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Towards a More Equitable Field Broadening the Landscape with Fellowships in Audiovisual Preservation --Manuscript Draft--

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Towards a More Equitable Field: Broadening the Landscape with Fellowships in

Audiovisual Preservation

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Moriah Ulinskas is an audiovisual archivist, PhD candidate in Public History at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and a founding member of the Community Archiving Workshop- a collective of film and video archivists who work to help communities maintain intellectual control over their legacy recordings. From 2011 to 2017 she served as Diversity Chair for the Association of Moving Image Archivists and was the Preservation Program Director at the Bay Area Video Coalition from 2011 to 2014. In her role at BAVC, she oversaw the development of the first release of QCTOOLS, open source software for audiovisual preservationists, and established the NEA funded Preservation Access Program. She is a contributor to the recently published *Citizen Internees: A Second Look at Race and Citizenship in Japanese American Internment Camps* has published articles in *KULA: Knowledge Creation, Dissemination, and Preservation Studies* and *Places Journal*.

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Members of the AMIA Continuing Education Advisory Task Force

Members of the AMIA Advocacy Committee of the Board

The original Public Broadcasting Preservation Fellowship hosts, partners, and Fellows

[\(https://pbpf.americanarchive.org/past-partners/\)](https://pbpf.americanarchive.org/past-partners/)

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The cost of a master's degree, the clumping of AV focused master's programs and jobs on the East and West Coasts, and the limited opportunities for education contribute to structural inequalities making it difficult for a diverse array of new professionals to enter into the field of audiovisual archiving. This article provides an overview of the Public Broadcasting Preservation Fellowship program, which seeks to lower some barriers to entry to the audiovisual archiving field. It concludes with information about additional forthcoming research and programs being led by the Association of Moving Image Archivists and the National Film Preservation Board.

Keywords: equity and inclusion; fellowship programs, paid internships, audiovisual preservation; audiovisual archivist

Introduction

The field of audiovisual archiving is researching ways of making the community of practitioners caretaking audiovisual heritage much more reflective of the makeup of society. The prohibitive cost of a master's degree, the clumping of AV focused master's programs and jobs on the East and West Coasts of the United States, and the lack of inclusive recruitment and limited opportunities for education and training in audiovisual preservation are some factors that contribute to structural inequalities, making it difficult for a diverse array of new professionals to enter and advance in careers within the field.

The Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) Education Committee website currently only lists three U.S. graduate programs that provide the opportunity to specialize in audiovisual preservation¹: NYU's Moving Image Archiving and Preservation degree program², a two-year program focusing on the preservation of physical and digital audiovisual media which costs approximately \$30,000 per semester³; the UCLA Master of Library and Information Science program with a specialization in Media Archival Studies⁴, which costs \$32,374 annually for non-California residents (half that for California residents)⁵; and The University of Rochester

Masters in Film and Media preservation, which combines a one-year film preservation and restoration program with one year of study in film and media theory, and costs approximately \$45,000 per year.⁶ Although these programs offer exceptional methods to gain skills and industry contacts in the field of audiovisual preservation, the barriers to entry are high, and few other structured opportunities exist for students to gain a foothold in the profession through internships and mentorships. Furthermore, a syllabus analysis of accredited Library and Information Science (LIS) programs conducted in 2017 found that across 45 archives-focused graduate programs, only 11 offered courses in the preservation of audiovisual materials. Most of these courses were taught within LIS programs in the U.S. Northeast and Midwest.⁷

As of 2019, the field of audiovisual archiving has for the first time begun to gather qualitative and quantitative information about the make-up of the workforce and the structural issues that have and continue to create undue barriers for professionals who want to join or advance in the field. A recent report commissioned by the National Film Preservation Board (NFPB) and presented at the AMIA conference in fall of 2019, the AMIA/NFPB “Sustaining the Profession: Continuing Education, Professional Advocacy, and Equity” (CEA) presentation found that although 70% of the audiovisual archives workforce had a master’s degree, the majority of surveyed participants “felt very strongly that the single path of obtaining a Master’s degree can be a significant financial burden, and alternatives are needed.”⁸ Additionally, an AMIA CEA Task Force report presented at the same conference found that cost and geographic location were high barriers to entry into the field, and there was a strong need for regional, low-cost training.⁹

