

Training of Community-Embedded Social Justice Archivists [SJ4A]

Narrative

Project Summary: “Training of Community-Embedded Social Justice Archivists” (SJ4A) is a three-year proposal (Implementation - Project Type) that meets the requirements specified in IMLS’ Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program – FY 2022 Guidelines (LB21) to achieve its Goal 1 (Objective 1.1). The University of Alabama’s (UA) School of Library and Information Studies (SLIS) in partnership with multiple interested state archives-related agencies (including the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH), Alabama Public Library Service (APLS), Multnomah County and the Oregon Country Fair (MC&OCF), New Mexico State Library (NMSL), Society of American Archivists (SAA), and Special Collections and Archives at the California State University (CSU)¹ request \$463,238 IMLS funds (with an additional \$263,228 cost shared). The SJ4A project goal is to recruit and train 12 community-embedded paraprofessional archivists who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) to get their master’s degree in the UA SLIS’ synchronous distance education program. This directly aligns with the LB21’s Objective 1.1 in the project’s support of BIPOC paraprofessionals working (part-time or full-time) in community-based archives-related settings while getting their graduate degree part-time. SJ4A meets an urgent need for archivists to apply social justice competencies in an innovative program that combines work experience and community-embedded practice with graduate instruction and curriculum support. It addresses current gaps in diversifying the workforce and operationalizing the how-to’s of social justice and social equity practice within galleries, libraries, archives, and museums (GLAMs) while proposing systematic, intentional, action-oriented, community-engaged, and impact-driven education [1, 2]. BIPOC archivist paraprofessionals living in their communities are in a strong position to integrate social justice principles of fairness, justice, equity, inclusiveness, empathy, and empowerment in developing information-based solutions that address their communities’ injustices while engaging with underserved populations and others [3, 4, 5]. Students will receive a structured, individually tailored cohesive and comprehensive curriculum drawing upon intersections in archival studies and social justice scholarship and practice. They will receive formal/informal professional mentoring by educators and practitioners and will apply the acquired skills through an integrated practicum course with community-based agencies external to their workplace. Students will learn and apply archive management and social justice skillsets incorporated into the curriculum to develop work applications and practices that create tangible deliverables that are especially tailored towards meeting underrepresented needs in their embedded communities. If funded, SJ4A will begin August 1, 2022, and be completed by July 31, 2025.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

Assessment of Need: During its Annual and Exhibition virtual conference in June 2021, the American Library Association (ALA) Council unanimously adopted a new Code of Ethics principle on racial and social justice to dismantle systemic biases, confront inequities and oppression, enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and advance social justice advocacy [6]. This new professional guideline spotlights an immediacy to learn the how-to’s of integrating impact-driven and community-engaged social justice and inclusion activism via information-related work [7, 8, 9, 10]. Both the Core Values and Core Ethics of the SAA identify the importance of diversity and a need to “advocate for archival collections to reflect that rich complexity”; they also “acknowledge that, both historically and currently, not all members of the profession abide by these beliefs or guidelines” within a reality of archival work that has historically stayed privileged and biased while representing a semblance of neutrality [11]. As a result, today’s archives-related agencies increasingly recognize the lapses of the past and a need to center social justice in their special collections, illustrated in a recent emergence of community archives, preservation literacy programs, community archives consulting programs, and co-stewardship efforts [12, 13, 14, 15]. While these developments are encouraging, the question remains as to if the profession possesses the necessary capacity to support such initiatives outside of larger well-resourced, institutions [16].

Moreover, archival-related disciplines have struggled with diversifying their ranks and membership over several decades throughout their whitewashed histories and contemporary practice [17]. They have resisted discarding dated notions, including neutrality, passive bystanders to enfolding community dynamics, solely internalized foci, and limited input-output planning in service design without developing external impacts to change socio-cultural, socio-political, and socio-economic realities in the lives of their user constituencies [18]. Further, graduating archivists and those in the

¹ For a list of committed SJ4A personnel involved in select roles and responsibilities, click [here](#).

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workforce continue to remain predominantly a white majority and few racial/ethnic minorities have gravitated towards the archives-related professions. For example, in the last SAA A* Census [Part 6. Report on Diversity], conducted in 2004, a total of all minorities in SAA membership was only 7%, with just 2.8% being African minorities [19]. More recently, Alex H. Poole [20] documented the history of SAA's DEI initiatives and critically evaluated the association's narrow demographic representation, noting that merely 8% of respondents to the SAA Member Needs and Satisfaction Survey in 2012 constituted people of color and 7.6% of the participants in the SAA A* Census constituted non-whites and Latinos. In a 2016 *Archival Outlook* article, SAA President Bruce Meissner stated that "We remain too white, too traditional, perhaps too blind to the varieties of diversity that surround us," indicating that the goals of supporting a profession reflective of its diverse communities of service had not been achieved [21]. Meissner's observation remains a point of concern. More BIPOC archivists with MLIS degrees are needed to serve their increasingly diverse populations around the country. Mario H. Ramirez [22] critically ascribes an intellectual, methodological, and racial homogeneity in the archival professions for its resistance to seriously engage with discussions about intersections between race, power, and whiteness in the recent past. He attributes an inability of the archival-related professions to decenter its predominant socio-cultural positionality of white privilege as an essential factor contributing to its limited community-wide impact in American society and marginal integration of social justice and activism in its ranks [23]. In his rethinking of the role of archives and archivists, Anthony W. Dunbar (2006), among others, proposes the need to establish alternative discussion or racial counternarratives and application of social justice to dismantle the systemic structural advantages of whiteness that provide tangible economic, social, cultural, and political advantages to a race-based select few [24]. The urgency in the 21st century to dismantle normative assumptions in the archival professions, resistance among archivists to expand the impact and relevance of their work for external community stakeholders via adopting social justice actions, and its predominant whiteness has been highly problematized, and is strongly interrelated.

