN

(b) (6)

Education & Professional Development

MA, Museum Studies

Cooperstown Graduate Program

BA, British History

University of New Hampshire

Courses & Seminars: Class in Museum Education – Curriculum Development (Tufts University); Classes in Irish History and Archaeology (University College Galway, Ireland); Historic House Issues & Operations Seminar (AASLH & National Trust for Historic Preservation); IPI Climate Notebook training (Image Permanence Institute, R.I.T.)

Professional Experience

Maine State Archives

April 2020 to present

The mission of the State Archives is to make the operations of state and local government more efficient, more effective and economical through records management and by preserving and providing access to the public the permanent historical records of Maine in our custody.

Maine State Archivist

As the first woman to lead the Maine State Archives, I am constitutionally charged by the State of Maine to care for and preserve the historical documents of state government while working with state agencies to manage their many and varied records. I lead a staff of fourteen in addition to contract staff and volunteers.

McBrien Museum Consulting

2019 to 2020

Serving cultural organizations to strategical plan, streamline operations, and protect collection.

In my consulting business, I work with cultural organizations to develop strategic plans, streamline operations, conduct research, or develop new ideas to share and care for important collections.

Maine Humanities Council

2019 to 2020

A statewide non-profit organization which uses the humanities— literature, history, philosophy, and culture — as a tool for positive change in Maine communities.

Facilitator

I facilitate dynamic discussion around specific themes to community groups throughout the mid-coast region of Maine, usually through a series of readings and discussions.

Maine Historical Society

2015 to 2019

The heritage and history of Maine

Chief Curator/Director of Public Engagement

I was responsible for the acquisition, care, and interpretation of the museum's collection through exhibitions, public programs, and research facilitation. I also managed and grew the organization's community engagement, exhibition program, school and public programs, visitor services, and historic house museum. I supervised three regular staff members, special-project contract employees, seasonal staff, and volunteers and interns.

Maine State Museum

2008 to 2015

The cultural, natural history, and pre-history of Maine

Curator of Historic Collections

I was responsible for the acquisition, care, and interpretation of the museum's transportation, industrial and recreational history collections, the largest collection for the museum. I supervised interns and volunteers working

with these collections and facilitated access to researchers and the public alike. During my tenure, I created the Cultural Emergency Resource Coalition of Maine, a multi-discipline collaborative project to train and encourage Maine's cultural institutions in disaster preparedness. To support this program, I secured a \$45,000 grant from FEMA to start the initiative, then another \$50,000 grant from a private foundation to continue the work.

During my time at MSM, I served as curator for a 2,000 square foot temporary exhibition about a controversial, multi-racial island community in Maine. Facilitated collaboration between 5 major Maine organizations including the University of Southern Maine, Portland Branch NAACP, Maine Freedom Trails, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and the Phippsburg Historical Society. Worked closely with descendants to ensure a fair and balanced presentation of their family's history. Applied for and earned over \$70,000 in grants for the exhibit and related education programs. For this exhibit, I appeared on television and in newspapers several times, both regionally and nationally. This exhibit and related programming was awarded both an Award of Merit and History in Progress Award from the American Association for State and Local History. www.malagaisland.org

I also co-curated a major permanent 5,600 square foot exhibition about home life in Maine, the first permanent

American Independence Museum

2006 to 2008

Connecting America's Revolutionary Past to the Present

Ladd-Gilman House and Folsom Tavern

Curator

I was responsible for the acquisition, care and interpretation of the museum collection, the development and coordination of all adult programming, as well as the recruitment, training, and supervision of all volunteers and seasonal interns.

Pejepscot Historical Society

2003 to 2006

Preserving the History of Brunswick, Topsham, and Harpswell, Maine

Joshua L. Chamberlain Museum, Skolfield-Whittier House, Pejepscot Museum

Curator, Interim Executive Director

As Curator, I was responsible for the acquisition and care of collections objects, development and installation of exhibitions, supervision of historic house managers, and public research assistance. From August 2005 through October 2006 I served as the Interim Executive Director during which I was responsible for the day-to-day operations of the organization and served on several museum and community committees. I supervised three part-time staff members, two seasonal staff, summer interns, and over seventy volunteers.

Strawbery Banke Museum

1999 to 2001

Changing History of a Portsmouth Neighborhood

Education Assistant

I served as historic interpreter, role-player, and museum teacher as well as the Youth-at-Risk Coordinator for which I developed and performed outreach programs while establishing new relationships with area schools.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

1999

Intern for Registry of Survivors

I cataloged archival name lists to facilitate research. I also assisted visitors in their search for lost family and friends while registering survivors in a database.

Professional Memberships & Affiliations

Council of State Archivists

New England Museum Association

Maine Archives and Museums

African American Collection of Maine Advisory Committee, Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine, University of Southern Maine, Advisory Committee member (2015 – 2017)

Malaga 1912 Scholarship Fund Committee member (2013 – 2018)



MAINE STATE ARCHIVES

Department of the Secretary of State

Shenna Bellows
Secretary of State

Katherine McBrien
Maine State Archivist

8 August 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am writing to express my support of the Humanities Council's proposed "What If ...?" project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. I am thrilled to hear about the Maine Humanities Council's plans to offer Discussion Project programming using Afrofuturist texts to foster discussions about creating a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society. In addition, I am eager to serve as a program speaker for this initiative.

I have worked with the Maine Humanities Council for a few years now, serving as a discussion facilitator as well as a speaker for their "World in Your Library" program. In my experience, MHC is a supportive and engaging group who fosters deeper thought and quality discussion in all their programming.

I most usually speak with public groups about a mixed-race community who lived on Malaga Island and were evicted from their homes by the State of Maine in 1912. My discussion explores the topics of racism, eugenics, civic engagement, and the role of state government in individual lives. It directly looks at the concept of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" in the late 19th and early 20th centuries through this community and the obstacles they faced to live in the ways they wanted. The topic also helps audiences in Maine to understand national issues such as racism and democratic ideals within a local context.

I greatly look forward to working with the Maine Humanities Council on this important program for the people of our state. It will be a valuable experience for all.

Sincerely,

Kate McBrien
Maine State Archivist

CODY MOWER

(b) (6)

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

After being discharged from the Marine Corps in 2016 with a Post-Traumatic Brain Injury, he came home to sort his shattered life out. In 2019, Cody graduated cum laude from the University of Southern Maine with his B.A. in English and is currently set to graduate with his MFA from Stonecoast in Creative Writing. He runs both reading and writing groups for veterans through the Maine Humanities Council. His piece "Ghosts" won an Honorable Mention in the premier veteran anthology Proud to Be Vol.9.

SKILLS

- Writing
- Document management
- Microsoft Office
- Project management
- Project support
- Teaching
- Team Leadership
- Scheduling
- Consulting
- Editing

WORK HISTORY

- 09/2019 to Current **Humanities Coordinator/Facilitator**
Maine Humanities Council – Portland, ME
- Encouraged active learning by creating lessons and facilitating both reading and writing groups to veterans across multiple forms of media.
- 09/2020 to 05/2021 **Graduate Assistant**
Veteran's Upward Bound – Portland, ME
- Completed administrative, research duties, ran social media for VUB.
- 06/2019 to 12/2020 **Non-fiction Editor**
Stonecoast Review – Portland, ME
- Provided concise and constructive editorial feedback to writers and selected works for publication.
- 12/2019 to 03/2020 **Teaching Artist**
The Telling Room – Portland, ME
- Volunteered to help co-lead group writing sessions for children from 4th grade through high school.

EDUCATION

05/2021 **Master of Fine Arts: Creative Writing: Non-Fiction**
University of Southern Maine - Portland, ME

05/2019 **Bachelor of Arts: English With Distinction**
University of Southern Maine - Portland, Maine

- Minored in Writing
- Graduated cum laude

July 16th, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am happy to hear about the Maine Humanities Council's plans to offer Discussion Project programming using Afrofuturist texts to foster discussions about creating a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society. The demographics of Maine are changing as they have been for the last twenty years, leaning towards becoming a more racially diverse state. As Maine changes, we need to hold discussions and conversations about what that future looks like. Programs like this serve as both a tool of empowerment and a teaching opportunity to ensure that all Mainers have the same language when building an inclusive future.

Most of my work with MHC has been centered on veteran trauma and holding discussions on healing institutional-based trauma from the military. It is heartbreaking enough to deal with veterans who are desperately trying to make sense of their military trauma, and I'll be damned if we extend that to our own citizens. Institutional racism and oppression are glaring issues in our nation. Still, we can resist and make our state that much safer with education and vision with programs like this. A chance to be an example on the national stage. That's why humanities-based efforts like this one to envision and shape the future is so powerful. What makes this special both as an organization and as a state.

I continue to look forward to the future of the Maine Humanities Council as it has become an example to follow for other organizations within the state, and each year its influence grows as its programs expand. That constant upward growth leads the way, and by creating more programs using Afrofuturists text, holding more in depth discussions about the society we are building here, we are continuing that trend of leading the way.

All the best,

Sergeant Cody A. Mower USMC/Ret. M.F.A

Eugenie Mukankwiro

(b) (6)

Phone: (b) (6)

Email: (b) (6)

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Motivated second language teacher with more than ten-year experience.

SKILLS AND CERTIFICATIONS

- Certified Education Technician III
- Certified English/Language Arts ADULT ED teaching
- Conditionally certified for English - Second Language teaching- GRADES K-12
- Conditionally certified for English/Language Arts teaching- GRADES 7-12
- Conditionally certified for French teaching- GRADES K-12
- CPR/AED/First-Aid Certification
- Experience with creating engaging and appropriate materials and lesson plans
- Ability to teach language learning strategies to young and adult learners
- Experience with designing academic and educational policies
- Multilingual (Kinyarwanda, English, French and Kiswahili)
- Conversant with Microsoft suite (Word, Excel and PowerPoint) and Google Suite (Gmail, google docs, sheets, slides, calendar, forms, hangouts.)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Language Teacher and Education Technician

- Education Technician III: Casco Bay High School (Full time-35hrs/wk)-Portland, Maine (October 2020- to date)
- English Language teacher (Full time-45 hrs/wk) at the University of Kibungo Rwanda (January 2014- December 2018)
- Internship in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) at Eastern Michigan University Language Program (January-June 2012)
- English Language teacher (Full time-45 hrs/wk) at “College George Fox de Kagarama”, Kigali-Rwanda (September 2008- June 2010)
- English Language teacher (Part-time-15 hrs/week) at “Rwanda Teacher Service Commission”, Kigali-Rwanda (January-December 2010)
- English language teacher (Part-time-15hrs/week) at the Adult Center for English Language (SPIC), Kigali-Rwanda (January-December 2010)
- English Language teacher (Part-time-15hrs/week) at “Mère du Verbe” Elementary school, Kigali-Rwanda (January-December 2007)
- French Language teacher (Full time-45 hrs/wk) at “College George Fox de Kagarama”, Kigali-Rwanda (January 2002- December 2004)

Education Administrator

- Campus Director (Full time-45 hrs/wk) at Kepler University/Rwanda: Handled academics and operations of the campus (Jan-Jun 2019)
- Director of Public Relations (Full time-45 hrs/wk) at the University of Kibungo/Rwanda: Built relationships with University stakeholders to strengthen the University visibility (January- December 2018)
- Director of Academic Quality at the University of Kibungo/Rwanda: Supported in various processes surrounding academic programs approval, modification and re-approval (January 2013- December 2017)

Volunteer and Facilitation Experience

- Office and room cleaning at Oxford Street Shelter/Portland-Maine (June 2020-Sept 2020)
- Facilitator at the Portland (Maine)Adult Education Writing Center: Coached English language students in their writing needs (Jan 2020-Mar 2020)
- Facilitator at the Portland (Maine)Adult Education Language Lab: Assisted English language students with basic computer skills in the language lab (Sept 2019-Mar 2020)
- Practicum at Portland High School: Observed ELL classrooms and assisted teachers with various classroom students' activities (Jan 2010-Mar 2020)
- Maine Humanities Council facilitator (October 2020-to date)

EDUCATION

- 2019-2020: Portland Adult Education/Education Academy (Maine-USA): Certified Education Technician III & Maine Conditional Teacher Certification in ESOL teaching&Certified English/Language Arts ADULT ED.
- 2011-2012: Eastern Michigan University (Michigan-USA): Masters in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages)
- 2004-2008: Kigali Institute of Education (Kigali, Rwanda): Bachelor of Arts in English-French with Education
- 1999-2002: College George Fox de Kagarama (Kigali-Rwanda): Upper Secondary School Advanced Certificate in clerical studies

Eugenie Mukankwiro
58 Boyd Street, Apt#600
Portland, Maine 04101

July 27, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am writing in support of the Maine Humanities Council's proposed "*What If...?: Afrofuturism and the Quest for a Just, Inclusive, and Sustainable Society*" project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. I am thrilled to hear about the Maine Humanities Council's plans to offer Discussion Project programming using Afrofuturist texts to foster discussions about creating a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society. I am eager to serve as a Discussion Project facilitator as part of this initiative.

I have been facilitating for the Maine Humanities Council for a year so far. I am confident that my facilitation strategies allowed participants to make connections with one another through texts. I have also benefited a lot from being a facilitator. Through texts and connections with participants, I've learnt to appreciate diverse people and cultures. Humanities-based efforts like this are very important in that they help community- especially those who are isolated- to bond and engage in real communication. Beside enriching themselves through texts, participants share life experiences and break loneliness. The Maine Humanities Council is the organization to make this happen because they bring communities together through literature. These connections enable people to appreciate diverse cultures and shape a world that is welcoming to diversity and inclusion.

I look forward to working with Maine Humanities Council.

Eugenie Mukankwiro

MHC Facilitator

Monique Mutumwinka

(b) (6)

Portland Public Schools Multilingual and Multicultural Center, 2014 – present
Parent Community Specialist

- Help students and parents to integrate into the American education system
- Serve as facilitator, interpreter, cultural broker, or a person liaison between schools and families

Facilitator, Maine Humanities Council (current)

Board of Directors, Portland Housing Authority (current)

Languages: English, French, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Lingala, and Swahili

Previous experience:

I am originally from Rwanda but was born and raised in the Democratic Republic of Congo. I have been living in Maine since 2010. I was a dentist from DRC and Rwanda for many years and was a lecturer in Rwanda at a Community college.

I am a very caring, patient, and outgoing person. I am very active in my community by connecting people to resources around Portland, especially for the newcomers. I know what does mean to be in a new country. I am very social and spend time listening to people and trying to help them.

Date: 07/29/2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am writing in support of the Maine Humanities Council's proposed "What If ...?" project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities.

I am excited to hear about the Maine Humanities Council's plans to offer Discussion Project programming using Afrofuturist texts to foster discussions about creating a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society.

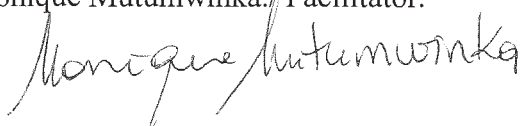
I am eager to serve as a Discussion Project facilitator as part of this initiative.

I joined MHC in January 2021 through Portland Adult Ed. Where I was a facilitator of Chinua Achebe's book "Things Fall Apart". Through the discussion, participants gained a space to connect with each other through the book. Participants shared their ideas and opinions with others. I enjoyed being part of this discussion as a facilitator. I felt connected to them. This experience is so amazing to see ways people are meaningfully connected, and engaging with books, or poetry. I also participated to the Readers Retreat in May where I learned about different views of different speakers talking about the same book. This discussion was so powerful and encouraged me to discover how different angles or analysis of a book is rich. People are being connected through a book and build a strong community.

We are in a world where things are changing every day. MHC supporting this proposed "What if?" is a way to help readers to contemplate or to discover or to analyze what the future deserve to them. We are living in a dynamic world where generations can engage in different ways of seeing things. This is very special when the future is seeing uncertain by many people. The discussion will be powerful because the way I embrace the future is total different from young adult's perspectives. Sharing our opinions open us minds and connect us in different ways. MHC is the organization to help this happen because of his mission: the way it brings communities together is so powerful. MHC gives opportunity to everyone or every group to join a discussion where you are, people with same experience, or work, or place. It depends on what matters for you. The discussion brings people isolated to come together in the community. This is so special and awesome. Because the discussions are also led by facilitators who are part of the community.

I am looking forward to participating and working with MHC. With the support of the grant to MHC and with the support from the community, I think we can come together, help each other for seeing the world in a better way and equitable.

Monique Mutumwinka, Facilitator.