The Public Broadcasting Preservation Fellowship (PBPF) program in audiovisual preservation presents new opportunities for lowering the barrier of entry and advancement for

people that need financial support, hands-on skills, soft skills and mentorship to pursue a goal of working with audiovisual materials. The PBPF model began as a program led by WGBH Educational Foundation on behalf of the American Archive of Public Broadcasting (AAPB) and funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) that placed current Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) students in audiovisual preservation fellowships at public media stations across the United States. The program model has since been adapted as a collaboration between the AAPB and the University of Alabama (Alabama) School of Library and Information Studies (SLIS) to provide graduate-level education and direct professional training in the field of audiovisual archives. In elaborating this project, this essay will first provide a background on the AAPB and the first iteration of the Public Broadcasting Preservation Fellowship. Then, the authors introduce the University of Alabama's new EBSCO scholarship program, which is funding fellowships at public broadcasting stations, in collaboration with the AAPB. The essay concludes with a short discussion on the emerging impacts and continued realization of the NFPB study on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the field of audiovisual archiving, which has inspired approaches and methodologies taken by University of Alabama as well as led to the development of a new AMIA Diversity and Inclusion Fellowship program.

AAPB Public Broadcasting Preservation Fellowship

The AAPB launched the first iteration of the PBPF in 2017 with funding from the IMLS. The program's initial goal was to address existing public media's preservation challenges by bringing more people into the field with direct training and investment in the digitization of legacy public radio and television content. This section provides a background on the AAPB and reports on the initial PBPF pilot program led by the AAPB.

AAPB Background

The AAPB was instituted in 2013 by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) as a collaboration between the Library of Congress and WGBH with a mission to coordinate a national effort to preserve significant historical content created by public television and radio and provide a centralized web portal for access to the unique programming aired by public stations over the past 70+ years.¹⁰ To date, the AAPB has digitized and preserved more than 110,000 historic public media programs and original materials contributed by more than 130 public television and radio stations, producers and archives. The entire collection is accessible on location at the Library of Congress and WGBH, and more than 53,000 of these materials are available online within the United States for research, educational and informational purposes at <http://americanarchive.org>.

At this time, only a small fraction of public media material has been digitized and preserved. After the Library of Congress and WGBH were selected by CPB as the permanent stewards of the AAPB collection, the team developed a Collection Development Plan with the goal of growing the collection by up to 25,000 hours of additional material each year. Two of the priorities for collection growth included 1) material produced by stations in states that were not currently represented in the AAPB, and 2) material produced by organizations that document underrepresented and historically marginalized communities. For example, since then the team has made efforts to grow the archive with collections contributed by stations in states such as New Mexico, Kansas, Oklahoma, Georgia, and Alabama (which in 2013 were not represented within the collection), as well as organizations such as Vision Maker Media (which “empowers and engages Native People to share their stories”), Radio Bilingüe, and the Center for Asian American Media, in order to preserve and make accessible the stories and voices of underrepresented communities within the public media landscape.

The AAPB has worked with organizations in targeted states and communities to obtain grant funding to digitize collections, but additional methods are needed in order to preserve as much material from as many stations and communities as possible. Many public media stations have kept their legacy material over the years, but these collections are often not actively managed, documented, organized, or used, due to lack of resources (staffing and funding). One possibility that the AAPB team identified for developing collaborative preservation initiatives in local communities was to connect stations with LIS programs in their region by offering paid fellowships to students in those programs. While most LIS programs do not have a focused audiovisual curriculum, many LIS programs do provide training in archives, digital preservation, and digital curation. At the same time, AAPB staff have expertise in analog media preservation and digitization. By developing relationships between the AAPB, LIS programs and public media stations in geographic proximity to those LIS programs, the team saw an opportunity for these partners to fill needed gaps for each other. Thus, the team conceived the PBPF.

