



Catholic Research Resources Alliance

**Special Meeting of the CRRA Board of Directors to discuss
The NEH Challenge Grant Proposal
Monday, April 26, 2010
4:00pm - 5:00pm (EST)**

AGENDA

1. Purpose: NEH Challenge grants are **capacity-building and infrastructure grants** intended to help organizations secure long-term improvements in and support for their humanities programs and resources
2. Grant proposal speaks to three criteria
 - What is the organization?
 - Can the organization move forward? Develop projects? Raise necessary funds? What contributions have the organization and its members made to humanities scholarship, including such things as library and archives collections; significant humanities research; programs and exhibits and or publications; notable scholars at the institution, and grant funded projects.
 - What is the significance of the project and what will be the impact on humanities scholarship? How will the project make a difference?
3. The target and proposed activities to be carried out in a five year time period beginning July 1, 2011 (FY2012)
 - Target \$2,000,000 - NEH awards \$500,000 and the fund-raising match is \$1,500,000
 - Activities to be carried out include those that build capacity and infrastructure:
 - fund-raising expenses (travel, contacting donors and other expenses relating to fund-raising),
 - membership recruitment (travel, site visits, scholarships for CRRA workshops, etc.),
 - marketing to support these activities;
 - programming and/or programmer for enhancing EAD functionality and access to full digital resource
 - Activities to be carried out from the revenue from the endowment (which is established with \$1,500,000 of the targeted funds)
 - graduate student research fellowships,
 - digitization grants to individual CRRA member projects
 - expansion of scholarships and training awards for CRRA workshops
 - expansion of marketing and public relations
 - portal enhancements (software, certification, graphic design)
 - supplemental funds for staff salaries
4. What is needed from CRRA members for the grant proposal
 - One or two paragraphs from each institution on prior accomplishments related to the humanities. Choose two or three from the list below:
 - Name 2-3 outstanding library or archival special collections
 - Name 2 significant humanities programs at your institution
 - Name 1-2 notable scholars at your institution

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- Name one notable humanities program, exhibits and or publications at/from your institution
- Name 1 grant funded humanities projects from your institution
- One letter of support from a notable humanities scholar (Pat will furnish a template for requesting a letter of support)
- A letter of support from you, your provost and/or president. Can be one letter co-signed or individual letters. Jennifer will ask for a letter of support from the ACCU executive director and Fr. Jenkins (Notre Dame president and ACCU Board member)

Minutes

Present: Steve Connaghan, Artemis Kirk, Pat Lawton, Ed Starkey and Jennifer Younger

Jennifer presented an overview of the purpose, criteria, proposed target and activities for an NEH challenge grant proposal to be submitted from CRRA, which were also outlined items 1 – 3 in the agenda. Points raised in discussion were:

- Can we raise the funds, meaning the \$1.5M match to an NEH award of \$500K?
- Is the \$2M target appropriate? Would a lower target be more doable and/or appropriate?
- What specific activities would we engage in for building the infrastructure?
- Can CRRA move forward with projects?
- The deadline of May 5th is only 9 days from today.
- Is there a downside to CRRA in applying if the grant is not awarded?
- Should CRRA become a 501c3?
- An NEH challenge grant focuses on building capacity and infrastructure without the delineation of specific projects, and is in this fundamental way, very different from other kinds of grants. For a challenge grant, NEH sees adding one or more staff and building an endowment as “building capacity and infrastructure” which are then used for various activities with the general outcome of enhancing scholarship in the humanities.

In discussing the above, particularly in regard to digitizing collections, Pat reported on a recent meeting with the Scholars Advisory Committee in which the scholars:

- Affirmed their desire for a focus on unique materials
- Recommended adding unique content and collections to the portal
- See CRRA as leading collaborative digitization projects
- Affirmed the importance of implementing full functionality for searching and displaying of EAD records

After considerable discussion, Board members present agreed that while pursuing such a grant is desirable, the time line for this round is too short to bring together the needed institutional participation. Board members also agreed it would good to include a grant proposal in the CRRA strategic plan as one objective for the next year and put time in the June 29th agenda for discussion of what to pursue, by whom, etc. By June 9th, Pat and Jennifer will furnish an agenda and background materials for the June 29th morning

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meeting, which will include an update to the current's strategic plan, a draft strategic plan for 2010/11 and a draft proposal for an NEH Challenge Grant (which could then be used as the basis for moving forward in creating a full proposal for submission in May 2011).