

**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE HUMANITIES**

SAMPLE APPLICATION NARRATIVE



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Picturing America School Collaboration Projects  
Institution: University of North Carolina, National Paideia Project



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE  
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DIVISION OF EDUCATION  
PROGRAMS

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## **National Endowment for the Humanities Division of Education Programs**

### **Narrative Section of a Successful Application**

This sample of the narrative portion from a grant is provided as an example of a funded proposal. It will give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. It is not intended to serve as a model. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with staff members in the NEH Division of Education Programs well before a grant deadline. This sample proposal does not include a budget, letters of commitment, or résumés.

**Project Title:** Picturing America Across North Carolina

**Institution:** University of North Carolina, National Paideia Center

**Project Director:** Terry Roberts

**Grant Program:** Picturing America School Collaboration Projects

## **Picturing America Across North Carolina**

### **Project Summary**

“*Picturing America* from across North Carolina” is a collaborative project, directed by the National Paideia Center, affiliated with the University of North Carolina, in partnership with the Ackland Art Museum at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The goal of “*Picturing America* from across North Carolina” is to promote deep conceptual understanding of works included in the Picturing America Portfolio for teachers and librarians across the entire state of North Carolina. We will host three one-day conferences for educators in the key regions of North Carolina: mountains, piedmont, and coastal. Each conference will be designed so that educators enjoy a multi-faceted learning experience centered around a significant theme that connects American values with particular works of art. These three conferences (one in Asheville, one in Chapel Hill, and one in Wilmington) will feature: 1) an opening keynote lecture by a noted scholar in American Cultural Studies; 2) interactive instructional sessions by National Paideia Center and Ackland Art Museum staff; and 3) model Socratic seminars led by National Paideia Center staff. Each conference will be based on a different theme from the Picturing America Portfolio, discussed in detail by experienced scholars, and further explored by participants within sets of integrated, thematic sessions. Therefore, participants will learn a great deal about the selected works, they will also walk away with new strategies and materials for teaching students. The collection of teaching materials modeled during these conferences will be made available to participants for their use in leading similar lessons with their students.

North Carolina is a long, narrow state rich in resources that preserve and represent the American experience. We are offering three one-day conferences in three different regions in order to make the conference programming available to a wide range of educators and highlight resources located in different areas of the state. In addition, we are utilizing electronic media to offer conference participants continued support as they set about using model teaching strategies and integrate the seminal works from Picturing America into their standard curriculum.

Our project evaluation will include survey data from the participants at the end of each regional conference as well as a follow up survey collected six months later to determine how conference participants have used the works of art, the teaching strategies, and to what effect.

We plan to portray the project outcomes through photographs and artifacts that illustrate student engagement, integrated into the final evaluation report.

## **Narrative Description**

### Intellectual Rationale

*The purpose of “Picturing America from across North Carolina” is to provide up to 105 North Carolina educators who received the original Picturing America portfolios with a powerful learning experience through three one-day thematic conferences. In this way, participants will enjoy a much deeper understanding of selected works within the portfolio while collecting a variety of teaching methods and materials to share with colleagues and use with students. As the teachers’ intellectual engagement with the Portfolio grows, so will their commitment and ability to teach the Portfolio as a fundamental part of the curriculum.*

### Conference Design and Content

Each of the three conferences is built on the same program agenda. We will start the day with an opening plenary presentation by the conference scholar, who will place the works from that theme in the context of American cultural history, with the particular aim of helping teachers understand how those works can be integrated into their curricula.

Following a short break, we will then offer two sets of break out sessions of 75 minutes each, in which educational experts from the National Paideia Center and the Ackland Museum will lead model sessions on teaching these works in Elementary Grades (Beth Shaw McGuire), Secondary History (Terry Roberts), and Secondary Language Arts (Laura Billings)—using material from both the Picturing America Portfolio and related materials from collections at the University of North Carolina. Each participant will have the opportunity to attend two of the three breakout sessions. (Middle school teachers, for example, will want to attend the Elementary session as well as one of the two Secondary sessions.)

After lunch the conference staff will lead model Socratic Seminar discussions with two of the works from the thematic section of the Portfolio. The final plenary session will focus on the use of electronic media to maintain the collaboration and continue sharing lesson plans and other materials once the participants begin actually using the strategies they have learned to teach the

art works from the Portfolio. Please see the following draft agenda for the Central North Carolina Conference as representative of the design for all three.

