

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE

STEP Committee

Technology Fee Application

Facilitating Student Research at the Center for Louisiana Studies

Title

John Sharp

Name of Submitter
(Faculty or Staff Only)

Center for Louisiana Studies

Organization

Title: Facilitating Student Research at the Center for Louisiana Studies Date: 7/7/2021
Name (Contact Person): John Sharp
Address: PO Box 40831, Lafayette, LA 70504
Phone Number: 21320 Email: John.Sharp@Louisiana.edu
Department/College/Org: Center for Louisiana Studies / College of Liberal Arts

ABSTRACT (250 words or less):

The mission of the Center for Louisiana Studies (CLS) is to promote scholarly investigation into Louisiana's rich cultures and heritage through acquisition, research, publication, and interpretation. Today, the Center for Louisiana Studies is made up of three complementary divisions: 1) UL Press is the world's largest academic publisher devoted primarily to Louisiana-related works, 2) The Programming and Special Projects Division engages the broader community through collaboration with other UL Lafayette departments and external agencies and organizations, as well as through free programming and lectures, and 3) The Research Division which houses the world's largest collection of Cajun and Creole folklore, field recordings, oral histories, and other folklife materials-a vast image archive, and other significant and one-of-a-kind collections, in addition to maintaining an active fieldwork schedule.

The Research Division serves as a student and public research center for ethnographic, folkloric, and historic information through the use of our in-house database and expertise. Additionally, we often train students how to conduct their own field recordings, loan the equipment, and houses the created artifacts in the CLS Archive. Currently, the computers, field recording gear, and scanners available to students and researchers are in desperate need of replacement. This grant application seeks **\$18,201.69** that will provide one large format scanner, five computers, five digital audio recorders, two iPads, a video podcast kit, four quality microphones, quality headphones, and associated peripheral items to improve student access to CLS holdings as well as provide up to date field recording equipment for student use.

Budget Proposal

1. **Equipment** \$ 6,475.00 (5 computers) Dell Optiplex 7000 enhanced with monitors
 3,199.90 (1 scanner) Epson Expression 12000XL large scale scanner
 699.99 (1 scanner kit) Epson Expression 12000XL transparency unit
 1,628.00 (1 iPad) 11 inch iPad Pro 1TB with Apple Care
 1,928.00 (1 iPad) 12.9 inch iPad Pro 1TB with Apple Care
 1,799.00 (1 kit) Padcaster Studio for iPad Pro
3. **Supplies** \$ 127.90 (10 cards) SanDisk 64 GB SDXC Memory cards
 138.00 (2 adapters) USB-C AV Multiport Adapters
 458.00 (2 mics) AudioTechnica 2050 Large Diaphragm Condenser Mics
 198.00 (2 mics) AudioTechnica AT 2020 Cardioid Condenser Mics
 1,549.90 (10 pairs) Beyerdynamic DT 770 Pro headphone kit
 1,149.95 (5 recorders) Zoom H4 Pro Digital recorder

TOTAL: \$ 18,201.69

Facilitating Student Research at the Center for Louisiana Studies

Purpose of grant and impact to student body as a whole

The Research Division of the Center for Louisiana Studies serves as a student and public research center through the use of our in-house database, which catalogs our vast holdings related to Cajun and Creole culture and Louisiana in general. Additionally, we often train students how to conduct their own field recordings, loan the equipment, and houses the created artifacts in the CLS Archive. Currently, the computers, field recording gear, and scanners available to students and researchers are in desperate need of replacement. This grant application seeks funds to provide the equipment and supplies needed to facilitate student research and fieldwork, which in turn will grow the holdings of the Center for Louisiana Studies and allow us to fulfill the stated mission to “promote scholarly investigation into Louisiana’s rich cultures and heritage through acquisition, research, publication, and interpretation.”

