

**Funding Proposal: History Department
Bridge Program Year 2
May 2023**

The History Department is soliciting funding and administrative support for the second iteration of its Bridge Program. The History Bridge Program is designed to recruit under-represented minority students into graduate studies in history. The department ran the pilot of this program in May of 2022, and it was a resounding success by every measure.

The rationale for this program is rooted in a will to mitigate stark inequities: our department currently has an enrollment of 4 (9.75%) African American graduate students, 3 (7.31%) Asian American and Pacific Islander students, 2 (4.87%) Native American students, and 0 (0%) Hispanic & Latinx students. These numbers have improved since last year, when we had 2 (4.35%) African American graduate students, 2 (4.35%) Asian American and Pacific Islander students, 1 (2.17%) Hispanic & Latinx student, and 0 (0%) Native American students. We are on a trajectory to diversify our graduate student body, but there is more work to do with regard to recruitment and retention.

If we turn our attention more broadly to the field of history, we see that the discipline has produced in recent years, as a percentage of all doctorates, 4.51% of African American doctorates, 3.16% Asian American and Pacific Islander doctorates, and 6.2% Hispanic/Latinx doctorates. The lack of representation of communities of color in our department negatively affects the scholarship we produce, the programs we build, and the education we provide—as a result of this lack of representation, our perspectives on the past are impoverished and our understanding of how to correct past injuries and to build just and equitable communities in the present and future is incomplete. Building on the success of, and the lessons learned from, the May 2022 Bridge Program we wish to continue to lay the foundation for under-represented minority scholars to enter the field of professional history and to acquire the skills they need to thrive there; furthermore, we wish to reflect on the barriers of entry into and success in history graduate program, and to transform our departmental practices by removing them.

The ten students who participated in the May 2022 Bridge Program are now juniors and seniors in college. Many of them are preparing their graduate school applications to submit in the coming months. Our faculty in history have remained in close contact with them and continue to assist them in their preparations for graduate study. Several of these students plan to apply to our graduate program. Below, we elaborate on a few key components of our plan for the 2023 History Bridge Program, highlighting new initiatives. Attached, we include a proposal for a daily agenda, a budget, and the students' exit survey from the 2022 Program.

Application Process: Prospective participants will send a one-page prospectus stating their academic/career goals and research interests; they will provide a transcript and one letter of recommendation from a history professor. Prospective participants should be juniors in college who plan to graduate the following academic year. They should have a GPA of 3.0 or higher and be at least 18 years of age. One new item we will include in the 2023 application is a question about the specific field of study that applicants are interested in pursuing—based on our experience last year, we learned that it would be an advantage to provide students with practice

writing and envisioning themselves as professional historians even at this early stage. By writing about their research interests and how they plan to pursue them further in graduate school, they will already be doing the work of preparing for the application process and they will be well positioned to participate in the kinds of discussions we encourage in the Bridge Program. This information will also assist us in selecting a cohort that can learn from the particular faculty research strengths we feature here at UTK.

We have budgeted for ten students to participate. Last year we welcomed ten students and it proved to be the ideal size for a seminar-like atmosphere and a cohort experience.

Just as last year, the application process for this program will be widely publicized through departmental mailers, individual email invitations, and social media blasts. We learned that social media and individual invitations with glossy posters received the most response from interested students. We have also remained in close contact with the faculty members who recommended students last year, and we will continue to work with them to send strong applicants our way. We will also hold Zoom information sessions on the program, and will invite participants from the 2022 cohort to speak about their experiences at these sessions.

Last year, three faculty members from UTK participated in an intensive workshop at the American Historical Association focused on building bridge programs. We learned there about the importance of sustaining close relationships with local HBCUs. Therefore, we plan to give priority acceptance to students from the history departments of Tennessee State University, North Carolina A&T, and North Carolina Central with whom we have built ongoing relationships. The application deadline will be March 1, with notification of outcome by March 15.

We are currently, though tentatively, planning for the 2023 program to take place during exam week, May 9-12. We chose this timing because it rests between the commencement dates at regional HBCUs and the time when students might be starting summer jobs.