EVE ALLEGRA RAIMON

Professor, Department of English
University of Southern Maine
Women and Gender Studies Program Professor and member, Executive Council
(207) 780-4676 (w) /raimon@usm.maine.edu

EDUCATION

Ph.D., English and American Literature, Brandeis University, May 1995

Major fields of concentration: American and African American literature; gender and ethnic studies; journalism and media studies

M.A., English, University of Vermont, 1988

B.A., Comparative literature, Cornell University, 1980

ACADEMIC HONORS

Faculty Senate award for excellence in teaching, May, 2021

Osher Map Library Teaching Fellow, 2021

Faculty Senate Research Grant, University of Southern Maine, 2019

Kathleen I. MacPherson Outstanding Feminist Faculty Award, USM, 2017

Faculty Senate Research Grant, University of Southern Maine, 2013

University of Southern Maine, Faculty Senate award for excellence in scholarship, May 2006

University of Southern Maine, Faculty Senate award for excellence in university service, May, 1998

Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship, 1988-1992

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Professor, Department of English, University of Southern Maine, 2011-present

Professor, Arts & Humanities, University of Southern Maine, 2007-2011

Chair of the faculty, University of Southern Maine, Lewiston-Auburn College, 2004-2006

Associated Faculty, M.A. Program in American & New England Studies, 2005-2006

Women and Gender Studies Executive Council, 1997-present

Associate Professor, Arts & Humanities, University of Southern Maine, 2001-2007

Assistant Professor, Arts & Humanities, University of Southern Maine, 1995-2001

PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS:

Harriet Wilson's New England: Race, Writing, and Region, JerriAnne Boggis, Eve Allegra Raimon, and Barbara A. White, eds., with a forward by Henry Louis Gates Jr., Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2007.

The "Tragic Mulatta" Revisited: Race and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Antislavery Fiction, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004.

SELECTED ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS:

"Brutality and Brotherhood: James Baldwin and Prison Sexuality," special issue of *African American Review*, 46.4, 2013 (backdated, published in 2014)

"Making Up Mammy: Representing Historical Erasure and Confounding Authenticity in Cheryl Dunye's *The Watermelon Woman*," in *Too Bold for the Box Office: Mockumentaries from Big Screen to Small*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group. New York: Lanham, MD, (2012).

"Lost and Found: Making Claims on Archives," *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers*, 27.2, 2010

"Whose 'Greater Expectations' Are They, Anyway? Exposing the Tensions within Educational Reform Rhetoric," Rosemary Cleary and Eve Allegra Raimon, Winter, 2009, AAC&U's *Liberal Education*

"Writing Group as Sanctuary," Lisa Botshon and Eve Allegra Raimon, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 1, 2009

"Miss Marsh's Uncommon School," in JerriAnne Boggis, Eve Allegra Raimon, and Barbara A. White, eds., *Harriet Wilson's New England: Race, Writing, and Region*, with a forward by Henry Louis Gates Jr., Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, July 2007



July 16, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Ave.
Portland, ME 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I'm writing in support of the Maine Humanities Council's proposed "What If . . .?" project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. I'm excited to hear about the Maine Humanities Council's plans to offer Discussion Project programming using Afrofuturist texts to foster discussions about creating a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society. I'm eager to serve as a Discussion Project facilitator as part of this initiative.

As an English professor at the University of Southern Maine, I have been a facilitator for several book discussion series at the MHC over the years in both Southern and Central Maine in topics that range from "Literature and Medicine," a group for veterans, and, most recently, a series on race and ethnicity, with particular attention to Maine authors. I have found that these groups offer Mainers a challenging, yet welcoming environment in which to learn about important and timely social and historical issues. In the process, participants become more keen critical thinkers and readers of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. I enjoy discussing the texts with an adult population with much life experience to offer. The focus of the current proposal strikes me as particularly needed in light of so much current controversy over just what it means to study race. The topic of "Afrofuturism" will provide Mainers a chance to look backward but also what might be required to envision a more egalitarian and sustainable future. The Maine Humanities Council has a long and successful history offering such opportunities for critical reflection throughout the state; this award would help the organization continue its admirable record.

I look forward to participating in the MHC's "What If . . ." program with a particular focus on "Afrofuturism." Since my area of specialization in teaching and scholarship is African American literature and culture, I am especially enthusiastic about this proposal.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eve A. Raimon".

Eve A. Raimon

DARREN J. RANCO

University of Maine, 5773 S. Stevens Hall
Orono, ME 04469-5724
(t): 207-581-9485 (f): 207-581-4760

(a) Education and Training

| | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Harvard University | Cambridge, MA | Anthropology | Ph.D. 2000 |
| Vermont Law School | Royalton, VT | Environmental Law | M.S.E.L. 1998 |
| Harvard University | Cambridge, MA | Anthropology | M.A. 1997 |
| Dartmouth College | Hanover, NH | Classical Studies and Anthropology | BA 1993 |

(b) Research and Professional Experience

July 2011 - Chair of Native American Programs, University of Maine
January 2009 - Associate Professor of Anthropology, Coordinator of Native American Research, University of Maine
July 2003- June 2008 Assistant Professor of Native American Studies and Environmental Studies. Dartmouth College
July 2000- June 2003 Assistant Professor of Native American Studies. University of California, Berkeley.

(c) Refereed Publications, last 4 years

Erle C. Ellis, Nicolas Gauthier, Kees Klein Goldewijk, Rebecca Bliege Bird, Nicole Boivin, Sandra Díaz, Dorian Q. Fuller, Jacquelyn L. Gill, Jed O. Kaplan, Naomi Kingston, Harvey Locke, Crystal N. H. McMichael, **Darren Ranco**, Torben C. Rick, M. Rebecca Shaw, Lucas Stephens, Jens-Christian Svenning, and James E.M. Watson. 2021. People have shaped most of terrestrial nature for at least 12,000 years. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 118(17): 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2023483118>

McGreavy, Bridie, **Darren Ranco**, John Daigle, Suzanne Greenlaw, Nolan Altvater, Tyler Quiring, Natalie Michelle, Jan Paul, Maliyan Binette, Brawley Benson, Anthony Sutton, and David Hart. 2021. Science in Indigenous homelands: addressing power and justice in sustainability science from/with/in the Penobscot River. *Sustainability Science* 16: 937-947.

Daigle, John J., Natalie Michelle, **Darren J. Ranco**, and Marla Emery. 2019. Traditional Lifeways and Storytelling: Tools for Adaptation and Resilience to Ecosystem Change. *Human Ecology* 47(5): 777-784.

Daigle, John J., Crista L Straub, Jessica E Leahy, Sandra M De Urioste-Stone, **Darren J Ranco**, Nathan W Siegert. 2018. How Campers' Beliefs about Forest Pests Affect Firewood Transport Behavior: An Application of Involvement Theory, *Forest Science*, published online December 7, 2018, fxy056, <https://doi.org/10.1093/forsci/fxy056>.

Carr, Tish, and **Darren Ranco**. 2017. "Citizen Science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge—Values of Inclusion in the Wabanaki Youth Science Program." *Maine Policy Review* 26(2): 86-88.

Reo, N., K. Whyte, **D. Ranco**, J. Brandt, E. Blackmer, and B. Elliott. 2017. "Invasive Species, Indigenous Stewards, and Vulnerability Discourse." *American Indian Quarterly* 41(3): 201-223.

Costanza, Kara K.L., Livingston, William H., Kashian, Daniel M., Slesak, Robert A., Tardif, Jacques C., Dech, Jeffrey P., Diamond, Allaire K., Daigle, John J., **Ranco, Darren J.**, Neptune, Jennifer S., Benedict, Les, Fraver, Shawn R., Reinikainen, Michael, Siegert, Nathan W. 2017. The Precarious State of a Cultural Keystone Species: Tribal and Biological Assessments of the Role and Future of Black Ash. *Journal of Forestry* 115(5): 435-446.

Carr, Tish, Laura Kenefic, **Darren Ranco**. 2017. Wabanaki Youth in Science (WaYS): A Tribal Mentoring and Education Program Integrating Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Western Science. *Journal of Forestry* 115(5): 480-483.



July 29, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, ME 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I would like to express my enthusiastic support for the Maine Humanities Council's (MHC) application for programming related to your project, "What If...?: Afrofuturism and the Quest for a Just, Inclusive, and Sustainable Society." MHC is uniquely positioned to engage a diverse range of communities in their programs, and this range and diversity is extremely important as we reflect on the histories and experiences of racism and injustice, and how they shape our collective futures. As an engaged Native American scholar and educator, I am extremely interested in being part of many of these discussions both inside and outside of Native communities as a speaker, facilitator, and advisor.

Over the last seven or eight years, I have actively engaged MHC and served many roles in implementing programs related to their Think and Drink, 14th Amendment, Consider This, and other public speaker programs. As a busy scholar, I do this work because MHC is one of a very few institutions that is able to engage communities in critical discussions related to our past, present, and future lives. As an academic, I can bring critical scholarly issues to a broadly represented public through these programs that broaden the impact of my scholarship. In relation to Maine's Bicentennial, I am excited to offer programming on Tribal issues across the state, including the role of Native Americans in the State Constitution, the history of land and environmental issues, and issues related to contemporary Tribal sovereignty and natural resource management.

I am very excited about the MHC role in examining Afrofuturist texts. In all honesty, I have been worried for a while that no institution with the reach and expertise of the MHC had not prioritized a broad education and reflection program on this issue and am excited that they will be taking the lead! Please support this critical moment in our national history by providing resources for this program!

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darren Ranco". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Darren Ranco, PhD
Chair of Native American Programs
Associate Professor of Anthropology

PAUL R. STRICKLAND

(b) (6)

SUMMARY

A seasoned, accomplished, retired **Human Resources Executive** with broad strengths in change management, labor relations, employee relations, production management and nonprofit leadership. Proven experience in program development and execution resulting in company financial savings and professional recognition. Served as an active volunteer in organizations and foundations in the area of innovative community building, reducing generational poverty, provided affordable housing for low-income families and job skills training and retraining for native people.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Episcopal Community Services Volunteer

2010-2012

- Worked as a full time volunteer for Episcopal Community Services of Minnesota, a faith-based organization that served homeless and low-income individuals and families.
- Captained a strategic reorganization and restructuring effort to achieve sustainability.
- Implemented a new approach to fundraising that resulted in a five-fold increase in individual contributions in the first year.

Center For Religious Inquiry Executive Director

2004-2010

- Founded an interfaith program to create a safe welcoming place for spiritual seekers of any background or affiliation to experience a deeper understanding of unity through inquiry, dialogue, study and reflection based on the premise that all religions have equal value and an equal claim on the truth.

PRS Consulting Principal

2003-2004

- Developed a consulting practice offering strategic and technical HR advice in the areas of Human Resources Administration and Policy Development, Organizational Development, Labor Relations, and Employee Relations Planning for Mergers, Acquisitions and Divestitures

Target Corporation, Minneapolis, MN Marshall Fields Department Stores

1988-2003

Director/Employee and Labor Relations

- Directed a twelve person corporate Human Resources team that provided strategic and technical employee relations support for 30,000+ employees located in stores, corporate headquarters, and distribution centers.
- Led a distribution/supply chain HR management team that provided generalist support for 2,650 union and non union, hourly and salaried employees in four distribution centers processing \$3 billion of soft goods and big ticket merchandise annually.
- Served as chief negotiator and managed labor relations function with 10 union contracts.

- Directed all employee relations activities for the seamless acquisition of Marshall Field’s department stores and distribution centers by Dayton Hudson Corporation in 1991.

General Mills, Inc., Minneapolis, MN 1981-1988

Employee Relations Representative (1987-1988)

- Functioned as the company representative at 6 onsite EEO/Affirmative Action compliance reviews.
- Designed and delivered an 8-hour fair employment practices seminar and trained 500 upper level managers and professionals.

Industrial Relations Representative (1981-1987)

- Negotiated and administered 7 labor agreements including Grain Miller, IBT, and RWDSU bargaining units.
- Created and delivered the “Superior Work Climate Program” – a corporate wide organizational development program designed for line managers that promoted positive employee relations while stimulating improved productivity.

Mississippi Research & Development Center, Jackson, MS 1977-1980

Field Office Manager

- Directed a state office that provided management and technical advice to Mississippi industries and communities to assist community leaders in economic development.

Continental Group, Inc., Corrugated Division, Jackson, MS 1970-1977

Production Manager

- Directed the corrugated box manufacturing operation with 350 hourly union employees and 20 salaried employees with annual sales of \$15 million.

Education & Personal Growth

| | |
|---|------|
| Bachelor of Arts, Humanities, University of Dallas. Irving, Texas | 1969 |
| Braniff Graduate School, Post Graduate Work | 1970 |
| Rotary Group Study Exchange to Southern India | 1979 |
| Target Leadership Institute | 2001 |
| Art of Convening Advanced Facilitator Training | 2006 |
| Timeless Earth Wisdom – Indigenous Culture and Practices | 2011 |
| True North Groups Moderator Training | 2012 |

Community Leadership

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Maine History Council, Crossing Over Series, Discussion Facilitator | 2020 |
| Down East Hospice Volunteers – Chair | 2017-Present |
| Maine Community Foundation, Washington County Advisory Committee-Vice-Chair | 2017-Present |
| Robbinston Historical Society, Board member | 2015-Present |
| Maine Community Foundation, Scholarship Committee | 2014-Present |
| Center for Earth Wisdom, Treasurer | 2013-2015 |
| Altrupreneurial Leadership Center, Vice-Chair | 2012-2013 |
| The Wells Foundation, Vice Chair | 2006-2009 |
| Episcopal Community Services, Chair | 2006-2012 |
| American Indian OIC, Personnel Committee Chair | 1983-2000 |
| Leadership Minneapolis, Program Committee | 1986-1987 |

7/18/21

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am writing in support of the Maine Humanities Council's "What If ...?" project as outlined in the grant application request to the Division of Public Programs at the Endowment for the Humanities.

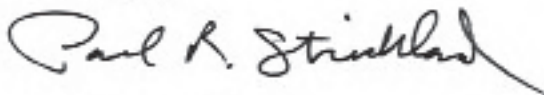
I am intrigued to hear about the Maine Humanities Council's plans to offer Discussion Project programming using Afrofuturist texts to foster discussions about creating a more just, inclusive and sustainable society and I am eager to serve as a Discussion Project facilitator as part of this initiative.

I am a relatively new facilitator to the Maine Humanities Council but I have been facilitating discussions with diverse groups in Texas, Mississippi, Minnesota and now Maine since the early 70's. Most recently I facilitated a MHC five-month/six book discussion of contemporary Native American authors. I feel that participants have gained a better understanding of their own personal agency in creating a just, inclusive society that works for all. I also believe that many participants have gained a better understanding of leveraging their privilege for the benefit of others. Personally these discussions have reinforced my beliefs and practice that it is hard to hate someone when you know their story.

As an organization with dedicated staff, a cadre of skilled facilitators and a proven track record of social transformation, MHC is uniquely positioned to build understanding, community and the recognition that we are truly all in this together and that together we can create a more just society.

I look forward to a continued association with MHC. Rural areas like Washington County, where I live, desperately need the types of community building services that MHC provides. I am honored and humbled to be a small part of MHC's efforts.

Sincerely,



Paul R. Strickland
Robbinston, Maine

Dr. Ellen M. Taylor
130 Townhill Road
Appleton, ME 04862
ellen.taylor@maine.edu

Education

Harvard University: Doctor of Education, Language, Literacy, and Culture.

Cambridge, Massachusetts. June 1997. Doctoral Thesis: *More than Words: Roles of Personal Narrative Writing*. Course work in language and culture, human development and psychology, theory and practice of teaching writing, qualitative and quantitative research methods, discourse analysis.

University of New Hampshire: Master of the Arts in Writing, Poetry Concentration.

Durham, New Hampshire. December 1985. Course work in writing poetry and fiction, teaching writing, linguistics, with a concentration in poetry.

Tulane University: Bachelor of Arts in English.

New Orleans, Louisiana. June 1982. Liberal arts course work with a concentration in literature and writing.

Experience

Professor of English, University of Maine at Augusta, Augusta, Maine. Courses include American Short Story, Contemporary Latin American Literature, Creative Writing, Introduction to Literature, Literary Theory, Literature of the Holocaust, Poetry: Cross-Cultural Forms and Themes, Reading and Writing Memoir, Women and Gender Studies, and Women Writers. 2002 – present.

Assistant Professor of Humanities and Founding Director of the College Writing Center, State University of New York at Cobleskill, Cobleskill, New York . Experience teaching American Literature, Composition, Creative Writing, The Short Story, Technical Writing, Theory and Practice of Teaching Writing, and Women's Literature. Responsible for directing the College Writing Center, including recruiting, training, and supervising tutors, creating and managing the budget, and analyzing the Writing Center data. 1998 – 2002.

Academic Development Coordinator

University of New Hampshire, Durham, New Hampshire. Hired, trained, and supervised subject area tutors and Group Instruction facilitators; designed and conducted seminars for students applying to graduate school; provided training in using the Internet; provided reading and writing support for students in a federally funded TRIO program. 1996 – 1998.

Research Assistant

Harvard Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Designed coding manual and coded students' writing about literature for a longitudinal adolescent writing

project; conducted interviews with students' first year college professors regarding writing assignments and expectations; contributed to final adolescent writing report. 1993 – 1994.

Reading and Writing Specialist

University of New Hampshire, Durham, New Hampshire . Designed and conducted workshops on reading and writing across the disciplines; worked one-on-one with students teaching skills in academic reading and writing, and computer assisted writing. 1989 – 1993.

E.S.L. Consultant and Instructor

Lawrence Equal Employment Program. Lawrence, Massachusetts. Designed and taught a language skills program for displaced Hispanic Women. 1988.

Exeter Adult Education Center, Exeter, New Hampshire. Designed and taught a literacy program for Laotian refugees. 1988.