Development of the PBPF Pilot

The PBPF is designed to provide students enrolled in non-specialized LIS graduate programs with hands-on experience in audiovisual preservation through public media digitization projects. Through this model, public media stations can connect participating Fellows to real-world materials desperately in need of care, providing them with both the opportunity to actively contribute to the preservation of these important collections and the institutional knowledge to contextualize their value. The stations benefit by having paid fellows dedicate needed time and energy to preserving their unique and historically significant programming, while the students benefit by gaining hands-on training in cataloging, digitization, and digital media management. The LIS programs provide the infrastructure needed to support the fellows as well as space for

purchased digitization equipment, and they benefit through connecting with experts in AV preservation and gaining opportunities to build AV into future curricula through the knowledge gained and equipment purchased through the program. And finally, the AAPB provides a home for preserving the digitized collections, as well as training and mentorship to the students and faculty, and the AAPB benefits by receiving preservation copies of the media digitized by the fellows to fill important gaps in its collection.

The PBPF pilot project supported ten Fellowships through the spring and summer semesters of 2018. During the course of this project, WGBH partnered with LIS programs at five universities, including the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; the University of Missouri; the University of Oklahoma, San Jose State University; and Clayton State University.¹¹ Two students at each university – one for the spring semester, and one for the summer -- were funded to undertake the Fellowships, completing 224 hours of work at a rate of \$23/hour. (The exception was San Jose State University, where the same Fellow continued her work through both the spring and summer semesters; this Fellow's experience formed the basis of a plan to extend the Fellowships through two semesters in later rounds.) The funding rate was calibrated to increase accessibility to the Fellowships for students who might not be able to accept an unpaid or poorly-paid internship, as well as to demonstrate respect for the skilled and challenging nature of the work being completed. The design of the fellowship sought to provide students with hands-on experience in all areas of audiovisual preservation, from inventorying and assessment to digitization, digital preservation and public access.

PBPF Curriculum Design

Each Fellow in the first semester of the project was responsible for 1) inventorying and assessing magnetic tapes for digital preservation; 2) digitizing a targeted selection of tapes (30-

60); 3) creating detailed catalog records for the digitized material; 4) collaborating with AAPB archivists to implement the AAPB workflow for submission of the digitized materials into the AAPB for digital preservation, including creating proxies, generating preservation and technical metadata, and ingesting metadata into the AAPB's online system; 5) researching the significance of the collection and creating a special collection to highlight the materials in the AAPB; 6) writing a blog post about the collection for the station and the AAPB; and 7) documenting their experience with the creation of a 3-5 page handbook and a video tutorial on the use of the equipment for the benefit of future students.¹² For the second semester of the project, the curriculum remained broadly similar, but the summer Fellows were tasked with testing, augmenting and refining the documentation created by the spring Fellows rather than developing their own from scratch.

This curriculum was designed to provide the Fellows with practical experience in a variety of aspects of the audiovisual preservation workflow, including collection assessment, cataloging, digitization of magnetic formats, digital preservation of digitized media, and content curation and public access. In evaluations of existing AV coursework offered in traditional LIS and archives programs, researchers found that written and oral based assignments (rather than hands-on practicums) dominated the coursework, while readings primarily focused on motion picture film (the least prevalent form of audiovisual material in contemporary archives).¹³ The authors of the report concluded that a need for educational opportunities for regions where AV archiving courses are not taught is evident, and that programs should “include learning objectives that address social, economic, and political dimensions of AV archiving.” The PBPF curriculum aimed to fill this gap in existing course offerings by giving the Fellows the opportunity to handle

at-risk materials, in a variety of common magnetic and digital formats, in working professional environments around the country.

The secondary goal of the curriculum as designed was to provide participating universities with more resources to support training and education in audiovisual preservation going forward. Each University was required to identify a faculty member to act as an advisor to the Fellows and primary contact for the program. The Universities were also responsible for setting up the digitization station that the Fellows were required to use and document over the course of the project. The goal was that after the Faculty Advisors supported the Fellows in their semester-long projects, they would subsequently be able to incorporate the equipment and the documentation generated by the two sets of Fellows into ongoing coursework at the University, so that future students interested in learning about audiovisual preservation could benefit from the resources generated by the project.

The public broadcasting organizations that served as host organizations for the project – WUNC Radio, Oklahoma Educational Television Authority, KOPN Radio, the Center for Asian American Media, and Georgia Public Broadcasting – were also required to designate a staff member to support the Fellows, generally referred to as the host mentor. The host mentor was responsible for getting the Fellows situated at the station, identifying material for preservation, and providing information about the station's history and legacy that would help the Fellows accurately catalog the material they were digitizing over the course of the project.

