

# NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES



## SAMPLE APPLICATION NARRATIVE

### Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions

Institution: James C. Bolton Library at Louisiana State University at  
Alexandria (LSUA)

**NOTE:** This sample narrative conforms to a past set of grant guidelines. Please consult the revised guidelines for 2010 at: <http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/pag.html>.

#### **A. What activities would the grant support?**

Library Services at Louisiana State University at Alexandria (LSUA) is seeking funding in the form of a \$6,000 grant for a SOLINET (Southeast Library Network) consultant to deliver a course on disaster planning which staff members will attend. With the region still recovering from the aftermath of the hurricanes of 2005, Library Services recognizes the need for training in disaster preparedness for the benefit of the continued longevity of its library and archival collections. For the project, a consultant with SOLINET will be brought to the campus in Alexandria, Louisiana to instruct staff members in aspects of emergency and disaster planning.

The training will include exercises, discussion and practical applications given by the consultant. The project will also include the supplies needed for the participants, as well as the cost of travel and fees for the instructor. The instructor will ascertain the progress and readiness of the staff at the conclusion of the course. By the end of the course, the staff should be able to utilize materials used in the exercises for a disaster plan for the library, as well as assess the library's needs and design a disaster plan. Implementing the knowledge gained from disaster preparedness and recovery training, LSUA Library Services will create a disaster plan in coordination with the campus-wide plan to act to save unique and irreplaceable materials in the event of a natural or man-made event.

#### **B. What are the content and size of the humanities collections that are the focus of the project?**

In addition to collections that support undergraduate research, the library also holds a certain number of rare and irreplaceable books, an archive of university records, manuscript collections, oral histories, and image collections, as well as an art collection.

*The Library Collection:* As of June 30, 2007, the library collection consisted of 166,304 volumes; of these about 87% fall into NEH humanities categories. Most of the books were published in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, predominantly 1950-1989. About 2% of the titles have imprints from the nineteenth century. The focus of this collection is to support the undergraduate curriculum.

*Archives, Manuscripts, and Photographs:* The focus of the archival collection is to document the history of Central Louisiana, with a special focus on Rapides Parish and the city of Alexandria. Most of the materials date from the twentieth century and consist of local business records, records of civic organizations, and records of various families and individuals considered to have historical value. The records are in the form of manuscripts, photographs, and oral histories on audio tape. Also included are local publications contemporary to the archival collections. This collection is housed in a restricted area. Of note in this collection is a series of bound ledgers recording daily transactions of a county general store that existed in the mid- to late-nineteenth century in a community fifteen miles from the university campus. Some examples of recently acquired collections, in the form of manuscripts and artifacts, that could be lost to history in the wake of a catastrophic event:

- 1) the files of a now-deceased local prominent banker from a family of nineteenth and twentieth century pioneers in Alexandria which is a part of the collection focusing on business activity in the area following the Civil War.
- 2) the research collection of a local author, studying plantation owners and politicians before, during, and after the era of the Civil War. The collection consists of unique manuscript material including notes of a Louisiana Supreme Court Justice spanning several decades in the nineteenth century.
- 3) records from the 10th Judicial District Court dating from 1866-1870. These records pertain to a legal dispute between the heirs of a local landowner over the disposition of his estate.

Currently, the James C. Bolton Library is the only repository in the area focusing on this region. Central Louisiana encompasses the lower Red River Valley bounded on the east by the Mississippi River and on the west by an area referred to as "No Man's Land" or "Neutral Strip" which served as a dividing boundary between Spanish-controlled Texas and American-controlled Louisiana between the years of 1806-1821. As an area of transition between southern Louisiana Cajun and Creole cultures and northern Louisiana Anglo-Saxon influences, Central Louisiana's identity is that of a crossroads. Its character has been shaped by contributions from such varied groups as Native Americans, descendants of Czech immigrants, and African Americans. Central Louisiana saw much upheaval and change during the years of the American Civil War and Reconstruction, during the antebellum and the colonial and era, when Louisiana changed hands from country to country in the space of only a few decades. Prior to the purchase of the Louisiana territory, the area had changed hands between the British, Spanish and French countries more than five times. The manuscript collection at LSUA, the Central Louisiana Collection, is quite valuable not just to the region, but to American history as well.

*The Art Collection:* The library includes, as part of its collection, unique artwork. One hundred five pieces of Southern art work have been collected from the 1960s to the present, representing a wide variety of media, such as oil on canvas, watercolor on paper, woven cloth, and sculpture. A good many of the pieces were selected by Fine Arts faculty while the artists were still young. Some of the works have become important because now the artists are well known, and the art works are occasionally borrowed for regional and national exhibits. Such artists include Ida Kohlmeyer, Clementine Hunter, Clyde Connell, and John Goodheart.

### **C. How are these humanities collection used?**

Library Services at Louisiana State University in Alexandria provides support for the research of university students, faculty, and staff of LSUA. Since 1960, LSUA functioned as a two-year college for the region as a part of the Louisiana State University System. In 2001 the state legislature

authorized LSUA to offer baccalaureate degrees. With its expanded mission, the University continues to add to its degree offerings and to grow to better serve the community of Central Louisiana.

Typically, library materials are utilized by the faculty in classroom activities and studies, and professors may reserve books for student use. The library collection of books, microfilm, and periodicals are used by faculty, staff and the student body in research, education and personal inquiries. Although the library's primary demographic is the university population, the library is open to all who wish to use it.

