LG-252402-OLS-22, Statewide California Electronic Library Consortium, Inc

SCELC & EAST: Expanding Diversity and Inclusivity in the Collective Collection of Shared Print

Summary: The Statewide California Electronic Library Consortium (SCELC) in collaboration with the Eastern Academic Scholars' Trust (EAST) seek an IMLS National Leadership for Libraries (NLG-L) Planning Grant in the amount of $150,000 for a 12-month project during the FY2022 award cycle to identify ways to enhance the diversity of institutional participants and collections in their respective shared print programs, which collectively serve 118 institutions and include over 12 million retention commitments. Expansion of the diversity of shared print participants and collections furthers the IMLS goals of strengthening community engagement across diverse organizations and supporting stewardship of the national scholarly record in academic libraries in the United States (IMLS Goal 2; Objective 2.2). Outcomes include development of national best practices for shared print programs related to expanding inclusion of minority serving institutions and a research framework to evaluate the diversity of collective and prospective collections of retained materials including metadata analysis of diversity metrics such as broader representation of minority researchers and topics of interest to minority communities.

Project Justification: Over the last decade plus, shared print programs (SPPs) and the collective collections they create have begun to transform collection management in academic and research libraries.[1] These programs ensure that print scholarly content is protected, preserved, and made available for teaching, learning, and research.

SCELC and EAST are among the largest regional SPPs with proven expertise in developing and expanding shared print and were founding members of the Partnership for Shared Book Collections. They propose this project due to identified participation gaps by minority serving institutions (MSIs) in shared print programs.[2] Such gaps increase the risk of loss of representative collections, particularly those held exclusively by MSIs. Preliminary data analysis shows that within the SCELC community of over 300 libraries, only 17 MSIs participate in shared print. Of the 82 EAST member libraries, 12 are minority serving institutions. National data indicate that MSIs comprise 15% of all institutions, yet between SCELC and EAST they comprise only 5.5% of total program participation, representing a gap in access to and preservation of the scholarly record amongst MSIs. Effective and inclusive community-developed strategies for increasing MSI participation are needed to address this gap reduce the risk of loss of scholarly materials that directly serve the MSI.

Providing pathways to leadership and participation in shared print for MSIs goes well beyond the regional programs of SCELC and EAST with clear national impact. This Planning Grant will provide a framework to support wider community participation in shared print as well as evidentiary support for the hypothesis that diversity in institutional profile contributes to the diversity of collaborative collection preservation. The project will also explore the development of replicable methodologies for the assessment of diversity in collections, a project of national scope and interest.

Project Work Plan: Summarized below, key activities for the proposed Planning Grant include the joint review of past program assessment surveys by both SCELC and EAST for current and prospective participants, interviews with MSI library representatives, and focus group exercises. These activities will support the identification of leaders from MSIs, determine how and if SPPs have a distinctive value proposition for MSIs, and create interest and participation amongst MSIs not currently participating in SPPs. Exploratory collection analysis and research activities will also be conducted to test assumptions that adding institutions of a diverse profile will contribute to the diversity of the shared print collections.

1. Community Research (August 2022 – December 2023): Findings from existing, but separate, program reviews will be mutually studied followed by (10) additional interviews and (2) virtual focus groups. The work will culminate in the development of an SPP Best Practices to Support MSI Participation Whitepaper.
    1.1. Jointly Review Prior Program Assessments: Impacts of SPP on member library operations and collections; Identification of needs and preferences for future program building; Non-participant reasons for not joining SPP
    1.2. Interviews: Reviewing findings of 1.1 with prospective SCELC/EAST program participants from MSIs

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[1] McAllister, Lorrie and Laster, Shari, editors. Transforming Print: Collection Development and Management for Our Connected Future. Chicago: ALA Editions, 2021.

