



## 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 Landmarks of American History and Culture guidelines at

<https://www.neh.gov/grants/education/landmarks-american-history-and-culture-workshops-school-teachers>

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:	The Most Southern Place on Earth: Music, History, and Culture of the Mississippi Delta
Institution:	Delta State University
Project Director:	Rolando Herts
Grant Program:	Landmarks of American Culture and History Workshops

## **Intellectual content and significance**

“The Most Southern Place on Earth: Music, History, and Culture of the Mississippi Delta” is proposed by The Delta Center for Culture and Learning at Delta State University (DSU) as a NEH Summer Landmarks of American History and Culture program comprising two six-day experiential learning workshops for K-12 teachers occurring in June and July 2019.

The philosopher Edward S. Casey has written extensively about the ways in which *place* is represented, particularly in painted landscapes, photographs and maps. Among his arguments is the contention that truly successful representation of place requires that the artist move from simply drawing the physical identity (called topographic representation) to a more sublime “topopoetic” representation, capturing the emotional poetry of the place.

Topopoetic reading and understanding of place is a primary philosophical underpinning of “The Most Southern Place on Earth” workshop. Through six days of experiential, place-based learning, workshop participants will be transformed intellectually, taking with them a deeper, more critical appreciation of the Mississippi Delta, equipping them to more effectively educate others about the history and culture of the region through teaching, research, and engagement.

The Mississippi Delta is a culturally significant American landscape of great emotional poetry, so significant that it was designated a National Heritage Area by Congress in 2009. Indeed, the Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area’s federal partner, the National Park Service, has written: “Much of what is profoundly American – what people love about America – has come from the Delta, which is often called ‘the cradle of American culture.’” (*Stories of the Delta*, NPS Lower Mississippi Delta Symposium, 1996)

The Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area’s five cultural heritage themes provide an intellectual and experiential framework for “The Most Southern” workshop. These themes are interrelated parts of an integrated whole, like overlapping patches in a carefully sewn quilt. The broad themes that will be threaded together over the six-day workshop are: (1) “The Mississippi River and

the Land It Embraces”; (2) “The Culture of the Blues and the Birth of An American Sound”; (3) “Moving Toward Freedom: Changing America's Character in the Struggle for Rights”; (4) “Growing More than Cotton: The Delta as a Wellspring of Creativity”; and (5) “The Delta Divide: Creating the Delta's Diverse Communities.”

The history and culture of the Mississippi Delta is best explored in the Mississippi Delta. The broad cultural heritage themes that provide an intellectual and experiential framework for the workshop are fundamental yet fluid like the Mighty River that created and shaped the Delta. There is a creation element here that hearkens to an expression of faith that has shaped the culture of this place: six days of work and a seventh day of rest. The six-day timeframe, thus, is significant, authentic, and, appropriate toward understanding the history and culture of the Mississippi Delta. Indeed, here the poetry of place can be heard, touched, felt, smelled, and tasted through the voices and music of the people, the Mississippi River and its rich soils, cotton plants, and soul food. At the same time, exploration of the Delta’s history and culture provides insight into America’s stories, a shared heritage that can be examined by and integrated into various humanities and humanistic social science disciplines anywhere in the country including literature, music, art, history, geography, and regional studies. Furthermore, the approaches used to explore the Delta’s heritage can be used anywhere. Every place has its own topopoetry and its own stories that can engage learners with their own cultural landscape, making the Delta a case study that reveals ways of learning about place that can be applied broadly and benefit teachers and students anywhere.

### **Relevance and applicability for K-12 curricula**

Summer 2018 will mark the ninth year that the “Most Southern” program has been offered by The Delta Center. Numerous testimonials from past participants clearly indicate this program’s relevance and applicability for K-12 curricula. In November 2017, we received this testimonial from a summer 2017 workshop participant:

I wanted to share the impact that the [workshop] has already had on my classroom. While there [in Mississippi], I had a conversation with Wheeler Parker and we realized how close he lives to my school in the Chicago suburbs. I followed up with him this fall and designed a civil rights "surprise" field trip for my students. The students went to Emmett Till's grave site then returned to school where, to their surprise, Wheeler was waiting to tell his story to them. The kids were blown away. Kids who have been complacent in my class asked great questions and went up afterwards to greet him and take photos with him. It was fantastic. It was only possible because of your [workshop].

