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Cornell University Library and HBCU Library Alliance awarded collaborative Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant to create digital library

Ithaca, NY—Cornell University Library has been awarded a \$400,000 grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to partner with the Historically Black College and Universities Library Alliance in a digital collections production initiative that will lay the foundation for a future HBCU digital library.

During the course of the grant, librarians at Cornell University, led by principal investigator Peter Hirtle, will train selected HBCU librarians and archivists in techniques of digital imaging. They will also assist in the development of management strategies and policies needed for the development of a collaborative digital library. HBCU participants, with the assistance of project manager Ira Revels, will then implement their training by digitizing and making available on institutional websites a wide variety of records reflecting the history of HBCUs.

Cornell University Librarian Sarah E. Thomas commented: “This program enables the Cornell University Library to share its digital library experience with the HBCU Alliance librarians and to build on the foundation that Anne Kenney, Associate University Librarian, and others have laid in digital imaging and preservation workshops. We are pleased to have the support of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to extend the knowledge of best practices into the larger community.”

Loretta Parham, Chair of the HBCU Library Alliance Board of Directors, noted, “This grant and the partnerships fostered by it complement the purpose of the Alliance and, most importantly, build upon the strengths and legacies of HBCU institutions. It’s another step forward for all involved.”

The HBCU Library Alliance is a consortium that supports the collaboration of institutions dedicated to providing an array of resources designed to strengthen the libraries of Historically Black Colleges and Universities and their constituents. The purpose of the HBCU Alliance is to ensure the excellence in HBCU Libraries and the development, coordination and promotion of programs and activities to enhance member libraries.

Cornell University Library has a long history of success in digital library development and in providing continuing education programs. With funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the library has produced and made available in three languages a tutorial on digital imaging <www.library.cornell.edu/preservation/tutorial/>, and also offers workshops on digital preservation management <www.library.cornell.edu/iris/dpworkshop>.

Other partners in the project are the Southeastern Library Network and the Robert W. Woodruff Library of the Atlanta University Center. Both will work with the Cornell University Library to provide administrative, staffing, and logistical support for the initiative.