Portsmouth Adult Education Program, Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Led multiple classes in English as a Second Language to students from Iran, Mexico, Brazil, and France. 1988.

English Teaching Fellow: United States Information Agency

Alianza Cultural Uruguay/Estados Unidos, Montevideo, Uruguay. Taught courses in writing and American Literature to Uruguayan teachers of English; wrote textbook on teaching writing as a process to E.S.L. students; developed teaching materials for all levels of English; conducted teacher training sessions in writing nationwide. 1986 – 1987.

Creative Work: Summary of Recent Activity (2006 – 2021)

Book Publications:

Compass Rose, Moon Pie Press, 2015.

Floating, Moon Pie Press, 2009.

Letters from the Third World, Sheltering Pines Press, 2005

Humming to Snails, Moon Pie Press, 2005.

Creative Publications:

“Border Library” poem in *Goose River Anthology*, Summer 2021.

“Mail Call,” Creative Nonfiction in *Leaflet*, Summer, 2021.

“Why We Need the Sea,” Ekphrastic Poetry for Earth Day, Farnsworth Art Museum, Spring 2021.

“Quarantine Sonnet Two: Virtual Choir” *Wait: Poems from the Pandemic*, Littoral Press, Spring 2021.

UNIVERSITY *of* MAINE *at* AUGUSTA



College of Arts & Sciences

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

July 19, 2021

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I write this letter to endorse and support Maine Humanities Council proposed program, “What If ...” as described in the grant application for the National Endowment of the Humanities. The timing is propitious for such an inclusive and intersectional discussion project, including themes of climate, food, and racial justice, as well as democracy, religion, and spirituality. Afrofuturist texts, such as those by celebrated Octavia Butler, give us narratives through which to examine these national and global issues. We need to consider these important issues as part of an interconnected web of social justice and examining them through literature is an effective way to generate discussion. I would look forward to serving as a Discussion Project facilitator for this exciting project.

For several years I have had the pleasure for facilitating book groups sponsored through the Maine Humanities Council, with groups as diverse as mostly retired people interested in mysteries, residents of Maine’s Department of Corrections, and others interested in Maine poetry. Each experience demonstrated the power of looking at language in a group. Each person connects to a text bearing her/their/his own experiences, assumptions, and desires. This dynamic makes a text open up in exciting ways and helps to forge connections between people and among groups. I’ve seen readers become open to new ideas and interpretations though and because of literature.

These programs have lasting power in a community, and the Maine Humanities Council has a proven record of success in such efforts. As we tend to be more and more divided politically and ideologically, one way we can come together is with a common text. I look forward to these future conversations.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ellen M. Taylor
Professor of English
Coordinator of Humanities

Adam-Max Tuchinsky

Home Address:

(b) (6)

Office Address:

CAHS Dean's Office
228 Deering Street
University of Southern Maine
Portland, Maine 04104-9300
adam.tuchinsky@maine.edu

Education:

Ph.D. History 2001 – **University of North Carolina**
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

M.A. History 1994 – **University of North Carolina**
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

B.A. History and English 1991 – **University of Illinois**
Urbana-Champaign, Illinois

Current Position:

University of Southern Maine

Dean, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences,
July, 2017-Present

Interim Dean, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences,
October, 2015 – July, 2017

Chief of Staff, President's Office, July 2015 – October 2015

Associate Dean, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences,
November, 2010 – June, 2015

Associate Professor of History, August 2007 – Present

Assistant Professor of History, August 2001 – August 2007

Dissertation:

“‘Horace Greeley’s Lost Book’: The *New-York Tribune* and the
Origins of Social Democratic Liberalism in America”
Director – Charles Capper

Publications:

Book:

Horace Greeley's New-York Tribune: Civil War-Era Socialism and the Crisis of Free Labor (Cornell University Press, November 2009)

Articles and Essays:

"Introduction," *Walking*, Henry David Thoreau (Tilbury House, 2017)

"'Woman and Her Needs': Elizabeth Oakes Smith and the Divorce Question," *Journal of Women's History* 28 (Spring 2016): 38-59.

"Fourierism in America," *Encyclopedia of the American Enlightenment* (Thoemmes Continuum, February 2015).

"'More Anon': American Socialism and Margaret Fuller's 1848," *Margaret Fuller and Her Circles*, edited by Brigitte Bailey, Katheryn P. Viens, and Conrad Edick Wright (University of New Hampshire Press, 2013).

Professional Presentations (selected):

Chair and Comment, "The Civil War and its Legacies," New England Historical Association Meeting, Portland, Maine, April 13, 2019

Chair and Comment, "The Union, the Confederacy, and Latin America in Transnational Perspective," Southern Historical Association Annual Meeting, Atlanta, Georgia, November 13-16, 2014

Comment, "The Construction of Radical Networks in the Antebellum Era." Meeting of the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, July 17-20, 2014.

Invited Lectures (selected):

"The History of American Political Parties and Partisanship," Panelist, Elevating the Chat, May 19, 2021

Interview, Paul Santommena, "Horace Greeley and American Socialism," Podcast, March 10, 2021

"Agriculture and History," Hall Elementary School, May 18, 2018.

"Invisible New England: The Real New England," Maine Humanities Council," West Buxton Library, January 13, February 17, March 24, April 28, June 2, 2018.



College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

July 22, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04012

Dear Dr. Abudrraqib,

I am delighted to write this letter of support for the Maine Humanities Council's proposed "What If ...?" project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities.

I have been honored to work with the Maine Humanities Council for more than a decade, first as a faculty member and then as an academic administrator with the University of Southern Maine. What has impressed me the most about your organization, throughout its history, is its abiding commitment to its mission, which is to serve the people of Maine in a way that honors its diversity and its values. When I began working with the MHC, the Council partnered with our state's universities, libraries, and our varied cultural organizations and societies to make herculean efforts to ensure that the state's rural and elderly populations had opportunities for discussion and reflection about the histories and literatures of the region and the country.

Over the past ten years, the state of Maine has become increasingly diverse in new ways, and the "What If...?" project affords the opportunity to reach new communities in much the same way earlier programming focused upon the experiences of the state's Franco and Indigenous communities. The themes that are addressed in this new series, in some areas, will mirror earlier conversations that focused upon the environment, religion, gender, and the way in which Mainers and other Americans reconcile their varied identities in a pluralistic society. This new program, however, also moves MHC programming into newer areas—such as our reckoning with racial and social justice—that for Maine, with its ageing white population, are essential to our future. Overall, these conversations about history and culture, I have found as a facilitator, stitch together our communities and increase our sense of mutual understanding.

228 Deering Avenue, Portland, ME 04102-9300
(207) 780-4221, TTY
usm.maine.edu/college-of-arts-humanities-social-sciences

A member of the University of Maine System



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

As the Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, I have been delighted to work with the Maine Humanities Council to recruit speakers and to design programming that will honor our state and our many communities. But I think what has impressed me the most about the Council's more recent work is that it no longer only relies upon people like me in its efforts to secure facilitators and conversation leaders. The Council, moreover, has done excellent work to recruit new leaders and audiences for its important programs, and most importantly, offered robust and intentional professional development to prepare new and long-serving facilitators to lead community conversations on challenging subjects.

Sincerely,

Adam Tuchinsky

228 Deering Avenue, Portland, ME 04102-9300
(207) 780-4221, TTY
usm.maine.edu/college-of-arts-humanities-social-sciences

A member of the University of Maine System

Rebecca Dawson Webb

(b) (6)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Freelance Writing Coach, Editor, Workshop Facilitator, and Copywriter [2005 – Present]

Creating and editing K-12 educational content for ePublishingPartners. Offering nonfiction writing support, especially memoir and therapeutic writing, for individuals, groups, and organizations, including York Hospital Oncology, Kittery Adult Education, York Housing, Beacon and Seacoast Hospice, and Krempels Center.

TEDxPortsmouth [2019 – Present]

Head Speaker Coach

Lead speaker team in helping TEDxPortsmouth select speakers and craft their talks.

Facilitator [2017- Present]

Supporting organizational effectiveness and consensus building around a variety of civic concerns. Work includes Portsmouth Listens, and Caring Unlimited, and South Berwick Public Library.

Maine Humanities Council, Portland, ME [2013 – Present]

New Hampshire Humanities Council [2000 – 2001]

Scholar-Facilitator

Book discussion facilitation for veterans, women in prison, English language learners, library reading groups, and those who work with victims of domestic violence, the aging and the dying.

Kittery School Department, Kittery, ME [2016 – 2017]

Communication and Engagement Coordinator

Worked with the superintendent of schools on a grant-based project to increase community understanding of Project-Based Learning.

York County Community College, Wells, ME [2016]

Writing Instructor at Marshwood High School

Taught college composition class to high school students.

Kittery Land Trust, Kittery, ME [2010 – 2015]

Administrative Assistant [2010] promoted to *Communications Coordinator* [2013] and

Communications and Outreach Director [2014]

Cultivated membership; raised visibility of organization in community by establishing partnerships and developing education and other outreach programs; built and refined communications, including website content, newsletter, annual appeal, email campaigns, other marketing materials; instrumental in establishing new database.

Clear Creative, Kittery, ME [2009 – 2017]

Branding Strategist and Content Creator

Worked with small to medium sized startups on branding strategy, tagline creation, visual consultation, content creation and editing.

University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH [1997 – 2005]

Writing Instructor

Taught Freshman Composition, Introduction to Creative Nonfiction, and writing for English as a Second Language Summer Institute, served as lecturer representative on English 401 Review Committee [2001 – 2002]

TASIS England American School, Surrey, England [1988 – 1995]

High School English Teacher

Taught 10th and 12th grade English, International 9th/10th grade English for ESL students, Advanced and Intermediate Composition, British Literature and Composition, and SAT verbal preparation.

TASIS Switzerland, Lugano, Switzerland [Summer 1989]

Teacher of English as a Foreign Language

OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Published writing

- Art articles, *The Wire* [2006]
- “The Writing Mentor Project 501: An Invitation for Readers,” a chapter in the handbook for teaching Introduction to Creative Nonfiction [1999]
- Poem “Leaves,” *Conscience* [1996]

Professional Presentations

- “Awakening Possibilities in the Creativity and Craft of Nonfiction,” University of New Hampshire Bi-Annual Composition Conference, Durham, NH [2002]
- “Why do I Want this Education? Inviting Students to Find Footholds as Learners,” College Conference on Composition and Communication, Chicago, IL [2001]

Additional Training

- Facilitation training workshops [2016 – 2017]
- Strategic communication, fundraising, membership cultivation and development workshops and webinars [2010 – 2015]
- “Core Essentials Program” - life coach training, Coach U [2008]
- “Teaching the Writing Process,” University of New Hampshire [Summer 1992]
- “The Theory and Practice of Teaching English as a Second Language,” Harvard University [Summer 1990]

EDUCATION and SKILLS

- M.A., Nonfiction Writing. University of New Hampshire [1997]
Assistantship: Instructor of Freshman Composition - two years.
- B.A., English Literature. Tufts University [1987]
- The American University of Paris- junior year abroad [1986]
- Westminster School, Simsbury, CT [1983]
- Microsoft Word, Excel, Adobe Photoshop, InDesign, Constant Contact, Emma, Savvy content management system, Little Green Light database, Basecamp, G Suite

July 28, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am writing in support of the Maine Humanities Council's proposed "What If . . .?" project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. I am thrilled to hear about the Maine Humanities Council's plans to offer Discussion Project programming using Afrofuturist texts to foster discussions about creating a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society. And I am eager to serve as a Discussion Project facilitator as part of this initiative.

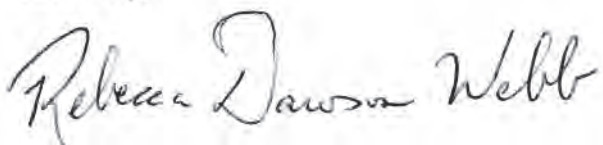
It has been my honor to be a facilitator for the MHC for the past eight years, helping to connect Mainers through the power of ideas. The MHC brings people together with thoughtfulness, intention, and a spirit of exploration. Their text-based discussion groups create a space for a respectful, enriching exchange that challenges participants' thinking, expands their perspective, and helps develop new understandings. These groups invite participants to listen and be curious and to tolerate complexity, ambiguity, and uncertainty. In the process, participants practice the ability to understand the text, themselves, each other, and the world. And in thinking critically together, participants are encouraged to envision positive possibilities for the future of Maine. Time and again, I have seen how much participants value being a part of these community-building discussion groups and engaging in practices that have wider applications for our state's civic health.

As a facilitator, I have loved meeting Mainers of a range of backgrounds and experiences and being enriched and broadened by what they have shared: refugees learning English at Portland Adult Education exploring what it means to have hope, incarcerated women finding healing and connection through poetry or gaining a sense of empowerment around women's suffrage, veterans exploring their experiences of homecoming through *The Odyssey*, and book groups grappling with the history of Maine and exploring how life should be in Maine. I am grateful to the MHC for giving me the opportunity to be a part of this good, meaningful, and expansive work. And I have learned a great deal about effective exploratory discussions in which people are engaged in making meaning and thinking critically together.

To offer space, as the MHC does, for expansive, civil conversations is more important than ever right now. The MHC is committed to using the humanities to connect Maine's communities and raise up marginalized voices around such key issues as inclusion, equity, and democratic voice. And the MHC has the vision, dedicated staff, community connections, and diverse group of facilitators to do this important work effectively. Indeed, the MHC has worked hard to refine their mission to address this crucial time in the United States and to ask the important questions that can positively shape Maine's future.

The power of the humanities is the power of the imagination to connect to different experiences, ask key questions, and envision new possibilities, which is why the "What if . . .?" project with its exploration of Afrofuturist books like Octavia Butler's *Wild Seed* is so apt. I am looking forward to joining with the Maine Humanities Council on this vitalizing project!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Dawson Webb". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rebecca Dawson Webb
Maine Humanities Council Facilitator

Maya Williams

(she/her/hers & they/them/theirs)

(b) (6)

Objective

To support Maine Humanities Council.

Education

Randolph College Lynchburg, VA May 2022
Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing with a Focus in Poetry

University of New England Portland, ME May 2018
Master of Social Work (Advanced Standing) & Certificate in Applied Arts and Social Justice

East Carolina University Greenville, NC May 2017
Bachelor of Social Work & Bachelor of Arts in English

Skills

Program/Community Coordinating Arts Education Writing & Communication Skills
Leadership/Management Interpersonal Skills Public Speaking

Experience

MaineTransNet Portland, ME May 2020-Present
Sexual Assault Program Coordinator

- Work in developing peer support group programs online and in-person for trans sexual assault survivors.
- Create educational opportunities for sexual assault and domestic violence advocates to gain knowledge in trans cultural competency.
- Write and edit testimony for legislative sessions in support of trans sexual assault survivors.

Speak About It Portland, ME July 2019-July 2020
Actor/Consent Educator

- Worked as an actor and workshop facilitator for high school students, college students, and faculty.
- Coordinated resources for youth and faculty as well as trainings on consent education and sexual violence awareness.

Maine Humanities Council Portland, ME Aug. 2019-Present
Program Facilitator

- Work as a literary workshop facilitator for youth ages five to seventeen using children's books to hold space for dialogue and learning.
- Work with librarians in Southern Maine on humanities programming.

Opportunity Alliance Portland, ME Sep. 2019-Jan. 2020

Care Coordinator

- Worked with adults from ages 30 to 72 in case management coordinating teams of providers, developing plans of recovery, and obtaining community resources.
- Worked with adult clients through an established care plan through shared decision making to support clients in enhancing wellness and increasing community inclusion.

EqualityMaine

Portland, ME

Aug. 2018-Aug. 2019

Program Assistant Volunteer in Service to America (AmeriCorps VISTA)

- Worked in ongoing outreach, volunteer management, programming, and grant writing for queer and trans youth between the ages of 12 and 18.
- Coordinated regional youth committees, conferences, spoken word workshops, cultural competency trainings for educators, provided mental health resources, and a summer camp to support queer and trans youth.

Quill Books & Beverage

Westbrook, ME

July 2018-Present

Teaching Artist

- Host and facilitate accessible weekly writing workshops for people in Southern Maine between the ages of 13 and 65.
- Building ongoing curriculum and community support at Quill Books & Beverage through writing as well as maintaining an LGBTQ+ lens for inclusion.

Feminine Empowerment Movement Slam Boston, MA

April 2018-Oct. 2019

Youth Coordinator

- Worked in ongoing outreach for feminine identified youth ages 12 and 18.
- Coordinated transportation, youth funding, and contact with youth and their advisors in order to create an open and brave space at the Feminine Empowerment Movement Slam Tournament.

Port Veritas

Portland, ME

Sep. 2017-Present

Organizer

- Host weekly open mic, make weekly social media posts, and collaborate with other organizations and schools in Southern Maine to implement community programs and workshops.
- Coordinate featured performers and fundraise payment for their feature for weekly open mic in downtown Portland.

Maine Inside Out

Portland, ME

Aug. 2017-Aug. 2018

Master's of Social Work Intern

- Worked as a field placement intern for the Advanced Standing Master of Social Work Program of the University of New England.
- Worked on community practice and advocacy through theater and the arts for incarcerated youth between the ages of 13 and 30 inside and outside of prison facilities through arts programming, grant writing, and community outreach.