Archivist historians and contemporary scholars also note that a lack of racial/ethnic minority representation in the archives-related professions is directly related to poor recruitment and retention support provided to BIPOC members, very much similar to the broader problematic trends in library and information science (LIS) professions [25]. Paul Jaeger and Rene Franklin and others propose the virtuous circle in LIS minority recruitment that suggests that increased numbers of minorities teaching in LIS graduate programs will shape and transform the LIS curricula which in turn will impact the next generations of minority librarians (including archivists), who will then effectively and competently serve the diverse communities that patronize the archival-related settings. The critical role of mentorship/networking in supporting professional development of minority archivists is also a major barrier to recruiting and retaining archival professionals from underrepresented backgrounds [26]. This is especially urgent for BIPOC professionals in archival studies, as Alex H. Poole [20] recently notes that while increased attention has been given to the recruitment of archivists from underrepresented backgrounds, less attention has been given to the development of mentoring frameworks to support the retention of archival professionals from diverse backgrounds. Based on an analysis of systematic interviews with twenty-one Harold T. Pinkett Minority Student Award recipients, reporting on their education, professional, and mentoring experiences, Poole recommends that systematic mentorship is closely correlated with professional retention [20]. *SJ4A* responds to these critical needs identified by leading archival studies scholars, practitioners, professional leadership, and others. More BIPOC archivist-related professionals with MLIS degrees are urgently needed to serve their increasingly diverse populations around the country. *SJ4A* students will be the first of many BIPOC archives leaders who can act as change agents to effectively mitigate the forces of limited impact of the professions in making a difference external to their work environments. Providing BIPOC archivists-related paraprofessionals with MLIS degree is important to improve their service effectiveness and diversify the professions.

The Scope and Target Group/Beneficiaries: The acronym "SJ4A" in the proposal title represents key constructs central to the project's scope and related to social justice competencies for BIPOC archives-related paraprofessionals in terms of activism, advocacy, autonomy, and accountability. Social justice and inclusion advocacy is defined as a strong force of mobilizing progressive changes in the 21st century [27]. In the *SJ4A* it involves extending archives-related work to operationalize social justice ideals of fairness, justice, equity/equality, change agency, empowerment, and community development in community-embedded settings. Activism is applied in the *SJ4A* in the activities and partnerships that students will develop with underserved populations, including those considered on the margins of society, to extend the impact of their archives-related agencies. Advocacy involves speaking with (and working on behalf of) the collaborating partners for seeking a share of public resources, services, programming, etc. (via intentional planning, design, and development) beyond solely advocating for their own professional organization as in the past [28]. Autonomy refers to

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the freedom for *SJ4A* BIPOC paraprofessionals to engage and collaborate with underserved individuals, groups, organizations, etc. to develop archives-related deliverables that operationalize social justice principles. Accountability is closely aligned with professional ethics and standards to be responsible (and answerable) to external/internal communities in justifying their financial and other kinds of support.

The term *archives-related agencies* in the *SJ4A* refers to archival institutions and allied organizations, including state and public libraries, with archival facets to their institutional missions. Its use is a response to developments over past decades in the placement/integration of archival studies (or archival sciences and archival education) with libraries (academic, public, school, special, library education) under the broader umbrella of “library and information science” [29]. Consequently, the primary target population in the *SJ4A* are future BIPOC archivists who are interested in extending their social justice competencies and include: (1) paraprofessionals currently working in archival environments and pursuing archival careers; (2) paraprofessionals working in library environments interested in pursuing careers in archives; and (3) paraprofessionals with archival interests pursuing careers in librarianship. The *SJ4A* curriculum will support their archival-focused and related career pathways. Elements of core library functions, including reference, information organization and retrieval, collection development, and user services will be integrated into the proposed *SJ4A* curriculum in its archival studies and social justice courses. This integrated approach has been successfully developed over some years of ongoing experiences at the UA SLIS in response to student expectations and workforce realities. In the *SJ4A*, the targeted group of the 12 BIPOC archivist paraprofessionals cohort are also the beneficiaries contributing to the emergence of social justice-driven archival practices within their home institutions. Their employers and service communities will also be most immediately and positively affected as beneficiaries since *SJ4A* students will develop tangible intersecting archival studies and social justice deliverables that make a difference in their community settings. The numbers of the service communities are not known at this time (since students are not admitted) though we will make efforts to recruit and admit students from a diverse range of settings (e.g., urban/semi-urban and rural/semi-rural) from around the country. In addition to these beneficiaries, *SJ4A* will help move the field (i.e., the beneficiaries) progressively forward in diversifying its privileged ranks while responding to the limited professional training programs available for BIPOC archivists to succeed in obtaining higher education credentials and making an impact while meeting their dreams and aspirations.

Unique Context and Relevance: The UA SLIS is part of an academic institution and college that highly values diversity-driven and research-oriented community impact illustrated in its strategic plans and priority missions [30, 31, 32]. The UA SLIS has a distinct tradition whose strategic priorities are to provide a learning environment that promotes diversity, equity, leadership, service, and social justice [33]. Almost every course in its MLIS program addresses meeting needs of a diverse and global society via information-related work; an emerging strength of its curriculum is preparing graduates to advocate for social justice and think critically about diversity within the LIS professions [34]. UA SLIS supports a comprehensive archival studies program which adheres to the SAA’s recommended educational guidelines on graduate education [35], is listed in the SAA educational directory, and is also an invited consortium member of the Archival Education and Research Initiative (AERI) [36]. The UA SLIS’ programmatic offerings include MLIS-Archival concentration (36 Credit Hours) in which all students in the *SJ4A* program will be enrolled. This concentration has been evaluated and approved by the UA Board of Trustees and the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE). The existing archival studies area in the UA SLIS is led by two full-time faculty, complemented by allied faculty with expertise in social justice, digital archives/libraries and technologies, and book studies. Experiential learning opportunities are supported by a robust network of local, regional, and national community partners, including the Library of Virginia, Birmingham Black Radio Museum (BBRM), Invisible Histories Project (IHP), Birmingham Civil Rights Institute (BCRI), and Houston Public Library (HPL). *SJ4A* students will thus be completing a social justice emphasis within an already emerging archival studies in an ALA-accredited program, capable of supporting their academic and professional goals. Forty-five percent of incoming 2021 MLIS students self-declared as archival studies concentrators. These students (and *SJ4A* enrollees) also benefit from participation in extracurricular professional development activities, including an active student chapter of the SAA and mentorship opportunities provided by the local, regional, and national community partners. *SJ4A* has implications for the development of the UA SLIS MLIS program in the future. Following the grant conclusion, the connections established between the archival studies and social justice areas of the program will continue to mature. The primary objective of the *SJ4A* is to support the education and mentorship of emerging BIPOC archival professionals while contributing to the broader DEI goals of the archives-related professions. While the intent is not to develop a new degree program, this grant will enable the strengthening of curricular links between the already established archival