**Picturing America from across North Carolina**  
**Chapel Hill, North Carolina**  
**Central NC Conference Theme: *Freedom and Equality***

- 8:00 Welcome and Overview
- 8:30 **Conference Keynote:**  
**Images of John Brown in American History & Literature**  
**Dr. Eliza Richards**
- 9:30 Break
- 9:45 **Model Teaching Breakout Sessions A**  
Beth Shaw McGuire, Terry Roberts, Laura Billings
- 11:00 Break
- 11:15 **Model Teaching Breakout Sessions B**
- 12:30 Lunch and Gallery Tour: “Jacob Lawrence and the Legend of John Brown,”  
Ackland Art Museum
- 1:30 **Model Paideia Seminar Discussions:**  
“The Migration Series, no. 57” by Jacob Lawrence  
“Freedom of Speech” by Norman Rockwell  
Laura Billings, Terry Roberts
- 3:00 Break
- 3:15 **Closing Plenary Panel: Q & A** Moderated by Beth Shaw McGuire  
**Follow-Up List-Serv and Dissemination of Materials**
- 4:00 Evaluation and Adjournment

The **Central North Carolina Conference** (Chapel Hill) will focus on the works in the Picturing America “Freedom and Equality” theme. The primary scholar will be Dr. Eliza Richards, Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature, who is collaborating with the Ackland staff on the spring 2010 exhibit on “Jacob Lawrence and the Legend of John Brown,” featuring Lawrence’s series based on the life of John Brown. Dr. Richards will closely

examine how images of John Brown and other Civil War era events changed the way that literature—and in particular poetry—was written in America. She will interweave artistic representations of Brown and other seminal images of the war (including the new art of photography) with poetry and prose from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Through the conference breakout sessions that follow, we will model lessons for examining the ideas of freedom and equality with students. In the Elementary breakout session, teachers will work with Beth Shaw to create an exhibit of Freedom and Equality images from the Portfolio and Ackland holdings, an exhibit for which students will write their own catalog. In the Secondary English session, participants will compare and contrast Thomas Hart Benton's painting of "Huck Finn" (Ackland) juxtaposed with excerpts from the novel as expressions of Freedom and Equality. In this session, Laura Billings will help teachers see effective methods for integrating artistic analysis with essential literacy skills. In the Secondary History session, teachers will focus on Lezley Saar's portrait of "Elizabeth Keckley: Mrs. Lincoln's Seamstress" (Ackland) as an exploration of race and gender. Terry Roberts will use a short segment from Doris Kearns Goodwin's *A Team of Rivals* to augment the discussion and the writing of personal history. In this way, teachers will examine their own personal understandings of the race and gender as a lens on the American experience.

Participants in the Central NC Conference will also take a guided tour of "Jacob Lawrence and the Legend of John Brown" as a preliminary exercise before the intellectual challenge of a Socratic dialogue centered on either Jacob Lawrence's "The Migration Series, no. 57" (to connect back to the John Brown exhibit) or Norman Rockwell's "Freedom of Speech," both of which give participants the opportunity to reflect on their own views regarding the evolving fight for Freedom and Equality in a democracy.

The **Western North Carolina Conference** (Asheville) will focus on those works in the Picturing America "Leadership" theme, and the primary scholar will be Dr. David Lubin, Charles C. Weber Professor of Art at Wake Forest University. Dr. Lubin, will discuss selected works from the Leadership theme, with a particular focus on Augustus Saint-Gauden's monument honoring the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Colored Infantry and their leader, Colonel Robert

Shaw, focusing on the crucial role that leadership has played at those points in American history when the nation and its ideals were most threatened.

This same theme of leadership in response to threat will be carried through in the breakout sessions as well. Teachers in the Elementary session will participate in a model session by generating a list of personal qualities and skills often associated with leaders and will then determine which of these traits are referenced in selected images from the Portfolio and Ackland collections. Participants in the Secondary Literacy breakout will work with Gordon Parks' photograph of Malcolm X (Ackland) and an excerpt from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* on literacy and power to study how constant reference to American art can enhance student understanding of American literature. Participants in the Secondary History session will use Alexander Gardner's portrait of Abraham Lincoln along with four of Burk Uzzle's photographs of Martin Luther King (Ackland) to draft unit lessons on photography and historical thinking.

