NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE
Humanities

DIVISION OF **EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the Education Programs application guidelines at www.neh.gov/grants/education/humanities-initiatives-historically-black-colleges-and-universities for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Education Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: Stories That Heal: Embedding Narrative Medicine in the Sciences, English, and Nursing Curricula

Institution: Alcorn State University

Project Director: C. Dianne Bunch

Grant Program: Humanities Initiatives at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Stories that Heal: Embedding Narrative Medicine within the Sciences, English, and Nursing Curricula at Alcorn State University

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Stories that Heal: Embedding Narrative Medicine within the Sciences, English and Nursing Curricula at Alcorn State University

Our project will train science, English, and nursing faculty at Alcorn State University in the field of literature and medicine. Through this initiative, faculty from the departments of English and sciences as well as the School of Nursing will work together to create new interdisciplinary courses and then revise their curricula to include courses on literature and medicine. At the end of a 24-month training and study period, faculty will be equipped to teach Alcorn State University students the narrative skills of the humanities to help them develop better diagnostic skills and increase empathy with at-risk patients in rural Mississippi.

Science and nursing students who attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have a greater need for cutting-edge curricula because of the at-risk populations that they will eventually serve. For example, the graduates of Alcorn State School of Nursing will primarily attend patients in the rural Mississippi counties of Jefferson, Adams, and Claiborne. These counties lead the nation in poverty and obesity rates. Ironically, these patients' voices which are the least heard by the medical establishment are the most celebrated throughout the world as the inspiration for the Mississippi blues and Southern literature. The Alcorn English department has long been interested in making the humanities more available to sciences and nursing students through literature courses specifically created to help them hear the stories of others and then to tell their own stories of healing. The Alcorn English department believes that such courses can connect the humanities with the sciences as well as the medical community and the patient.

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Stories that Heal: Embedding Narrative Medicine within the Sciences, English, and Nursing Curricula at Alcorn State University

Intellectual Rationale

Our project will train science, English, and nursing faculty at Alcorn State University in the field of literature and medicine. Through this initiative, faculty from the departments of English and sciences as well as the School of Nursing will work together to create new interdisciplinary courses and then revise their curricula to include courses on literature and medicine. At the end of a 24-month training and study period, faculty will be equipped to teach Alcorn State University students the narrative skills of the humanities to help them develop better diagnostic skills and increase empathy with at-risk patients in rural Mississippi.

Professors of English are trained to read narratives about diverse people with a multiplicity of needs; our science and nursing faculty and students are continually asked to read narratives of their patients through their physicality and the stories they tell. Therefore, this project will establish a much needed dialogue between seemingly disparate disciplines that actually use similar methods of interpretation: one reads the text; one reads the body. Research in the area of literature and medicine has been arguing for years that medicine must employ the humanities in order to strengthen medical students' abilities to reach patients and to lower stress on medical personnel. Medical professors have looked to the work of authors such as Flannery O'Connor, Audre Lourde, William Carlos Williams, Walt Whitman, Raymond Carver, Walker Percy, and Anton Chekov as a means to illustrate the confluence between medicine and literature and to instill their students with a deeper moral understanding.

Dr. Robert Coles, a child psychiatrist, professor at Harvard Medical School, and Pulitzer Prize-winning author, has argued for including the humanities in medical education. In his

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Introduction to *A Life in Medicine: A Literary Anthology* (The New Press, 2002) he states that "a patient's presence before us in a hospital or office setting becomes for us a moral occasion, a measure of our moral life as it is lived moment to moment." The leading proponent of embedding humanities curricula into medical education is Dr. Rita Charon who is Professor of Clinical Medicine at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University and Director of the Program in Narrative Medicine. Dr. Charon graduated from Harvard Medical School in 1978 and completed the Ph.D. in the Department of English of Columbia in 1999, writing on the late works of Henry James and on literary analyses of medical texts. She designed and now directs Columbia's teaching programs in medical interviewing, humanities and medicine, and narrative medicine. In her book *Narrative Medicine* (Oxford UP, 2006), Dr. Charon explains that one of the problems of medical education is the lack of humanities within the curricula, and she offers a solution for bridging this gap by proposing courses that create a dialogue between English departments and medical programs. She further states that "Medicine can benefit from learning that which literary scholars and psychologists and anthropologists and storytellers have known for some time—that is, what narratives are, how they are built, how they convey their knowledge about the world, what happens when stories are told and listened to, how narratives organize life, and how they let those who live life recognize what it means" (9). The importance of literature courses designed for the sciences is clearly delineated by Charon when she argues that "Narrative medicine can help answer many of the urgent charges against medical practice and training—its impersonality, its fragmentation, its coldness, its self-interestedness, its lack of social conscience" (10).

