

# Mellon Foundation

Humanities for All Times

## Proposal Narrative

### Project Abstract

*Humanities for Our Times: From Epistemologies and Methodologies to Liberatory Creative Practices and Social Justice*

Colorado College (CC) seeks funding to support professional development for humanities faculty engaged with our newly implemented General Education (GE) curriculum and ongoing work towards becoming an antiracist institution. Faculty development will focus on expanding innovative and impactful course offerings in two critical learning categories: *Equity and Power* and *Creative Processes*. Funding will provide faculty with a range of opportunities focused on course design, pedagogy, and antiracist praxis with the aim of supporting the following endeavors: two *Equity and Power* summer seminars; a year-long *Creative Processes* seminar series with speakers, workshops, and an online and open-access published component; an academic conference open to non-CC faculty; and a retreat focusing on antiracist pedagogies, social justice, and empowerment. Students who take these new courses will also be eligible to apply for grants to support social justice work based on humanities methods.

We recognize the myriad ways in which white supremacy has shaped our institution and have been taking steps to work our way out of its grip. Our GE requirements were developed after a 2015 student petition challenged the faculty to undertake thoroughgoing curricular reform focused on DEI concerns. In 2018, following an external review of racism at CC, we made the commitment to become an antiracist institution. At this pivotal historical moment, our students are demanding an education that will empower them to make social change. CC faculty recognize the central importance of the humanities to help students identify, understand, and solve the systemic problems of racism, injustice, and oppression. This work demands that each of us reflect critically not just on how and why we create knowledge, but also on how and why we teach--and on the classroom environments we create. Centering these and related questions will position the Humanities Division, History Department, and interdisciplinary program faculty to make contributions to CC's GE curriculum that provide our students with a significant foundation to enact social change and create a more just, equitable, and liberating society.

### Rationale

The dominant claim in the mid-century American academy was that the humanities disciplines dealt with something called “the human condition,” a concept which has barely survived the critical scrutiny from scholars of postmodernism, Critical Race Theory, postcolonialism, and intersectionality. Where does the debris of an idea of a secular universal human being (gendered cis male and raced white) that emerged during the European Enlightenment era—uninflected by the particularities of history, identity, and

culture—leave the humanities now? Our project proceeds from a critique of this ahistorical way of thinking about the humanities that calls for a nostalgic resurrection of universal, transcendent qualities, characteristics, and concepts that would be in tension with current analyses of systems and structures of injustices and oppression. We also recognize and embrace the legitimate, rational critiques of Critical Race Theory and intersectionality that are not purely polemical and sensationalized (e.g. Jennifer C. Nash’s *Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality*). Our project will take these critiques seriously, inquiring how the gifts and challenges of Critical Race Theory and intersectionality constantly change and evolve.

Social justice happens in classrooms as well as in the streets and courtrooms, and CC’s Block Plan—in which students take and professors teach a single class at a time for 3 ½ weeks— places us in a uniquely strong position to take advantage of liberal arts colleges’ commitments to educating the whole student by integrating theory and practice, practicing active learning in both the classroom and community, and bringing a critical lens to urgent questions of the day to empower students to be thoughtful, knowledgeable changemakers. This country’s complex history of white supremacy--which includes the afterlife of slavery and settler colonialism as well as physical and epistemic violence--demands that we develop strong, informed critical thinking and creative processing skills in our students that they can bring to bear on questions of social inequality and structural and systemic oppressions. This intellectual work is a necessary foundation for meaningful participation in social change movements and on the social justice front. Our students must learn how to simultaneously dismantle aspects of academic disciplinary traditions and practices that exclude and dehumanize while also recognizing and building on the humanistic approaches that are empowering and liberatory. To do so, our faculty must have opportunities to explore “otherwise” possibilities and alternative approaches to conventional research methods, conventional analysis, and conventional academic writing.