To complete the support team for each Fellow, each host site also had an associated Local Mentor, an experienced audiovisual archivist within close-enough geographical proximity to the host station to provide on-site assistance to the Fellow if they ran into difficulties with their project. The Local Mentor was also encouraged to set up a site visit with the Fellow at their place

of work so the Fellow could gain more experience with the different setups of active audiovisual archives and increased familiarity with the professional requirements of the field, as well as an opportunity to network with working archivists.

PBPF Implementation Phase

Both the Spring and Summer Fellowships began with a four-day Immersion Week, hosted at WGBH. Analysis of audiovisual education initiatives has found that “a great deal of preservation learning needs to take place in person [...] Having a multi-day workshop is a fairly efficient way to bring together a number of trainers and preservation technologies to students in a short period of time.”¹⁴ The Immersion Week provided the Fellows with an introduction to the skills that they would need to complete their digitization projects and gave them an opportunity to gain a basic comfort level working with legacy equipment and digitization technology. Sessions included background on the history of public media; an overview of the technical characteristics of analog and digital audio and video; training in the fundamentals of PBCore; an introduction to digital preservation in the command line; and intensive workshops in audio and video digitization. Some of the training provided was specific to the challenges of audiovisual media, while other training sessions, such as the command line workshop, were intended to be applicable in a broader array of archival contexts. Much of the information provided during Immersion Week was designed to be reiterated over the course of the project. The intention was that the intensive week of training would provide an initial scaffolding for the skills that the Fellows would later refine and develop through the practical work of the Fellowship.

The secondary goal of Immersion Week was to provide the Fellows with an opportunity to meet in person and develop a cohort mentality before dispersing to their different geographical locations. Towards this end, the Fellows were provided with a Slack channel to use as a point of

communication and collaboration. This goal met with only mixed success; the Slack channel was little-used, and Fellows tended to consult their mentors and AAPB staff with questions about their projects before using each other as resources. Nonetheless, the fact that the Fellows had originally met and spent a week together in person did pave the way for later collaboration on projects such as joint conference presentations.

Faculty Advisors and station staff were also encouraged to attend Immersion Week as schedules allowed. Initially, station mentors were funded through the grant to attend the first Immersion Week of the project, with some Faculty Advisors also attending with the support of their institutions. However, feedback from the first round of Fellows indicated that the Faculty Advisors who had attended Immersion Week were more invested in the project of providing ongoing audiovisual training and capable of supporting the Fellows in their independent research and documentation. As a result, grant funds were later reallocated to allow the remaining Faculty Advisors to attend the second Immersion Week as well. Fellows also appreciated the opportunity to meet their mentors in an informal setting and share the learning experience before diving into the work of the project. An independent evaluation of the project showed that, when the majority of a PBPf 'team' (Fellow, Faculty Advisor, and station mentor) were able to meet at Immersion Week, the opportunity to plan the project and connect outside of the normal work environment improved the experience for the participants overall.¹⁵

After Immersion Week, Fellows dispersed to their stations to begin their digitization projects. Although the Fellows largely worked independently during this phase of the project, AAPB staff hosted a webinar once a month to discuss a professional topic or review information for the Fellows. These webinars also provided an opportunity for the Fellows to check in with AAPB staff and each other about the progress of their projects. Fellows also frequently emailed

AAPB staff with questions about their projects, and AAPB staff occasionally held informal Skype calls or Google hangouts with the Fellows to talk them through technical difficulties.

Results of the PBPF Pilot

Several Fellows had challenges in setting up and operating the legacy equipment required for the digitization stations, and this was overall identified as the most frustrating aspect of the project for the first round of the Fellows. In many cases, the project start was delayed because the equipment purchased for the project turned out to be faulty or inadequate to the task. As a result, the second round of Fellows – who mostly inherited complete digitization stations with documentation created for them by the first round of Fellows -- reported a much higher rate of satisfaction with the project overall than the first round of Fellows, who were faced with a much more challenging technical environment.