United Way
2017

Greenville, NC

Jan. 2017-April

Bachelor's of Social Work Intern

- Worked as a field placement intern for the Bachelor of Social Work Program of East Carolina University.
- Worked to promote early literacy through the use of research assessment, story-telling/arts & crafts programming for infants and toddlers/Pre-K aged children, grant



Monday, July 26th, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am writing this letter in support of the Maine Humanities Council's proposed "What If ...?" project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities.

I am ecstatic to hear about the Maine Humanities Council's plans to offer Discussion Project programming using Afrofuturist texts to foster discussions about creating a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society. As an educator in intersectional inclusion of transgender survivors using trauma informed practices and as person of color, I look forward to see this project's success. Moreover, I am eager to serve as a Discussion Project facilitator as part of this initiative.

In my experience facilitating for the MHC, I have been able to learn and relearn how literature can be used as a form of access for community members in order to create culture transformation. I believe participants have gained a new adoration for different forms of storytelling from marginalized communities and find themselves in those stories. I have also gained modalities of how to apply this facilitation in my work with MaineTransNet as well as my work as Portland Poet Laureate.

What makes this program particularly special is the opportunity to use literature as a trauma informed practice. It is a great idea because it is able to create a space for becoming trauma informed without using jargon or oppression olympics dynamics that may come to play in some spaces' who intend to promote social justice and fall short of their goal. The Maine Humanities Council is the organization to help make this happen because of their ongoing experience of serving marginalized communities with different partner organizations and their decision making in selecting facilitators who desire to create brave spaces for community members.

Special thanks to the University of New England's Arabella Perez' expertise as well for making this come to fruition. I am excited for this project and more like it.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maya Williams', written in a cursive style.

Maya Williams, MSW
ey/em ; they/them ; she/her pronouns
511 Congress St
Portland, ME 04101

Hong Zhang

EDUCATION

- Ph. D. Anthropology, Columbia University, 1998
- M. Phil. Anthropology, Columbia University, 1992
- M.A. Anthropology, Columbia University, 1989
- M.A. English, Wuhan University, Wuhan, China, 1984
- B.A. English, Huazhong Normal University, Wuhan, China, 1982

TEACHING AND RESEARCH INTERESTS

Aging, eldercare, and population policy
Gender, marriage and family, labor migration and urbanization, NGOs
Chinese popular culture and language

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2007-present Associate Professor, East Asian Studies, Colby College
- 2000-2007 Assistant Professor, East Asian Studies, Colby College
- 2017-present Co-editor, *ASIANetwork Exchange: A Journal for Asian Studies in the Liberal Arts*
- 2015-present On the speaker roster for “*World in Your Library Program*,” Maine Humanities Council.
- 2014-2017 Board of Directors, ASIANetwork, a consortium of 170 North American colleges devoted to strengthening Asian Studies in liberal arts education.
- 2010-2012 Invited Reviewer for the Fulbright Grant on the Greater China, Council for International Exchange of Scholars, Washington, DC.
- 2006-2012 Co-Chair, Chinese Society of Women’s Studies (CSWS), USA.

FELLOWSHIPS and GRANTS (National competitive awards and grants)

ASIANetwork Freeman Foundation Student-Faculty Program Grant for the collaborative research project: “Redefine Old Age and Eldercare: Stories from China,” Summer 2012.

Fulbright Senior Scholar Grant for research in China: “Gender, Labor Migration and Urbanization in China,” 2009-2010.

ASIANetwork Freeman Foundation Student-Faculty Program Grant “Reconfiguration of China’s Urban Landscape,” Summer 2007.

Fulbright-Hays Study Abroad Program, the U.S. Department of Education, summer 2005.

Richard Carley Hunt Post-Doctoral Fellowship, Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, 2002-2003.

Post-Doctoral Fellow, Fairbank Center for East Asian Research, Harvard Univ., 2002-2003.

PUBLICATION

2020. "Globalizing Late Life in China: Realigning the State, Family and Market Interests for Eldercare," in the 4th edition of Jay Sokolosky (ed.), *The Cultural Context of Aging: Worldwide Perspectives*. Chapter 22. Pp. 252-275.
2020. *Beyond Filial Piety: Rethinking Aging and Caregiving in Contemporary East Asian*. Jeanne Shea, Katrina Moore and Hong Zhang (eds.). New York/Oxford: Berghahn Publishing House.
2017. Chapter 12, "Recalibrating Filial Piety: Realigning the state, family and market interests in China?" eds. by Harrell and Santos in *Transforming Patriarchy: Chinese Families in the Twenty-First Century*. University of Washington Press. Pp. 234-250.
2017. Guest editor with Jeanne Shea, "Introduction to Aging and Caregiving in Chinese populations". *Ageing International*. Vol. 42(2):137-141.
- 2016 (Translation). 《美国持续性代理权和成年人监护制度立法及法律适用》 (*Legislation and Legal Application of the Durable Power of Attorney and Adult Guardianship System in the U.S.*). Eds. By Wang Zhuqing and Tian Ye. Beijing: Zhishi Chanquan Publishing House. I translated into Chinese Rhein's "No One in Charge: Durable Powers of Attorney and the Failure to Protect Incapacitated Principals", pp. 132-158.
- 2014 (Reprint). "Labor Migration, Gender and the Rise of Neo-Local Marriage in the Economic Boomtown of Dongguan, South China." In Xiaowei Zang (ed.), *Gender and Chinese Society*. New York/London: Routledge. Pp. 639-656.
- 2014 (Reprint). "China's New Rural Daughters Coming of Age: Downsizing the Family and Firing Up Cash-Earning Power in the New Economy." In Xiaowei Zang (ed.), *Gender and Chinese Society*. New York/London: Routledge. Pp. 671-698.
2013. "Transforming the Concepts of Aging: Three Case Studies from Anthrology," a co-authored chapter for *Oxford Textbook of Old Age Psychiatry*. 5th Edition. Oxford (UK): Oxford University Press, pp. 39-55.
2010. On the translation team to translate Xiaolan Bao's *Holding up more than Half the Sky: Chinese Women Garment Workers in New York City, 1948-92* (University of Illinois Press, 2006) into Chinese titled 《撑起大半边天: 纽约华工妇女史》. Tianjin People's Press.



COLBY COLLEGE
4410 Mayflower Hill
Waterville, Maine 04901-8844
TEL 207-859-4410

DEPARTMENT OF EAST ASIAN STUDIES

Hong Zhang
July 24, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am writing this letter in strong support of the Maine Humanities Council's proposed "What if...?" project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities.

I am thrilled to learn about the Maine Humanities Council's plans of offering Discussion Project program using Afrofuturist texts to foster discussions about creating a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society. I hope I can be part of the project through serving as a program speaker for this initiative.

I have been on the speaker roll for Maine Humanities Council's World in Your Library (WIYL) since 2015. In the past six years, I have traveled to various local public libraries throughout Maine giving talks on contemporary China from evolution of China's birth control policy to population aging, political humor, globalization and outsourcing, and women's rights. I was very impressed by the enthusiasm, knowledge and interest of the Maine audience and participants in the topics about China. I think the Maine Humanities Council is doing a great job in creating this type of programs that connect Mainers with global affairs. I thoroughly enjoyed the interaction with the audience and their questions in the Q&As have also taught me new perspectives to re-examine China and the US-China relations.

I have recently begun to work on topics about climate change and sustainable development. This topic connects well "What If ...?" themes. The humanities-based programs like this one brings about diversity, inclusiveness, creativity, imagination and connectivity to our community local and global. I strongly support this new initiative by Maine Humanities Council.

Sincerely yours,

Hong Zhang
Chair and Associate Professor
East Asian Studies



July 23, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraquib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, ME 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraquib,

This letter is to convey our support for the Maine Humanities Council proposed "What If...?" project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. We are thrilled to hear of the Maine Humanities Council's plans to offer a variety of public humanities programming to promote reflection and discussion in their mission to create a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society here in rural Maine and around the globe. For more than 25 years Maine Humanities Council has been a partner and a cornerstone of support and guidance for facilitating community discussions. Our organization has been tutoring adults who read at levels lower than 12th grade since 1978, partnering trained volunteers with individuals. MHC's New Books New Readers program has been a way of building our literacy communities with text-based discussions held each year.

This comprehensive framework acknowledges the important skills of cooperation and communication, among others, for the success and well being of individuals and communities, as articulated by the Equipped for the Future: 21st Century literacy standards, supported by the National Institute for Literacy. Maine Humanities Council discussion based programs have provided for us the expertise and curriculum to explore humanities based literacy standards.

The current challenges for our adult learners, of dealing with the Covid-19 Pandemic, including the increased reliance on digital literacy skills, combined with the impact of rural isolation and the overwhelming breadth of information to sort through, has even further strengthened our partnership with the Maine Humanities Council, as teleconference platforms opened the door for stronger access and collaboration among program administrators and our adult learners. What we have seen with Maine Humanities Council discussion programs, especially over the last two years, is the development of very supportive relationships, improved reading and critical thinking skills, and stronger skills for listening and sharing ideas. The safe environment promotes information sharing, self expression, and new perspective taking and therefore enables the improved self confidence, self advocacy, and for adults who otherwise struggle to access written information. We are currently hosting a 7 week book discussion group, sponsored by Maine Humanities Council, with a community of 28 participants, from 8 towns and 3 counties. We are reading *Milltown* and *We Are Water Protectors* and having rich discussions about topics that we are otherwise afraid to talk about. The variety of perspectives and personal experience stories that people have to share is rich. The learning opportunities are inclusive, accessible, and vast in number. This particular discussion group is expanding the lives of our adult learners in ways they have not been challenged previously.

Maine Humanities Council has been a great partner for us as the programs are well structured and designed with ZOOM training and teamwork planned. The texts provided for book discussions are always the most engaging with gorgeous artwork, thoughtfully written and often historically linked concepts with a wealth of material to explore and discuss. The books themselves become part of the community, passed around for others to enjoy (offspring). The ripple effect of the MHC programming is seen and felt for years afterwards.

We look forward to continuing our partnership and to seeing the "What If...?" project come to fruition. We are excited to see how far these opportunities can reach into more rural communities as broadband access expands.

Sincerely,

Barbara Averill
Executive Director

Nationally accredited by ProLiteracy. Community Partner with the United Way of the Tri-Valley Area.



COLBY COLLEGE
4700 Mayflower Hill
Waterville, Maine 04901-8847
TEL 207-859-4700

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am delighted to write in support of the Maine Humanities Council's proposed "What If ...?" project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. I have worked on a number of projects over the years with the Maine Humanities Council, and can attest to their visionary capacity to mount effective and meaningful public engagement on complex topics. The Maine Humanities Council's track record of inclusive outreach is notably impressive, as their presence is equally strong in very rural parts of the state and in urban centers, in prisons, schools, and public libraries, and with community-based organizations across the state.

I absolutely love this topic and know it will resonate deeply across Maine. Their ability to offer public humanities programming is unparalleled in the state, and their commitment to envisioning work as one pathway toward forging a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society is a perfect fit with their proposed topic of Afrofuturism. Afrofuturism asks us to imagine a world based in equity and mutual respect, community strength and empowerment. This message will be inspiring across Maine, where communities across the state are participating in conversations about issues such as how to invest effectively in racial equity, how to address our challenging opiate epidemic through public health initiatives rather than criminalization, how to work towards a carbon-free future that nourishes our environment and sustains our coastlines, and more. The Maine Humanities Council excels at bringing people from different backgrounds and perspectives together to engage with each other on complex and challenging issues like these.

I write in my capacity as the Coordinator of Freedom & Captivity, a collaborative, statewide public humanities initiative to explore and promote abolitionist visions and possibilities for Maine. The initiative includes partnerships with over 50 organizations across Maine, including advocacy, activist, humanities, arts, cultural and community based organizations. The Maine Humanities Council has been instrumental in supporting our vision and growth, enabling us to develop a comprehensive website, to offer humanities-rich workshops in prisons, to offer book-based community discussions on the topic of abolition, and more. The humanities offer a powerful lens for reflecting critically on our current structures and experiences and for engaging the creative imagination about how things might be different – and better – than they are now. Freedom & Captivity seeks to engage communities across Maine in this difficult and challenging



COLBY COLLEGE
4700 Mayflower Hill
Waterville, Maine 04901-8847
TEL 207-859-4700

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

work of imagining how to reduce and possibly end punitive incarceration – the humanities are our bridge for how to do that. We could not have undertaken a project of this scope without the support of the Maine Humanities Council.

In conclusion, I urge you to support this proposal, so well-envisioned and timely for Maine. I can't wait to participate!

Sincerely,

Catherine Besteman

Catherine Besteman
Francis F. and Ruth K. Bartlett Professor
Coordinator, *Freedom & Captivity*

Rockport Public Library

July 22, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am writing to you today to voice my support for the Maine Humanities Council's proposed "What If ...?" project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. I was over the moon to hear about the MHC plans to use speculative fiction and Afro-futurism to foster community dialog and community engagement. I believe that focusing on what is possible is the best way to allow our minds to envision a positive future.

The Rockport Public Library like all libraries in Maine is a busy place. The MHC understands that. Every interaction we have had with MHC is professional and pleasant. They offer us high level content that we couldn't bring to our community without them. They also package it in a way that makes it easy for a busy library to host their events.

Maine is a large state with many communities far away from each other. The MHC's approach of having community conversation and humanities programming all across the state helps us be one Maine instead of many. I always look forward to working with the MCH as it enriches not just my town but the state as a whole. I'm very excited to be part of the conversation and imagine "What If...?" with my community.

Warm Regards



Benjamin L. Blackmon
Library Director
Rockport Public Library

PO Box 8 • Rockport, Maine 04856 • 207-236-3642
rpl@rockport.lib.me.us • www.rockport.lib.me.us



Bangor Office: PO Box 653
Bangor, ME 04402
(207) 945-5102

Dover-Foxcroft Office: PO Box 192
Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426
(207) 564-8166

Samaa Abdurraqib, Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

June 25, 2021

Dear Samaa:

I am writing with great pleasure and enthusiasm in support of the Maine Humanities Council's proposal to support the Discussion Project throughout Aroostook, Penobscot and Piscataquis Counties. These opportunities to gather with neighbors or co-workers on zoom or around a library table are a highlight of my calendar whenever I have the opportunity to participate. During this past pandemic period, the discussion has been enriched by participants throughout the State of Maine and beyond bringing voices of diverse experience to my living room in Piscataquis County – how wonderful is that!

Partners for Peace is the domestic violence resource center serving Piscataquis and Penobscot Counties, an expansive rural area in north-central Maine. As an employee of Partners for Peace, I have been a participant in Maine Humanities discussion groups beginning a decade ago when Council staff approached the domestic violence resource centers with the opportunity to engage in a text-based discussion group modeled after the Literature in Medicine program. These groups became a focal point for gathering community members, advocates and survivors to share poetry, essays and novels related to the experience of domestic violence. Reading and sharing together strengthened our relationships with one another and offered new insights into survivors' stories and the impact on us all.

Most recently Partners for Peace staff sought assistance from the Maine Humanities Council to further a discussion of *Stamped: Racism, Anti-racism and You*. We were fortunate to be chosen for this discussion project in the late autumn of 2020. Virtually every staff member participated whole-heartedly in the discussions, learning together about so much that we did not know. This experience led to the formation of a committee that drafted an inclusivity pledge for our organization, a commitment to personal and organizational change.

We have experienced untold connections, "light bulb moments" and deepening, respectful relationships that allow us to exchange beliefs and challenges in meaningful ways as a result of our participation in Maine Humanities Council Discussion Groups. We look forward to many more!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Cynthia Freeman Cyr'.

Cynthia Freeman Cyr
Rural Legal Services Coordinator

TOGETHER PLACE PEER RUN RECOVERY CENTER

Administered by:

Maine Mental Health Connections, Inc.

2 Second St ♦ Bangor ME 04401

(207) 941-2907 ♦ togetherplace.org



June 21, 2021

To Whom it May Concern:

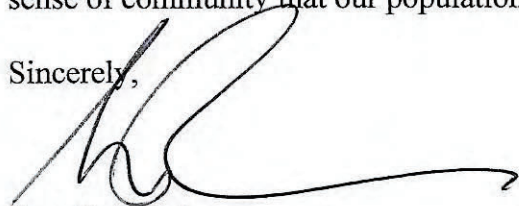
I'm writing in support of the Maine Humanities Council's upcoming grant proposal for programming in Penobscot, Piscataquis, and Aroostook Counties and to express our eagerness to partner with the MHC in this project.

The mission of Maine Mental Health Connections is based on the philosophy that people in substance use or mental health recovery have the right to choice in determining their independence in the community, and opportunities should be provided for them to have and make choices that will lead to their individualized and group empowerment.

The Maine Humanities Discussion Project would be a good fit for our participants. We see the project's goals of connection, agency, and engagement relating nicely with our mission. And we trust Maine Humanities for its exemplary past programming; our Maine Humanities poetry groups in 2019 and 2020 (pilot versions of the current Discussion Project) and our mini-grant, "The Creative Recovery Initiative," have been rewarding and shown us that Maine Humanities is an incredible community resource and a true partner.