In addition to connecting K-12 educators with primary sources that effectively engage their students, the "Most Southern" program also has inspired participants to incorporate place-based experiential learning in their teaching methods. Several have created units focused on Blues and civil rights; have incorporated storytelling based on "Most Southern" experiences; and have used material culture to "bring to life" various "Most Southern" topics and themes with the ultimate goal of preparing their students to live in increasingly diverse global communities, as well as to think and act critically regarding pressing local issues rooted in poverty, marginalization, privilege, and even violence (e.g., 2017 evaluations #24284, #24793, #24802, #25043, #25097). By taking K-12 educators through a transformative experiential learning process, "Most Southern" workshops equip participants to educate their students critically, humanistically, and holistically.

### **Program of study**

We propose two place-based, experiential learning workshops, each for 36 K-12 educators, in the region that historian James Cobb describes as "the most Southern place on earth," the Mississippi Delta. We will use an interdisciplinary approach framed by the five cultural heritage themes described above as we probe issues and forces that shaped the Delta and our nation.

Each day we will explore one or two themes or subthemes, connecting them as a proverbial quilt that interprets Mississippi Delta history and culture. Participants will integrate the themes they

explore into narratives that tell the Delta's story and capture poetry of place, which they will be challenged to distill into lesson plans that they will use with their students toward fostering greater understanding of the Mississippi Delta's significance to American history and culture. Participants also will learn how to read place as text and how to weave the themes together. We believe an interdisciplinary, place-based experiential learning approach can be used anywhere as an effective strategy to analyze and understand American stories. These are lessons that participants will take back to their own schools and districts, empowering themselves and other educators to engage students in learning through their own places.

The first workshop will run **Sunday, June 16 through Saturday, June 22, 2019** and the second workshop will run **Sunday, July 7 through Saturday, July 13, 2019**. Participants will be given a list of **core readings** prior to the workshop to acquaint themselves with some of the issues that will arise during the week and aid in discussions. Core readings include brief essays that provide a collective, integrated overview of the Mississippi Delta's history and culture, as well as books that provide in depth analyses of the region's history and culture. These readings connect with the workshops' daily themes and subthemes. **The core readings list is in Appendix 2.**

Each day will consist of classroom lectures and experiential learning fieldtrips. **Visiting faculty** will engage participants in discussions in both classroom and fieldtrip settings based on their areas of expertise. **Discussions** will be driven by **questions** derived from daily themes that align with faculty expertise and aspects of the core readings. Fieldtrips will take participants throughout the region so that participants can engage with significant people and places. Our chartered coach bus will be a "mobile classroom" with video and audio capabilities, and travel time will be filled with discussions, presentations, videos, and songs relevant to the topics being explored. Discussions facilitated by workshop co-directors will focus primarily on orientation, synthesis, and reflection, some of which will be captured in documentary film shorts that participants can use as they develop their lesson plans. **Participants will contribute to the intellectual life** of the workshop by participating in the film shorts,

sharing daily reflections and ideas about how they will use what they have learned from their experiences and each other in developing their lesson plans. With permission, the documentary film shorts will be posted daily on the workshop website, making their reflections and ideas accessible to fellow participants, colleagues, students, and NEH staff (see videos from the 2017 “Most Southern” Landmarks workshop at <http://deltacenterdsu.com/photos-portfolios-and-videos>). **For a partial list of discussion questions, see the day-to-day syllabus in Appendix 1.**