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studies and social justice in the UA SLIS curriculum. *SJ4A* students will also benefit from a comprehensive practicum program (a.k.a internship for course credit) that is part of the existing legacy at UA SLIS, which also provides a network for supporting mentorship and professional activity. To date, UA SLIS practicum students enroll for 3-6 hours credit and have acquired experiential learning opportunities in forty-four states and five foreign countries [37]. This experience of success leaves UA SLIS prepared to support the mentoring and professional development facets included in the *SJ4A*. The *SJ4A* participants will also benefit from learning within a program that prepares students for work with audio-visual (AV) formats, including emerging documentation commonly generated by advocacy efforts [38]. The UA SLIS has also served as a partner on successful IMLS-funded community archives initiatives with the Birmingham Black Radio Museum (BBRM), recipient of two IMLS grants through its Museum Grants for African American History and Culture program in 2017 and 2018 [39, 40]. The success of such partnerships illustrates promising practices for supporting equitable and sustainable partnerships applied at the national level that will also be managed and implemented in the *SJ4A*.

PROJECT WORK PLAN

The overall project design covers six phases that include: recruitment and applications of *SJ4A* students from diverse archives-related environments; needs assessment of social injustices and GLAM services in their communities and relationship-building with employers; implementation of educational/training activities and mentoring; ongoing evaluation of program outcomes; career growth and placement assessment, post-graduation tracking; and dissemination of program results. *SJ4A* will require community-embedded BIPOC paraprofessionals to enroll as part-time students in two 3-hour courses per semester (including summer) over two years with the grant covering their tuition and fees (beginning January-April 2023 and ending August-December 2024). A limited semester stipend (additional to book fees etc.) will also be provided since the students are already working professionals and earning to cover their predominant living expenses. Five major components in the curriculum will include: (1) Knowledge of core functionalities in three 3-hour SLIS required courses (with introduction to archives and social justice intersections); (2) Archival studies in four 3-hour courses (e.g., intellectual foundations; archival appraisal/management; technical dimensions; archival representation, access, and use); (3) Social justice scholarship in four 3-hour courses (e.g., social justice activism and advocacy; diversity and inclusion leadership; community-engaged scholarship; and an elective choice (see Table 1); (4) Archivist and activist practicum for one 3-hour course credit; (5) Comprehensive ePortfolio (tailored to represent *SJ4A* experiences, including philosophy of LIS practice and artifacts related to student learning outcomes). This will serve as the culminating *SJ4A* experience to spotlight students' work and deliverables created during their MLIS program. Many of these course elements in the curriculum are currently scattered and ad hoc. The *SJ4A* will provide the UA SLIS an opportunity to integrate them in a comprehensive, cohesive, systematic, and intentional manner that is impact-driven, community-engaged, and promotes a social justice agenda. Social justice competencies in developing information-related work applications/practices especially tailored towards the needs of their local and regional communities will be incorporated into the curriculum.

The course numbers (for each 3-hour course) are identified in front of the following products of students' course involvement (see the courses and tentative schedule in Table 1). Archival studies deliverables applied towards community-embedded workplaces in the UA SLIS courses will include: (1) Introduction to archival studies and intersections with social justice (LS 555); (2) Intellectual foundations of traditional and non-traditional archival theory and emerging practice (LS 556); (3) Appraisal and evaluation of archives (LS 557); (4) Representation, access, and use of archives (LS 558). Social justice outcomes in archives-related courses will include: (1) Understanding and applying diversity and inclusion in leadership and praxis; (2) Community-engaged scholarship and practice; (3) Social justice and inclusion advocacy; (4) Choice of one elective from intercultural perspectives in youth literature (LS 621), cultural diversity programming (LS 544), outreach to diverse populations (LS 580), universal design for information technologies (LS 581), social aspects of information (LS 583), or race, gender, and sexuality in LIS (LS 582). The PI has led such a tailored community-embedded and outcome-responsive curriculum that was effectively implemented in two-IMLS funded rural paraprofessional librarian technology and management training programs that followed a similar structuring and scheduling of graduate education (i.e., two courses over the fall/spring/summer for two years) and research evaluation assessment strategies [41, 42].

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An educator (PI or co-PI) and practitioner will provide each *SJ4A* student mentoring and guidance in their formal coursework to integrate information-related deliverables while developing comprehensive solutions to specific concerns

Competencies/Outcome Expectations	Req. Hrs.	Examples of Courses (3 credit-hours each)
1. <i>Knowledge of core functionalities in the profession</i> (required courses that all students currently take).	9	LS 500 (Information and Media); LS 501 (Information in Communities); LS 513 (Professional Paths).
2. <i>Archival studies skills</i>	12	LS 555 (Introduction to Archival Studies); LS 556 (Intellectual Foundations of Archival Theory and Practice); LS 557 (Archival Appraisal); LS 558 (Archival Representation, Access, and Use).
3. <i>Social justice skills</i>	12	CIS 650 (Applying Diversity Leadership Theories and Praxis in Information Organizations); CIS 650 (Community-Engaged Scholarship); CIS 668 Social Justice and Inclusion Advocacy; LS 621 (Intercultural Perspectives in Youth Literature); LS 544 Cultural Diversity Programming; LS 580 (Outreach to Diverse Populations); LS 581 (Universal Design for Information Technologies); LS 583 (Social Aspects of Information); LS 582 (Race, Gender, and Sexuality in LIS).
4. <i>Social justice archivist practicum</i>	3	Practicum experience in a community-based environment external to their regular work setting.
<i>Comprehensive ePortfolio</i> [required]	0	Student homepage will be tailored to represent <i>SJ4A</i> grant experiences during the MLIS program. Components include: Philosophy of LIS Practice + Two course/work samples that support each of the four Program Learning Outcomes at UA SLIS.
<i>TOTAL</i>	36	

Table 1: Course requirements/tentative schedule (assuming *SJ4A* will be funded) for students' plan of study from January 2023—December 2024).