As leading medical schools now recognize the needs for the humanities in their curricula, forward-thinking English departments are also emphasizing the importance of literature and the

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sciences. For example, the Department of English at the University of Missouri has developed an initiative to bring together scientific and humanistic disciplines through the publication of a sciences and humanities journal and the development of new curricula in their English department. They are currently offering courses such as Literature and Medicine, Literature and Science in Britain 1700-1900, Nineteenth-Century Literature and Sciences, and Disciplining Bodies: Literature and the Life Sciences.

Nurses are often seen as the more caring professionals in the field of medicine, yet their voices are less often heard than those of the higher-profiled physicians. In addition, nursing programs often lag behind medical schools in the establishment of humanities curricula. Further, science and nursing students who attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have a greater need for cutting-edge curricula because of the at-risk populations that they will eventually serve. For example, the graduates of Alcorn State School of Nursing will primarily attend patients in the rural Mississippi counties of Jefferson, Adams, and Claiborne. These counties lead the nation in poverty and obesity rates. Ironically, these patients' voices which are the least heard by the medical establishment are the most celebrated throughout the world as the inspiration for the Mississippi blues and Southern literature. The Alcorn English department has long been interested in making the humanities more available to sciences and nursing students through literature courses specifically created to help them hear the stories of others and then to tell their own stories of healing. The Alcorn English department believes that such courses can connect the humanities with the sciences as well as the medical community and the patient.

Content and design

The first phase of this 24-month project will begin with an initial training seminar on literature and medicine entitled: "Stories that Heal: A Faculty Seminar for the Teaching of

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Narrative Medicine at Alcorn State University." This seminar will be held on the Alcorn State University Natchez campus during May 12-14, 2011. Twenty Alcorn faculty participants from the undergraduate sciences and English departments as well as undergraduate and graduate School of Nursing will attend. The first day, Thursday, May 12, 2011, will be the keynote address by Dr. Rita Charon, the leading figure in the field of literature and medicine. She will address the issue of narrative medicine and discuss the success of her program at Columbia University where she teaches medical interviewing, humanities and medicine, and narrative medicine. A question and answer session will follow her lecture. Participants will then break into three small groups for discussions led by the Project Director, Dianne Bunch, Ph.D., Associate Professor of English; Project Co-Director, Lillie Jones, Ph.D., Professor of English; and Project Nursing Liaison Meg Brown, R.N., Ph.D. Chair of Baccalaureate Nursing.

In the afternoon, the film *Wit* based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning play by Margaret Edson and starring Emma Thompson, will be shown to participants. After viewing the film that portrays an English professor's battle with cancer and the medical profession, Dr. Jones will conduct a question and answer session.

Day two, Friday, May 13, 2011, the seminar will feature a panel to include two leading psychiatrists in the state of Mississippi. Dr. Phillip Scurria, M.D., F.A.P.A and Clyde Glen, M.D. will discuss how narrative offers an entry into new experiences and the implications this might have for the cultivation of empathy. The panel will be followed by a question and answer session. Participants will then break into small groups led by Bunch, Jones, and Brown.

During the afternoon session, the film *Away from Her*, starring Julie Christie will be shown to participants. After viewing the film about a couple's struggle with the psychological burden of Alzheimer's disease, Dr. Brown will conduct a question and answer session.

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The last day of the seminar, Saturday, May 14, 2011, the group will be addressed by Dr. William Monroe, Professor and Dean of the Honors College, University of Houston. Professor Monroe will present a staged reading of his play *Primary Care*, using seminar participants. Immediately following the reading, Professor Monroe will discuss the nursing profession and literature. A question and answer session will follow along with small group discussion of the lecture. In the afternoon, Professor Monroe will discuss how he teaches his honors courses on literature and medicine, including selection of authors and texts, the development of a syllabus, and specific writing assignments.

During summer 2011, phase two of Alcorn's campus initiative on literature and medicine will continue by establishing an interdisciplinary study group consisting of all twenty participants from the seminar. This study group will hold monthly meetings beginning June, 2011 through April, 2012 to discuss the following texts and films: *Narrative Medicine*; *A Life in Medicine: A Literary Anthology*; *Imagine What It's Like: A Literature and Medical Anthology*; *Stories of Illness and Healing: Women Write Their Bodies*; *Teaching Literature and Medicine*; *Stories Matter: The Role of Narrative in Medical Ethics*; *Remaking American Medicine*; and *The New Medicine*. These monthly meetings will be led by Bunch and Jones and alternatively held at the School of Nursing on the Natchez campus and Alcorn's main campus. The group will keep journals, write stories, and blog. A website, created for the group will function as a repository for participants' journal entries, stories, and comments. The website will also disseminate information about the initiative to the larger campus community and the medical community in the area.