Our primary goal is to empower faculty to design relevant, engaging humanities courses that both attract significant student interest because they speak to our students’ explorations of antiracism and social justice and fulfill the *Equity and Power* and/or *Creative Processes* GE requirements. Now more than ever, the problems facing U.S. society need traditional and new humanistic questions, methodologies and analyses. When surveyed, faculty members gave us several examples of what this could mean. One faculty member, for example, asks students to close read, and then “remix” and perform, Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. First, students learn about “historical practices and critical developments of race and gender theories and read the plays contextualized through a variety of critical lenses, both academic and pop cultural, that model engaging discussions of inequality with respect to race, gender, and class.” Then students “explore their own positionality vis-à-vis the play by staging it for a contemporary audience, developing a first-hand understanding of how to do so in a way that foregrounds social justice concerns.” Another faculty member shared an assignment for a unit on Digital Liberal Arts. First, students read and discuss Safiya Umoja Noble’s *Algorithms of Oppression*. Then, they run their own Google searches anchored in a particular humanities discipline, close read and critique the search results, and conceptualize an anti-oppressive Digital Liberal Arts project that would contribute to the ongoing project of decolonizing the humanities.

BIPOC and other humanists from marginalized and oppressed peoples have long traditions of using the generation and dissemination of knowledge as well as interventions into dominant epistemologies as tools

in the struggle for social justice and inclusion. It is vital that we offer a rigorous range of *Equity and Power* courses that are rooted in humanistic traditions and methodologies, as humanistic modes of inquiry offer powerful strategies to empower students to be changemakers. As one faculty member explained, “humanistic methodologies require close observation, listening, stillness, re-visiting; social justice objectives greatly benefit from a deep understanding of prior movements, activism, and expressive forms. In order to work towards social justice we need to understand the contexts and perspectives that inspired such movements and be attentive to the circumstances that created the need for justice. How did the patterns of injustice arise? How are they perpetuated? And, by whom? What is at stake in shifting these patterns? Humanistic practices are attentive to nuanced and specific instances of injustice as we examine closely, attending to slight shifts (in language, color, sound, naming, etc).”

The curricular goals for *Equity and Power* courses are that “students will gain an understanding of social, political, cultural, epistemological and/or economic forces that have produced and/or now sustain multiple forms of inequalities and their intersections; students will identify, analyze, and evaluate the ways in which individuals and groups have unequal experiences, social positions, opportunities or outcomes based on the intersections of race, indigeneity, caste or class, citizenship, gender, gender identity, sexuality, size, (dis)ability, religious practices, belief systems, or other dimensions of difference; and students will seek to identify and challenge their implicit biases and assumptions while learning to participate respectfully and productively in potentially uncomfortable discussions about equity and power and their position in relationship to others.” Humanistic questions and methodologies across disciplines and canons share particular characteristics. Primary, of course, is the rigorous and evolving interrogation into what it means to be human and experiencing the world through space, place and time. In humanistic traditions, to be human is to make meaning and seek beauty. Western modern and postmodern humanistic modes of inquiry, unlike the natural sciences and the non-humanistic social sciences, center human consciousness and agency in their modes of inquiry, thus providing a grounds and framework for particular social justice claims and strategies--from the power of narrative to both reveal and create identities and histories to the interrogation of moral and ethical imperatives. Many humanistic traditions also privilege rationality. As one colleague has offered, “the Socratic method that underlies philosophic and humanistic inquiry assumes two fundamental premises that are crucial for the pursuit of social justice. First, it begins from a place that does not think it knows what crucial concepts like ‘person’ and ‘justice’ mean, and second, refuses to accept proposed meanings without rational argument. It is this simple but powerful hermeneutic method that has been used over the centuries to expose irrational prejudices, such as those which denied personhood and justice to non-Caucasian persons.” Humanistic methodologies are complex and diverse enough that they also include approaches that critique Western privileging of rationality and supposedly objective arguments, acknowledging that the human world of cultural and epistemological diversity contains multiple logics and ways of generating meaning. Introducing students to the variety of inroads that humanistic questions and methods offer to illuminate the most urgent questions of the past and present gives them powerful analytical tools that prepare them to be the changemakers that most of them aspire to be.