Proposal Description and Needs

The Center for Louisiana Studies is the oldest and best known of UL Lafayette's research centers, a reflection of the university's reputation as one of Louisiana's chief institutional sponsors of humanities research and activities. Founded in 1973, the Center's formation was part of a wave of scholarly interest in the study of the history and cultures of lower Louisiana, particularly the rich French, Spanish, African, and Native American colonial past and its links to the dynamic vernacular cultures of modern Louisiana. In its early days, the Center focused primarily on providing research tools and materials to academic historians. For instance, in the 1980s, the Center acquired and made available to scholars and the public a comprehensive microfilm collection of governmental records dating to the Spanish and French colonial era, opening new vistas for researchers intent on telling the still little-known story of the state's early settlement.

Over time, the Center diversified its holdings and expanded its mission, increasingly reaching beyond the academy to the broader public as well as a host of collaborators in both the public and private sector. Long before the term "public history" became popular, the Center positioned itself as a public-facing humanities institution intent on fostering dialogue and exchange between academic researchers and anyone interested in the history and culture of Louisiana. What began as a historical, document-based archive became a vast and continually growing audiovisual digital repository focused on the cultural heritage of south Louisiana, particularly the Cajun and Creole cultures for which the region is known. What started as small series of publications focusing on primary research documents for colonial historians evolved into one of the state's most dynamic regional publishing houses, The University of Louisiana at Lafayette Press (better known as the UL Press). And what began as a director and an administrative assistant grew to include a full unit with a revolving cast of affiliated researchers (the Center Fellows) in a variety of disciplines, including anthropology, history, geography, ethnomusicology, history, folklore, English, Francophone Studies, and more.

The Research and Archives Division houses the world's largest collection of Cajun and Creole field recordings, oral histories, and other folk life materials, as well as a vast image

archive focused on Louisiana history and culture, and other significant and one-of-a-kind collections. Archival holdings date from the early twentieth century and are available to student researchers and members of the public through a fully searchable digital in-house database. The Center serves as the official archival repository for a large number of partner institutions in the arts and humanities community of south Louisiana, such as the Festivals Acadiens et Creoles and the Rendez-Vous des Cajuns radio program, just to name two. The Research division also regularly partners with scholars at UL Lafayette to house Louisiana studies related audiovisual collections. An example of that is the "Recent Louisiana Disasters Oral History Project," directed by Dr. Liz Skilton in the UL Public History Department, which includes over 200 oral histories collected on Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the 2016 Floods, and the Lafayette Grand 16 Theater Shooting Incident. Instructors from English, Folklore, Modern Languages, Music, History, and the Honors Program have all deposited fieldwork conducted by students as part of their coursework in the Center for Louisiana Studies Archive over the years as well.

Budget Purpose and Justification

As with all computers, the hardware is only supported for a limited time- leaving a number of machines that cannot be updated to adhere to basic University operating system and security standards. For that reason (and the wear of years of use), five new computers (Dell Optiplex 7000 enhanced with monitors) are needed to replace broken and out of date Research station computers. Five pairs of the headphones listed (Beyerdynamic DT 770) will be used with these computers to ensure a quality personal listening experience for students while accessing audio and video archival materials without disturbing other patrons in the cramped CLS Research space. The Center for Louisiana Studies Archive is accessible by students and other researchers by visiting our offices in the Dupre Library, where they access our database and holdings via computers at one of six research stations. Of these work stations, three currently have non-operational computers, and the other three computers are several years old and are in constant need of maintenance in order to keep them in working order. When students come to do research, they must frequently be placed at a computer with work in progress by a student worker because of the limited number of machines that function properly. Without these much-needed replacements, students and researchers will be unable to access the Center for Louisiana Studies holdings for research, which is part of the CLS mission.