After all twenty participants have been thoroughly oriented in the field of narrative medicine by the seminar "Stories That Heal" and the year-long study group, they will then meet

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together in a two-day workshop entitled "Narrative Medicine Curriculum Development Workshop." This seminar will be held at the Alcorn School of Nursing during May 11-12, 2012, to discuss, develop, and implement several new courses on narrative medicine. This workshop will choose the actual content, structure, written assignments, and assessments for courses that will then be sent to the administration for approval. Day one of the "Narrative Medicine Curriculum Development Workshop" will begin with a keynote address by Dr. Meg Brown, R.N., Ph.D., Chair of Baccalaureate Nursing, Alcorn School of Nursing. Dr. Brown will discuss the nursing program and how narrative medicine courses can be effectively integrated into the nursing curriculum, particularly the graduate nursing curriculum. There will be a question and answer session after Dr. Brown's address and small group discussions about issues confronting the students in the School of Nursing. During the afternoon, participants will tour the Alcorn School of Nursing Clinic and Natchez Regional Hospital that employs many Alcorn nursing graduates. The second day, Saturday, May 12, 2012, the group will be addressed by Dr. Paul Broome, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, who will speak about curriculum development at Alcorn State University and the importance of interdisciplinary cooperation and the Narrative Medicine initiative at Alcorn State University. Participants will then break up into small groups to decide how many courses can be developed and embedded into the curricula of the School of Nursing, the sciences, and English literature. After deciding which courses to develop, faculty representing the various curricula will then actually design the new courses for their area, including selection of texts and the creation of a model syllabus.

Institutional Context

Founded in 1871, Alcorn State University was the nation's first state-supported institution for the higher education of African Americans. The "Stories That Heal" seminar

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closely follows the university's mission, which emphasizes "intellectual development and lifelong learning through the integration of diverse pedagogies, applied and basic research, cultural and professional programs, public service and outreach." Alcorn students are able to benefit from the work of the seminar through the addition of courses to the English, sciences, and Nursing curricula. Humanities are taught at Alcorn State University through various literature courses offered in the Department of English and Foreign Languages, through music and art taught in the Department of Fine Arts, and in history and law courses in the Department of Social Sciences. Current university faculty with terminal degrees in science, nursing and English will teach courses in literature and medicine.

Follow-up and dissemination

Follow-up and dissemination is built into the project. First, long-term impact for Alcorn State University will be the enhancement of curricula in the sciences, English, and nursing departments. Second, this model of faculty development and interdisciplinary cooperation between the humanities and the sciences will be presented to other HBCUs in the state through advertising the project's website. Third, the Department of English plans to present a panel at a future National Council of Teachers of English conference describing the process of developing courses in literature and medicine. Fourth, the website will be maintained by the department of English as a means to advertise narrative medicine courses and an outlet for students to share their comments and stories on the website. This also will allow the department to monitor the progress of the new courses in literature and medicine.

Evaluation

Evaluations will be on-going throughout the project. A written evaluation will be conducted at the end of each of the three days during the first phase of the project, asking seminar participants

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to assess the daily program based on motivation and information. The second phase of the project, the study group, will be evaluated less formally by participants blogging and discussing the merits of theoretical and literary texts in the field of literature and medicine. The primary evaluation of the study group will occur when participants attend the curriculum development workshop and use their expertise in literature and medicine to actually create courses. The final written evaluation will be given to participants after the Narrative Medicine Curriculum Development Workshop to assess its effectiveness.

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Stories That Heal: A Bibliography

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Ferrell, Betty and Nessa Coyle. *The Nature of Suffering and the Goals of Nursing.* Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008.

Frank, Arthur. *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness and Ethics.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1997.

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Hawkins, Anne Hunsaker and Marily Chandler McEntyre, eds. *Teaching Literature and Medicine.* New York: Modern Language Association, 2000.

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The Lost Prince. Dir. Stephen Poliakoff. Perf. Daniel Williams and Matthew James Thomas. BBC Warner, 2004. DVD.