that further social justice attributes of fairness, justice, equity/equality, change agency, empowerment, and local/regional community development. The educator/advisor will monitor and coordinate the formal educational program, archival and social justice studies, and work experiences. The practitioner-mentors will form a *SJ4A Practitioner-Mentoring Board* that will meet regularly, as needed, to consult on matters that might require the attention of the entire group. UA SLIS faculty will partner in the educator-practitioner team with MLIS-holding archivists-related professionals to guide each *SJ4A* student immersed in their work environment to develop specific social justice-related outcomes in their courses; these will be especially designed and developed in response to their archives-related environment. Since locally-based mentors (i.e. in the same city) could have associated politics or conflict of interests with the student and their workplace, the choice will be provided to each student in selecting whether they want a local/non-local mentor (self-selected or not). Electronic telecommunications in non-local mentoring is part of a

contemporary professional etiquette and might provide extended opportunities to the student in networking with a broader, diverse regional/national group of professionals. A structured requirement of at least monthly communication meetings with summary reports will be expected of the student-mentor and student-educator teams. No in-person attendance will be required for the educational component of the *SJ4A* experience. Flexibility/adjustment are written into the *SJ4A* expectations in case of health contingency owing to local, regional, or national policies regarding COVID-19 circumstances. All course assignments integrating social justice deliverables, additional resources and support, and measurements will be conducted in conjunction with an assigned faculty advisor (i.e., PI/co-PI). Time, attendance, and other required reports will be developed by the employer institution where the student will be working in consultation with the assigned faculty and mentor, as needed. These will be communicated, negotiated, and co-developed by the faculty advisor, student, and employer after the student is admitted based on their expectations and analysis provided in their application materials. Mentors in the *SJ4A Practitioner-Mentoring Board* will meet for planning prior to the academic year, at the conclusion of the program, and will assist with dissemination of results.

Dr. Bharat Mehra (coordinator) and Dr. Robert Riter will lead the educator-practitioner teams during this 3-year (36-month) project. Archive directors and staff partnering in the *SJ4A* program include six agencies including the past/current SAA President. The project partners will provide advising and practitioner-mentoring and professional work experience to some of the *SJ4A* students (from the selected twelve) while the remaining *SJ4A* students will be assigned (or self-selected) other practitioner-mentors from around the country. These partners or their leadership personnel designee will serve on the *SJ4A Advisory Board*. Project partners have been selected to participate in *SJ4A* based on their leadership role, knowledge, networks, experience, and interests to participate in promoting social justice-based outcomes in their archives-related agencies and communities. The project partners are located across the country, and if the proposal is funded, additional representatives from other regional/county archives-related systems will be contacted to elicit their participation in the various activities identified in the grant proposal. Project partners will assist in: (1) Recruitment of *SJ4A* students via participating in the *SJ4A Recruitment Board* consisting of 10 members (both MLIS and non-MLIS) who are directors/staff members of partnering institutions and others. The Board will help recruit student applicants to *SJ4A*. In consultation with the PI/co-PI, the Board will also offer advice to applicants in following admissions procedures and completing the application packet in a timely manner. (2) Participation and recruitment for the online *SJ4A Needs Assessment Interviews* will be built on ongoing online needs assessment interviews that have been ongoing in recent years as part of the regular accreditation process in the UA SLIS. The PI/co-PI have also been gathering online feedback from various related stakeholders. If the proposal is funded, they will continue in developing these with a focus

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on the grant objectives and collect social justice and advocacy feedback from at least fifty archives-related professionals (BIPOC and white) from across the country. They will elicit feedback about stakeholder experiences to better understand the challenges associated with diversifying a workforce in their setting and developing social justice applications in their functional work responsibilities. Conversations will also help in identifying how the archival studies and social justice courses in the curriculum might be tailored to help *SJ4A* students in developing meaningful outcome-based deliverables in their course assignments, exercises, and projects for their communities. Interviews will be delivered synchronously using teleconferencing and online software. In addition, e-mail will serve as asynchronous communication/information-sharing tools for various other grant activities. (3) Members of the *SJ4A Practitioner-Mentoring Board* will work with *SJ4A* students and the PI/co-PI to tailor the individual student's academic program in integrating archival and social justice competencies to meet the needs of their work environment and community. Members of the *SJ4A Practitioner-Mentoring Board* will be provided a stipend by the grant for their efforts and mentoring participation with qualified and selected students. (4) A required online *Annual SJ4A Summit* will be conducted in December 2023 and December 2024 where *SJ4A* students, mentors, and others will share their experiences in the program.

All *SJ4A* students will be provided a tuition-waiver and stipends across the semesters (including summer) when UA is in session. They are also provided limited stipends since they are already working full/part-time paraprofessionals. *SJ4A* students will be paid a general stipend that might be used to cover travel expenses, books and fees, and costs to cover technology. Each *SJ4A* student will be provided a laptop computer. Each *SJ4A* student will have to integrate assignments in their coursework to produce tangible deliverables integrating social justice solutions in meeting the needs, expectations, and challenges presented in their work environments and communities. If the proposal is funded, project planning will begin August 1, 2022, with the first students enrolled in the spring semester 2023. The overall project design covers the following SIX conceptual phases and their overlapping temporal boundaries have been identified:

Phase 1 Project Set-Up, Recruitment, and Applications (August-December 2022): If the proposal is funded, August-September 2022 will be used for set-up (planning and relationship-building to ensure implementation success), including (not limited to): consolidation of ties with collaborating stakeholders; organization of planning, human resources, and infrastructure; and configuration of communication channels and technologies (e.g., website design). The PI/co-PI will create a *SJ4A Recruitment Board* with 10 members (mix of BIPOC and white archives-related professionals) via our professional networks that will help recruit student enrollees to *SJ4A*. The PI/co-PI and board members will develop a plan for competitive recruitment of diverse underrepresented students to the program, including development of recruitment materials, and criteria for selection. Application materials will be tailored to the *SJ4A*'s expectations. Applicants will be expected to articulate social justice potential and actual implementation in their archives-related settings and provide essays related to their applicability as individuals, in their workplace, and in their communities. Applications will be evaluated based on these and ensuing conversations with strong applicant's employers (with the applicant's permission) to determine suitability into the program. Recruitment will then begin, including a focus on applicants' potential for developing and operationalizing social justice outcomes in their work settings and communities. Prospective *SJ4A* applicants will be reached through the UA SLIS's existing recruitment mechanisms, including outreach to professional organizations, and advertising on the UA SLIS website. Individual applicants working with members from the *SJ4A Recruitment Board* and others in consultation with the PI/co-PI will be encouraged to apply, and will complete admission procedures and submit the completed application packet. *SJ4A* will make comprehensive efforts to develop a robust pool of recruits and applicants to draw from. *SJ4A* will replicate similar numbers from the PI's past IMLS grants that involved an approximate double of admitted students to apply into those training programs; six times (or more) the number were recruited in those instances.