While each day corresponds to core readings, we also will present a song, a text, and a food item that will tie into a day’s theme, lectures, and discussions. These items will be “Delta icons,” tangible artifacts that provide memorable experiential insights into abstract and often complex themes. We believe after the participants leave, whenever they hear that song, re-read that text, or eat that food item, they will be reminded of what they learned that day in the Mississippi Delta. Likewise, whenever they think about the Mississippi River or the Great Migration, for example, they will think about the icons we presented. Indeed, the strongest memories are those with many connections, and Delta icons will help the participants’ memories of the day’s lesson stay with them long after they have left the Delta and returned to their classrooms. **The significance of each icon is described in the day-to-day syllabus in Appendix 1.**

**Day 1 – Monday: “Created, Sustained and Destroyed by the River: The History of the Delta”**

Song: “When the Levee Breaks” by Memphis Minnie. Text: “Down by the Riverside” by Richard Wright. Food: Fried catfish. Facilitators: Dr. Rolando Herts and Ms. Lee Aylward. We will begin with an introduction to the workshop and an overview of the week. Participants will discuss what they know and what preconceptions they have about the Delta. Dr. Herts will challenge participants to attempt to develop a topopoetic understanding of the Mississippi Delta by appreciating multiple, intersectional perspectives and identities that have shaped the culture and history of the region. Ms. Aylward will give an overview of the Delta’s history and discuss how the Mississippi River has physically shaped the Delta and affected its people. She also will discuss how the River continues to affect the lives of people

today. Participants will learn about and discuss the importance of place and how it can be used when teaching the humanities as exemplified by core readings *The Most Southern Place on Earth* and *This Delta, This Land*.

We will view the documentary *LaLee's Kin: the Legacy of Cotton* and meet with Reggie Barnes, the now-retired school superintendent who appears prominently in this film. We will then take the bus to the spot where the levee broke in 1927, unleashing the Mississippi River, destroying the Delta, and creating the greatest natural disaster in American history at that date, as detailed in core readings *Rising Tide* and *Deep 'n As It Come*. In the mobile classroom, participants will watch *Fatal Flood*, an American Experience documentary film about the Great Flood of 1927. After a working dinner featuring fried catfish, we will return to DSU to prepare for the next day.

**Day 2 – Tuesday: “Immigrant Stories”** Song: “Sail Away” by Randy Newman, sung by Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee; Text: Supreme Court decision GONG LUM v. RICE, 275 U.S. 78 (1927); Food: Delta Chinese; Visiting Faculty: Dr. Charles Reagan Wilson. We will learn about the people that flooded into the Delta after the River was tamed. Although widely viewed in terms of stark black and white, the Delta is historically a land rich in racial and ethnic diversity. Many groups of people have made the Delta home, including Chinese grocers, Lebanese hardware store owners, Russian Jewish shop keepers, and Italian farmers, among others. As revealed in core reading *Forgotten Time: The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta after the Civil War*, many people are surprised to learn that in 1880, fully two thirds of all merchants in the Delta were foreign born. Religion is generally the part of life most resistant to assimilation, so it is an ideal lens for examining the culture of immigrant groups. We will travel to Greenville to learn about immigrant life (and death) in the Delta by visiting their churches and cemeteries. The drive will include a screening of the documentary “Delta Jews,” which traces the history of Delta Jewry and also reveals widespread opposition to the Civil Rights Movement. We will learn about the Chinese community in the Delta and tour the Chinese cemetery with Cathy Wong, a third generation Delta-Chinese. We will tour the Hebrew Union Temple and its museum and listen to

Benji Nelkin tell the history of his congregation. Participants also will see the Greenville (i.e., “white”) cemetery and the neighboring black and Jewish cemeteries. We will taste fortune cookies and Kim’s pork skins, cooked in woks by a Delta-Chinese family business.

Dr. Charles Reagan Wilson will lecture and lead a discussion about the religious heritage of the Delta. He will describe the common Christian and non-Christian sects, discuss the origin of the Church of God in Christ, an African American Christian denomination founded in the Delta, and explore contrasts between the sacred and secular as illustrated by the pastor and the Bluesman. The workshop will reconvene to hear local Blues entertainer Bill Abel who will discuss and illustrate the evolution of the Blues from field hollers to rock, using his homemade diddley bows and guitars.