However, despite the technical difficulties that they faced, all the Fellows were eventually able to complete their projects and most of them digitized far more than the minimum required 30 tapes – a major achievement for students who had had no experience or training in handling audiovisual media at the beginning of the project. In total, the ten fellows preserved 553 at-risk items, an average of 50 per Fellow. The Project Team worked with the Fellows to develop a poster presentation for the SAA 2018 conference¹⁶ and a panel presentation at the NDSA Digital Preservation 2018 conference;¹⁷ several Fellows also collaborated to submit the poster about the project to both the Oklahoma Chapter of the Association of College and Research Libraries conference and the AMIA conference in November 2018. The work that the Fellows did is highlighted through the Special Collections that they created on the AAPB website.

An independent evaluation concluded that the project “built fellows’ confidence in digital projects [and] ability to meet the wide range of challenges one faces in a digital project.”¹⁸

Fellows reported that seven of the nine participating fellows indicated that they would recommend the PBPF program to other students, and all of the Fellows reported that, following their experience with the Fellowship, they were interested in pursuing careers involving digital audiovisual collections. Furthermore, all participating universities and host stations have expressed a strong interest in continuing the project to develop future Fellowships.

In the year since the first Fellowship concluded, some of the original nine Fellows have pursued positions as full-time audiovisual archivists, while several others have found themselves working in more general archives where they are the only staff member who has experience in handling moving image and sound materials. As one Fellow reported in a recent email, “I use a lot of the information I learned from the Fellowship in my current position, especially the formats and total understanding of what goes into simply ‘digitizing’. My ability to identify AV is sadly unique here, so I am hoping that the Fellowship continues.”¹⁹ Another Fellow has gone on to pursue a Ph.D. in information studies at the same institution where she completed her Fellowship, where she continues to support students in learning how to use the digitization equipment onsite. Some of the institutions that supported Fellows have also reported significant impact from the Fellowship; as one mentor wrote, “As a result of our training I have really taken a new look at our needs and plan to serve many more of them in house [...] My goal is to provide students with the opportunity to learn so we can foster AV preservation far into the future.”²⁰

These results demonstrate that providing students on a general archives track with the opportunity to work with audiovisual materials can create an ongoing impact both for the individual students and the broader field: the students and their mentors leave the program with an increased awareness of the value of this particular skill set, and the ability and desire to advocate for it. The reports shared by participants after the close of the project increased

confidence in the value of introducing audiovisual archives training into broader LIS programs as a way to create opportunities for a pathway into the field.

Following the conclusion of the pilot project, several changes to the model were recommended by participants and an independent evaluator to increase the effectiveness of the program and improve the experience of the participants.²¹ The most important was to ensure that digitization equipment was set up and tested before the beginning of the project, so that the onus of troubleshooting did not fall on the Fellows. The difference in the reported satisfaction levels between the first and second rounds of Fellows demonstrates that delays in the start of the project due to non-working equipment led to high frustration levels, but that Fellows thrived under the intellectual challenge of learning how to operate digitization workflows on tested and functional equipment. Additionally, a longer Fellowship model was proposed for future iterations to allow the Fellows more of an opportunity to not only become comfortable with digitization workflows, but also to work with their Host Stations to develop preservation plans for the lasting stewardship of their files.

Subsequently, WGBH reached out to other potential partners to investigate the possibility of expanding the reach of the project to additional regions. The enthusiastic response from Alabama SLIS resulted in the development of the second iteration of the PBPF project, supporting a cohort of distance education students at Alabama SLIS.

PBPF Expansion through the University of Alabama School of Library and Information Studies

Through a series of concurrent developments described in this section, the University of Alabama and the AAPB have begun developing a new collaboration to offer Public Broadcasting Preservation Fellowships through Alabama SLIS, with funding from the EBSCO Foundation. While the funding was received as far back as 2016, and discussions around the envisioned

Alabama/AAPB PBPF collaboration began in 2018, the Alabama iteration of PBPF has taken on new meaning and direction in the wake of the reports presented in the AMIA/NFPB “Sustaining the Profession” panel at AMIA 2019, which detailed a need for creating more accessible routes to training and education in the field of audiovisual archiving. The NFPB report noted that to develop a more inclusive workforce, the field needs to create alternative pathways to post-graduate training for those entering the field (any age, background or ability), in part due to the high cost of the post-graduate training routes not being affordable or sustainable for many students. The presentation suggested creation of affordable professional development and training curriculum; designated scholarships for students from underrepresented backgrounds, field-wide advocacy for employers to embrace skills-based education; increasing paid internship and fellowship opportunities; and the development of a mentorship program that would include mentors and mentees from underrepresented backgrounds.²² The Alabama SLIS, in collaboration with the AAPB seeks to address some of these recommendations in a recently launched master’s degree and fellowship program that expands upon the PBPF model, with generous support from the EBSCO Foundation.

