Semi annual performance report for award: HAA-258807-18

Due date: July 31 2018

Institution(s): University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras; Rio Piedras, PR
Title: Caribbean Diaspora: Panorama of Carnival Practices

Participant(s):
Blanca Ortíz (Grant Administrator)
Mirerza González-Vélez (Co Project Director)
Nadjah Rios-Villarini (Project Director)

Division : Digital Humanities
CFDA Number : 45.169

I. Accomplishments

Using academic and popular artifacts connected to Caribbean Carnivals, **Caribbean Diaspora: Panorama of Carnival Practices** is a long-term project aimed to interpret, analyze and curate archival materials related to carnival dynamics available in traditional and digital formats. At the present time, the project have developed one (1) planning session (March 2018, see Appendix B), two (2) hands on workshops (April and June 2018) and organized the second planning session that will take place Aug 1-3, 2018 (see Appendix C). Group meetings and working sessions have produced a preliminary design and prototype for an interactive website about the Caribbean carnival and its accompanying mobility of people, culture and ideas. During the sessions the team decided that the target population for this project is a general audience and that the main objective is to inform and educate about migration movements around carnival practices in the Caribbean with particular emphasis on the US territories (PR and USVI).

The work team also decided that the preliminary design should fulfill three main goals:
a. to showcase recovered materials from the Diaspora Project
b. to curate and revitalize existing materials from UPR library collections
c. to propose new digital experiences with these materials.

In collaboration with the Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC) the team also engaged in the recovering and preservation of existing archival materials from traditional repositories and digital projects, particularly those compiled by the Diaspora Project aimed to contribute to scholarship, teaching and public knowledge of the humanities and cultural connections among Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. These materials (120 openly online titles, 483 items within the titles, and 42 titles pending review to be open for access) are now available as an open-source digital collection that can be access online at http://dloc.com/diasporaproject.

In addition, all working sessions have been documented (videos, photos, research reports and meeting minutes) and resulting materials are been uploaded to a digital

platform .

For photos check: https://sites.google.com/s/1g2rp9_N-f5tg274qR9vv-YG76kSyi4KM/p/1tkU4DhInNHoP13luWxNeTXKha7NWV_Wz/preview

These materials will also provide data to produce a white paper with a blueprint that guided the designing process. A long-term goal of the project is to foster a digital humanities culture in campus. Documenting our research process is fundamental to achieve this goal.

II. Participants and Other Collaborating Organizations

1. Nadjah Ríos Villarini, Ph.D. University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus, College of General Studies
2. Mirerza Gonzalez Vélez Ph.D. University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus, College of Liberal Arts
3. Joel Blanco, Ph.D. University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus, Information Science Graduate School
4. Nora Ponte Cobo, Ph.D. University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus, College of Liberal Arts
5. Lowell Fiet, Ph.D. University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus, College of Liberal Arts
6. Laurie Taylor, Ph.D. Digital Scholarship Librarian; Digital Scholarship Director, Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC) University of Florida
7. Jenniffer Guiliano, Ph.D. Associate Professor in the Department of History and affiliated faculty in both Native American Studies and American Studies at the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis.
10. Mila Aponte, M.IS., library sciences consultant
11. Pablo Defendini, web designer
12. María Ordóñez, Director Puerto Rican Library Collection
13. Mayra Torres, Coordinator Digital Library UPR
14. Faviola Martínez, undergraduate student - research assistant
15. Gabriela Rivera, undergraduate student - research assistant

III. Challenges/Problems

The PI and CO-PI have experienced multiple challenges in the last six months related to the administration of the granted funds. The first one relates to access to vital research resources and support personnel. At the present time Puerto Rico's finances are under the oversight of a federally appointed board. Consequently, The University of Puerto Rico is experimenting significant budget cuts due to reductions in the public funds assigned by the territory's government, impacting overall research activities. To compensate budget cuts, UPR administrators have implemented a direct cost policy that retains (hold or keep) 33.4% of the granted money. This budget reduction is forcing us to identify supplementary funding in order to complete the number of activities programmed. Also, the UPR informed last May 2018 changes to the staff responsible for post-grant awards services, limiting the available personnel that helps in the administrative works needed to manage the project's budget.

In addition, Puerto Rico is still dealing with long term recovery efforts from the impact of Hurricane Maria last September 2017. The hurricane resulted in weak infrastructure services, particularly several serious power shortages and limited access to reliable communications services. Traveling to the island and lodging services are also limited and still in the process of normalizing. However, the work team has been able to maximize available resources in order to achieve its goals as proposed in the work plan, and requested an extension of the grant period to complete the project as expected. NEH granted the extension to December 2019.

IV. Special reporting requirements – NONE

V. Project Outcomes
As part of the tasks designed for this semester, the project director created an inventory for the recovered materials (photos, audio recordings, video recordings, newspapers and magazines) collected for the past ten years following Library of Congress guidelines to create metadata. This inventory was used to transfer digital materials to the Digital Library of the Caribbean Collection (dLOC) at University of Florida. DOLC is processing information to do the upload but for now they have created a portal to access the Diaspora Project collection. This formal partnership constitutes an important collaboration. For more information please visit the following link: http://dloc.com/diasporaproject

In addition, more than 300 items related to carnival in the Caribbean were identified in the UPR Library System (El Mundo Digital Collection and Puerto Rican Collection). These items were catalogued and used to develop three micro projects. Web designer, Pablo Defendini and library science consultant, Mila Aponte are using these projects to propose a design and develop a prototype for a webpage. We expect to complete this task by September 2018.

A fourth project is going to be piloted this semester in a class of digital music composition (August-December 2018). Dr. Nora Ponte and her students will experiment with calypso rhythms and sonority in order to produce music for the proposed webpage. Also, project directors presented the panel Composition and Sonority on May 18, 2018 at 9:00 am in Sala A, College of Humanities UPR, Rio Piedras Campus in order to discuss the relationship between carnival sounds and digital composition tools. As part of this panel, Prof. Mila Aponte talked about the value of digital humanities for liberal arts majors (see Appendix D).

The following activities have been scheduled for August- December 2018:
Second team workshop is taking place next Aug 1-3 2018. Agenda and objectives for the three days workshop have been attached as Appendix C.

Project directors will present a paper titled "Carnival and Migration. The Digital Humanities Advancement Project", as part of the panel "Caribbean Diasporas: Art as Memory and Archive" in the West Indies Conference 2018 to be hosted by the Miami University next October 3-6, 2018.

Project directors were invited to participate in a NEH Advance Institute sponsored by

the University of Florida focused on Caribbean Studies. If this proposal is approved this seminar will take place in 2019. Participants, especially from under-resourced institutions and those with preservation concerns, will gain digital humanities teaching experience and in-depth knowledge of how to utilize digital collections in teaching. The Institute will provide training in tools, processes, and resources for developing lessons, modules, and/or courses. Twenty-six participants will achieve: 1) acquisition of concrete digital skills and DH approaches for teaching and research utilizing Open Access digital collections; 2) participation in an enhanced community of practice for digital humanities; and, 3) creation of Open Access course and teaching materials that blend digital humanities and Caribbean Studies. As a long-term goal, part of our task is to foster a digital humanities culture by creating the UPR Digital Humanities Center. This institute will provide technical and practical skills to accomplish this goal.

VI. Products - NONE

VII. Supplementary Materials :
Appendix A : proposed project schedule vs completed project schedule
Appendix B : agenda first working session
Appendix C : agenda second working session
Appendix D : composition and sonority flyer
Appendix E : First meeting photos