The School of Library and Information Sciences has received a Laura Bush 21st Century Grant for a project entitled: Education and Training for Improved Access, Collaboration and Professional Development in Three Communities: The North Carolina Central University School of Library and Information Sciences, the Department of History and the North Carolina Central University Art Museum (with Practicum experiences in the UNC-Chapel Hill Ackland Museum, the Duke University Nasher Museum and the North Carolina Museum of Art).

The grant was among only 17 out of 38 applications funded in this cycle of awards from the IMLS.

Funding for the grant will provide students with undergraduate or graduate degrees in any discipline, but particularly in art, public history or African American history the opportunity to obtain a Master of Library Science degree with a concentration in Archives (with an emphasis in museology). The grant will provide tuition and stipend for the Master in Library Science degree and participation in a Practicum at one of the three major museums in North Carolina. Additionally, students will attend an annual conference of the Association of African American Museums. The Association of African American Museums is dedicated to serving the interests and needs of Black museums and cultural institutions nationwide. The roots of this organization run deep into the fabric of American life

Black museums instilled a sense of achievement within Black communities, while encouraging collaborations between Black communities and the broader public. Most importantly, the African American Museums movement inspired new contributions to society and advanced cultural awareness (aam-us.org retrieved on November 2, 2013).

The concepts of this grant are consistent with the tenets of the African American Museums movement, the IMLS vision for “A democratic society where communities and individuals thrive with broad public access to knowledge, cultural heritage, and lifelong learning” (Imls.gov). The third tenet of the grant is consistent with two of the findings of a needs assessment survey conducted in 2008 by the Association of African American Museums. An additional survey modeled the Association of African American Museums and was conducted by the African Museum. The survey includes results of 99 museums from 32 countries and was funded by the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), Smithsonian Institution and a Strategic Partnership Grant from Michigan State University (MSU). Both surveys produced a priority list of needs (survey listed at: http://achsp.matrix.msu.edu/report.pdf).

The IMLS Grant team includes the following:

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Dr. Irene Owens, Dean and Professor, School of Library and Information Sciences, PI
Mr. Kenneth Rodgers, Director, NCCU Museum, Co-PI
Dr. Carlton Wilson, Dean, Arts and Sciences, Co-PI