### **Day 3 – Wednesday: “The Blues: American Roots Music and the Culture that Produced It”**

Song: “Crossroad Blues” by Robert Johnson; Text: “The Weary Blues” by Langston Hughes;

Food: Hot tamales; Visiting Faculty: Dr. David Evans. The Delta is the birthplace of the Blues, arguably America’s first art form. We will tour the Delta, revisiting harsh social conditions discussed on Monday and learning first-hand how place influenced the music produced in the Delta. We also will compare and contrast the immigrant Delta experience with the African-American Delta experience. This exploration will be facilitated by Ms. Aylward, Dr. Herts, and Dr. Edgar Smith, an African American who grew up in a juke joint community and ultimately became the Provost of the University of Massachusetts system. Sites visited will include Dockery Farms, the plantation widely viewed as the “Birthplace of the Blues” because Charley Patton, the father of the Delta Blues, grew up there. We also will visit the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center. In the mobile classroom, we will listen to a collection of Blues songs that will show how the sound developed and matured over the years, and there will be discussions regarding why.

Dr. Evans will describe the origin and evolution of the Blues as the ancestor of rock ‘n’ roll, R&B, and other genres. Participants will discuss what exactly the Blues is, why it originated in the Delta, how place and the Blues have come to affect and represent each other. Participants also will



discuss the cultural milieu of contrasts between rich and poor, powerful and powerless, literate and illiterate that produced the Blues. Dr. Evans will lead a discussion session and illustrate these concepts through performance. We will conclude the day with an “open mic” event designed to allow everyone an opportunity to reflect on their experiences.

**Day 4 – Thursday: “The Emmett Till Story: a Case Study in Oppression, Revolution, and**

**Reconciliation”** Song: “The Death of Emmett Till” by Bob Dylan Text: Confession of J.W. Milam and Roy Bryant in *Look* magazine, “The Shocking Story of Approved Killing in Mississippi.” Food: Kool-Aid pickles; Visiting Faculty: Charles McLaurin. We will use the Emmett Till story as a case study to explore how those same social conditions sometimes led to terror and violence. Charles McLaurin will speak to the group about his involvement in the Civil Rights Movement via the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and close friendship with voting rights activist, Mrs. Fanny Lou Hamer. He will give a first-hand account of what Mississippi was like at the time of the Till murder, thus bringing to life our traveling exhibit on the lynching of fourteen year old Emmett Till.

We will visit the courthouse in Sumner where the trial of Till’s murderers was held in 1955 as detailed in core reading *The Blood of Emmett Till*. We will sit in the courtroom and listen to a panel of presenters who have special knowledge of the trial and/or its aftermath. We will invite Wheeler Parker, Till’s relative who witnessed his abduction; members of the community who are familiar with the Till case and/or were active in local reconciliation efforts; and two FBI agents who were assigned to opening the case in 2004. We will tour the “Emmett Till Trail” with stops at the Emmett Till Intrepid Center in Glendora and the spot where Till’s body was pulled from the Tallahatchie River. We will end the tour at the Bryant store in Money, where Till was accused of assaulting 21-year-old Carolyn Bryant, precipitating the events leading to his lynching. While on the bus, workshop participants will view and discuss a documentary about the Emmett Till case and listen to music and poetry written about his murder and legacy.