Library Services' historical preservation program at LSUA is still quite young, only recently staffing the archive as a unit within the library. The archive expects to provide useful resources to researchers interested in both nineteenth- and twentieth-century history of the region and the university.

With the emergence of a staffed, functioning archive at LSUA, the local area will gain a valuable resource for preserving local history. British, Spanish, and French inhabitants left behind manuscripts and artifacts vulnerable to loss as the last of the people who recall these histories pass into history themselves. Many family historians and collectors are finding their heirs lack interest in preserving information gathered over many generations, and they fear that their inheritance containing the information will not be preserved. Equally poignantly, students of history at LSUA need primary source materials to support their research, and those students native to Central Louisiana may lose the opportunity to connect with their past.

Having an archive at LSUA addresses the issues of acquisition of and access to these materials. However, the archive and the library face potential hazards from disasters the area is prone to, most notably tornados, hurricanes, and flooding. The archive will provide the necessary conditions to preserve the materials far longer than they would have been kept otherwise. With donations from families with deep roots in the community, as well as those from businesses and community leaders, LSUA future researchers will have a place to look for information that otherwise might have been lost.

#### **D. What is the nature and mission of the institution?**

The James C. Bolton Library is an academic library serving the student and faculty population of Louisiana State University at Alexandria. The mission of the library and archive is to provide educational resources for professors, materials for research by students and faculty, and to provide a repository of information concerning the local area history of Central Louisiana. The library operates primarily to serve the university community, although its doors are open to all.

Louisiana State University at Alexandria is a member of the Louisiana State University system. The university is a four-year baccalaureate-granting institution which supports undergraduate education in an expanding variety of majors. Louisiana State University at Alexandria began in 1959 as a member of the Louisiana State University system to provide two-year community college degrees. In 2001, LSUA was authorized by the state legislature to offer baccalaureate degrees. The expansion of LSUA continues today with new degrees being offered on an ongoing basis.

In the fall semester of 2007 LSUA showed an enrollment of 2,448 students. The total library budget for FY0708 is \$497,286.

Currently, the library staff is comprised of ten full-time professional and support staff, as well as four part-time paid student workers. The library is open Monday through Friday year-round, with the exception of fourteen holidays.

**E. Has your institution ever had a preservation or conservation assessment?**

No, LSUA has never had a preservation or conservation assessment.

**F. What is the importance of this project to the institution?**

The importance of disaster preparedness cannot be overstated. In recent years, the campus at LSUA received damage by two different hurricanes, Hurricane Lili in October of 2002, and Hurricane Rita in September of 2005. Damage from Hurricane Lili was not discovered until a roof leak caused book damage and mold and mildew problems. Only recently was the damage repaired at a cost of \$300,000. Although no damage was found in the library itself from Hurricane Rita (after Katrina, the second of the deadly hurricanes of 2005 to devastate Louisiana) campus-wide damage came to a cost of \$50,000, including debris removal. Given Central Louisiana's location within a hurricane-prone region, one can reasonably expect that another hurricane will deliver damage to the library collections sometime in the future.

LSUA does maintain an emergency disaster plan; however, this plan does not account for the library collections. Currently, the campus committee is aware of the need for a disaster preparedness plan.

LSUA prides itself on its mission to provide educational opportunities to the area; steps taken with the aid of this grant to provide historical preservation are a natural development. From its inception, the library has striven to acquire donations of unique materials important to the region that would be lost to history had they not been accepted into the collection. Over the years, demand for permanent safe storage of donated papers and records has grown. Many of these collections date from the early periods of European and American settlement and would simply be lost in the event of a disaster. Due to the unstable nature of the media and records, coupled with the occurrence of natural disasters in the area, LSUA and the people of Central Louisiana are quite sensitive to the possibility of losing much of their history. As an active supporter of the communities it serves, LSUA has taken the initiative to safeguard fragile records, and now will take steps to ensure their survival through disaster planning. The need and desire for this program is great among the citizens of Central Louisiana.

**G. What are the names and qualifications of the consultant(s) and staff involved in the project?**

Michelle Riggs, the University Archivist, will act as Project Director and primary contact. She has a Master of Library and Information Science degree from Louisiana State University School of Library and Information Science. She served as Assistant Archivist at Earlham College from 2004-2007 before joining the library as University Archivist for LSUA in 2007.

Kara M. McClurken from SOLINET Consulting Services will be the lead consultant for this project. She has extensive training as a conservator and experience as a consultant. SOLINET is known for offering fine courses in preservation and conservation to library personnel throughout the region.

**H. What is the timetable for the project?**

Month 1: Schedule training and hold mandatory-attendance classes for library staff and key campus emergency response personnel.

Month 2: Perform in-house inspection of grounds and supplies. Determine what additional supplies are needed.

Month 3-5: Draft disaster plan and submit it to the Campus Safety Officer for inclusion in the campus emergency response plan.

Month 4: Order supplies.

Note: The use of consulting services, vendors, or other trade names is being provided for the information and convenience of potential applicants. Such use does not constitute an official endorsement, approval, or favoring by the U.S. Government, or by the National Endowment for the Humanities or any of its employees, of any product, service, or business to the exclusion of any others that may be available. The views and opinions of document authors do not necessarily state or reflect those of the U.S. Government, or the National Endowment for the Humanities or any of its employees.