The five digital recorders (Zoom H4 Pro) and microphones (two AudioTechnica AT 2020s & two AudioTechnica 2050s) listed in the budget are needed to create four field recorder kits to loan out for students to do fieldwork. Two of the listed memory cards (SanDisk 64 GB SDXC) will go in each of the fieldwork kits and two cards will be extras. Four of the pairs of headphones listed (Beyerdynamic DT 770) will also be used in these audio kits to enable the interviewer to live monitor the sound being captured to ensure quality recording. All created content will be offloaded from the cards, added to the Center for Louisiana Studies Archive, and stored on Center for Louisiana Studies server. Due to limited opportunities through coursework to learn oral history and field work technique and limited access to quality recording gear, students are often referred to the Center for Louisiana Studies for guidance and to borrow equipment. After years of assisting students and faculty in this manner, the equipment we have on hand is damaged from loans, and the majority of it is broken beyond repair. Without this

much needed addition of four new field recording kits, the Center for Louisiana Studies will be unable to assist students with this objective, which is a part of our stated mission.

The iPad listed in the budget (11 inch iPad Pro) is needed to create a video podcasting kit to loan out for students to do fieldwork interviews and to create video podcasts for Center for Louisiana Studies content and events. The video podcast kit (Padcaster Studio) will be used with the 11 inch iPad and provides a portable podcast studio in a backpack (including the iPad frame, tripod, sunshade, greenscreen, remote control, teleprompter, and backpack) for video production with the iPad. The additional iPad (12.9 inch iPad Pro) is needed for use as a portable student work station for audio and video field recordings and to use at events to interact with students and the public. The adapters in the budget (USB-C Adapters) are needed to connect the machines to the network to offload created content to the Center for Louisiana Studies server, where will be stored. Without these iPads and video podcast unit, the Center for Louisiana Studies is unable to assist students and researchers with video fieldwork and the creation of video podcasts to showcase both their work and our archival holdings. With the addition of these materials, The Center for Louisiana Studies will gain up-to-date, user friendly technology to help students accomplish this objective.

The scanner listed in the budget (Epson Expression 12000XL) is needed for students, researchers, and staff to be able to scan larger format archival materials (such as non- standard sized paper, posters, and large photos) for electronic access and to scan student materials for possible addition to the Center for Louisiana Studies Archive. The transparency unit (Epson Expression 12000XL transparency unit) listed in the budget is needed for students, researchers, and staff to be able to scan photographic negatives of varying sizes for research and possible addition to the CLS Archive. Without this scanner and transparency unit, the Center for Louisiana Studies is unable to assist students and researchers with the digitization of larger format materials- both our current holdings and materials brought in by students. The Center for Louisiana Studies currently has no way to accommodate the scanning of larger size materials at a resolution that meets digital archival standards.

Projected lifetime of enhancement

The projected lifetime of this enhancement will be five to seven years.

Person(s) responsible for

- i. Implementation: John Sharp
- ii. Installation : John Sharp and Chris Segura
- iii. Maintenance: John Sharp, Chris Segura, and Alan Latour
- iv. Operation: John Sharp, Chris Segura, and students

Training (with qualifications)


This project will be completed in-house, supervised by Center for Louisiana Studies Assistant Director John Sharp as the Project Manager, and assisted by Archives of Cajun and Creole Folklore Archivist Chris Segura. Sharp and Segura will order the equipment and supplies, set up the recorders and microphones into loanable field kits, set up the iPad and Padcaster kit for use in the office as well as field, install the scanner for use, and set up the computers as research stations for students with help from College of Liberal Arts IT guru Alan Latour. All intake of new materials will be performed by Segura and Sharp, as well as all digital storage tasks. Sharp and Segura helped to establish the current digital archive which is accessed in-house and will help students to access the database as well as pull any physical materials needed for research. Both Segura and Sharp possess high levels of problem solving and technical skill with processing and preserving archival holdings for public access, have performed hundreds of hours of fieldwork, and have taught numerous students how to conduct interviews using active listening techniques.

To my knowledge, the Center for Louisiana Studies has not been the recipient of any previous STEP grants

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