**Day 5 – Friday: “The Civil Rights Movement and the Music it Produced”** Song: “Fried Green Tomatoes” by Booker T and the MG’s; Text: 1963 letter from the Reverend James Bevel “to the white citizens of Cleveland, Mississippi”; Food: “Soul” food; Facilitators: Dr. Rolando Herts and Ms. Lee Aylward. The Emmett Till case is widely seen as “the spark that lit the fuse” of the modern Civil Rights Movement. Soon after the Till murder, Rosa Parks said that she refused to give up her bus seat because she remembered Emmett Till. Facilitators will frame participants’ understanding of the Delta’s role in the Civil Rights Movement and the Delta-influenced music that fueled the Movement. We will travel to Memphis to tour key museums that interpret these connections in powerful, multifaceted ways. In the mobile classroom, we will screen the documentary “Goin’ to Chicago” which tells personal stories about sharecropping and hopes for freedom via the Great Migration. We will tour the Cotton Museum and the Stax Museum of American Soul Music, both of which set the stage for the National Civil Rights Museum, where we will see how the fight for equality in the Delta played out alongside the national struggle. Located across the street from the National Civil Rights Museum is the Blues Hall of Fame Museum which houses exhibits featuring Blues musicians from the Delta. The last stop of the day will be in the lobby of the Peabody Hotel, where we will experience the opulence that the Delta’s cotton economy produced for a few.

**Day 6 – Saturday: “The Delta in Diaspora”** Song: “Sweet Home Chicago” by Robert Johnson; Text: Articles from, and letters to, the *Chicago Defender*; Food: Fried chicken and pound cake; Visiting Faculty: Dr. John Strait. Participants will learn about the Great Migration, the largest peace time movement of people in American history. As millions of African-Americans (and other ethnicities) from all across the South moved north, they took with them their music, literature, family structure, customs, and food. Participants will learn how the Great Migration spread the Delta’s influence across the country, creating the Delta Diaspora that we have today. As African-Americans traveled north on Highway 61 or on the Illinois Central, they carried Blues music with them, which created jazz, soul, and rock and roll. Migrants carried their foodways and lifestyles, which also changed during the migration.

They transformed parts of Chicago, Gary, Ypsilanti, Detroit, Oakland, and New York City, among other places. The focus of the day will be dispersal of people and culture, which also provides an opportunity to review issues of music, food, civil rights, religion and other aspects of cultural heritage, making it an ideal topic to end the week and achieve a synthesis of our themes and subthemes. The session will provide an opportunity to compare and contrast Delta heritage with the participants' own places.

We will end the workshop with "Make your own mojo." Ms. Aylward will describe the use of mojos as power objects, tracing their West African origins into the Delta and using Blues songs and references. She will explain that participants will make mojos that give them power over their own memory and reveal that we have been (unbeknownst to participants) collecting historically and culturally significant objects at each stop on our trip and from each presentation during the week. These objects will include bits of brick from the Money store, sand from sandbags used in the Great Flood, cotton seeds, Mississippi River water, and pieces of 1960 voter registration forms. Participants will place these objects in a small pouch (the mojo) and then write the contents on a label. When they are asked what is in the mojo, they can relate all the heritage stories they have learned during the week. After relating them several times, they will have mastered the memory of this place called the Mississippi Delta. Participants will turn in their lesson plans, reflections or other deliverables at the end of the workshop. All lesson plans will be posted at <http://deltacenterdsu.com/lesson-plans-1>. Detailed portfolios, photos, and documentary videos for each workshop also will be posted at <http://deltacenterdsu.com/photos-portfolios-and-videos>.

Upon completion of the workshop, participants will all be awarded certificates of completion that specify the number of contact hours. **DSU will award five graduate credit hours without charge** (other than minimal application and student fees) to those who enroll at DSU in an expedited admissions process. **Continuing Education Units (CEUs) also will be available** for a small fee. Participants can request official transcripts from DSU's Registrar.

### **Project team and participation**

The Delta Center is proud to have offered “Most Southern” workshops for nine years. Co-directors have fine-tuned the workshops incrementally and strategically based on prior experience, as well as collaborative reviews of participant evaluations. Changes have included providing more free time for reflection and informal group discussions among workshop participants.

**Rolando Herts, PhD:** Director, The Delta Center. Dr. Herts is a scholar-practitioner with interdisciplinary academic and applied expertise in regional heritage development, community-based tourism planning and development, and place marketing/promotion. Through Teach For America Mississippi Delta, he taught second grade at Carver Elementary School in Indianola, MS (the adopted hometown of BB King). He also is a 2017 participant in the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture’s Interpretation Workshop.