Background and Context

In April of 2016, a Memorandum of Agreement was negotiated between the College of Communication and Information Sciences (CCIS) at the Alabama SLIS and EBSCO Industries Inc. of Birmingham, Alabama. EBSCO (a longtime benefactor of the School of Library and Information Studies at Alabama) pledged \$750,000 “to create and support master’s degree programs in information and digital media in the College of Communication and Information Sciences.” The university agreed to provide \$250,000 for the same purpose. The specific uses of this \$1,000,000 gift were not prescribed in detail. In August of 2017, James Elmborg was hired

as director of SLIS. In addition to the regular challenges of organizing and running a large accredited academic unit, SLIS was charged with targeted the gift from EBSCO in the context of the original memorandum. The question of the “Million Dollar Gift” was on early faculty meeting agendas, but discussions were unfocused and unproductive. Clearly, whatever path the school took with the gift would involve a significant commitment of energy and time. The magnitude of mounting a new degree program was daunting and somewhat out of scope for a school with a full pipeline of students working on a degree accredited by the American Library Association (ALA). Institutional pressures to define a direction for the gift began to concern everyone.

In August of 2018, Rebecca Fraimow of WGBH Media Library and Archives contacted Director Elmborg at Alabama SLIS to ask if the school might be willing to participate in the WGBH Educational Foundation’s project, the AAPB. Elmborg responded with interest, noting that the school at Alabama was in the process of developing a new degree proposal in digital media management and was interested in what WGBH and AAPB were learning from doing this work. Discussions ensued between WGBH staff and Alabama staff, as did discussions with SLIS faculty and the Dean of the College. SLIS began to explore the collaboration with AAPB in the context of the EBSCO gift.

On September 6th, 2018, confident that all relevant constituencies had been brought into the process, Jim Elmborg, Rebecca Fraimow, and Casey Davis Kaufman of WGBH held a conference call to discuss the status of the discussions. Rebecca Fraimow sent a summary of that meeting to the participants which summarizes the extent of the plans at that time:

As we discussed, University of Alabama is looking to develop a degree specialization around digital media management, and has some dedicated

funding for this effort. A collaboration with WGBH/the Preservation Fellowship program would create yearlong dedicated Fellowships for University of Alabama students interested in this specialization, both those stationed at University of Alabama and distance learners in other states, to complete digitization and digital preservation projects at collaborating public media stations and contribute content to the AAPB.²³

The collaborators envisioned a program that would enable fellows to gain hands-on experience in creating preservation, technical, and descriptive metadata for media materials; digitizing analog materials in accordance with best practices for a/v media; using open-source command line tools to transcode and generate documentation around digital media; and working with the AAPB's digital asset management software to ingest media into a repository. As they undertook the Fellowships, the students would complete a coursework curriculum focused on digital media management as designed by University of Alabama in collaboration with WGBH to take advantage of the hands-on opportunities provided through the Fellowships, resulting in a certification at the end of the year. AAPB and the University of Alabama discussed the future possibilities of making distance learning courses and curriculum materials created for the program available to other universities that have participated in the PBPF program.