[2] Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) include institutions designated by the U.S. Federal Government and/or the National Center for Education Statistics as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs), Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving institutions (AANAPISI), or Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). See also https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/edlite-minorityinst.html

    1.3. Virtual Focus Groups: Clarifying findings from 1.1 and 1.2 (Prospective SCELC/EAST SPP participants from MSIs)

    1.4. SPP Best Practices to Support MSI Participation Whitepaper: Bringing together all research activities, this inventory will highlight shared values of SPPs and will summarize the value proposition of SPPs and requisite conditions or SPP changes needed to assist MSI institutions in promoting and seeking funding for future SPP participation.

2. SPP Program Development and Collection Analysis (August 2022 – December 2023): At least two new MSI SPP participants will be identified, and their respective collections evaluated for uniqueness and presence of materials that expand the representation of minority created and minority focused scholarship.

    2.1. Develop Research Sampling Methodology and Criteria for Collection Analysis

    2.2. Load Collections and Identify Retention Commitments

    2.3. Evaluate Collective Collection and new MSI SPP participants using Research Sampling Methodology and Criteria for Collection Analysis

3. Dissemination (February 2023 – July 2023): SCELC and EAST will leverage their internal communications frameworks as well as the committed partners from the SPP community to share broadly the findings of Community Research Activities (1.1-1.4) and SPP Collection Analysis (2.1-2.3) with national SPP and MSI library representatives.

    3.1. Whitepaper: Best Practices to Support MSI Participation

    3.2. Published Findings: Research Sampling Methodology and Criteria for Collection Analysis

    3.3. Conferences and Meetings: Findings from whitepaper and research findings presented at meetings such as Partnership for Shared Print Collections; Print Archive Network Forum, American Library Association Interest/Affinity Groups for MSI Libraries, Charleston Conference, HBCU Library Alliance Invitational Webinar on SPPs

    3.4. SCELC/EAST Website: SCELC and EAST will share the open access whitepaper on a joint project page

Diversity Plan: The formation of an Advisory Group of library and institutional leaders from MSIs will provide a diversity of participation in leadership and feedback for all program activities. The Advisory Group will be composed of eight (8) representatives and meet quarterly to review and provide guidance on the activities of (4-6) grant personnel from SCELC and EAST, including each organization's Executive Director and SPP staff. Advisory Board members will receive reports on Community Research Activities, provide oversight on the selection of at least two new SPP participants from MSIs, receive progress reports on collection analysis activities, and support the dissemination of program findings by sharing outcomes with their communities. Members should include: an MSI representative from current SPP; MSI Consortia representatives (i.e., HBCU Library Alliance, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, Asian Pacific American Librarians Association), Members of ALA affiliate organizations such as REFORMA: The National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking, and the American Indian Library Association (AILA).

Project Results: This project builds upon past-funded IMLS grants that have sought to expand the institutional diversity of participation in preservation programs by fostering inclusive professional communities. The IMLS-funded HBCU Library Alliance + Digital Library Federation Authenticity Project and The Community Archives Center for Tacoma serve as models for using participatory project design in this regard. Project results from this grant will extend the existing research on collection diversity and SPPs by identifying and disseminating best practices for expanding SPP participation. As outlined in the Project Work Plan, SCELC and EAST have a strong commitment to working with the Advisory Group on dissemination of a Best Practices Whitepaper and publication of the methodology and findings of the Research Sampling Methodology and Criteria for Collection Analysis. As a Planning Grant, this work will serve as a national foundation to develop a longer-term grant application with additional partners on SPP Collection Diversity initiatives.

Budget Summary: IMLS funds of $150,000 will be used to support shared print collection analysis services and consultant fees for research and community-building activities. Funds will be allocated to staffing and consultant fees ($80,000) for Community Research, Program Development, and Collection Analysis Activities; Software tools ($40,000) including subscription activation for SPP analysis tools such as GreenGlass, Gold Rush, CollectionHQ, and data visualization tools such as PowerBI and Tableau; and Dissemination of Research ($30,000) including web-based material production and conference and meeting registration costs. Indirect costs for institutional overhead will be contributed in-kind.