**Lee Aylward, MA:** Program Associate for Education and Community Outreach, The Delta Center. Ms. Aylward has served as lead interpreter and organizer for previous NEH “Most Southern” Landmarks workshops and various experiential learning workshops hosted by The Delta Center. Ms. Aylward is an adjunct faculty member in the DSU College of Education where she teaches reading. She also is a former K-12 librarian and has taught GED preparation classes.

**Shelia Winters, MBA:** Program Associate for Projects, The Delta Center. Ms. Winters has over 30 years of higher education experience primarily in program and budget management, including coordination of Educational Talent Search, a K-12 college readiness and GED preparation program based at Coahoma Community College, Clarksdale, MS.

**Reggie Barnes.** During the workshop screening of documentary film “Lalee’s Kin: the Legacy of Cotton,” which depicts struggles caused by poverty in Tallahatchie County, MS, Reggie Barnes will speak about his tenure serving as Superintendent of the West Tallahatchie School District. He subsequently became the Superintendent of Bolivar County schools in Mississippi, and today manages his own school administration consulting business. His expertise in cultural competency, diversity,

parental involvement, and managing underresourced school districts will provide workshop participants valuable tools for addressing similar issues in their school communities.

**David Evans, PhD:** Professor Emeritus of Music, The University of Memphis. Acknowledged worldwide as a leading ethnomusicologist, Dr. Evans is the author of nearly 100 published articles about African-American folk music and folklore, as well as several books including *The NPR Curious Listener's Guide to the Blues*, *Big Road Blues*, and *"The Coon in the Box": A Global Folktale in African-American Tradition*. Dr. Evans also is a GRAMMY Award-winning Blues musician, having performed vocal and guitar at numerous Blues and folk festivals and concerts throughout the world.

**John B. Strait, PhD:** Professor of Geography at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, TX; Dr. Strait's academic interests include race/ethnicity, residential segregation, and poverty. His expertise on the Great Migration and the Mississippi Delta's geographic and cultural diaspora will equip workshop participants with lessons to share in their classrooms. Over the past decade, Dr. Strait has organized field research opportunities in the Mississippi Delta for several college classes.

**Charles Reagan Wilson, PhD:** Formerly the Kelly Gene Cook Sr., Chair of History and Professor of Southern Studies at the University of Mississippi, Dr. Wilson has written and presented extensively on the South and Southern culture. He has been a faculty member with previous "Most Southern Place on Earth" workshops.

**Edgar Smith, PhD:** Dr. Smith grew up in the "Blue Front" juke joint district of Hollandale, MS, in the heart of the Delta. He says the "Blues lulled him to sleep at night." He became a distinguished biochemist and ultimately the Provost of the University of Massachusetts system. He is a member of the Mississippi Blues Commission, and a board member of the B. B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center. He speaks passionately to K-12 educators about heritage as a community development tool.

**Charles McLaurin:** McLaurin speaks regularly to visiting and local K-12 and college student groups. He was inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King to join SNCC in 1961 and was involved in the effort to

register Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer to vote, eventually going on to serve as her campaign manager during her congressional bid in 1963. McLaurin was arrested 30 times for his efforts to register black voters in Sunflower County. He was a delegate for the Mississippi Democratic Freedom Party at the Democratic Convention in Atlantic City in 1964, and the COFO (Congress of Federated Organizations) director of Freedom Summer operations in Sunflower County, MS.

**Robertson Scholars:** Robertson Scholars are high achieving students from Duke University and the University of North Carolina. At the end of their freshman year, they engage in service learning projects, and each summer, two Scholars volunteer to work in The Delta Center. As part of this voluntary service learning commitment, they will act as documentarians, photographing and filming workshop activities and interviewing participants about their learning experiences. They will prepare detailed portfolios for each workshop and publish photos and documentary videos on the “Most Southern” workshop website and social media platforms like Facebook.