Maine Mental Health Connections is proud of our work with Maine Humanities. It's had an impact on the sense of community that our population feels, and has been no less than powerfully inspiring each time.

Sincerely,



Sean Faircloth
Executive Director
Maine Mental Health Connections
DBA Together Place Peer Run Recovery Center



July 16, 2021

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Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib:

I am writing in support of the Maine Humanities Council's "What If...?" project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. I am excited to hear about the Maine Humanities Council's plans to offer a wide range of public humanities programming in many different corners of Maine. These programs will bring a diverse spectrum of people in Maine together to discuss vital issues of our time and to create a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society.

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Founded in 1975 by a group of writers and publishers, the Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance (MWPA) works to enrich the literary life and culture of Maine. We bring together Maine writers, editors, publishers, booksellers, and literary professionals at all stages of their careers to sharpen craft, create community, and celebrate great writing. The Maine Humanities Council's work with community members to create conversations around books dovetails with MWPA's work in reading and writing communities around Maine, and we frequently discuss the ways our projects and initiatives can build on each other.

STAFF

Taryn Bowe
Associate Director

Gibson Fay-LeBlanc
Executive Director

Hannah Perry
Program Director

Samara Doyon
Office Coordinator

I have seen firsthand the power of MHC's programs to envision and shape our collective future, and the "What If...?" project is a further deepening of that work. These are conversations that Maine communities need, and I think this project's focus on Afrofuturism and the work of Octavia Butler and other writers will provide a platform for expansive and generative discussion and engagement.

MWPA is ready to support and engage with this project however we can, and we endorse it wholeheartedly.

Sincerely,

Gibson Fay-LeBlanc
Executive Director

MAINE WRITERS & PUBLISHERS ALLIANCE
314 Forest Avenue, #313
Portland, ME 04101
207-228-8263
info@mainewriters.org
mainewriters.org



July 7, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am writing in support of the Maine Humanities Council's (MHC) proposed "What If ...?" project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. I am excited to hear about the Maine Humanities Council's plans to offer diverse public humanities programming focused on creating a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society. As a school that works extensively with immigrant populations, this work is aligned to the vision and mission of Lewiston Adult Education and Lewiston Public Schools.

Lewiston Adult Education has a lengthy history of working with the Maine Humanities Council. We have partnered with MHC to provide book group opportunities for our students and community members. These experiences are both literacy-rich and culturally engaging. Students value the physical resources as well as the conversation. The leadership at MHC has been thoughtful and responsive to the unique demographic needs of the Lewiston community, and the MHC volunteers have provided the structure and support, to teachers/staff/ and students, to make the literacy groups academically and culturally engaging. I am confident that MHC can help to lead this work utilizing Afrofuturistic texts as a way of increasing the diversity, equity and inclusion work much needed at both the local and state levels.

Lewiston Adult Education supports the Maine Humanities Council in this work. This initiative will help to foster needed community conversations around race and equality.

Sincerely,

Bill Grant
Director, Lewiston Adult Education



July 16, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am writing on behalf of the Southern Maine Agency on Aging (SMAA) to express our support of the Maine Humanities Council's (MHC) proposed "What If ...?" project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. I am thrilled to hear about the MHC's plans to offer a variety of public humanities programming focused on reflection and discussion across Maine communities to create a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society. This work is so needed in the current climate with so many pressing issues including social justice, social isolation, and times of general divisiveness.

As the local area agency on aging in the most populous, and southern-most region of Maine, SMAA is the focal point in Cumberland and York counties for resources, services and information to empower older adults, adults with disabilities, and their caregivers to live to their fullest potential. In carrying out our mission we aspire to better reach underserved communities and engage a diverse team of staff and volunteers by expanding our learning, outreach, and cross-cultural communication and competency, utilizing a multi-pronged approach that allows us to demonstrate through data that we are an inclusive organization. Partnerships with organizations like the MHC support and inspire this important work by engaging our team in powerful and transformative conversations, expanding perspectives, and building empathy. Through multiple projects interfacing with SMAA staff, volunteers, clients, and community partners, MHC has demonstrated its commitment to excellence in bringing people together to engage in meaningful conversations around big ideas, sharing educational, moving content, and modeling leadership in creating inclusive community.

I encourage you to select MHC's "What If...?" project to support their efforts to continue to transform Maine communities to be more connected through the opportunity to engage meaningfully with the humanities. SMAA looks forward to continuing to champion this work in collaboration with MHC.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Guest".

Anna Guest, MOT, OTR/L
Agewell Programs Manager



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
MOUNTAIN VIEW CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

1182 DOVER ROAD
CHARLESTON, MAINE 04422

RANDALL A. LIBERTY
COMMISSIONER

JEFFREY A. MORIN
WARDEN

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

The mission of the Department of Corrections is to reduce the likelihood that juvenile and adult offenders will re-offend by providing practices, programs and services which are evidence based and which hold the offenders accountable.

Dear Jan,

I'm pleased to send you a letter of support for your upcoming grant proposal.

Mountain View Correction Facility's mission is to reduce the likelihood that offenders will re-offend by providing practices, programs and services. The men spend an average of 6 months to 5 years at Mountain View and the more interaction and community involvement we provide for them, the better prepared they are for release back into their/our communities.

Over the past 5 years, the Maine Humanities Council and Mountain View have partnered on various projects. The Mountain View residents and I have greatly enjoyed all these programs. Programs like the Discussion Project, Veterans reading groups, and poetry groups. All of these groups allow residents an opportunity to share positive times in their lives instead of concentrating on the negative. It is an opportunity for them to reflect on their experiences and develop new skills.

It has been our experience that the facilitators offer as much to the groups as the materials. Over the years two facilitators have shared their valuable time with our residents. Both were so caring and personable, showing an abundance of empathy and treating the residents as individuals resulting in residents that were excited to participate.

Listening to the residents share stories regarding their pasts is quite moving. I have found that the insights into their pasts often help me with my everyday interactions with them.

The Maine Humanities Council and Mountain View have great communication and collaboration. MHC has included us in all aspects of the groups from start to finish. They check in throughout the programs to see what is needed and make sure that the connections their agency is fostering is the best it can be to bring about positive engagement with our residents and facility.

Sincerely,

Marsha Higgins
Community Programs Coordinator
Mountain View Correctional Facility
1182 Dover Road
Charleston, ME 04422
e-mail: marsha.higgins@maine.gov
Phone: 207-285-0722



ARTS. ARTISTS. IDEAS.

534-538 Congress Street
Portland, Maine 04101
Wabanaki Land
207.828.5600
www.space538.org

July 16, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am writing with my enthusiastic support and intent to collaborate on the Maine Humanities Council “What If...?” initiative as proposed to the NEH. SPACE is an artistic and humanities hub for ideas, and speculative futures about how we bring people together to discuss alternative futurisms rooted in a more just, fair, and sustainable society is a crucial part of our ongoing strategic vision work for the next five years, and something SPACE has strived to build a home for over the past two decades. We admire and love the community leadership of the Maine Humanities Council, and look forward to a discussion that is rooted in multiple sites, audiences, and parts of the greater Portland and Maine landscape.

As you know, we have historically worked with MHC as both a program collaborator and as a grantee for our own self-initiated projects, and fiscal sponsor to independently organized community humanities projects funded through MHC. We are so grateful for your many years of collaborating with us, now as Associate Director but previously as the brain trust and champion of the popular community conversation series Think & Drink that worked to reinvision the roles of community policing, architecture as Portland’s peninsula adapts to population growth, and equity in our communities. Many of our artists, audiences, and collaborators use science fiction and futurisms as ways of escaping in entertainment, but they shape how we imagine what technologies, lifestyles, social structures, and the future of labor might look like. As the Infrastructure bill is about to change the shape of our nation’s communities, and the world adapts to new challenges that are social, ecological, and global health related, we need to have broader coalition based activities across organizations, spaces, and audiences like the one Maine Humanities Council can foster.

I look forward to collaborating with Maine Humanities Council and hearing more about your vision for programming. SPACE will enthusiastically host programs you come up with, and collaborate with our creative, scholarly, and artistic community to push the boundaries on the speculative futures for a brighter tomorrow.

With respect and admiration,

Kelsey Halliday Johnson
Executive Director

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July 24, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am writing in support of the Maine Humanities Council's proposed "What If ...?" project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities.

I am the founder of the Committee to Restore the Abyssinian Meeting House and serve as a founding board of director. I am excited to hear about the Maine Humanities Council's plans to offer a variety of public humanities programs focused on Afrofuturism.

As the population of people of color continues to grow in Maine the Maine Humanities Council has led the way in our community by promoting conversation based on writings and literature written by people of color, many of whom are Maine authors. MHC creates a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society by including members of our communities.

In 2019 the Abyssinian and MHC initiated a discussion series designed to reach out to people of color of all ages, genders and races. Included were people that attended churches composed of black people, younger people that were recent college graduates, community leaders and new immigrants who sought opportunities to meet members of their new surroundings. The pandemic allowed people all over the state to meet from the comfort of their homes while learning what united us as people.

I hope to be able to work closely with MHC as we explore what the future holds for Maine communities. So much has been written about history, race relations,

systematic racism, the politics of race and how we prepare for the future while addressing the past problems that are still prominent today.

The population in Southern Maine has changed markedly in the last fifteen years. And while an influx in African and Hispanic populations are key to the change there are many people that are African Americans as well. There is a unique opportunity to bring people together from across the state to create a unified economic development strategic plan based on input from all groups of people. The range of intellectual and cultural diversity reflects the unique nature of the state's population. Conversations with people of all different ethnicities and races will offer an opportunity to bring people together that is apolitical.

The conversations across the state will include black, white and brown people, Hispanic, Native Americans and people from Asia. MHC reaches people of all sexual preferences, all faiths, and rich or poor. I am committed to MHC's effort to bring people together to determine how we can make meaningful long-lasting change in Maine.

I look forward to participating and working with MHC as the programming for Afrofuturism begins to explore the dissemination of systematic racism in Maine and the rise of unified people in Maine.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Debbie

Deborah Cummings Khadraoui
Founder, Committee to Restore the Abyssinian Meeting House

Abyssinian Meeting House
PO Box 11064 | Portland, ME 04104
www.abyssinianmeetinghouse.org

July 12, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am pleased to write a letter in support of the Maine Humanities Council's proposed "What If...?" project. MHC has greatly benefited programs across the state by providing opportunities for discussion and dialogue.

RSU 54 Adult Education provides a range of adult education services to six communities in Central Maine. In addition, our program has historically reached out to and served adult learners from throughout central and northern Somerset County – a region not served by other adult education programming.

The MHC sponsored discussion project we hosted last winter was a great example of how, thanks in part to the wonders of technology, we brought a group of people from disparate rural communities together. In our discussions of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, we explored not only the historical impacts of colonialism in Nigeria but observed how similar oppression persists in modern culture, indeed, in our own state. MHC helps facilitate conversations like ours, conversations that lead to creating a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society.

In addition, our program has benefited in years' past from the "New Books, New Readers" program, which was a vehicle both to discuss topics of social significance—such as Native American culture—and also to promote family literacy.

I sincerely hope that MHC continues to receive the support they need to sponsor quality projects like "What If...?" Without MHC's discussion projects and other initiatives, communities like the ones served by RSU 54 would be left with a cultural void.

Sincerely,



Jeremy T. Lehan
Director, RSU 54 Adult & Community Education



Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am writing on behalf of Northern Light Mayo Hospital in support of the Maine Humanities Council's proposed "What If....?" Project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Health Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. At Northern Light Health we have become immersed in the important work of addressing diversity and inclusion in our workplace and with the patients we serve. We are excited to hear about the MHC's plans to offer resources through programming to help create a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society.

NL Mayo Hospital is a critical access hospital in the middle of the Maine Highlands. We are the largest hospital in Piscataquis County, one of only three counties east of the Mississippi considered as frontier by the US Census Bureau. We have participated for over fifteen years in the MHC's *Literature and Medicine* program. Staff members who have joined these sessions have gained insight into the common themes of humanity that are woven into a wide variety of literature sources; how a personal experience can align with the shared experience of others, and how parallels today in our work with patients were captured, often a century or more ago, by the timeless themes in classical writings. It is exciting to see the 'AHA!' moments on the faces of participants as they recognize the similarities between their present circumstances and the writings of others often captured in what would appear to be much different times and situations.

In the past few years the program has focused on a state-wide approach to content—offering the same reading list and guided discussion points in all participating sites. We know that professionals across the state are having some of the same discussions and reflections that we are having on thought-provoking contemporary topics. That creates a unifying effect state-wide.

As we work with our employees and our patients to increase awareness of and discussions about diversity in all its presentations and opportunities programs like this, focused on the humanities and unified across the state, will help us to reflect the values that we profess as engaged members of the healthcare community. We sincerely hope that the MHC is successful in its pursuit of this funding so that we can continue to partner with them here in Piscataquis County.

Mayo Hospital
897 W Main Street
Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426-1029

CA Dean Hospital
364 Pritham Avenue
Greenville, Maine 04441

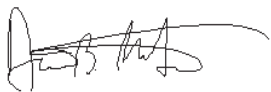
David B. McDermott, MD, MPH
Senior Physician Executive
dmcdermott@northernlight.org

Office 207.564.4443
Fax 207.564.4323
Cell (b) (6)

Northern Light Health

Acadia Hospital
A.R. Gould Hospital
Beacon Health
Blue Hill Hospital
C.A. Dean Hospital
Eastern Maine Medical Center
Home Care & Hospice
Inland Hospital
Maine Coast Hospital
Mayo Hospital
Mercy Hospital
Northern Light Health Foundation

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David B. McDermott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David B. McDermott, MD, MPH, CPE, FAAFP, FAAPL
Senior Physician Executive

29 July 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, ME 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am writing in support of the Maine Humanities Council's "What If...?" project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. I am excited to hear about the Maine Humanities Council's plans to offer a wide range of public humanities programming in many different corners of Maine. These programs will bring a diverse spectrum of people in Maine together to discuss vital issues of our time and to create a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society.

Indigo Arts Alliance is a nonprofit artist residency program that invests in supporting artists across disciplines, including visual arts, performing arts, creative writing and music composition. IAA provides both the time and space necessary for the development of new work; it also offers public programming that brings communities together with educational, informative and creative programming that expands cultural awareness.

We have benefitted immensely from the support of Maine Humanities. Our experience has shown that their innovative and inclusive approach to community building is making a real difference in our state., Afrofuturism and the work of Octavia Butler and other writers will shine a spotlight on a sector of literature that is often undervalued. More importantly it will educate people to the deeply important ideas that inform Afrofuturism. Namely, that this worldview actually is core to the resilience and humanity of Black people everywhere.

Indigo Arts Alliance offers its support to this project and we endorse it with great enthusiasm.

Márcia Minter | She, Her



Co-Founder, Executive Director

[Indigo Arts Alliance](#)

60 Cove Street | Portland ME | 04101

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

RANDALL A. LIBERTY
COMMISSIONER



MATTHEW A. MAGNUSSON
WARDEN

July 13, 2021
Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

My name is Jason Palmer and I am a Case Manager at the Maine State Prison. I am writing to support the Maine Humanities Council "What IF...?" project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. I am ecstatic to hear about the plans of the Maine Humanities Council's plan to offer a variety of public humanities programming for reflection and positive discussion to create a more just, inclusive and sustainable society. Working in a prison, I see a variety of different people from all different forms of socioeconomic status and ethnic origins. Many staff and residents come from far more diverse backgrounds and represent a portion of the population not as prevalent as that found in Maine. By fostering discussions and reflections on works created by those different backgrounds it helps to break down stereotypes and prejudices that have been passed down from generation to generation.

The Maine Department of Corrections has partnered with the Maine Humanities Council to provide book group discussions at the Maine State Prison over the last four years. During that time, we have discussed books that have focused on a variety of topics from Post-Traumatic Stress to the Civil War. Each discussion has been dynamic by delivering engaging conversations and thought-provoking insights from the outside facilitators. This particular book club was made up of veterans initially and has expanded to other residents of the facility, bringing in other perspectives and generating thoughtful discussions. These particular discussions have been able to give the residents a way to vocalize their life experiences and learn from others whose experiences are completely different. Maine Humanities Council has been able to deliver these thoughtful and passionate discussions to a setting that is mostly forgotten about and has allowed those residents who participate in the book discussions a way to feel humanized instead of as a cog in a machine.

Maine Humanities Council has been able to support this programming because of their efforts to remember that not only the public have a voice but those that are incarcerated are also human beings that will eventually reenter society. Without the humanistic approach and caring nature of this organization the residents in the facility would not have an outlet to come to when they are released back into society. I look forward to continuing to work with Maine Humanities Council and any projects that they are involved in.

 Jason Palmer
Correctional Care and Treatment Worker



Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director, Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue,
Portland, Maine 04102

July 18, 2021

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

What If... Maine Humanities wasn't the devoted community partner that it is? It would be a very different world at Portland Adult Education. Hundreds of students never would have participated in Maine Humanities led book discussions. Over 70 students would not have participated in the epic experience of reading, "Things Fall Apart" last year. This is not a "What If World" that I want to imagine. Maine Humanities is the ideal recipient for grant funding through the National Endowment for the Humanities. Their proposed "What If...?" project is well tuned to their overarching goals of creating a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society.