In the Socratic Seminar sessions for the Western NC Conference, participants will discuss either Emanuel Leutze's "Washington Crossing the Delaware" or James Karales' "Selma-to-Montgomery March for Voting Rights," giving them the opportunity to examine personally the role of leadership in a democracy and how that role may change when the democratic ideals are threatened.

The **Eastern North Carolina Conference** (Wilmington) will focus on the works in the Picturing America "Landscape" theme, and the primary scholar will be Dr. Joy Kasson, Professor and Chair of the American Studies Program at UNC. Dr. Kasson will build on our study of landscape—both natural and manmade—and its effect on the American psyche.

The breakout sessions will explore this theme of natural and manmade landscapes in much more detail. Teachers in the Elementary breakout will explore how landscape can express

values and ideals, serve to document reality, or serve as metaphors for human hopes and dreams—examining works from the Ackland collection for each of these elements. In the Secondary English session, participants will compare artistic landscapes with similar landscapes in words (using a selection of Thomas Hart Benton’s landscape paintings (Ackland) with excerpts from Willa Cather) and then write descriptive “landscapes” of their own based on Bierstadt’s “Looking Down Yosemite Valley, California.” Participants in the Secondary History session will examine one of the first American landscapes, John White’s “Early Map of Virginia” (actually a portrait of the North Carolina’s Outer Banks from the North Carolina Collection, UNC Libraries), a highly creative “map” by the artist who accompanied one of the first expeditions to colonize the New World.

The Socratic seminar sessions for the Eastern NC conference will take as their texts Thomas Cole’s “The Oxbow” in combination with Richard Diebenkorn’s “Cityscape,” (comparing the two texts in one discussion) and Romare Bearden’s “The Dove,” both of which give participants the opportunity to discuss the ideas and values expressed through natural versus manmade landscape in the development of the American sensibility.

### Professional Development of Participants

In addition to deepening educators conceptual understanding of representative works of art, “*Picturing America* from across North Carolina” is strategically designed to showcase complementary instructional methods. We will use a triangulated approach to the learning process, based on *The Paideia Program* by Mortimer Adler, building on background knowledge to support students’ intellectual skills and conceptual understanding. First, participants will be asked to read the Teachers Resource Book closely as well as a thematic set of short readings prior to attending the conference. We will open each conference with didactic instruction or lecture so that participants will know the essential background information on the works from that theme. Second, there is intellectual coaching in the breakout sessions to help participants master the skills of a given discipline (to view, analyze, or create for example). Third, there is

Socratic seminar discussion so that participants practice critical thinking about the ideas and values of a topic or subject.

The “*Picturing America* from across North Carolina” conferences will be presented through these three complementary modes of instruction resulting in the development of three complementary learning experiences. The opening plenary session by the conference scholar is primarily *didactic* and intended to provide the participants with background *information* on the works from the conference theme, including social and cultural history that will help them present and teach the works.

The two sets of breakouts that follow the opening plenary are active sessions, wherein the participants interact with the works themselves in a variety of ways while being *coached* by the session leaders. The goal of these sessions is to use the art work from the Picturing America Portfolio supplemented by works from the Ackland collections to develop the participants’ academic *skills*, including observation, reading, writing, research, and design. It is important to note that both elementary and secondary breakout sessions will model for teachers how to deliver the North Carolina Standard Course of Study using these influential works. All three sessions will leave the participants with strategies and materials that are directly transferable to their classrooms. (Please see the appendices for an illustrated list of supplementary works from the Ackland Art Museum and other UNC collections.)

The afternoon session is a formal *seminar discussion* facilitated by staff from the National Paideia Center, intended to enhance the participants’ *conceptual understanding* of the ideas and values inherent to the works in the Picturing American Portfolio. (Please see a sample Seminar plan for Jacob Lawrence’s “Migration Series, no. 57” in the appendices.)

In sum, each of the three conferences is designed to develop the participants’ knowledge, skills, and understanding of the Picturing America works from the selected theme, thereby enabling them to teach those works effectively by replicating their experience with their own students. Further, participants will receive the teaching materials from each conference with the participants from all three, and the strategies modeled at each conference will be fully transferable to the art work in the other thematic groups. In this way, Picturing America from Across North Carolina will augment the Picturing America Portfolio “Teaching Activities.” As a result of the conference learning experience and materials, teachers will be well prepared to

teach the entire Picturing America Portfolio in the context of their own curriculum and share it with others.