### **Audience**

All NEH guidelines for eligibility and selection criteria will be followed. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by a selection committee convened by the co-directors with guidance from NEH. Committee members will read and score all applications independently using the following formula: a maximum of 2 points for the resume, with more points given to those with evidence of extra activities or awards; a maximum of 2 points given for the current position, with more points given to those teaching over 100 children in the past year and/or teaching classes that might directly benefit from this workshop; a maximum of 6 points given for the letter/essay, with more points given based on the reviewer’s evaluation of what the applicant would bring to the workshop, how they would use what they took away from the workshop, and the appropriateness of their own teaching responsibilities. Toward giving special consideration to first-time Landmarks participants, committee members will give an extra point to such applicants. An addition point will be given to applicants from underserved areas identified by NEH. The sum of these scores gives a maximum possible score of 12 per reviewer. Final scores for

each applicant will be totaled based on the sum of scores given by each reviewer. Highest scoring applicants will be offered workshop positions.

### **Publicity and project website**

The “Most Southern” workshop website is located at <http://deltacenterdsu.com/mostsouthern/>. It includes links to application and eligibility requirements, a Dear Colleague letter, a daily itinerary, travel issues, housing, reading assignments, etc. The website also includes portfolios, documentary videos, and participant lesson plans. The site is a page within the Delta Center’s website at <http://deltacenterdsu.com>.

The workshops will be publicized through Facebook and other social media channels (e.g., MS Delta National Heritage Area; Scholarships, Grants and Summer Institutes for Teachers). “Most Southern” has an active alumni network of over 500 K-12 educators who help to publicize the workshops through their professional networks, including the National Council for the Social Studies. Workshop information also will be sent to local school districts and national teacher and school administrator organizations.

### **Institutional context**

The Delta Center for Culture and Learning is an award-winning, interdisciplinary Center for Excellence at DSU in Cleveland, MS. The Delta Center directs humanities and humanistic social sciences toward fulfilling its mission: to promote greater understanding of the history and culture of the Mississippi Delta and its significance to the world through education, partnerships, and community engagement. The Delta Center is the management entity for the Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area, a partnership with the National Park Service, and has distinguished record of providing experiential learning programs for educators, students, and visitors from throughout the world. In addition to presenting 16 iterations of the “Most Southern” Landmarks workshop with NEH support, The Delta Center has presented “The Three R’s of the Delta: Rivers, Rails, and Roadways,” a two-week geography workshop for up to 40 K-12 teachers, funded by the National Geographic Society and the

Mississippi Geographic Alliance, and “From the Birthplace of America’s Music: The Music and Musicians of Mississippi,” a week-long workshop for 20 K-12 Mississippi teachers funded through the Mississippi Humanities Council by NEH.

In acknowledgement of its commitment to diverse community engagement through cultural heritage education and development, The Delta Center received the Georgene Clark Diversity Champion Award in 2016. The Delta Center also recently received the prestigious National Park Service Centennial Award for creating the Delta Jewels Oral History Partnership, a cultural heritage interpretation project that has engaged over 1,000 residents and visitors in celebrating the lives of unsung African American church mothers from the Mississippi Delta.

Founded in 1924, DSU is one of eight public institutions of higher learning in Mississippi. With a full-time enrollment of about 3,300 students, the school is a regional university in the heart of the Mississippi Delta. With black and white student enrollment each at almost 50% each, DSU is among the most integrated institutions in Mississippi’s public higher education system. The campus is compact and all facilities are within walking distance of each other. Participants will receive DSU identification cards that will allow them full access to campus facilities, including computer labs and the library, which contains curriculum materials and other educational resources. The workshop will be held on-campus in a dedicated classroom equipped with AV facilities and wireless communications. DSU dorms are inexpensive and functional. All facilities are handicapped accessible and parking is available free of charge. There are several national chain hotels located within 1-3 miles of Delta State. We negotiate a reduced rate for participants up to \$125/night. Cleveland also has a diverse range of dining options.