



SIUE project receives \$100K grant to provide more equitable futures

Promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in the study of humanities and social sciences is crucial now, more than ever, especially when facing challenges brought on by the pandemic. A new experiential learning and training program for 150 African American students at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Realizing Inclusive Student Engagement in the Digital Humanities (RISE-DH), is working to combat the challenges and provide a more equitable future.

Led by the SIUE College of Arts and Sciences Interdisciplinary Research and Informatics (IRIS) Center, the innovative programming has received a \$100,000 grant supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC).

“On campus and in our region, technology resources are not evenly distributed,” said principal investigator (PI) Jessica DeSpain, Ph.D., co-director of the IRIS Center. “Beyond the expense of and access to hardware and software, digital humanities has a long history of racist and exclusionary practices.”

Project co-PIs include Howard Ramsby II, Ph.D., distinguished research professor in the Department of English Language and Literature, Margaret Smith, Ph.D., research assistant professor of digital humanities in the IRIS Center, and Kristine Hildebrandt, Ph.D., professor in the Department



From left: Jessica DeSpain, Ph.D., co-director of IRIS center; Kristine Hildebrandt, Ph.D., professor in the Department of English Language and Literature and co-director of the IRIS Center; Howard Ramsby II, Ph.D., distinguished research professor in the Department of English Language and Literature; and Margaret Smith, Ph.D., research assistant professor of digital humanities in the IRIS Center. (SIUE photos)

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RISE-DH helps address the digital divide of people of color and the digital humanities. The program has three goals:

- To engage African American students in the study of Black literature and culture using digital humanities methods that will help them develop 21st-century skills and imagine careers in the humanities and social science
- To support incoming students who

are struggling to feel connected to the University in the wake of the pandemic

- To create equitable access to high-impact practices.

“The RISE-DH fellows will engage with four established projects, giving them the opportunity to learn more about the field of ethnography, linguistic archiving, community engagement, literature, and technical cultural remix,” said DeSpain.

Along with the established projects, RISE-DH will also have a peer

mentorship component to the program that will connect senior and incoming students on campus. The program will begin in fall 2022 with its first cohort.

The grant was awarded to 21 grantees whose projects and programs relate to and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. A full list of SSRC grants awarded is available at www.ssrc.org/programs/ssrc-neh-sustaining-humanities-infrastructure-program-ship/grantees/

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