The curricular goals for *Creative Processes* courses are to “ask students to engage with research, texts or other sources that provide a context for understanding creativity; involve students in a first-hand creative experience, such as a form or forms of creative expression or problem-solving using creative modalities, and engage processes of collaboration, experimentation, and/or iteration; provide opportunities for

students to reflect on their own creative experiences and connect them to their critical or contextual understanding of creativity; prepare students to bring knowledge and experience of the creative process to their subsequent courses at CC.” The generation and interpretation of creative processes is at the heart of many humanities disciplines, including music, art history, art studio, literary studies, film studies, theatre, dance and aesthetic philosophy. All humanities disciplines provide students with insights into the transformative power of their own and others’ creative production. Our aim in the projects for which we are seeking funding is to explicitly tie these learning outcomes to CC’s antiracism commitment and students’ development as changemakers on the social justice front. The courses developed through the Mellon funds would foreground communities of color in both the course content and associated activities. While *Equity and Power* courses are their own category, they may also carry a *Creative Processes* designation. Creative research practices and knowledge mobilization can find the nuanced intersections that promote multidimensional narratives of communities of color. As faculty develop these courses, they can then teach what they are practicing and involve students in their research. Furthermore, students who take these courses will have the opportunity to apply for grants to work with faculty on a social justice project of their own design that draws on the creative humanities methods they learned about in class. The results of this work will be transformational for the college and have ramifications not just for the newly-developed courses, but for every course that faculty teach.

Introducing such an ambitious and innovative GE curriculum has demanded that faculty design a critical mass of new courses that meet the new curricular goals. Many individual faculty at CC are already deeply engaged with issues of equity and power, and several are leaders in their fields in deconstructing and decolonizing their disciplines. However, we believe there is great value in embarking on such work collectively, producing generative conversations and strategically developing a robust set of curricular offerings. Creative pedagogies prioritize students’ voice and cultural identities, giving students power to explore their lived experiences. Creative methods authentically honor different ways of knowing and learning. With these requirements, CC is uniquely situated to explore the intersections of creative and inclusive teaching. At this early stage of implementing our new GE curriculum, it is thus extremely important that we provide opportunities for developing these courses so we can include as many faculty members as possible in these conversations.

The activities we propose are structured around the following questions:

- How can we continue to critically examine the histories, narratives, methods and theories that structure our disciplines under an antiracist lens, and what impact does this examination have on course content, pedagogies, and student experience?
- How may humanistic questions, methods and creative practices be harnessed for liberatory projects?
- How can we continue to decenter whiteness in our respective humanistic disciplines so that we genuinely hear, teach, and critique the voices of previously marginalized scholars and creatives in their fields?
- How do we strengthen existing interdisciplinary programs and forge new interdisciplinary collaborations within the context of the college’s antiracism commitment?
- Can we still talk meaningfully about a universal “human condition” in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? What are the constraints and what are the opportunities offered by this concept, and how do they relate to the struggle for social justice against a landscape of political and cultural polarization?
- Are justice and other moral and ethical claims inherent in forms of humanistic analysis?

CC's new president, the former civil rights attorney L. Song Richardson, stated that she was drawn to CC because we are in the vanguard when it comes to antiracism and the liberal arts. This grant will enable us to take this important work to the next level. Dean of the Faculty Claire Oberon Garcia (PI) has gathered a diverse and talented team of permanent faculty at all ranks to ensure the success of this project. Key team members are Nene Diop, Assistant Professor of French; Steven Hayward, Professor of English & Director of the Journalism Institute; Jameel Paulin, Assistant Professor of Art; Natanya Pulley, Assistant Professor of English and Creative Writing; Kris Stanec, Senior Lecturer in Education & Faculty Research Fellow (permanent faculty); and Project Coordinator, Chet Lisiecki, Assistant Professor of German Studies. While these faculty were hired into different departments, their approach to teaching and scholarship is deeply interdisciplinary. The diversity among the pre-tenure faculty members in particular is the direct result of CC's antiracism and DEI work. The College not only attracted these faculty members, but has also demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting and retaining them.