Portland Adult Education is a part of Portland Public Schools. Our robust programming serves approximately 2000 students annually and includes English Learning, High School, College Preparation, Job and Workforce Training, and Enrichment courses. We have joyfully partnered with Maine Humanities for the past 20 years in a variety of projects. They have provided books and facilitators for humanities-based discussions for our English language learners at all levels of language proficiency. For many of our students, this was the first book they had ever read in English – for some it was the first book they had ever owned. In addition, Maine Humanities has run staff workshops to expand our staff's capacity to lead rich discussions in the classroom. Most recently, we expanded our participation to include high school and college transition students in this year's Reader's Retreat project. Maine Humanities' sponsorship allowed full participation of 70 students reading Chinua Achebe's classic novel, Things Fall Apart. This partnership benefited both the PAE students and statewide participants. Maine's newest residents brought new perspectives and context to all who participated. It is crucial to elevate New Mainers' voices for all to benefit from diverse viewpoints and experiences.

Maine Humanities is the ideal recipient of this grant. They have proven themselves over and over again to be highly organized, innovative, respectful and adaptable to Maine's changing population. Every year, I look forward with eager anticipation to reinventing our partnership. MHC's goal of bringing Mainers together to envision a more just, and inclusive state could not be more timely.

Sincerely,

Alison Perkins,

PAE LA teacher / PPS Language Acquisition Specialist



The Maine Coalition
to End Domestic Violence

P.O. Box 5188
Augusta, ME 04332-5188
207.430.8334

July 16, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am writing in support of the Maine Humanities Council's proposed "What If...?" project. I am thrilled that the M.H.C. is seeking to offer this new programming that expands their efforts to create critical thinkers with a framework for imagining a safe, just, joyful and thriving world.

Here at the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence, I worked some years ago with the M.H.C. as they sought to connect with our member programs located across Maine to facilitate community book groups focused on themes related to domestic abuse. I was impressed by their attention to collaboration and quality facilitation, and remain so now. This was not some quick, thrown-together program, but rather a thoughtful offering to communities made with great care for the trauma and hardship that many group participants have either experienced in their lives, and/or witnessed in their work. In more recent years I have stepped back from my role in that project, since the M.H.C. has developed its own strong relationships with the local programs where the book groups are run. However, I regularly hear about the excitement and joy that these groups bring. M.H.C. creates a space for people who do really hard work, day in and day out, to step back, reflect, and use a different part of their minds. Such visioning is key to building a violence-free world, and M.H.C.'s commitment to creating that space is no small contribution. I know that in this new program they will continue that approach.

In closing, I am hopeful that the M.H.C. will be successful in its funding application. Poetry, art, literature: they offer us such rich opportunities to build connection and to create new versions of our world and ourselves. Maine needs more of this kind of programming, and the M.H.C. is ideally and uniquely poised to lead it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Regina Rooney".

Regina Rooney
Education & Communications Director
Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence

mecasa

MAINE COALITION AGAINST
SEXUAL ASSAULT

July 8, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

The Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MECASA) is pleased to support the Maine Humanities Council's proposed "*What If...?*" project outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. We are excited to see this project launch and for the Maine Humanities Council to invite Mainers into conversations about liberation and justice.

For over 35 years, MECASA has represented and served Maine's sexual assault service providers by advocating for victim-centered public policy and providing expert training, technical assistance, and resources for providers and partners in the movement to end sexual violence. We share communities and audiences with the Maine Humanities Council (MHC) and are grateful for the spaces they create for reflection, connection, and ideas.

This year, MECASA was a recipient of an MHC Discussion Project grant. With the support and facilitation of MHC, LGBTQ+ sexual assault advocates throughout Maine read texts and discuss the intersection of LGBTQ+ identity and working in the anti-sexual violence field. From this discussion project participants have gained insight and connection and we hope this contributes to their sustainability as advocates in this work. One of the texts we chose was Wild Seed for expanding our scope of language and lenses when talking about sexual violence – and can imagine a program rooted in Afro-futurism prompting rich discussion statewide.

Maine Humanities Council is both a trusted resource and partner for MECASA. Their format and programming are clearly designed to be inclusive and responsive to the needs of our communities. We look forward to being a part of future projects from MHC, including "*What If...?*" and support the funding of this initiative.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Ward Saxl
Executive Director

For a lifetime of caring



**MID COAST-PARKVIEW
HEALTH**

123 Medical Center Drive
Brunswick, Maine 04011
(207) 373-6000
www.midcoasthealth.com

July 19, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, ME 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

Please accept this letter of support for the Maine Humanities Council's proposed "What If ...?" project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. We are delighted to hear about the Maine Humanities Council's plans to offer public humanities programming to promote reflection and discussion on creating a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society. In healthcare, we especially see the impact on disparities in health outcomes in communities. Additionally, throughout our system we are working on ways to insure a work environment of belonging that addresses diversity, equity and inclusion priorities. Efforts like the "What If...?" project will help to facilitate these important goals.

Mid Coast-Parkview Health, including Mid Coast Hospital, Mid Coast Medical Group, CHANS Home Health and Hospice and the Mid Coast Senior Health Center serves 90,000 people in the midcoast region of Maine. We are part of the MaineHealth system, the largest healthcare system in Northern New England. In our experience working with Maine Humanities Council, particularly through their Literature in Medicine program for twenty years, we know that participants have gained understanding and awareness of important issues influencing society. Humanities-based efforts like this one to envision and shape the future are a powerful idea. It is important to have conversations such as this across the state of Maine and to involve many audiences and communities to advance the conversation. Maine Humanities Council is the organization to help make this happen because of their track record of leading and sustaining important programs that raise awareness of these important topics in communities.

We support MHC's effort to offer this type of programming, and look forward to collaborating with MHC on this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lois Skillings", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lois Skillings
President



MWL Education Fund

LEARN ◦ SHARE ◦ LEAD

July 27, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

On behalf of the Maine Women's Lobby and the MWL Education Fund, I am very happy to support the Maine Humanities Council for your proposed "*What If ...?*" project, through the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Maine Humanities Council has demonstrated their commitment over many years to support Mainers and Maine organizations to using the humanities to inform and connect our communities. The proposed project, *What If...?: Afrofuturism and the Quest for a Just, Inclusive, and Sustainable Society*, is an opportunity to bring Mainers together to envision a more just, inclusive, and sustainable future for our State. The project feels like such an exciting next step in MHC's efforts to do this work, and it's certainly something we would support and hope that our community would engage with!

The Maine Women's Lobby & MWL Education Fund work together to support legislative advocacy and civic education to help Mainers have the skills and confidence to engage in feminist public policy change. As a grantee, your support and resources have helped us to convene reading groups, exploring feminist texts through the past and present; as well as speaker events covering the history of gender equity in civic engagement. Our shared efforts have helped us in our work to meet our mission and have also provided a new lens through which to consider and work toward our mission. We're grateful for such a partnership – and know that you would bring such intentional good work to your "*What If...*" programming.

We have been delighted to partner with the Maine Humanities Council on our efforts to inform, engage, and uplift our community around civic engagement. We look forward to many more years of fruitful partnership and are very happy to recommend MHC for this programming – and look forward to the chance to participate!

Sincerely,

Destie Hohman Sprague
Executive Director
Maine Women's Lobby & MWL Education Fund



BANGOR PUBLIC LIBRARY
145 Harlow Street, Bangor, Maine 04401

Ben Treat, *Director*

www.bangorpubliclibrary.org

info@bangorpubliclibrary.org

Fax (207) 945-6694

(207) 947-8336

July 19, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am thrilled that the Maine Humanities Council has proposed use of the Afrofuturist genre to prompt discussions about how best to promote a just, inclusive, and sustainable future. The programming is likely to generate meaningful dialogue and will undoubtedly be popular.

The Council's annual programs, such as Read ME, promote statewide conversations; the Council's grant funding also enables organizations to reach into their communities and promote local talent. For instance, the library received Maine Humanities Council funding for its 2020 and 2021 series, *Atlohkewi – Tell Me a Story*, which provided a venue for Carol Dana to tell winter stories of the Wabanaki tribes. Carol Dana is the foremost expert on the Penobscot language, and Humanities Council funding enabled us to offer her a venue for both a 2020 series that suddenly moved online and an online-only 2021 series.

As an Area Reference and Resource Center, statewide conversations are part of our core identity. Libraries help to foster connections among people by introducing people to ideas, stories, people, and perspectives that they might never have encountered. Library users benefit when libraries are able to draw upon the MHC's connections to statewide, national, and global narratives.

The Maine Humanities Council is well-situated to offer Mainers new lenses. The impulse of the humanist is to hear and reflect; to ask not only "why would someone say that?" but also "why is *that* my reaction?" and "do I see myself in this story... and do I like what I see?" We can see *that* a problem is real through other modes of discourse, but the humanities enable us to see ourselves as a part of the narrative of the problem, as a potential agent of change. I look forward to the Bangor Public Library's participation in your proposed Afrofuturism programming.

Sincerely,

Ben Treat
Library Director



STATE OF MAINE
 DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
MAINE CORRECTIONAL CENTER
 17 MALLISON FALLS ROAD
 WINDHAM, MAINE 04062
 TELEPHONE (207) 893-7000

RANDALL A. LIBERTY
 COMMISSIONER

JANET T. MILLS
 GOVERNOR

SCOTT R. LANDRY
 WARDEN

July 29, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
 Associate Director
 Maine Humanities Council
 674 Brighton Avenue
 Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

I am writing in support of the Maine Humanities Council's proposed "What If...? Project as outlined in the grant application to the Division of Public Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. I have witnessed firsthand the Maine Humanities Council's commitment and expertise in bringing Mainers together to envision a more just, inclusive, and sustainable future for our State. This grant would support the continuation and expansion of their important work in Maine.

As an Education Coordinator/Teacher with the Maine Department of Corrections' Southern Maine Women's Re-Entry Center and the Women's Center, I coordinate a wide range of education and humanities-based opportunities for women currently incarcerated in the state of Maine. I have had the good fortune of partnering with the MHC for nearly a decade. MHC has consistently provided opportunities for deep discussion based on the shared and complex experiences of being human in this world through exploration of rich texts and media. MHC stands out as an exceptional community partner in their commitment to truly listen to, center and foster opportunity for meaningful community connections for the people who engage in their programs. For example, over the past year, MHC has trained women currently incarcerated in Maine as paid facilitators. As facilitators, the women have found new points of community connection and have been able to engage in discussion which allows commonalities to rise and stigmas or prejudices to be explored and healed. In this way, MHC has had a powerful impact on the successful re-entry of the women they have worked with.

MHC's demonstrated commitment to foster and support conversations that explore inclusion, community, and connection throughout the state of Maine with diverse audiences has reshaped the culture of the Southern Maine Women's Re-Entry Center. Women have been able to engage with people from every corner of Maine and have been surprised to feel welcomed at the table. This has inspired hope for many women who feel deeply outcast by the circumstance of their incarceration and the acts leading them there. MHC is prepared to carry the depth of the discussions this project invites and will without a doubt create powerful new communities and change in the wake of the discussions from this proposed project.

I support MHC's effort to offer this program which will center Afrofuturist texts to bring Mainers together to envision a more just, inclusive, and sustainable future for our State because I have witnessed the commitment to community-inclusive work and their unmatched skill in fostering new community through humanities-based discussion. I look forward to stewarding this project with MHC within Maine's women's prisons and am grateful to witness the positive impact of their programs within these walls and throughout the state of Maine.

Sincerely,
Abbie Turner

Abbie Turner
 Southern Maine Women's Re-Entry Center
 Education Coordinator/Teacher



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER



20 State Street, Ellsworth, ME 04605 · 207- 667- 6363 · www.ellsworth.lib.me.us

July 23, 2021

Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib
Associate Director
Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, ME 04102

Dear Dr. Abdurraqib,

It is my pleasure to submit this letter of support on behalf of the Ellsworth Public Library for the Maine Humanities Council's grant application to the National Endowment for the Humanities. Your project *What If...? Afrofuturism and the Quest for a Just, Inclusive, and Sustainable Society* will facilitate important conversations throughout the state of Maine and will benefit communities statewide. The Maine Humanities Council is well positioned to take on a project of this scope.

The Ellsworth Public Library has worked with the Maine Humanities Council on various projects. We participate in the Read ME program to celebrate Maine authors. We've hosted a number of World in Your Library speakers on a range of topics, and we have received grant funding from the MHC for public programming. All of these initiatives have been a great benefit to our community and our library. Humanities based programming is an important way to spark dialogue and critical thinking about a range of topics. We would be thrilled to partner with Maine Humanities Council on this new project.

As a rural state with limited resources, the need for humanities based programming in Maine is great. Small communities have very limited opportunities to host quality public programs. This grant project to bring statewide discussion about a just and sustainable future will be very beneficial to our state. As so many of our communities are thinking toward the future during this time of tremendous change, a series of programs centering around humanities texts is a creative and effective way to frame these important conversations. Interest in Octavia Butler's work has only grown in recent years, and I think this programming will resonate with many people.

We are eager to continue our work with Maine Humanities Council by partnering on this project. Our community will greatly benefit from it and we wish you the best of success in your proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amy Wischart".

Amy Wischart
Director, Ellsworth Public Library

“What If...?: Afrofuturism and the Quest for a Just, Inclusive, and Sustainable Society”
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What If...?: Afrofuturism and the Quest for a Just, Inclusive, and Sustainable Society Walkthrough

The *What If...?* initiative will encourage Mainers to consider the questions “What kind of future do we want?” and “How do we create a more perfect union for ourselves and our successors?” and to begin to envision what it might take to manifest those futures. Our conversations with program partners across the state indicate that there is eagerness and an urgency for this type of exploration. This project will build on groundwork laid during the recent commemoration of Maine’s 200 years as a state; it will engage Mainers across the state in texts, discussions, talks, and workshops using Afrofuturism as a model for how to imagine futures, reimagine histories; and it will challenge assumptions of what is and is not possible. Across the state, communities will engage in discussions on racial justice, climate justice, food justice, religion and spirituality, and democracy and its possibilities - all issues of importance as we look to the future and which this genre explores so well. Because all Mainers have a stake in creating our future, we will partner with a wide variety of organizations across the state to offer five different program formats as entryways to engage as wide an audience as possible: (1) Readers Retreat, a dynamic, two-day deep dive into Octavia Butler’s *Wild Seed* that will kick-off the project; (2) The Discussion Project, multi-session scholar-facilitated reading and discussion groups; (3) Maine Speaks, a humanities speaker program; (4) Community conversation programs with Toshi Reagon; and (5) Intensive/immersive community experience working with Daniel Minter, a nationally recognized Maine artist and teacher.

MHC has extensive experience offering community programming - such as Readers’ Retreat, Discussion Project, and Maine Speaks - in Maine and nationally. Over the past year, we have refined our programs, making them more accessible and equitable. For the special programs we will offer with Toshi Reagon and Daniel Minter, we are creating unique opportunities for Maine audiences. MHC works hard to earn trust and build strong, collaborative relationships with a variety of community organizations and scholars across Maine. Programs for this initiative will combine strong scholarship and humanities content with local communities’ concerns and interests. Through these programs we hope Mainers experience an increased sense of community and their value within it, a sense of their own agency, and experience the pleasure, power, and relevance of the humanities in their lives. This walkthrough provides an overview of each program, the partners and audience involved, and how it is structured.

1) READERS RETREAT 2022

“I’ve just been so, so pleased to watch the evolution of the Winter Weekend, which was a great program, into the even more impactful Readers Retreat and the diversity of titles being selected, related programming, outreach to new attendees, etc. I’m such a big admirer of all the work of MHC, but in recent years especially, really respect the work that’s clearly being put in to do better and be more inclusive and equitable in its offerings and focus. From me as a librarian and a human, thank you!” –
Marcela Peres, Director of Lewiston Public Library

Overview

Readers Retreat is a two-day event that brings together a diverse group of people for a deep dive into one primary text. Readers Retreat 2022, which will be held in May, will be a large public kick-off event for this initiative, taking attendees into the genre of Afrofuturism via Octavia Butler’s *Wild Seed* (1980). Readers Retreat occurs on an annual basis and is one of MHC’s largest public programs. In the past, we have hosted Readers Retreat on college campuses as a way to enhance the sense of an intellectual exploration of a text. We will continue this tradition by hosting the retreat on the beautiful and accessible coastal campus of Southern Maine Community College - its location offering attendees the opportunity to lean into the event’s “retreat” aspects.