This program would build on the original single fellowship proposed in the current proposed round of PBPF Fellowships, and could hopefully be launched in the following year.²⁴ On January 17, 2019, Elmborg travelled to WGBH offices in Boston to discuss in detail potential plans for the upcoming year. While a broad outline of upcoming events had already been confirmed, this in-person visit was vital for bringing a concreteness to the commitments and to putting faces and personalities to the names in the emails. Two days of discussion clarified basic

nuts and bolts of summer immersion workshops, the schedule for the week, and how these activities would be supported. The meeting produced a final outline of a first-year trial run of the program. The immersion workshop would be held over three days in August in Tuscaloosa. Responsibilities were established for identifying partner stations where students would be placed for the semester. The content and personnel necessary for that workshop was finalized, as was a working budget, which included the purchasing of broadcast quality tape decks and assorted equipment. The final budget also included stipends of \$2500 for the students participating in the internship semester. The largest expense went towards funding an Immersion Week workshop similar to the one that had been held in Boston to kick off the original PBPF pilot project, with costs including stipends for presenters and travel expenses (including hotels) for all participants, including students, workshop presenters, and station representatives. As Alabama staff gain experience and expertise in audiovisual preservation, future workshops can be made more streamlined and require less outside participation, saving on costs for the program.

Implementation of the Alabama PBPF Pilot

The one-week immersion event was ultimately held in Tuscaloosa in August in the Digital Media Center. Bob Butler, Director of Engineering and Tech Services at the Center for Public Television, provided major logistical support leading up to the event. Four students went through the immersion workshop and were placed in three stations—two at WCVE in Richmond, Virginia; one at WSRE in Pensacola, Florida; and one in Tuscaloosa at WUVA. All four students completed their semesters successfully, providing hours of digitized programming and good working knowledge for future years.

As enrollment opened for spring semester, 2020, another call was issued for internships. Surprisingly, there were no applications. Conversations with faculty suggested that many

students were opting for non-credit internship opportunities to save on tuition and make more opportunities for elective courses. In addition, students tend to be highly organized with specific plans for coming semesters. The Immersion Workshop and subsequent AAPB Fellowship required students to be flexible and willing to take the leap of faith that this program would be of value to them. The lack of students for spring semester was cause for concern and forced a re-examination of the approach. Feedback from students suggested they thought the internships provided valuable and exciting opportunities. Feedback from SLIS's national advisory board suggested that providing accessible training for audiovisual archivists was a glaring need that no other program was filling in the ways envisioned by SLIS at Alabama. In November, Elmborg attended the AMIA in Baltimore to learn more about the status of archival education and how SLIS at Alabama might fit into the landscape. This visit was eye-opening and provided a much clearer sense of the needs SLIS at Alabama can fill in archival training.

The Alabama and AAPB collaboration is well positioned to make an important contribution in the effort towards addressing some of the structural inequalities identified in the NFPB study, and the program is working towards expanding education access and diversifying the audiovisual archiving profession in four important ways. First of all, the SLIS distance program is a major asset in this endeavor. In fall of 2019, there were 145 students enrolled in the Distance Education program. These students all pay the in-state tuition rate for Alabama, which as of this semester is \$420 per credit hour. There are no campus fees added to this base tuition. The cost for the entire MLIS degree is \$15,120. The cost for competing master's degrees can be four times this total or more.

Second, the SLIS MLIS provides an opportunity for students in a variety of geographic regions who may not be able to relocate to pursue a graduate degree. During fall of 2019,

students from 24 states were represented. Drawing from this current pool of students for a specialized degree would, over time, radically disperse trained digital archivists across the nation to counterbalance the inevitable bi-coastal and urban clustering generated by a field that only offers specialist degrees in three locations (New York City, Los Angeles, and Rochester, NY.) .

Third, SLIS currently has a strong and growing archival studies program focused on community archives, including courses in Digital Libraries, Metadata, and Programming for Digital Libraries. These courses can be combined with current archival coursework to create an educational platform for training digital archivists. Envisioning audiovisual archives as truly national and community-based entities will further support the goal of increasing diversity and equity within the field by providing opportunities for students to connect with a variety of pathways into the profession.

Finally, Alabama SLIS has placed an aggressive emphasis on social justice, equity, and diversity. The school has an EBSCO endowed chair in social justice and inclusion advocacy, and faculty have pledged to continue to work through curriculum and pedagogy to create inclusive and equitable spaces for teaching, learning, and professional development. While not all of the challenges identified in the NFPB study can be fixed with a program like the one envisioned at Alabama, the proposed Alabama program will create accessible and affordable new pathways that have the potential of bringing dozens of emerging audiovisual archivists into the field who would have otherwise been prevented from doing so due to geographic and financial barriers.