## Plan and Schedule

### January-May 2022: Enrolling Faculty and Grant Applications for Course Development

We will share information about the grant with faculty in the Humanities Division, History department and interdisciplinary programs and begin organizing ***Equity and Power Seminars*** for Summer 2022. A competitive process will enable faculty to apply for funding to design *Equity and Power* and *Creative Processes* classes. All interested faculty will submit proposals based on a preliminary idea for a new course and must commit to participating in the ***Equity and Power Seminars*** and/or the ***Creative Processes Seminar Series***. These seminars focus explicitly on foregrounding humanistic questions, modes of inquiry, methodologies and critiques of disciplinary canons from a perspective that decenters whiteness and focuses on the knowledge production, dissemination and leverage of knowledge to support liberatory practices of scholars and creative practitioners of color. Proposals will be due by March 15, 2022, with a second round of proposals due by November 15, 2022. All proposals will be reviewed by the Key Team Members under the direction of the Project Coordinator, as they are the most familiar with the goals and intentions of the grant. This group will meet in January 2022 to create a detailed rubric for evaluating the proposals. Only proposals that explicitly outline the relationship between humanities approaches, knowledge production, and social justice will be awarded grants. Faculty will then be expected to offer the new class in the 2022-2023 and/or 2023-2024 academic year(s).

### June-July 2022: *Equity and Power* Summer Seminars

We will hold 2 *Equity and Power* seminars, each of which will run for 3 weeks. These seminars will focus on major works that cross disciplinary boundaries and align generally with three critical learning categories that are part of our GE curriculum. Week 1 will focus on "Analysis and Interpretation of Meaning," Week 2 will focus on "Historical Perspectives," and Week 3 will focus on "Creative Processes." Faculty may participate in one or both seminars, which will be non-hierarchical; inclusive of all identities, abilities, backgrounds, and ranks; and accessible to those who cannot be physically present on campus or attend every session. We are seeking funding to give participants stipends, cover the cost of lunch and refreshments, and award grants to those who need to pay for child- or eldercare to participate.

**Seminar #1: Foundational Texts of New Humanistic Traditions and Approaches.** Faculty will read, revisit, and discuss foundational texts that represent and give voice to historically marginalized and silenced perspectives. Readings will focus explicitly on anti-oppressive interrogations of humanities traditions, with an emphasis on antiracism. Discussions will focus on the past and present influence of these texts on various humanities disciplines, theories, and methods. The reading list may include works such as W.E.B. DuBois's *The Souls of Black Folk*, James A. Porter's *Modern Negro Art*, Edward Said's *Orientalism*, Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic*, Paulette Nardal's *Awakening of Race Consciousness*, Suzanne Césaire's *The Grand Camouflage*, and extra-institutional critical work produced by a diversity of authors and practitioners before the 21st century.

**Seminar #2: Opening New Doors in the Humanities Disciplines.** Faculty will read and discuss several contemporary works that have provided (or seem poised to provide) major re-sets in humanistic fields of study around race, difference, equity, and inclusion. Texts may include Alexander Weheliye's *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*, James Edward Ford, III's *Thinking Through Crisis: Depression-Era Black Literature, Theory, and Politics*, or Dorothy Kim's *The Alt-Medieval: Digital Whiteness and Medieval Studies*.