Phase 2 Needs Assessment Interviews, Conversations with Employers, Planning and Relationship Building (August-December 2022): Online *SJ4A Needs Assessment Interviews* will be conducted during August-December 2022 with fifty archives-related professionals (BIPOC and white, diverse professional backgrounds) who will provide feedback regarding challenges in developing and integrating social justice applications in their regions. These will include potential members who will be recruited for the *SJ4A Practitioner-Mentoring Board*. They will address topics related to local information needs, use of information resources and services, challenges and barriers, areas of improvement, and the use of computers and information technologies to further social justice and impact-driven offerings in archives-related settings. Notes will be taken during these conversations and these interviews will be recorded to permit additional content analysis. These findings will inform the development of mentoring materials, course content, practicum projects, advising protocols, and the *SJ4A* summits. It will allow *SJ4A* to develop as an evidenced-based program, responding to

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the current concerns and needs of archives-related professionals and their institutions. During this time, the 12 member *SJ4A Practitioner-Mentoring Board* will be finalized. Practitioner-mentor and student teams (one mentor for each student) will be developed. Based on the essays in the application materials submitted, the PI/co-PI will establish initial communication (online-zoom/email, phone) with employers of strong applicants (with their permission) to establish communication about potential social justice initiatives in the work setting, employer support/resources for the applicants while they are enrolled in the *SJ4A* program, and other aspects to ensure student success. These communications will be sustained (as needed) with the employers of *SJ4A* students (once admitted) throughout the *SJ4A* time-period and beyond to meet *SJ4A* objectives and support enriching experiences for all concerned. The PI has been involved in past IMLS grants with similar communications and relationship-building with employers of rural library paraprofessional students to ensure positive experiences. The PI/co-PI and practitioners from the *SJ4A Practitioner-Mentoring Board* will work with admitted students and *SJ4A* course instructors to shape archives-related course content, assignments, and outcomes to develop tangible and relevant products, in conversation with employers at specific archives-related environments.

Phase 3 Implementation of the Educational and Training Segment (Ongoing from January 2023 through December 2024): Students will be admitted and selected into the program and begin classes in January 2023. Admitted *SJ4A* students will participate in the online *SJ4A New Student Orientation* during January 2023, prior to the start of the spring semester. This will be extension of the traditional UA SLIS orientation to include an introduction to both the MLIS and *SJ4A* requirements/procedures. During this session, we will discuss the role of social justice in developing archives and archives-related practices, how these can support their communities of service, and the challenges and opportunities in implementing social justice-driven programs and initiatives. Separate break-out sessions will be organized as part of the event for the new students to interact with their practitioner-mentors and each other as a cohort.

During January-May 2023 online and/or face-to-face meetings will be orchestrated with the involvement of faculty, practitioner-mentors, and students who will take their first two required courses in the *SJ4A*. This phase will identify learning objectives and course recommendations. A critical component of the *SJ4A* grant is structured and multifaceted mentorship. In addition to academic mentorship and advising provided by the PI/co-PI, participants will be paired with practitioner-mentors. These mentors will assist the *SJ4A* students in developing and implementing community information initiatives, provide professional development advice, and guidance regarding the political realities of social justice driven information work. The mentoring will serve as a structured element of the *SJ4A* program and will be individualized to each *SJ4A* student to ensure that the mentoring aligns with their contexts of practice and professional goals. Once admitted to the program, *SJ4A* students will be paired with an academic advisor and practitioner-mentor. During the first semester the student, academic advisor, and practitioner-mentor will create an educational strategic plan based on the students individual learning objectives and professional goals. This will ensure an alignment between the program curriculum, course outputs, practicum component, research projects, and allow for the early identification and remediation of academic deficiencies. The program plan will also be informed by the student work/position profile, which defines the students professional objectives linked with defined social justice skills, to ensure an alignment between the student's program plan and the positions they will pursue. *SJ4A* students will meet regularly with their academic advisors [at least twice a semester and as needed] and with their practitioner-mentor at least once per semester for formal mentoring meetings through a modality defined by the student, advisor, and practitioner-mentor. Practitioner-mentors will be available to respond to questions during the intervals between the formal meetings.

This individualized advising and mentoring, informed by the positionalities and goals of each student, is a critical component of the *SJ4A* program. Though this is a structured program [See course topics in Table 1], there is flexibility in selecting electives, formulating the practicum, and defining the mentorship experiences. *SJ4A* students will receive guidance choosing an appropriate elective (from the social justice stream) and in designing independent course research projects that enrich and complement their other educational experiences. The most effective electives and research projects will be identified for future refinement/use. The practitioner-mentors will develop orientation and mentoring programs for *SJ4A* in conjunction with participating faculty. This individualized approach within the cohort-based program supports community building through a shared programmatic experience while responding to the individual needs of the *SJ4A* students. In addition to individual advising and mentorship, there will be opportunities for a collective discussion. SLIS faculty, practitioner-mentors, and all students will meet at least once a year during the online *Annual SJ4A Summits* to discuss program progress, concerns, and needs. These summits will also provide an environment to discuss current issues and emerging professional concerns. Students will be part-time in the educational program, taking 6 credit hours (2 courses) each semester and 6 hours (2 courses) each summer. Thirty-six credit hours (12 courses)

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including a comprehensive ePortfolio are required for graduation. Students will graduate in December at the end of their second academic year.

Phase 4 Ongoing Evaluations and Online *SJ4A Annual Summits* (December 2023 and December 2024): This phase will continuously analyze the effectiveness of students' experiences in developing archival studies and social justice applications in their courses for their work environments. It will include collecting data on career choice, academic success, professional association participation, and the graduates' evaluation of the program throughout their period of study. *SJ4A* students' success in attaining personal learning objectives and goals established in the first semester (by mentors and students) will also be analyzed. The key to the ongoing evaluation will be careful documentation of several aspects of the project, with particular emphasis on identifying which aspects were most successful and which required refinement. Each *SJ4A* student's experience and progress toward their individualized learning objectives will be regularly evaluated during and at the end of each semester. In addition, random interviews with rotating students will be conducted during each semester. The project team will develop post-work instruments for evaluation to be completed by each *SJ4A* student every semester, their supervisors, practitioner-mentors, and project staff of practicum institutions. Expectations and accomplishments of all participants will be identified and evaluated. At the conclusion of the program, the project team will conduct exit interviews. Summary information will be incorporated into the final report to IMLS and shared with the archives-related work communities. A follow-up survey of participants and employers following completion of the program will establish overall program effectiveness. Formal and informal evaluations, application materials, new student orientation, the *SJ4A Annual Summits*, and the semester-meetings between practitioners and educators, will provide insights into how to enrich the archival studies and social justice curriculum.