The event consists of lectures and panel discussions provided by scholars and writers who are able to speak directly to the chosen text and the themes it addresses. Over the course of two days, attendees will have the opportunity to listen to lectures, listen to the selected speakers engage with each

other during panel discussions, participate in Q&A with speakers, and participate in small group discussion. The event opens Friday evening and closes Saturday evening, with the following schedule:

Friday

- 4:30-5:00: Welcome/Opening
- 5:00-7:00: Moderated speaker panel w/Q&A
- 6:00-8:30: Dinner

Saturday

- 8:30-9:00: Breakfast
- 9:15-10:15: Lecture
- 10:30-11:30: Lecture
- 11:30-12:45: Lunch
- 1:00-2:00: Lecture
- 2:15-3:15: Facilitated small group discussion w/participants
- 3:30-4:45: Closing

Program Development

Readers Retreat is a collaborative event – we work closely with scholars, community partners, advisors, and program participants to plan, create, and execute it. For our 2022 event, we have been and will continue to work with these collaborative partners from start to finish. Each Readers Retreat, we put forward a “book ballot,” with a list of potential texts, so that retreat attendees can vote for the book for the following year’s event. In anticipation of this Afrofuturism focus, in 2021, MHC worked with a small group of community-based advisors to select the texts for the book ballot. The advisors we worked with were writers and artists from the African Diaspora who are all well-versed in the genre of Afrofuturism, including Daniel Minter, who is an artist, scholar, faculty member at Maine College of Art, and a co-founder of an art-based non-profit in Maine. Minter will serve as a scholar-advisor for this NEH grant project. We collaborated with these advisors to create a book ballot that we then circulated virtually to the public via social media and our website. After two weeks of voting and over 120 votes, the general public selected Octavia Butler’s *Wild Seed* as the book for Readers Retreat 2022. MHC staff will continue to work closely with community-based advisors in the planning of Readers Retreat 2022.

Scholars

While we are still in the early stages of planning details for Readers Retreat 2022 and have yet to confirm a full slate of speakers, we have been able to get confirmation from Dr. Sam Plasencia (Colby College), who is also an advisor for the *What If...?* project. Dr. Plasencia researches and teaches the genre of Afrofuturism, with broader expertise in Afrofuturism, Afropessimism, and Black Studies.

We have a list of other writers and scholars we are considering, and we’ve begun reaching out to them to assess their interest and availability. We are looking for speakers who will be able to situate *Wild Seed* in the historical and genre-specific context, while connecting the text to our current cultural moment. We’re particularly interested in speakers who can speak to Octavia Butler’s opus and its historical and present cultural impact. We are currently extending invitations to the following potential speakers: (b) (6)

[Redacted list of potential speakers]

Partners and Audience

The Readers’ Retreat is a ticketed event that is open to the general public. Approximately 150-200 people attend the event each year. Attendees are generally people with previous connections to MHC:

participants from other programs and events, community partners, and long-time devotees of the program. In the past, the majority of Readers' Retreat attendees have been older, white, retired Mainers, who have the time and the means to attend a fee-based event. In recent years, in our efforts to create more equitable programming – a key component of creating a more perfect union—we have altered our outreach strategies for Readers Retreat. We now engage more directly with our community partners and participants who have attended other MHC programming by including the Readers Retreat text on several of our Featured Reads reading lists for Discussion Project programming, thereby ensuring that a wide and diverse range of people will have read the text and will be interested in attending Readers Retreat. (For a fuller description of partners and audience, please refer to the Discussion Project, below). We offer reduced-cost tickets to community partners who have hosted Discussion Projects focusing on the book, which helps us offer this event to people with a variety of reading levels who come from different socio-economic, racial, and geographical backgrounds. In order to broaden age diversity among participants, we are collaborating with scholar-advisors from Bowdoin (Dr. Judith Casselberry), Bates (Dr. Lori Banks), and Colby (Dr. Sam Plasencia) to connect college students to Readers Retreat by adding the text, *Wild Seed*, to their syllabi and hosting connected campus-based Discussion Project programming.

We will continue outreach to a wide variety of people with diverse life experiences, using our Discussion Project programming and our relationships with partners to encourage participation in Readers Retreat 2022. As an example: over the past few years, MHC has been developing strong relationships with Adult Education programs across the state and with the state's Department of Corrections (DOC). Our relationship building with these two partners has resulted in over 20 Discussion Project programs being offered at Adults Eds and at DOC facilities each year. Several instructors with the Adult Ed programs have become facilitators and speakers, and participants in these Discussion Projects attend Readers Retreat and other MHC programming. We are particularly proud of the work we've been able to do at one DOC facility, the Southern Maine Women's Re-entry Center (SMWRC). In addition to programming, we've also been able to work with facility and the women incarcerated there to train a handful of facilitators who have been able to facilitate virtual Discussion Projects in the broader community. Earlier this year, we conducted a facilitator training specifically for women incarcerated at SMWRC to enable them to facilitate their own Discussion Project programs internally, without the need for an external facilitator from the broader community. This will allow them to continue hosting reading groups even after our events shift from virtual events to in-person events. This fall, women housed at SMWRC will be reading *Wild Seed* for their Discussion Project program.

2) DISCUSSION PROJECT: MULTI SESSION FACILITATED READING AND DISCUSSION GROUPS

"These discussions gave all of us a lot to think about and we got to have some challenging conversations in what I felt was a very safe space." Discussion Project Participant

Overview

Our dream is that anyone and everyone in Maine who wants to should have the opportunity to join in a rich, meaningful discussion with others about the humanities. Small, facilitated reading and discussion groups have been at the heart of MHC's programming for over thirty years. Our experience offering these groups across the state has shown us the power of what can happen when people come together around a humanities text. Whether the group members are linked by their work, where they live, their lived experience, or simple curiosity, the Discussion Project fosters real communication and connection among participants as they listen to one another and are listened to. Discussions are grounded in the group's shared experience of compelling texts. As participants interact and explore ideas and readings together with the guidance of a skilled facilitator, they often develop a sense of community and connection with one another, even across time and culture, where there may not have been one before. The results? As a librarian recently wrote, *"Even reluctant speakers become leaders in linking literature to their hopes and aspirations."*

These groups are held in collaboration with community partners—Maine’s libraries, municipal adult education programs, correctional facilities, and an increasing variety and number of community organizations across the state. Working together with our partners we can offer a broad range of Mainers opportunities to engage in discussion of big ideas and issues of ongoing importance. There is no charge to participate in a discussion project, and all materials and a facilitator are provided to the groups who host them to remove any barriers for participation. In this section, we will provide some examples of crucial components of our Discussion Project work: facilitator preparation, partners and audiences involved, and the structure and readings for the program.

Facilitator Preparation

“I have really enjoyed the moments when people realize that the book is complicated, either because it simplifies things too much or because it challenges things they thought they already knew...I enjoy asking them to think about what makes us uncomfortable and what is at stake with our discomfort? Leaving it open-ended allows readers to ... recognize that [authors] have important perspectives...but that does not mean that [they] close out the conversation with "right" answers on all things. - MHC Facilitator

Because our scholar/facilitators are such an important key to program success, we have been working steadily to revitalize, expand, and provide more support for our large core group of experienced facilitators. Having open applications, interviews and ongoing peer and staff support for facilitators helps us connect with a more diverse group of scholar/facilitators from across the state and increases our ability to host programs that deal with compelling and challenging themes. We mentor those with less experience facilitating public humanities discussions who we think are promising. The skilled, deep engagement with the humanities, commitment, and varieties of experiences our facilitators bring to this work have helped our programming go deeper and better reflect the communities we serve. New facilitators complete an orientation to prepare them for their role. They also observe other facilitators, and have opportunities to continue honing their facilitation skills through workshops, experiencing a text-based group discussion, and connecting with each other as a support network.

As part of this initiative, MHC will hold professional development opportunities for all potential and existing facilitators over the next two years to provide key skill building opportunities for our facilitators/scholars to facilitate well with Afrofuturist literature in the many settings where our programs will be held. Professional development opportunities for facilitators will include:

- Four workshops for scholars/facilitators per year;
- Four facilitator discussion project opportunities in which facilitators read and practice facilitating with Afrofuturist works of literature;
- Reciprocal peer observation and feedback opportunities; and
- Staff facilitated peer facilitator learning cohorts (organized geographically and by shared experience).

We will offer a workshop on “Facilitating discussions with Afrofuturist literature” as well as “Facilitating Anti-Racist Discussions.” In addition to providing a facilitator handbook and other staff and peer support, we design and develop topics for facilitator professional development workshops by surveying our facilitator network to understand their needs. MHC staff will facilitate the workshops and hire experts from within our partner network to help design and implement the trainings. The structure for the workshops would look much like this sample, including time for discussion, interaction, and reflection:

Trauma & Resiliency Informed Facilitation Training for Maine Humanities Council Facilitators

Arabella Perez, Director, "Thrive Initiative: A Trauma Informed System of Care" for State of Maine

Overview

Trauma and Resiliency Informed care provides a framework to understand and effectively come to terms with trauma and toxic stress, and foster resiliency. Trauma can often look like culture because it

has weathered the brain architecture and the nervous/cardiovascular/endocrine systems. Utilizing brain science, trauma theory, critical race theory, intersectionality theory, and trauma informed principles; facilitators can navigate the layers of harm, foster resilience, and persist in healing efforts.

Session 1: Information & Shared Language

1. Review trauma and toxic stress:
 - a. Acute, complex, historical, intergenerational (epigenetics), racialized, systemic
2. Review brain science and the impact that trauma and toxic stress can have on the various body systems.
 - a. The stress response cycle (activation, the 3 Fs)
 - b. Understanding Adaptive Behaviors/Coping Skills and how these skills are shaped by experience, i.e., race, SOGI
3. Review the role of resiliency and how it intersects with culture.

Session 2: Skill Building & Putting the Information into Practice

4. Identify strategies and skills that are trauma and resiliency informed I (group strategies):
 - a. Creating the container using the TRI principles
 - i. Trust, Safety, Choice, Collaboration, Empowerment, Social Justice
 - ii. How to co-regulate when activation happens
5. Practicing self-regulation skills
 - a. Self-awareness and reflection activities
 - b. Non-centering of self-strategies

We will ask new and seasoned facilitators to attend these workshops, which we will offer on a semi-annual basis. The topics covered may change in future workshops depending on facilitators' and MHC's needs. Workshops will provide important support for facilitators, draw on their expertise and experiences, and create a community of facilitators who can learn and draw support from one another.

Facilitators have told us that the workshops, orientations, focused staff support, peer-observation and mentoring, and facilitator book groups have helped deepen their understanding of their role, increased their facilitation skills, and helped them feel even more committed to offering opportunities for communities of all kinds to engage in these kinds of important conversations across the state. We are seeing the results of this work. One facilitator wrote: *"I feel like I gained so many new skills as a facilitator. I have never prepared so deeply for a group and I really enjoyed having the chance to work so closely with the texts."* A partner shared, *"Our facilitator was really good about building community groundwork ...I think that made us all more comfortable to talk, share, and discuss different ideas."*

Partners Involved

"I have witnessed townspeople who didn't know each other develop great friendships in the course of discussing literature...the scholars have, without exception, been of a caliber otherwise not available to us. The program removes economic barriers that might prevent some of our patrons from participating,"

All of the programs for this initiative involve partnerships with a wide range of community organizations from across the state. We support the work they do, introduce them to the power and pleasure of engaging with the humanities, and are better able to engage the diverse communities they are part of. Local libraries, municipal adult education programs, and correctional education programs are among our longest partnerships. We cultivate relationships that are dynamic by regularly asking for feedback, by asking what their communities are interested in, and by collaborating on initiatives like this that can help them deepen their work with those they serve. Libraries and adult education programs serve as important, and in many cases one of the only, cultural centers for the communities across Maine. All face challenges maintaining adequate staffing, working with tight budgets, and accessing materials and scholars. Whether in cities or in the rural towns that make up much of the state, we support one another's

missions to connect community members, broaden awareness and understanding of the world, and foster productive community conversations. Discussion Projects held with the Women's Re-entry Center, the Maine State Prison, and other correctional facilities have offered participants much needed access to books and opportunities to discuss them. Participants tell us that participating helps them develop a sense of community, decreasing their sense of social isolation; provides needed intellectual stimulation; and offers a space where they can formulate and share ideas about issues important to them with others. Many are at a point in their lives where the future is at the forefront of their minds. They are eager to read *Wild Seed* and other texts as grounding for discussions of justice, democracy, and shaping the future.

In order to engage even more Mainers in discussions for this initiative, we will build on the trust, strong relationships, and successes we have partnering with healthcare organizations, veterans, high schools, educators, domestic violence and sexual assault resource centers, the Abyssinian Meeting House, area agencies on aging, and a number of other kinds of local and statewide organizations to offer programs. All believe this is a moment for Maine to look to the future and have expressed enthusiasm for engaging their communities in discussions of the issues Afrofuturist texts raise. Many letters of support capture how energized partners are that conversations sparked by the books will not be happening in isolation, but will be held across the entire state. While the majority of partners for programming will have worked with us at least once, this programming will help build and deepen the level of engagement in challenging content and discussions in accessible ways. As our Outreach Team continues to connect with regions of the state and communities/organizations that we have identified as under-resourced in the humanities and/or marginalized, we expect that many new partners will also participate in this initiative.

Audience

"I realized I am almost always with people...who have similar backgrounds and think a lot like I do. It was such a surprise to be in this group at the library with people who had such different perspectives from me. It challenged me in ways I had not been in other groups- made me think differently...Where else could I experience this? It was a wonderful experience." – Discussion Project participant

Discussion Project programs will engage with 8-25 program participants and will involve a very wide cross-section of Mainers. The aim is to have sufficient perspectives for a robust conversation, on the one hand, and sufficient space for all present to speak, on the other. The audience will reflect the communities our partners serve or are part of. The groups will be distributed as widely across the state as possible, making sure that communities under-resourced in the humanities (especially in rural areas) and those who have been historically marginalized are aware of this opportunity and prioritized. We will build on outreach we have done and are doing to ensure that this happens.

The educational experiences and the socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of participants varies widely, as do their life experiences. Groups include people who are incarcerated, in recovery, live in poverty, have endured trauma, have been marginalized, or are experiencing social isolation and disconnection. Other groups include people with class, racial, and economic privilege. Groups may include people whose families have lived in Maine for generations with those newly arrived to Maine from other countries. Some are specifically for people working within an organization (such as the staff at a domestic violence resource center), while others, such as those held at libraries, are open to the general public. On-line programs offer rare and valuable opportunities for people to gather from different parts of our mostly rural state. Groups offer rare opportunities for people to come together for the kind of civil, open discussions so important for our democracy. Another participant put it this way: *"I am more at ease with myself and the people around me because I have opened my mind to another experience."*

Discussion Project Structure

When applying to host a Discussion Project, organizations select readings and topics that best respond to how their communities wish to connect to the theme, *What if...?*. We have designed the program to be as easy as possible to host (i.e., we provide the books, a facilitator, and template fliers, press releases, invitations, strategies, and other promotional materials to partners, who take responsibility

for marketing their groups). Groups awarded a program select readings from a list of Afrofuturist texts carefully selected with the help of our scholars and advisors. The texts are chosen based on their connection to the initiative, the balance of voices represented, tone, readability, and genre to better ensure that the resulting collection is both challenging and accessible to participants, grounding participants' reflections and helping spark discussion. Groups may opt to read one or a series of 3-5 texts offering different perspectives on a given theme. They will vary in length, in style, and in genre; they may be stories, poems, novels, graphic novels and other art forms. We hope the texts will invite Mainers to make connections with their lives and consider Maine's future from a wide range of perspectives and voices in ways that surprise, enliven, inspire, inform, and expand understanding.

Groups come together at the host site for an hour and a half. Groups may meet 3-6 times at intervals of once a month, once a week, or at whatever the group decides. A facilitator encourages depth and breadth in the conversation, creating an atmosphere in which everyone has ample opportunity to share their ideas and questions. We are told that the groups enable meaningful, sometimes transformative, collective reflection; enhance mutual appreciation; and, crucially, that they are enjoyable. Participants commit to attending all of the sessions to build a sense of community and trust. To get a feel for how our reading and discussion programs are structured, here is an outline of one series we will offer:

“Afrofuturism & Africanfuturism: *What if...?*”

The texts offer an introduction to Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism, providing opportunities for readers to use a Black cultural lens to take in the past and the present and create a speculative future or an alternative present for us to grapple with. Issues for discussion raised by the texts include: racial justice, climate justice, food justice, religion and spirituality, and democracy and its possibilities. They are held either in person or via Zoom. Each meeting has an opening and time for discussion and reflection.

Meeting 1:

Opening- The facilitator:

- starts with an opening/grounding activity and introductions. This helps participants feel more personal connection with others, especially for on-line groups.
- shares a set of ground rules they can add to: Speak your truth, Lean into discomfort and into each other, Commit to non-closure, Embrace paradox, and Seek intentional learning, not perfection;
- makes sure participants see these discussions as an opportunity to find words that express the thoughts, ideas, and questions a reading raises for them and to listen as others do the same. There is no other end goal, no consensus opinion to generate;
- reminds the group that some pieces will draw them in, others may not: the important thing is to notice and find words for their responses.

Discussion:

- The facilitator guides participants through discussion of Afrofuturism and African futurism and the selected text, *Wild Seed* by Octavia E. Butler (Featured book of [Readers Retreat 2022](#)). Each facilitator generates open-ended discussion questions encouraging participants to explore the text, open up possible meanings and interpretations, speak to their lived experience through or via the text, and discuss the big ideas the text raises.
- Facilitators and participants often select key passages to read more carefully and discuss.
- Throughout the meeting, facilitators bring the discussion back to the text when needed and ensure everyone is given an opportunity to speak and listen.
- The facilitator ends with a preview and questions to consider when reading the next set of texts.