Academic Years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024: Creative Processes Seminar Series

Beginning in the Fall semester of 2022, we will run two seminar series open to all humanities faculty. These series will focus on the intersections of *Equity and Power* and *Creative Processes*. Some faculty may choose to build on the discussions from the summer seminars in order to design a course that carries both the *Equity and Power* designation and the *Creative Processes* designation, while others may participate in these series in order to develop a new course that carries one designation or the other. In Fall 2022, the seminar series will be run by Assistant Professor Jameel Paulin (Art), and in Fall 2023 it will be run by Assistant Professor Natanya Pulley, who is being reviewed for tenure in AY 2021-2022 and whose rank in 2023 will likely be Associate Professor. As they are currently pre-tenure faculty, we recognize that they might need particular support in taking leadership roles in this project by offering these seminars. First, our messaging will emphasize the importance of these two seminars in the context of the larger, multifaceted project that is supported by a team and the project manager. Second, we will communicate that Drs. Pulley and Paulin are at the forefront of new ways of thinking about the humanities and its relationships to populations outside of the academy and their issues and lived realities. They are authorities in their fields, and we will make sure that communications about their leadership of these seminars reflect their activities and stature in their fields. The Dean of the Faculty and the Diversity & Equity Advisory Board (DEAB) are available to address and resolve any concerns raised by Drs. Pulley and Paulin in a timely manner.

**Academic Year 2022-2023: Social Justice, Art, Ethics, and Technology.** This is a series of speakers, workshops, and events to support conversations about the ethical use of technology in the humanities and its role in social justice movements that foregrounds creative processes and their role in addressing the many ethical and moral issues pertaining to the research, development, and deployment of cutting-edge technologies. Workshops and some events will only be open to humanities faculty but guest speakers and artists will also offer public events such as talks and exhibits that will be free and open to the entire Colorado College community. The growth and influence of social media platforms have highlighted yet

another area of contemporary life in which there are great power inequities. There are multiple layers of irony in the fact that many oppressed peoples have found digital technology a source of self-expression, community building and a tool for social change, yet many platforms and digital resources are controlled by white and capitalist powers. In support of this seminar series we will invite 2-4 visual artists and thinkers whose work builds bridges between social justice, ethics, and cutting-edge technologies, such as Sondra Perry, Shoshana Zuboff, Norah Zuniga-Shaw, and Ruha Benjamin.

“Social Justice, Art, Ethics, and Technology” will offer CC faculty and students access to internationally renowned scholars who are uniquely equipped to untangle the interdisciplinary, intersectional, and intergenerational nature of digital humanities methods. These methods are valuable tools for understanding the past decade’s scandals around mass surveillance, data mining, and predatory practices by multinational technology corporations through the lens of equity and power. For example, organizations like Livable Futures, led by Norah Zuniga-Shaw, combine humanities methods and collaborative creative practices with immersive technologies to address and critique the continuing global ecological crisis. Organizations like this can provide CC with a model for how to employ innovative and digital humanities methods in order to analyze issues of equity and power and both inspire and structure a social justice project. By inviting a wide array of speakers and organizations with a variety of creative interests, this series will provide a robust forum on creative processes, in terms of instruction, research, creative practice, and social justice activism.

**Fall 2023: Investigations of Creativity towards Inclusivity.** Creativity does not exist in a vacuum. Nor does imagination. Both are informed by the socio-cultural power structures around us. Therefore, engaging in creativity means recognizing that narratives, aesthetics, and art movements can and do affect how individuals are treated—and how we view groups of peoples. To engage in the creative process, then, is to participate in a politicized field. In order for students to pursue social justice or projects in social justice, they need to recognize how their ideas are shaped and when to re-evaluate a process of creation. Investigating creativity’s role in the humanities is part of this project—and our hope is that we can find a way to actively engage all of the humanities in this relationship between creativity and social justice.

This series will be guided by several key questions. How is creativity framed in the different humanities disciplines, and how does this inform our interaction with the arts on campus, in our community, towards our students’ futures? How might we expand our understanding of creativity across disciplines and outside of a settler-colonizer framework? Finally, how might we embrace a rhizomatic approach to including creativity throughout all disciplines in discernable ways in support of the creative process requirement? Through interactive workshops and a speaker series, the “Investigations of Creativity towards Inclusivity Project” will expand course offerings and institutional discourse on creativity in order to (1) bridge the study of creativity within the humanities and the practice of it within the Arts, (2) deconstruct approaches and definitions of creativity, and (3) expand our study of creativity beyond the humanities in meaningful ways. This series will culminate in a special issue of the online journal *Hairstreak Butterfly Review* and a blog focusing on the many endeavors funded by the grant. Working in collaboration with CC’s archivist Jessy Randall and Digital Liberal Arts specialist Dr. Jennifer Golightly, this series of exchanges and discussions will be archived at CC’s Tutt Library with the aim of creating an enduring online repository that can serve as a resource to colleagues both at CC and outside of it. While