Lodging: Participants will stay at the Graduate Hotel, 1706 Cumberland Avenue, in single-occupancy dorm rooms. We are invested in participants' emotional and material comfort while visiting our campus. For this reason, we have proposed to staff the Program with two graduate assistants from the history department. The role of the GAs will involve assisting participants in navigating campus, finding food, entertainment, the gym, and transportation. The GAs will also be point-persons for safety concerns, and will be equipped to assist students in all matters of mental and physical well-being. Their experience as history graduate students will also lend an additional, informal layer of depth and conversation about graduate school.

Stipends: We have budgeted for participant stipends, travel vouchers, and meal per diems because we recognize that the summer is generally a time when students may otherwise be employed full time. The necessity of full-time employment is one barrier to participation in a program such as this one and we wish to remove barriers where we can.

We have also budgeted for faculty and graduate student participation because we recognize the extensive labor required to implement this program during exam week. This program will take

considerable energy and attention in terms of planning as well as execution and follow-up and should be remunerated as a matter of equity and justice. We have budgeted for a faculty consultant in addition to a coordinator because the coordinator should be in frequent, robust consultation with other members of the department, in particular faculty members of color; their consultation time is valuable and should be remunerated.

Programming: Just as last year, the programming is focused on introducing participants to graduate school in history, inspiring participants to imagine themselves as historians working in and outside of academia, and facilitating their understanding of the application process, which can be a barrier to graduate training. We learned from our discussions last year that the students would appreciate a campus tour as well more information about funding, mental health resources to avoid burn out during graduate school, and more time with mentors. We have adjusted the program this year to address these topics.

Last year, one of the most beneficial panels was one with scholars who work outside of academia. This panel set the tone for the whole week, as it busted myths about what it means to be a scholar and emphasized how many ways there are to be a working historian. We plan to invite the same panel again—three PhDs in history who work in the fields of museum curation, the national park service, and civic leadership.

We also plan once again to cultivate mentoring relationships between students and our UTK faculty so that, even if participants do not wind up applying to or attending graduate school, these history BAs have contacts in the field. At the same time, these mentoring networks foster relationships between history majors from different universities and enable them to learn from one another about career prospects and possibilities, conference opportunities, and to deepen relationships around their shared interests. Our exit survey indicated over and over again that one of the greatest benefits of the Bridge Program was the close and supportive relationships built among history majors in different programs who are all interested in graduate school. We wish to replicate that close cohort experience.

Another vital aspect of programming is our introduction to the process of applying for a PhD in history. This process can be confusing and can deter students from even trying to apply to graduate school. We want to maximize their chances of applying successfully and of garnering financial support for their studies. Once again, we plan to offer workshops on how to find appropriate graduate programs, how to write a strong statement of purpose, how to prepare for the GRE, how to contact potential faculty mentors to discuss their research interest, selecting referees, and choose a writing sample—all the details of the application process about which few students have insider information.

Entertainment: Participants reported that some of the most enduring aspects of the 2022 Bridge Program were the informal moments in which they fostered a common experience and learned to become confident in their academic potential through relationship building. They reported that it was during the in-between times that they gained the most in terms of building supportive networks of trust—during meals and entertainment activities. Therefore, we want to replicate some of the most vital relationship-building aspects of the program. We will continue to host the evening cruise on the Tennessee River and Grad student night; this year, we will also throw an

evening pizza party after the opening reception to ensure that students are getting to know one another not as competitors for graduate stipends, but as members of a supportive cohort.

Sustainability: Our participants from the May 2022 Bridge Program have gone back to their universities and shared the news their experiences in Knoxville. One student from Texas will be participating in the American Historical Association's annual meeting as a panelist speaking about his positive experiences in our Bridge Program. Two students from North Carolina led a brown bag lunch at their university, where they discussed with other under-represented students the application process for graduate school and the specialized knowledge they gleaned from our Program. The word is spreading about the transformative experiences of participants in the UTK History Bridge Program. We hope to continue to promote the reputation of this program by offering it again next year, so that it becomes regarded among history departments throughout the nation as a unique feature of UTK.