Mehl-Madrona, Lewis. *Narrative Medicine: The Use of History and Story in the Healing Process.* Maple Valley: Bear & Company, 2007.

Miss Evers' Boys. Dir. Joseph Sargent. Perf. Alfre Woodard, Laurence Fishburne, and Craig Sheffer. HBO Home Video, 2002. DVD.

Nadlehaft, Ruth and Victoria Bonebakker, eds. *Imagine What It's Like: A Literature and Medicine Anthology.* Manoa: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008.

The New Medicine. Dir. Muffie Meyer. Perf. Dana Reeve. First Run Features, 2006. DVD.

Remaking American Medicine. PBS Direct, 2006. DVD.

The Snake Pit. Dir. Anatole Litvak. Perf. Olivia de Havilland, Mark Stevens, and Leo Genn. 20th Century Fox, 1948. 2004. DVD.

Son Frere. Dir. Patrice Chereau. Perf. Bruno Todeschini and Eric Caravaca. Strand Releasing, 2003. DVD.

Wit. Dir. Mike Nichols. Perf. Emma Thompson, Christopher, and Eileen Atkins. HBO Home Video, 2001.

Stories That Heal: A Faculty Seminar for the Teaching of Narrative Medicine at Alcorn State University

Faculty Participant Evaluation

Day One

Circle your response to Dr. Charon's address for its ability to inform and motivate.

1	2	3	4
Not informative Or motivating	somewhat informative and motivating	informative and motivating	extremely informative and motivating

Circle your response to the small group session and it ability to explore pertinent issues raised in the address.

1	2	3	4
Not very Useful	somewhat useful	useful	extremely useful

Circle your response to the film *Wit* for its ability to illustrate issues raised in the morning discussion about narrative medicine.

1	2	3	4
Not very Useful	somewhat useful	useful	extremely useful

Please write any additional comments about the seminar:

Stories That Heal: A Faculty Seminar for the Teaching of Narrative Medicine at Alcorn State University

Faculty Participant Evaluation

Day Two

Circle your response to Drs. Scurria and Glenn's panel presentation for its ability to inform and motivate.

1	2	3	4
Not informative Or motivating	somewhat informative and motivating	informative and motivating	extremely informative and motivating

Circle your response to the small group session and it ability to explore pertinent issues raised in the presentation.

1	2	3	4
Not very Useful	somewhat useful	useful	extremely useful

Circle your response to the film *Away From Her* for its ability to illustrate issues raised in the morning discussion about narrative medicine.

1	2	3	4
Not very Useful	somewhat useful	useful	extremely useful

Please write any additional comments about the seminar:

Stories That Heal: A Faculty Seminar for the Teaching of Narrative Medicine at Alcorn State University

Faculty Participant Evaluation

Day Three

Circle your response to Dr. Monroe's presentation for its ability to inform and motivate.

1	2	3	4
Not informative Or motivating	somewhat informative and motivating	informative and motivating	extremely informative and motivating

Circle your response to the small group session and it ability to explore pertinent issues raised in the presentation.

1	2	3	4
Not very Useful	somewhat useful	useful	extremely useful

Circle your response to Dr. Monroe's discussion of pedagogical issues for its ability to inform and motivate you to teach narrative medicine.

1	2	3	4
Not informative Or motivating	somewhat informative and motivating	informative and motivating	extremely informative and motivating

Please write any additional comments about the seminar:

Narrative Medicine Curriculum Development Workshop
Faculty Participant Evaluation
Day One and Two

I am a faculty participant from the _____ Department in the College or School of _____.

During this workshop I and my colleagues were able to develop a course in narrative medicine for our department entitled _____.

The catalogue description of this course in narrative medicine will be:

Texts that a faculty member might choose for this course will be:

The objective, requirement and assessments on a model syllabus for this course will be:

Did you find this workshop helpful for producing these products? State specifically which sessions aided your work.

How would you have improved this workshop?

Brief Institutional History

Alcorn State University was originally founded as Oakland College, a school established by the Presbyterian Church for students of local planters. When Oakland College was unable to reopen after the Civil War, the state of Mississippi purchased the 225-acre property in 1871 for the purpose of educating former slaves and renamed it Alcorn University. Designated a land-grant college, the name of the school was changed to Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College in 1878. Renamed Alcorn State University, the university currently encompasses 1,756 acres and employs 185 full-time faculty members. Alcorn State has seven schools, with 13 departments. There are over 3,000 students enrolled as undergraduate and graduate students. In 2008, Alcorn State University was given its own postal designation, Alcorn State, Mississippi.