our ACM Mellon Graduate Studies Fellowship will expire in 2022, we are committed to supporting and mentoring students who are interested in pursuing graduate degrees in the humanities, humanistic social sciences, and the arts. Thus, Dr. Pulley will invite such students to work with her on these projects, and any student compensation or support will come from already existing department budgets. We have reviewed and will adhere to the Foundation's Intellectual Property Policy.

The *Creative Processes* Seminar Series will include a capstone event featuring a marquee keynote speaker that brings together students, faculty, activists, and social justice organizations.

#### Spring 2023 and Fall 2023: Solicit Student Project Proposals and Award Student Grants

All students who take one of the new *Equity and Power* and/or *Creative Processes* courses will be eligible to apply for a Student Grant of up to \$1500 to work on a social justice project in the United States. Students may apply individually or as a team, and the faculty member who taught the course that inspired the proposal must approve and agree to oversee the project. In their proposal, students must outline specifically how they will employ humanities methods in their project. Ten projects will be funded, and the Dean of the Faculty will determine the grant recipients in consultation with the Key Team Members. All students whose projects are funded will be invited to present at the Academic Conference in June 2023. CC will provide additional funding for certain successful proposals as needed.

#### June 2023: Academic Conference

**“Humanities for Our Times: New Perspectives on Humanistic Approaches, Ethics, and Social Change”** will be a faculty conference held at CC featuring invited speakers and moderators in the humanities who are experts in their fields and have established reputations of creating synergy between their scholarly work and social change. In addition to workshops, panels, and roundtable discussions, students who have completed one of the new courses developed with the Mellon “Humanities For All Times” Grant will present on their experiences forging connections between their academic work in the humanities and student activism. The conference will also feature a keynote speaker whose life and work exemplifies the dynamic synergy between humanistic methods and anti-oppression commitments. This conference will address the grant’s aim to “clearly articulate the distinct aims and methods of humanistic analysis and demonstrate the importance of such for the social justice objectives to which students are committed.” Panels, talks, and workshops will focus on epistemologies and knowledge production, humanistic methodologies, liberatory creative practices, and social justice. We will aim for 250 participants from both CC and other institutions of higher education.

#### August 2023: Retreat for Grant Recipients and Organizers

**Beyond Antiracist Pedagogies: Reframing the Relationship between Humanities Methods in the Classroom and Social Justice.** This offsite retreat will occur over 1 ½ days and be open to all humanities faculty who participated in various dimensions of the grant. On day one, faculty will work with an outside facilitator to workshop and prepare new courses by discussing a) how to connect antiracist pedagogies to course content, b) how to center social justice in the humanities classroom, and c) how to create assignments that employ methods of humanities analysis to enact social change. On day two, faculty will draft suggestions to the General Education Review and Assessment Committee for the development of an assessment tool for *Equity and Power* and *Creative Processes* courses that will measure student progress on the learning outcomes, including how students are able to identify distinct humanistic methods and



conceptual frameworks and understand potential connections between humanistic methods and social change.

Academic year 2022-2023 and Fall 2023: Reflective Luncheons

Once per block, faculty will meet over lunch to discuss and reflect on the new courses they developed (or are developing). These will be unstructured opportunities to continue building community, and individuals can participate by sharing their experiences, asking questions, soliciting feedback, or just listening.