These evaluative elements will be built into the *SJ4A* program elements. Participation in these program evaluation elements will not require a significant investment of student time, nor will they be obtrusive. In order to evaluate curriculum effectiveness, the PI/co-PI will work with the UA Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) to develop *SJ4A* specific Student Opinion of Instruction (SOI) surveys. Additionally, the PI/co-PI will revise existing orientation assessment instruments as a mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of the *SJ4A* orientation and summits. Similar instruments will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the mentorship and practicum components. All UA SLIS MLIS students participate in evaluation activities associated with course instruction, orientation, practicum, and yearly program climate surveys. The participation required of *SJ4A* students aligns with assessment activities normally requested of UA SLIS students.

SJ4A Outcomes will be observable and measurable and include: (1) *SJ4A* students will gain specific intersecting archival studies and social justice skills and develop information-related products and experiences contextualized in their work settings and communities; (2) More than 75 % of the *SJ4A* student's learning objectives and goals will be met; (3) *SJ4A* students will display a high level of competency in archives management and social justice advocacy issues pertinent to their work settings as judged by professionals in the field; (4) Practitioner-faculty collaborations in *SJ4A* will result in curricular changes; (5) Student involvement in archival studies and social justice applications in specific work environments will increase, making the value of these skills more visible, and contributing to the creation of additional career opportunities; (6) Each *SJ4A* student will develop a valuable network of mentors (i.e., practitioner and faculty) upon which they may draw upon in the future; (7) Practitioner-faculty collaboration in *SJ4A* will lead to greater cooperation in preparing social justice archives-related professionals in the future. More broadly, project outcomes focus on: (1) Success in recruiting BIPOC archives-related professionals; (2) Social justice knowledge, skills, and abilities gained by the students and measured by success in all courses; (3) Graduation with an ALA-accredited degree; (4) Successful career development of students following graduation; (5) Development of community-based social justice outcomes in archives and archives-related institutions.

Phase 5 Formal Dissemination (Ongoing): This phase will focus on dissemination of program findings and conclusions. Once evaluation is complete at each point throughout the program, the activities for dissemination will include: (1) Development/refinement of a documented model for public dissemination. This will include information about project success and areas where improvement is needed; (2) Development of annual and final reports to IMLS; (3) Dissemination of findings through conference presentations and publications in the professional literature in an ongoing manner throughout the grant duration. The PI/co-PI are experienced scholars, and they will present project results annually at professional conferences of agencies like the ALISE, ASIS&T, SAA, ALA, and PLA, amongst others. In addition to the reports for IMLS, PI/co-PI will prepare articles for reputed LIS journals in an ongoing manner to report project progress. Further, the College/School information officer will prepare press releases every six months and feature stories

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for the news media. A one half-time graduate assistant will be hired to develop an *SJ4A* web page and keep it updated, in addition to assistance in other grant activities. This website will contain information about the program to be used for recruitment and will grow as *SJ4A* progresses. Information about project partners and *SJ4A* students will be made available on this website. *SJ4A* students will be encouraged to present papers at the PLA, ALA, SAA, and other conferences (if they choose) where they will have opportunities to formally and informally present their *SJ4A* experiences. Funding has been budgeted to support students in this activity and additional research funds for presenting research at conferences is available through the UA Graduate School.

Phase 6 Post-Graduation Tracking of Career Development (January - July 2025): Once *SJ4A* students graduate, monthly online meetings with the *SJ4A* faculty will help tracking of career development at their place of work. We will also plan collective online meetings with the 12 BIPOC graduates to support their post-graduation professional growth, continue mentoring, and discuss ways to overcome challenges as well as identify opportunities through collaborations and participation at professional conferences. The cohort will form the *SJ4A Alumni Committee* to ensure the project's sustainability (once funding is over) in integrating its goals/objectives/activities with future students into the program (e.g., the *SJ4A* graduates serving as practitioner-mentors to future students). This time will play an important role as the cohort bridges and negotiates transitions and new roles based on their individual circumstances. It will integrate reflexivity in helping the *SJ4A* graduates develop career growth and resilience as professionals in their workplace. Conversations with employers will be included as deemed relevant. Future mapping of career paths and benchmarks over 1-3-5-10 years might also emerge to identify immediate, short term, and long-term impacts. Possible integration of social justice and inclusion activism in the existing archival studies concentration at the UA SLIS might be another opportunity that could provide the framework for similar training in the future and help measure the impact of this project. Participation in the *Post-Graduation Tracking of Career Development* is a required component of the program. The budgeted stipend will provide participants with funding for participating in this activity. These meetings, occurring no more than once a month, will be scheduled around the student graduates' schedules, with a sensitivity to the professional demands on their time. Additionally, *SJ4A* graduates will be invited to continue to participate in ongoing research, including conference presentations and published research outputs. This activity will also provide an added value to the *SJ4A* graduates, in the form of ongoing mentorship and professional counseling.

Key Personnel & Strategic Collaborations: The UA SLIS PI/co-PI [Bharat Mehra (Professor & EBSCO Endowed Chair in Social Justice) and Robert B. Riter (Assistant Professor; Marie Drolet Bristol-EBSCO Endowed Professor; Program in Archival Studies Coordinator)] will strategically collaborate with multiple archives-related agencies to facilitate all the grant activities integral to its work plan success and implementation. These include committed six *SJ4A* partners (e.g., ADAH, CSU, MC&OCF, NMSL, SAA leadership personnel); Advisory Board (ten state archives-related representatives) to provide feedback in all aspects of project planning, design, and operationalization; *Practitioner-Mentoring Board* (12 members, one for each student) will assist in situating grant and course experiences to the professional work settings; and others from national, regional, state-level, and local settings. Many have indicated commitment if the proposal is funded; others will be elicited moving forward. All external *SJ4A* stakeholders have been selected based on their professional expertise related to the topics of the proposal, roles they play in professional networks, possible impact in the field, and strong interest in the project's success and implementation. [see List of Key Project Staff and Collaborators]. PI: Dr. Bharat Mehra's action research explores diversity and intercultural issues in LIS and furthers social justice to meet the needs of minority and underserved populations in the development of community-based information systems and services. In his role as principal investigator/program director, he brings past experience in leading multiple IMLS-funded grants to further social justice, community development, and economic growth in the rural Southern and Central Appalachian region [43]. Currently, he is serving as an advisory board member on three IMLS grants on related topics. co-PI: Dr. Robert B. Riter serves as coordinator of the UA SLIS Program in Archival Studies. He currently sits on the interim Board of the AERI and serves as President-Elect of the Association for Documentary Editing (ADE). He actively collaborates with Alabama community-based archives and is a partner to the BBRM and IHP. This work includes grant development and management support. As *SJ4A Partners and Advisory Board Members*, the following bring specific expertise and support: (1) Terry Baxter (Archivist, MC&OCF, Vice President/President-Elect, SAA). (2) Courtney Chartier (Director, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University; SAA President). (3) Eli Guinnee (State Librarian, NMSL). (4) Steve Murray (Director, ADAH). (5) Dr. Nancy Pack (Director, APLS); (6) Dr. Mario H. Ramirez (Head of Special Collections and Archives, CSU/SAA Council Member).