When we applied for funding last year, we suggested that, for this program to be successful, it could not be a one-off. We need time to make adjustments and survey the outcomes. That suggestion stands. We ask that this pilot be funded for at least two more years, so that we can commit to building a clear and navigable pathway into the profession for under-represented minority students and so that we can foster trust with our colleagues at regional institutions. Our hope is that the Program's success will be clear after three years, and that it will be funded in perpetuity, that it will continue expand, potentially allying with other similar departments such as Africana Studies, and that it will become a nationally-revered program.

Measures of Success: We set the short-term goal of the 2022 Bridge Program as having 10 participants complete the entire program and respond with favorable feedback (measured by a 4 or higher on 5-point scale). We successfully met that goal, and we will issue our survey once again in 2023 to measure our success.

We can now issue a mid-term goal: after year three of the program, we aim for 60% of the students who are entering their senior year to apply to graduate school, and for at least 50% of them to apply to graduate school at UTK.

The long-term goal of the Bridge Program remains: to diversify the field of history by focusing on our graduate student body; this goal will be measured by enrolling under-represented minority students in numbers that reflect the population of the State, and of the Nation.

TENTATIVE SAMPLE ITINERARY

Tuesday, May 9: Welcome

- Staggered arrivals
- 5:00 pm: Campus Tour
- 6:00 pm: welcome reception in Student Union Executive Dining Room, 1502 Cumberland Ave, room 377

Wednesday, May 10: Introduction to the Profession and to Graduate Study

All daytime events will meet in Student Union, room 270. Evening event is at the Volunteer Landing Marina.

- 9:00-9:30: Participant and UTK Faculty Introductions
- 9:30-10:45 am: *Session 1: History as a Profession*
- 10:45-10:55 am: Break
- 10:55-12:35: *Session 2: Panel of Historians in the Field* (via Zoom)
Featuring: Dr. Jacqueline Imani, Dr. Kelli Mosteler, Dr. Crystal Moten
- 12:35-2:00 pm: Lunch
- 2:00-3:00 pm: *Session 3: What to Expect in Graduate School*

Featuring: Dr. Kristen Block and Dr. Sara Ritchey

- 3:00-3:10 pm: Break
- 3:10-4:40 pm: *Session 4: Graduate student panel*
Featuring: Malcolm Huang, Kiana Riles, Lily Sanders
- 6:00 pm: Volunteer Princess Sunset Cruise on the Tennessee River. Meet at Volunteer Landing Marina.

Thursday, May 11: Doing research, Sharing research

First event of the day is at Hodges Library. All other daytime events will meet in Student Union, room 270

- 9:30-10:45 am: *Session 5: Library Resources: what are they for, how can they help you?*
Meet at Hodges Library, Public Services, 1015 Volunteer Blvd.
Featuring: Professor Shaina Destine, MLIS
- 10:45-11:00 am: Break, walk to student union
- 11:00-12:15: *Session 6: Faculty Experiences in History*
Featuring: Dr. Beau Gaitors, Dr. Brandon Winford, Dr. Shellen Wu

- 12:15-1:15 pm: Lunch
- 1:15-2:15: *Session 7: Student Share Outs 1*
Featuring: Steven Bradford, Lee Tartaglia, Mario Sanchez Isabas, Trinity Young, Tia Ebony Sanders and history faculty
- 2:15-3:15 pm: *Session 8: Student Share Outs 2*
Featuring: Madison Fogle, Zaccheri Morra, Nia O'Bannon, Jonathan Glover, Nyami Harrison and history faculty
- 3:15-3:20 pm: Break
- 3:30-4:45 pm: *Session 9: Faculty break out mentoring sessions*
Dr. Brooke Bauer (Lee Tartaglia)
Dr. Beau Gaitors (Trinity Young, Tia Ebony Sanders)
Dr. Larry Perry (Nia O'Bannon, Jonathan Glover, Nyami Harrison)
Dr. Shellen Wu (Steven Bradford, Mario Sanchez)
Dr. Felege Yirga & Dr. Jacob Latham (Madison Fogle, Zaccheri Morra)
- 7:00 pm: Graduate Student Night on the Town at Maple Hall (bowling... bring socks!)