## Communication Plan

We will employ social media and a dedicated webpage on the CC website to promote events associated with the grant, some of which will be open to the community. Dr. Pulley and a team of students and faculty participants will create a blog focusing on what we have learned, both individually and collectively, through the various activities supported by the grant. We will feature new courses and scholarly activity on the homepage of the CC website. We will also invite a number of outside speakers, moderators, facilitators, and collaborators for the *Creative Processes Seminar Series* and the **Academic Conference**. We have reviewed and will adhere to the Mellon Foundation's Intellectual Property Policy.

The **Academic Conference** will be open to any humanities faculty from small liberal arts colleges, and we will circulate a CFP through traditional channels such as professional organization listservs. We will also promote the conference through the Associated Colleges of the Midwest, of which we are a member, and invite colleagues from these schools to attend. Dean of the Faculty and Chief Academic Officer Claire Oberon Garcia will write an article to be published in a relevant professional journal about the challenges and opportunities of using humanities methodologies and practices to support liberatory projects and the transformation of the liberal arts curriculum.

## List of Products

- At least 50 new and relevant courses that will support the *Equity and Power* and *Creative Processes* GE requirements; attract students to the humanities; and empower students to be changemakers, demonstrating how intellectual and creative work can support liberatory projects.
- The development of an assessment tool for these courses,
- New and ongoing collaborative faculty-student research projects, including creative projects, focused on antiracism, to be proactively shared with appropriate outlets in their discipline(s).
- A question on the all-college course evaluations of all humanities classes to assess a) how students are able to identify distinct humanistic methods and conceptual frameworks, b) how students understand potential connections between humanistic methods and social change, and c) how prepared they are to employ humanities methodologies for social justice goals.
- A student forum co-sponsored by The Butler Center, CC's multicultural center, where they can discuss the relationship between humanities methods and social justice.

## Explicit and Precise Account

Given CC's commitment to becoming an antiracist institution in 2018, and our implementation of a new GE curriculum in 2019, the timing of the Mellon "Humanities for All Times" grant could not be better. These two events are the result of decades of advocacy and agitation by members of the CC community, and there is a palpable energy around continuing to build on this work. We have sustained this energy through the pandemic, and we are ready to make even more significant changes right now. Thus, we have set a 2-year timeline for using the Mellon funds.

These funds will support faculty pursuing professional development and research opportunities in their respective humanistic disciplines' engagement with and reorientations around antiracism, equity and inclusion, and decolonization of disciplinary narratives and canons. Foregrounding the work of BIPOC scholars, public intellectuals, and social-justice advocates past and present, faculty will draw on critiques and studies of the liberatory potential of both the discipline-specific and shared features of humanities questions, modes of inquiry, and projects to design humanities courses that will prepare CC students to understand and change the forces that work to (re)produce social inequities and injustice.

The connecting thread between these activities is disciplinary development and enrichment, providing faculty with myriad opportunities to expand their ways of thinking about how different disciplinary narratives challenge and subvert systems of power. We project that approximately 50 faculty members will participate, which is more than half of the humanities faculty. This projection is based on several factors, including a) the high levels of participation among humanities faculty in antiracism development opportunities offered through the Office of the Dean of the Faculty and the Crown Faculty Center, b) the enthusiasm that humanities faculty have expressed about designing these courses and working with students on such important and timely issues, and c) the number of humanities faculty (well over 50) who developed courses as part of the 2011 Language Studies grant funded by the Mellon Foundation. With this many faculty participating, the effect will be transformational and the results will be tangible. Faculty will attend *Equity and Power* seminars, *Creative Processes* Seminar Series events, an academic conference, and/or a retreat on antiracist pedagogies and empowerment as pathways to generate ideas that triangulate the humanities, social justice, and creativity. These activities will be organized around faculty development and growth in thinking about the curricular goals of the *Equity and Power* and/or *Creative Processes* GE requirements, resulting in upwards of 50 new (and significantly revised) courses featuring relevant and antiracist reading lists, policies, and assignments, all of which will be available on our website. These courses will educate students about how and why humanities methods are integral to the struggle for social justice and liberation, and students will demonstrate what they have learned by designing a creative social justice project of their own, seeing it through, and sharing this work with their peers and faculty mentors.