Meeting 2: Subsequent meetings follows the format of the first. Discussion agreements are reviewed, they share additional thoughts on pervious readings, and enter into discussion of the text for this session: *Of One Blood, or, The Hidden Self* by Pauline Hopkins (fiction). In this work, Hopkins

intended, in her own words, to “raise the stigma of degradation from [the Black] race” and its title, *Of One Blood*, refers to the biological kinship of all human beings.

Meeting 3: Discussion of reading: *Dark Matter, A Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora* edited by Sheri Thomas (science fiction, fantasy, and speculative fiction)

- This discussion will explore the deep sense of loss central to the Black Diaspora and the power experienced in these works to imagine first steps in changing the world.
- As this is the last meeting, the facilitator encourages participants to make connections between the works read in the series and to reflect on the themes they have explored throughout, with their lives, and to think about the future they would like to see. They can discuss how they would complete the question, “What if...?”
- Participants complete on-line feedback surveys in the last 10 minutes.

In between meetings, the facilitator and site partner check in about the previous session, sharing observations and suggestions. MHC staff sits in on a session to see how the discussions are going, offering support for the facilitator and site coordinator as needed who fill out reflection forms.

3) MAINE SPEAKS

“There is little access to this type of ‘big picture’ information- especially when you consider proximity of qualified speakers and fiscal limitations of smaller towns.” – Maine Librarian

Overview

The Maine Humanities Council has been offering free speaker programming to libraries for the past eight years. The program has proved to be a very popular with libraries, and as of last year, other community organization throughout the state, especially in Maine’s rural areas. MHC provides speakers for the program, who deliver a presentation that explores local, national, or global topics of interest. Each presentation is followed by community discussion. Organizations apply to host the program, and MHC makes selections in the same manner described with the Discussion Project. Applicants select topics from our Maine Speaks roster, and MHC connects them with scholars.

We will be specifically highlighting scholars who can speak on Afrofuturism and related topics, and talks rooted in history and experiences that can spark discussion and creative thinking around issues connected to our project themes. MHC has a group of carefully vetted scholars and practitioners throughout the Maine. Not only are they well versed in their area of expertise, they’re also skilled in delivering information, sharing knowledge, and highlighting their insights in ways that are engaging and accessible to the public. We utilize a variety of approaches to finding speakers. We rely on our existing, extensive network of scholars and partners as well as an on-boarding process for speakers. We work with speakers to ensure their talks add richness to the themes we are exploring, are engaging, and incorporate what we know makes the best presentations. Here is a sample outline of one presentation we will offer:

“Afrofuturism in 19th century Black Spirituals”

About the Presenter: Judith Casselberry is Associate Professor of Africana Studies at Bowdoin College whose teaching and research agenda focus on Black American religious and cultural studies, social movements, and Black intellectual thought with particular attention to gender and liberation. She brings a wealth of knowledge gleaned from life experience and academic research—embodied knowledge of Black women’s musical, cultural, and liberatory practices and deep intellectual and heart knowledge of historical, political, social, and cultural contexts in which Black people produce freedom.

Opening

- The host site welcomes everyone and introduces Dr. Casselberry

Presentation

- Dr. Casselberry will speak with audiences for approximately 45 minutes about what 19th century Black spirituals teach us about Afrofuturism. Using audio and visual images, she will show how nineteenth century Black spirituals laid the foundations for Afrofuturism as Black people collapsed time and space to take on transcendent identities that brought God and the battles and heroes of the Old Testament into their history while projecting liberation in the now and future. She will also explore how, through the spirituals, Black people insisted on the value of their ways of knowing and ways of expressing life, and insisted on the fullness of life—life, death, sorrow, and joy; they insisted on a future in the now.
- She'll explore a number of questions with the audience, including: What if we fully embraced the insistence of the spirituals—insisting on humanity, insisting on a divine ethical and moral vision?
- During the last 45 minutes, she engages the audience in discussion, sharing suggested readings.

Closing

- The host thanks Dr. Casselberry, shares information about related programming, and asks everyone to fill out the feedback survey MHC has created.
- The host site and presenter will complete reflection forms to share any insights, observations, and suggestions. MHC will use these, along with participant feedback, to assess and improve the program and to share feedback with the host site and speaker.

Partners and Audience

The range of partners and audience for Maine Speaks are the same as those for the discussion project, described above. Audiences have ranged from 10 to over 100.

4) PROGRAMMING WITH TOSHI REAGON - DETAILS

Overview

MHC will be collaborating with Toshi Reagon and scholar-advisors at Bowdoin College (Dr. Judith Casselberry and Dr. Abigail Killeen) to host three community conversations based on Octavia Butler's *Parables* series (*Parable of the Sower* and *Parable of the Talents*). From September 2022 – May 2023, Reagon will serve as a fellow at Bowdoin's McKeen Center for the Common Good and, through this fellowship position, will be spending time in Maine with two purposes: 1) organizing and performing a month-long run of her stage performance, *Octavia E. Butler's Parable of the Sower Opera*; and 2) facilitating three community-based conversations in various locations in Maine. The opera, written by Toshi Reagon and her mother, scholar and Civil Rights activist Bernice Johnson Reagon, will be hosted in Portland at the Merrill Auditorium. The production of the stage performance will be fully funded by Bowdoin College; MHC will be responsible for funding, organizing, and doing outreach for Toshi's community-based conversations.

Audience

MHC will collaborate with library partners in three locations to host these community conversations – Rockport, Bangor, and Lewiston. We chose these three locations because: 1) The populations in two of these three locations are in alignment with our outreach goals. MHC is continuing to focus our outreach efforts towards people in Maine who have been historically and are presently marginalized. Lewiston and Bangor both have large (for Maine) populations of Wabanaki people, immigrants, and people of color. 2) These towns are major hubs for the regions in which they are situated. Rockport, in particular, is located between two towns – Camden and Rockland - which both have vibrant humanities-based organizations and programming. We have already received hosting commitments from libraries in these towns.

We estimate between 25-50 people at each event. Our outreach for attendees will begin with community partners, particularly partners who have received programming from MHC. We will prioritize partners that have held Discussion Projects featuring either *Parable of the Sower* or one of Butler's other

texts highlighted in our Featured Reads lists. In all of our outreach, we will focus on community partners that are either led by people with diverse backgrounds (i.e., racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, class) or who serve people from diverse backgrounds. We are especially looking forward to bringing these community conversations to locations outside of Portland. As the largest municipality in Maine, Portland is often a magnet for exciting programming, but the focus on Portland leaves out the vast majority of the state because most Mainers living outside of Portland cannot make the trip to Portland to take advantage of the programming. For these community conversations, we have intentionally chosen three locations that are accessible to a wider percentage of Maine's vast rural population.

In these community conversations, Toshi will bring in the relevant themes of the text and the stage play – illness, empathy, pandemic, food justice, racial justice, climate justice, etc. – into the local Maine context. She is interested being in conversation with organizers, students, activists, scholars, and other people who are working to create change in their local communities. Toshi is excited to make these connections in the less urban areas of Maine, and is looking forward to learning more about how Mainers work to create equitable and just communities.

5) PROGRAMMING WITH DANIEL MINTER – DETAILS

Overview

We will work with artist and scholar Daniel Minter to create a community-based, immersive art and discussion experience in two towns in Maine. These public series of events will be hosted in 2023 and 2024, during the second year of this NEH grant. During the fall of 2023 and the spring of 2024, Minter will spend time in the towns of Belfast and Bangor, respectively, with the purpose of establishing meaningful relationships with the art institutions and community organizations there. Belfast boasts a very active and involved artist community, with well-established connections to MHC and the broader Belfast community. Bangor's arts community is also thriving – Minter is particularly interested in connecting with artists in that area from the Penobscot Nation, as their tribal lands are situated in close proximity to Bangor. MHC has some relationships with tribal-led organizations and have partnered with Wabanaki-led organizations to provide workshops for our facilitators. Establishing stronger and broader connections within Wabanaki communities is a priority for MHC's Outreach Team, and we are thrilled that Minter suggested the town of Bangor as one of the event sites.

Through this programming, Minter will first spend time getting to know the organizations we invite into partnership, like Waterfall Arts, a community-based arts center in Belfast. He will take time learning the needs and concerns of those communities and will gather an understanding of how they see the humanities as a way to speak to those needs and concerns. During three partner meetings, Minter will introduce Afrofuturism as a genre of artistic expression particular to Black Diasporic people. He will use several pieces of his already created sculptures and paintings as a tool for focus and discussion, allowing participants to explore Afrofuturist themes present in his pieces. Minter's time in each town will culminate in a large, public community event, in which people will have the opportunity to view Daniel's previously created art and will hear from Daniel and from the partnering organizations about their study of Afrofuturist art and its vision for a more just and equitable future for all people.

Audience

The initial four gatherings for these workshops will be small, with specific community partners being invited to engage with Minter in a more intimate setting. Our outreach will be focused towards art-based community organizations, Indigenous-led organizations, and organizations working with or being led by racially marginalized groups. The larger community events will be open to anyone in the town or in the surrounding area. We hope to capitalize on the swell of interest that will come from Toshi Reagon's previous community conversations in libraries in that region – one community conversation will be hosted at the Bangor Library and the other will be hosted at the Rockport Library, which is approximately a 30-minute drive from Belfast.

RESEARCH & RELATED BUDGET - Budget Period 1

OMB Number: 4040-0001
Expiration Date: 12/31/2022

ORGANIZATIONAL DUNS: (b) (4)

Enter name of Organization: Maine Humanities Council

Budget Type: Project Subaward/Consortium

Budget Period: 1 Start Date: 05/01/2022 End Date: 04/30/2024

A. Senior/Key Person

| Prefix | First | Middle | Last | Suffix | Base Salary (\$) | Months | | | Requested Salary (\$) | Fringe Benefits (\$) | Funds Requested (\$) |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--------|---------------|--------|------------------|--------|-------|------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | | | | | | Cal. | Acad. | Sum. | | | |
| Dr. | Samaa | | Abdurraqib | | (b) (6) | 24.00 | | | (b) (6) | (b) (6) | (b) (6) |
| Project Role: PD/PI | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Jan | | Bindas-Tenney | | (b) (6) | 24.00 | | | (b) (6) | (b) (6) | (b) (6) |
| Project Role: Program Coordinator | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Dr. | Meghan | | Reedy | | (b) (6) | 24.00 | | | (b) (6) | (b) (6) | (b) (6) |
| Project Role: Program Coordinator | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Elizabeth | | Sinclair | | (b) (6) | 24.00 | | | (b) (6) | (b) (6) | (b) (6) |
| Project Role: Program Coordinator | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Nicole | | Rancourt | | (b) (6) | 24.00 | | | (b) (6) | (b) (6) | (b) (6) |
| Project Role: Program Manager | | | | | | | | | | | |

Additional Senior Key Persons:

[Add Attachment](#) [Delete Attachment](#) [View Attachment](#)

Total Funds requested for all Senior Key Persons in the attached file

Total Senior/Key Person 122,419.00

B. Other Personnel

| Number of Personnel | Project Role | Months | | | Requested Salary (\$) | Fringe Benefits (\$) | Funds Requested (\$) | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--|---|
| | | Cal. | Acad. | Sum. | | | | |
| <input type="text"/> | Post Doctoral Associates | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | |
| <input type="text"/> | Graduate Students | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | |
| <input type="text"/> | Undergraduate Students | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | |
| <input type="text"/> | Secretarial/Clerical | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | |
| <input type="text"/> | Total Number Other Personnel | | | | | | Total Other Personnel | <input type="text"/> |
| | | | | | | | Total Salary, Wages and Fringe Benefits (A+B) | <input type="text" value="122,419.00"/> |

C. Equipment Description

List items and dollar amount for each item exceeding \$5,000

| Equipment item | Funds Requested (\$) |
|---|----------------------|
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Additional Equipment: <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="button" value="Add Attachment"/> <input type="button" value="Delete Attachment"/> <input type="button" value="View Attachment"/> | |
| Total funds requested for all equipment listed in the attached file | |
| Total Equipment | |

D. Travel

| | Funds Requested (\$) |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. Domestic Travel Costs (Incl. Canada, Mexico and U.S. Possessions) | <input type="text"/> |
| 2. Foreign Travel Costs | <input type="text"/> |
| Total Travel Cost | <input type="text"/> |

E. Participant/Trainee Support Costs

| | Funds Requested (\$) |
|---|--|
| 1. Tuition/Fees/Health Insurance | <input type="text"/> |
| 2. Stipends | <input type="text"/> |
| 3. Travel | <input type="text"/> |
| 4. Subsistence | <input type="text"/> |
| 5. Other <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="text"/> Number of Participants/Trainees | Total Participant/Trainee Support Costs |

F. Other Direct Costs

| | | Funds Requested (\$) |
|---------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| 1. | Materials and Supplies | 14,560.00 |
| 2. | Publication Costs | |
| 3. | Consultant Services | 93,126.00 |
| 4. | ADP/Computer Services | |
| 5. | Subawards/Consortium/Contractual Costs | |
| 6. | Equipment or Facility Rental/User Fees | 1,500.00 |
| 7. | Alterations and Renovations | |
| 8. | | |
| 9. | | |
| 10. | | |
| Total Other Direct Costs | | 109,186.00 |

G. Direct Costs

| | | Funds Requested (\$) |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| Total Direct Costs (A thru F) | | 231,605.00 |

H. Indirect Costs

| Indirect Cost Type | Indirect Cost Rate (%) | Indirect Cost Base (\$) | Funds Requested (\$) |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 10% de minimus | 10.00 | | 18,395.00 |
| Total Indirect Costs | | | 18,395.00 |

Cognizant Federal Agency

(Agency Name, POC Name, and POC Phone Number)

I. Total Direct and Indirect Costs

| | | Funds Requested (\$) |
|--|--|----------------------|
| Total Direct and Indirect Institutional Costs (G + H) | | 250,000.00 |

J. Fee

| Funds Requested (\$) |
|----------------------|
| |

K. Total Costs and Fee

| | | Funds Requested (\$) |
|------------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| Total Costs and Fee (I + J) | | 250,000.00 |

L. Budget Justification

(Only attach one file.)

RESEARCH & RELATED BUDGET - Cumulative Budget

| | | Totals (\$) |
|---|-----------|-------------|
| Section A, Senior/Key Person | | 122,419.00 |
| Section B, Other Personnel | | |
| Total Number Other Personnel | | |
| Total Salary, Wages and Fringe Benefits (A+B) | | 122,419.00 |
| Section C, Equipment | | |
| Section D, Travel | | |
| 1. Domestic | | |
| 2. Foreign | | |
| Section E, Participant/Trainee Support Costs | | |
| 1. Tuition/Fees/Health Insurance | | |
| 2. Stipends | | |
| 3. Travel | | |
| 4. Subsistence | | |
| 5. Other | | |
| 6. Number of Participants/Trainees | | |
| Section F, Other Direct Costs | | 109,186.00 |
| 1. Materials and Supplies | 14,560.00 | |
| 2. Publication Costs | | |
| 3. Consultant Services | 93,126.00 | |
| 4. ADP/Computer Services | | |
| 5. Subawards/Consortium/Contractual Costs | | |
| 6. Equipment or Facility Rental/User Fees | 1,500.00 | |
| 7. Alterations and Renovations | | |
| 8. Other 1 | | |
| 9. Other 2 | | |
| 10. Other 3 | | |
| Section G, Direct Costs (A thru F) | | 231,605.00 |
| Section H, Indirect Costs | | 18,395.00 |
| Section I, Total Direct and Indirect Costs (G + H) | | 250,000.00 |
| Section J, Fee | | |
| Section K, Total Costs and Fee (I + J) | | 250,000.00 |

What If ...?
Maine Humanities Council

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

A. Senior/Key Persons

The requested amount reflects the requirements to adequately staff a project of this scale and complexity. Project staff will each spend a portion of their time directly on the project to reach multiple audiences through our program channels throughout the project. Project Director Dr. Samaa Abdurraqib oversees all aspects of the project.

F. Other Direct Costs

1. Materials and Supplies

- \$12,960 – Books for Discussion Project programming (24 programs, 3 books per program at \$12 per book, 15 participants per program).
- \$1,600 – Books for Readers Retreat (200 books at \$8 per book).

3. Consultant Services

- \$12,000 – Stipends for scholarly advisory panel (\$1,500 x 8)
- \$21,600 – Stipends for Discussion Project facilitators and Maine Speaks speakers (MHC average stipend rate at \$200 per session).
- \$9,000 – Stipends for Readers Retreat program scholars, speakers and small-group facilitators.
- \$37,500 – Honoraria for Toshi Reagon and Daniel Minter to develop and lead multi-community humanities discussion programming in year 1 and year 2 of the project, respectively.
- \$5,526 – mileage reimbursement for in-state travel for programming (average 70-mile round trip per session reimbursed at \$0.58 per mile).
- \$7,500 – travel and overnight for Toshi Reagon programming (4 trips from NYC to Maine, 3 days per trip).

6. Equipment or Facility Rental

Facility rental at Southern Maine Community College for Readers Retreat 2022.

H. Indirect Costs

Indirect costs calculated at de minimis 10% of the adjusted direct costs. Excludes honoraria and travel for Toshi Reagon and Daniel Minter program elements.