DIVERSITY PLAN

The entire *SJ4A* in its totality is conceptualized and structured around diversifying the archives-related professions. *SJ4A* will train community-embedded social justice archives-related professionals who are BIPOC, with an emphasis on: 1) Recruiting a diverse cohort of paraprofessionals from racial/ethnic underrepresented populations, focusing on mentorship, training, and community engagement. 2) Preparing emerging professionals for working with diverse constituencies, including the skills necessary to assess underserved community's needs and develop/implement workable archival solutions that generate relevant social justice outcomes [44]. *SJ4A* responds to critiques of whiteness in the archives-related professions through intentional recruitment and mentoring of participants from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds. These students will diversify archival practice and develop archival services capable of supporting diverse constituencies [45, 46].

PROJECT RESULTS

Impact: *SJ4A* will serve as a pilot case example in cohesive curriculum integration drawing on social justice and inclusivity, implemented in synchronization with an existing archives studies concentration. It will serve as a testbed for other pathways that can serve as a model framework at the national level in the future. In this process, *SJ4A* students will develop archival studies and social justice competencies to meet the unique information needs in their environments and propose culturally appropriate services in their communities that promote fairness, justice, equity/equality, change agency, and community development. Training BIPOC social justice archivists-related professionals will meet an urgent need to diversify the GLAM professions while also extending beyond traditional practice toward greater social and civic responsibility. *SJ4A* will have multiple levels of intersecting impacts: (1) **Community level:** *SJ4A* students who are BIPOC will be selected based on their existing paraprofessional roles in GLAMs with close ties to diverse communities; their student training and course deliverables will be contextually tailored to uniquely impact communities embedded across the country [not only at big institutions]. They will apply much needed social justice-related skills to provide better services as a result. (2) **Diversifying archival-related studies:** Not only will the *SJ4A* students as BIPOC individuals contribute towards a more equitable representation in the white-centered professions, however, as *SJ4A* alumni (once they graduate) they will attract future cohorts from underrepresented backgrounds for sustainability over several years. (3) **Integrating social justice in the professions:** Social justice intentionally weaved through the archival studies concentration will serve as a model for GLAM professions to go beyond current practice and make an impact outside their privileged workplace settings. (4) **Educational program level:** *SJ4A* students will interact and disseminate their testbed experiences of curricular links between archival studies and social justice with non-*SJ4A* students who will spread knowledge about these intersections in their own settings (5) **National level:** *SJ4A* students will have national impact as they continue to participate in national, regional, and local conferences (based on individual choice) to share their experiences in integrating social justice in archives-related work towards achieving tangible outcomes in their communities. (6) **Institutional level (for the employers):** *SJ4A* will benefit the employers and institutions in extended impact of including BIPOC graduated employees with social justice skills and developing tangible deliverables tailored to their communities' needs. (7) **Personal level (for the *SJ4A* students):** *SJ4A* students will achieve their career goals and continue mentoring future professionals (based on individual choice).

Sustainability: *SJ4A* will affirm the reputation of a well-established and highly regarded MLIS program (with its strong online degree program) in the field of LIS, enabling the UA SLIS in competitive recruitment to attract talented students interested in intersections between archival studies and social justice. Post-graduation career tracking and forming an *SJ4A* alumni cohort will assist in attracting future students. At the School level, this will ensure sustainability based on making and extending professional connections with local, regional, and national archives-related professionals. *SJ4A* will also be able to provide the School testbed experiences in archival studies and social justice applications towards meeting the needs, wants, and expectations in external communities. At the degree level, *SJ4A* will expand the role of archives-related professionals in applying archival and social justice competencies to address unique circumstances in diverse communities. *SJ4A* graduates will share that perspective with other students via formal and informal activities and events, who will in turn take that knowledge of social justice activism into their jobs. *SJ4A* students will thus serve as role models for other aspiring archives-related professionals from different communities interested in applying social justice competencies towards community building in their localities. Upon graduation, they will further sustain their efforts to support recruitment and mentoring of future cohorts interested in making extended impacts towards social justice agendas in their workplace and embedded communities (based on individual choice).

Training of Community-Embedded Social Justice Archivists [SJ4A]

Digital Product Form

Type: What types of digital products will you create?

The main project products (from teaching, research, and evaluation spread over six phases in the grant, see proposal for details) can be demarcated into at least four categories of digital products created during the grant duration and include: (1) The SJ4A project website (making content freely available). (2) Social justice advising and mentoring materials (following IRB protocols for human subjects). (3) Course syllabi and course content (selectively made available via the project website). (4) Published papers associated with the SJ4A project and recording conference presentations [when applicable] and associated presentation materials.

We might use a variety of ways to represent these datasets, representing in open access online repositories hosted at the lead project institution, published in summary or thematic analytical reports in peer-reviewed journals/books, visualized through diagrammatic and GIS-based software, etc. These and all content on the project website, including links to SJ4A resources, social justice and mentoring materials, published papers, and conference presentations will be licensed with a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) license. Digital audio/video recording strategies (e.g., via zoom for the synchronous online classes) will help archive the live sessions. The PI/co-PI and project participants will create all of the digital content. The services and tools used to create the digital content might include: Microsoft Office 365, Adobe Creative Cloud, Qualtrics, etc. The digital content will be formatted to widely accessible standards which adhere to responsible digital preservation practices. These formats include: DOCX, PDF, PPTX, HTML, and MP4. Word, PDF, jpeg, excel, mpeg, etc. The quality standards will be high to ensure their usability freely available online.