Initial Successes and Challenges

This narrative ends in the midst of program planning and development, at which point the program collaborators can report on initial successes and challenges that have informed and guided future expansion of the program. In the writing of this report, the question remains, how

can students be dependably recruited for this exciting opportunity? If \$1,000,000 is allocated to build a program, what is the most effective way to use it? Beginning fall 2020, SLIS will recruit students into the program through tuition scholarships. These students will be paid 50% of tuition, which brings the total cost of the MLIS degree with two AAPB internships to \$7,500. At that rate, 100 scholarships can be funded for students in the coming years, and with revenues generated from the distance education program, SLIS can continue to invest in scholarships for years to come. Working within an MLIS program allows the school to draw on a pool of students who may not have originally identified digital media archiving as their primary career path. A specialty concentration will be created within the MLIS degree alongside various other specialties (including academic librarianship, school librarianship, public library work, medical library work, and traditional archives). The specialized skill set needed for these roles will be integrated with the larger institutional and professional questions that are shared among all these specialties. This approach seems likely to be effective as a way to draw new professionals into media archive work.

To date, Alabama SLIS has recruited eight Fellows for the inaugural year of the scholarship program, representing eight states and regions across the U.S. Five of the fellows are located in the U.S. Southeast; one is located in the U.S. Northwest; one is located in Puerto Rico; and one in the U.S. Midwest. The AAPB is currently engaged in working to assure that all of these Fellows will have placements at public media organizations to complete the hands-on portion of the program. In the work so far, there have been many problems to solve, both practical and theoretical. No doubt there will be more obstacles. Nonetheless, this effort constitutes a major commitment from Alabama SLIS in belief that preservation of our media culture is vital to the long-term health of our society.

Conclusion: Next Steps

The “Sustaining the Profession” presentation at the 2019 AMIA conference reported on research undertaken by the NFPB and AMIA in 2019 to evaluate—among related labor and education concerns—equity, diversity and inclusion in the field of audiovisual archiving. The study and forthcoming report emerged out of the growing awareness of the need to move beyond simple measures of diversity to address deeper issues of cultural equity, inclusion and access in our cultural heritage professions and in the broader landscape. The results of this study have informed the overall strategy and development of the partnership between the University of Alabama and the AAPB. The qualitative and quantitative data and recommendations have already been pivotal to the assessment of how the PBPF program could become additional pathways to entry and advancement for people into the field of audiovisual archiving.

The NFPB Diversity Task Force, AMIA leadership, and AAPB and University of Alabama fellowship program staff have used the NFPB study to explore what kinds of initiatives, collaborations and funding sources are needed to increase inclusion and equity in the field. The NFPB study is already inspiring further action, and many such actions will be needed to make informed and continued change: by continuation of the PBPF model with non-coastal LIS schools like the University of Alabama that have not traditionally had media preservation training programs working to incorporate audiovisual preservation activities into their curriculum and thereby expanding who has access to such education. One of the immediately addressable issues identified is the lack of paid internships in the audiovisual archives field. As one of many ways that these challenges need to be addressed, AMIA sought NFPB pilot funding in 2019 to develop a *Diversity and Inclusion Fellowship Pilot Program* which is launching later in 2020. The primary goals of this pilot fellowship program are to 1) support the professional journeys of four aspiring individuals from traditionally underrepresented communities to find their learning

objectives and help guide their development as professionals in the field of audiovisual archiving, and 2) develop a model that can be replicated and expanded upon with future funding.

In order to begin to make progress, the field of audiovisual archives -- institutions, professional and trainee communities that do this work -- must invest in creating the structures needed to support a networked, collaborative and sustainable profession for all. Programs such as the PBPF and AMIA Fellowship have the potential of bringing emerging leaders into the profession by: 1) making the MLIS recruitment processes more inclusive by casting a wider net; 2) making graduate audiovisual preservation education and training more affordable by offering a 50% scholarship for students who participate in fellowships; 3) developing and enhancing the training curricula to include cultural competency training for both host sites and fellows, which could help inform inclusive collection prioritization and cataloging practices; and 4) building mentorship into programs to support students both during and beyond their fellowships as they enter the field as new professionals. The results of these endeavors have the potential to be truly transformative, not just for individual students' lives, but also for the wider field.

Notes

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