

Rare Book School Awards 15 Fellowships for Diversity, Inclusion & Cultural Heritage

Fellowship program seeks to enhance understandings of multicultural collections among professionals, local community members, and broader publics

Charlottesville, VA, 12 April 2021–Rare Book School (RBS) at the University of Virginia has selected the second cohort of 15 fellows to join the Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship for Diversity, Inclusion & Cultural Heritage (RBS-Mellon CH Fellowship). Fellows will participate in a three-year program which includes an orientation, Rare Book School coursework, community symposia, and other activities relating to multicultural collections and trainings.

“We are especially grateful to the Mellon Foundation for granting us the flexibility to adapt key aspects of the program in light of the global pandemic. With enhanced technological tools, fellows will be able to join others in their cohort in virtual workshops and conferences and in online Rare Book School courses this year,” said Danielle Culpepper, RBS Director of Budget & Finance and one of the authors of this initiative. “We look forward to gathering together with the fellows in person next year but are very excited to have the opportunity to bring all of the participants together virtually to engage in the important work of the fellowship in the current moment.”

This program builds on the success of earlier RBS fellowship initiatives, including the Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship for Scholars in Critical Bibliography, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)-RBS Fellowships for Early-Career Librarians, and the RBS-RBMS Diversity Fellowship Program. The RBS-Mellon CH Fellowship has been formed to: develop skills for documenting and interpreting visual and textual materials in special collections and archives; raise awareness within professional communities about the significance of inclusive, multicultural collections, including their promotion, development, and stewardship; build connections with diverse communities and publics through strategic programming, outreach, and advocacy; and advance careers by establishing new pathways and skills for professional growth.

The 15 RBS-Mellon CH Fellows were chosen from a highly competitive field of applicants by a selection committee comprising leading cultural heritage professionals. The selected fellows work closely with a broad spectrum of multicultural collections and communities. This year’s awardees include individuals working with Indigenous communities and collections, HBCU library collections, East Asian and Asian-Pacific American archives, Latinx and Black special collections, as well as community-engaged approaches to LGBTQ+ history and cultural production. Geographically, the fellows represent states across the country from coast to coast (and Alaska and Hawaii). “These fellows bring to RBS a remarkable range of experience and expertise in areas vital to the growth of libraries, archives, and museums,” remarked Barbara Heritage, RBS’s Associate Director and Curator of Collections, who also serves as a co-author of the grant. “In particular, this new cohort has a special interest in the ethical care of communities and collections. We see this as an important opportunity for RBS and other institutions to increase their engagement with multicultural communities in a responsible and ethical fashion, to help ensure that community voices, stories, and collections are valued and preserved in keeping with the vision of those various and diverse groups.”

“We very much look forward to welcoming our second group of Cultural Heritage Fellows to Rare Book School, where we hope they will find much to learn and much to contribute,” said RBS Executive Director Michael F. Suarez, S.J. “We remain profoundly grateful to The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for their ongoing support of this key diversity initiative at Rare Book School.”

More information about the Andrew W. Mellon Diversity, Inclusion & Cultural Heritage is available at: <https://rarebookschool.org/admissions-awards/fellowships/mellon-diversity/>.

About Rare Book School (RBS)

Rare Book School provides continuing-education opportunities for students from all disciplines and skill levels to study the history of written, printed, and digital materials with leading scholars and professionals in the fields

of bibliography, librarianship, book history, manuscript studies, and the digital humanities. Founded at Columbia University in 1983, RBS moved to its present home at the University of Virginia in 1992. RBS is a not-for-profit educational organization associated with the University of Virginia.

More information about RBS is available on its website: <http://www.rarebookschool.org>.

For further information, contact:

Marian Toledo Candelaria

Program Manager, Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship for Diversity, Inclusion & Cultural Heritage, Rare Book School, marian.toledo.candelaria@virginia.edu