

Rare Book School Receives Mellon Foundation Grant to Support Fellowships for Diversity, Inclusion, and Cultural Heritage

Charlottesville, VA, 26 June 2019 – Rare Book School (RBS), which is based at the University of Virginia, has been awarded a \$1.5 million grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to support the Andrew W. Mellon Fellowships for Diversity, Inclusion & Cultural Heritage, a six-year program that aims to advance the diversity of staffing and curatorial practice in special collections libraries. Forty-five fellows who identify with diverse racial or ethnic communities and/or who work primarily with collections that document minority, immigrant, and non-Western cultural traditions will participate in this program over six years.

Comprising three overlapping cohorts of 15 fellows each, the fellowship will seek to fulfill four core goals: 1) developing skills for documenting and interpreting visual and textual materials in special collections and archives; 2) raising awareness within professional communities about the significance of inclusive, multicultural collections, including their promotion, development, and stewardship; 3) building connections with diverse communities and publics through strategic programming, outreach, and advocacy; and 4) advancing careers by establishing new pathways and skills for professional growth.

Rare Book School will be collaborating with a number of partner institutions to make meaningful professional development activities available to fellows. These activities will include site visits to such institutions as the Free Library of Philadelphia, the Cuban Heritage and Latin American Collections at the University of Miami Libraries, and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture; targeted workshops at the annual conference of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries; and the opportunity to present work at the HBCU Library Alliance biannual meeting.

“We are excited by the opportunities this grant provides; it will enable us to be more active and effective agents in advancing the diversity of persons and practices in special collections libraries,” said RBS Executive Director Michael F. Suarez, S.J. “And we are enormously grateful, not only to The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and its staff, but also to a host of other interlocutors, for the many conversations we have had over the past several years in the nascent stages of this program. Listening carefully to new voices and attending to different perspectives has been both humbling and enlightening.”

The deadline for application to join the program’s first cohort of fellows will be 2 December 2019. More information about the Andrew W. Mellon Fellowships for Diversity, Inclusion & Cultural Heritage may be found at www.rarebookschool.org/mellon-diversity.

About Rare Book School (RBS)

Rare Book School provides continuing-education opportunities for students from all disciplines and levels to study the history of written, printed, and digital materials with leading scholars and professionals in the field of bibliography, librarianship, book history, manuscript studies, and the digital humanities. Founded in 1983, RBS moved to its present home at the University of Virginia in 1992. RBS is a not-for-profit educational organization affiliated with the University of Virginia. More information about RBS is available on its website: www.rarebookschool.org.

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