Availability: How will you make your digital products openly available (as appropriate)?

All the grant materials (including the research and teaching content) will be presented on a website freely available for selected content to the public (open source, Creative Commons license). These datasets and findings (including grant evaluation and assessment materials) will be summarized and published in peer-reviewed journals/books and presented in conferences. The PI/co-PI will attempt to publish papers in open-source journals and will upload preprints to the University's publicly accessible institutional repository. University computers and servers will be utilized with provided software (e.g., Adobe Acrobat, Zoom, Blackboard, etc.) to create, develop, and archive the content. Robust digital audio/video recording strategies will help archive the sessions. The various formats that will be used and strengthened to maintain integrity of the originally created materials. The recordings of the synchronous online classes will be behind a password-protected firewall.

Access: What rights will you assert over your digital products, and what limitations, if any, will you place on their use? Will your products implicate privacy concerns or cultural sensitivities, and if so, how will you address them?

The University of Alabama will not assert any ownership rights over the digital products and materials created and developed from the grant activities. There will be no conditions imposed on their access and use as we present the materials on our project website. There will be no prohibitive terms or conditions of use or access. The research content will be presented on a website freely available to the public (open source, Creative Commons license). The University of Alabama agrees that all content created for the project will be licensed as CC BY-NC 4.0. The research will follow protocols established by

the Institutional Review Board at the University of Alabama for human subjects with respect to privacy, anonymity of participants, cultural sensitivities, and confidentiality of responses. There are no anticipated privacy concerns, no necessary permissions or rights and no potential cultural sensitivities regarding the digital products created by the project. Digital content, resources, and assets created during the course of the project will be made available to the public through an accessible website. The co-PI/PI will work with the UA Office of Information Technology, Technology Accessible Team to ensure that all published content adheres to recommended practices, including appropriate captioning of content. Project website will make research materials developed during the grant freely available for selected content to the public. Peer-reviewed conference proceedings, books, and journals will document the project experiences and findings. Efforts will be made with publishers of these peer-reviewed venues to make them openly available online after minimum time.

Sustainability: How will you ensure the sustainability of your digital products?

SJ4A content will be hosted on a publicly accessible project website. Descriptive titles and headings will increase the findability of this content. Content hosted on the UA Institutional repository will be searchable through keywords. The digital assets created during the course of the project will be hosted on the University servers, including preservation backups. Research outputs will be stored in the University institutional repository. University computers and servers will be utilized with provided software (e.g., Adobe Acrobat, Zoom, Blackboard, Weebly, etc.). The PI/co-PI do not anticipate significant quality control challenges and risks. The PI/co-PI will serve as the final inspector on all digital products and determine when resources are ready to be added to the website or submitted for publication. They will also regularly review the content to detect any access errors. Additionally, copies of the content will be maintained on the University backup servers. University of Alabama's computers and institutional servers will be utilized to host (store, archive) digital materials created on the project website. We will ensure that the sustainability of the web content is maintained for at least three years (if not more) after the duration of the grant. The publications will be in peer-reviewed journals/conference proceedings that will make the articles reporting on the grant experiences available for as long as possible. We will use software (e.g., Adobe Acrobat, Zoom, Blackboard, etc.) to create documents that have a strong reputation of maintaining integrity of the materials in their original formats, limited corruption of files, etc. The University of Alabama's servers and the university's infrastructure/resources will safeguard from cyberattacks and provide mechanisms for strong protection of stored, archived, and hosted research data and website content into the future. Microsoft products and digital audio/video recording strategies will help create and archive the sessions and ensure usability over a sustained period of time. High quality control plan towards sustainability of the digital products into the future includes ongoing assessment, evaluation, and decision-making during the grant duration itself to ensure excellent quality control. The digital content will be hosted on the University of Alabama server and all data will be collected and stored in a password-protected computer located in the PI's office for at least five years after the grant is over. The research will follow protocols established by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Alabama. The documentation will be stored in password protected computers and servers located in PI's office. The dissemination of research findings will take place throughout the during of the grant and afterwards presented in peer-reviewed conferences and published in peer-reviewed journals and books to have lasting impact on the world. A discussion of the data management plan will be a standing agenda item at the monthly project team meetings. We will ensure compliance by maintaining a log of digital assets, a publication schedule, and an accessibility audit schedule during which PI/co-PI will evaluate the continued availability and accessibility of published digital outputs. See project design in grant application.

Training of Community-Embedded Social Justice Archivists [SJ4A]
Organizational Profile

The University of Alabama's (UA) mission is to advance the intellectual and social condition of the people of the state, the nation and the world through the creation, translation and dissemination of knowledge with an emphasis on quality programs in the areas of teaching, research and service. UA is a strong advocate of promoting collaboration and interdisciplinary research initiatives that involve faculty, students, industry and community from across campus, from across the state and from around the world. The University is committed to:

- Undergraduate education that produces socially-conscious, ethical and well-rounded leaders who are grounded in their subject matter and capable of controlling their own destinies.
- Graduate education that is deeply vested in subject matter knowledge, professional content, research skills and creative activity.
- Public outreach and service that is held in the highest regard and fosters impactful public engagement to enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Alabama, the nation and the world.
- Campus life that embodies collaboration, collegiality, respect and a culture of inclusivity.

Located in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, UA has an enrollment of 38,320 students. The freshman class includes 281 National Merit Scholars, bringing the total number of currently enrolled National Merit Scholars to 940. UA is recognized by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education as an R1: Doctoral University with very high research activity.

The University of Alabama is one of three campuses in The University of Alabama System, all of which are governed by The University of Alabama Board of Trustees. The University of Alabama System includes The University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa), The University of Alabama at Birmingham and The University of Alabama in Huntsville. The System is governed by a self-nominating board of 15 elected and two ex-officio members. The primary function of the board is to determine the major policies of the system.

UA's Division of Community Affairs helps achieve our overall mission to advance the intellectual and social condition of the people of Alabama through innovative programs that connect teaching, research and service in ways that improve the quality of life for individuals and communities. The success of the Division comes from the synergism resulting from a major research University joining forces with communities to address issues of major concerns in such areas as health, education, the environment, race and cultural relations, poverty, religion, science and the economy. Community Affairs provides leadership and opportunities for students and faculty from all over campus to form partnerships that advance the field of community-engaged scholarship in the city, state, nation and the world.