Friday, May 12: Demystifying the Application Process

All daytime events will meet in Student Union, room 270. Evening reception will be held at the East Tennessee Historical Society, 601 Gay Street

Featuring: Dr. Nikki Eggers, Dr. Tore Olsson, and Dr. Denise Phillips

- 9:15-10:45 am: *Session 10: Finding a Graduate Program*
- 10:45-10:55 am: Break
- 10:55-12:30: *Session 11: Choosing a Graduate Program*
- 12:30-1:30 pm: Lunch
- 1:30-2:00 pm: *Session 12A: The Statement of Purpose: what is it?*
- 2:00-3:00 pm: *Session 12B: Statement of Purpose Workshop*
- 3:00-3:05 pm: Small break
- 3:05-4:15 pm: *Session 13: Quantitative Materials: GRE & GPA*
- 4:15-5:00 pm: *Session 14: Other Materials: CV & writing sample*
- 5:00-5:20 pm: *Synthesis and Next Steps*
- 6:00 pm: Closing Reception at the East Tennessee Historical Society, 601 Gay Street

Friday, May 20: Departures

**Estimated Budget for Bridge Program in History
May 2023**

based on 10 student participants

**** denotes potential for in-kind donation or fee waiver**

NOTE: These numbers are rough estimates. Should this proposal receive support from the Dean's Cabinet, the Coordinator will work with the College's budgeting experts to develop a more precise budget.

Travel: [estimate based on last year's expenses] \$5,000
Lodging: [based on Conus rate] 102.00 X 12 X 4 nights = \$4,944.00
Materials: [printing and tote, UTK schwag bags] 15.00 X 10 = \$150.00**
Advertising: [design promotional materials] = \$300.00**
Application fee waiver: \$60.00 X 10 = \$600.00**
Meal per diem: \$56.00 X 10 = \$560.00
Participant stipend: \$250.00 X 10 = \$2,500.00
Welcome banquet: [Heartland Buffet for 30 + beverages]: \$500.00
Pizza night: [5 large pizzas from Brenz + sodas]: \$150.00
Departure lunch: [Classic Selection Sandwich Buffet for 30 + beverages]: \$500.00
Graduate assistantships in History: \$1200 X 2 = \$2,400.00
Graduate student panelist stipends: \$100 X 3 = \$300.00
Faculty stipend, coordinator: \$2,000.00
Faculty stipend, faculty consultant: \$500
Faculty stipends, research and mentoring: \$500.00 X 5 = \$2500.00
Professional Presenter Panel Stipend: \$500.00 X 3 = \$1,500.00
Entertainment evening 1: Volunteer Princess: est. \$40.00 per person (roughly 30 ppl) + beverages = \$2,500.00
Entertainment evening 2: Bowling night: [lane rental, shoes, food at Maple Hall]: \$900.00
Parking passes: [estimate, 5 @25 each]: \$125

Total: \$27,065.00
[with potential deductions: \$26,015.00]
[with graduate recruiting grant: \$24,000.00]

PROPOSED COST SHARING:

Graduate school: \$ 8,080

Participant stipends (\$2,500)

Welcome Banquet (\$500)

Lodging for participants (not including graduate assistants) (\$4,080)

College of Arts & Sciences: \$6660

Departure lunch (\$500)

Travel (\$5000)
Materials (\$150)
Advertising (\$300.00)
Parking passes (\$150)
Meal per diem (\$560)

Office of Diversity and Engagement: \$4,000

Professional presenter stipends (\$1,500)
Entertainment evening 1 (\$2,500)

Provost's Office: \$5,000

History Faculty stipends (\$2500)
Faculty stipend, coordinator (\$2,000)
Faculty stipend, consultant (\$500)

History: \$4,566

Entertainment Evening 2 (\$900.00)
Graduate assistantships (\$2400)
Graduate student stipends (\$300)
Graduate assistant lodging (\$816)
Pizza Night (\$150)