Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Approves $2.8 Million Grant to Expand and Diversify CHCI Nationally and Internationally

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MADISON, Wis. (Feb. 6, 2020) – The Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI) is excited to announce that it received a grant of $2.8 million from the Trustees of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to expand and diversify CHCI nationally and internationally. Sara Guyer, Professor of English and former director of the UW-Madison Center for the Humanities (2008 to 2019) is President of CHCI and Principal Investigator on this grant.

The grant, Sustaining the Promise of CHCI: New Models of Inclusive Collaboration, is a multiyear initiative that will enable CHCI to continue to fulfill its goals of greater diversity, inclusion, and connection. With support from the Mellon Foundation, CHCI will expand the innovative collaborations of the Global Humanities Institutes, in which at least three humanities centers on different continents serve as co-organizers of a Global Humanities Institute over an 18-month period. Each cohort includes a summer institute for emerging scholars as well as shared learnings to broaden the impact of each institute at a global scale. Previous topics include “Crises of Democracy” in Dubrovnik, Croatia and “Challenges of Translation” in Santiago, Chile, both in July 2019.

To date, more than 60 scholars from over 20 universities spanning five continents have participated in the Global Humanities Institutes. A committee of humanities center and institute directors from UW-Madison, the University of Chicago, the University of Washington, Brown University, and Washington University in St. Louis, designed the new program. The next institute, “Migration, Logistics, and Unequal Citizens in Contemporary Global Context” will take place in June 2020 in Taiwan with participants from eight countries.

The new grant also builds on CHCI’s Africa Humanities Initiative, a series of multidisciplinary, collaborative workshops bringing together senior and early-career scholars from the African Continent. The first two workshops were held in Addis Ababa and Dakar in January 2019, and two more are scheduled for Marrakesh and Maputo in 2021.

The grant allows CHCI to invest in collaborative interdisciplinary research undertaken by multi-generational and international teams of scholars. With this phase of support, CHCI will focus on increased access from two distinct angles. The first is “Voices from the Global Humanities,” CHCI’s public-focused project with public radio. The podcast connects the outcomes of the Global Humanities Institutes with audiences in and beyond academia and continues a partnership between CHCI and “To the Best of our Knowledge.” Second, CHCI will undertake projects and planning for its future, including support for the involvement of new and ongoing humanities centers at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACUs), and urban and lower-income universities and colleges in the U.S. and around the globe.
Sara Guyer explains, “In addition to sustaining the Global Humanities Institutes, which model high-stakes research collaboration in the humanities, this grant will allow CHCI to focus on questions of diversity and inclusion. Drawing on extensive international experience, including substantial initiatives on the African Continent, and an institutional home in the United States, CHCI is uniquely poised to address institutional inequality in the humanities from a global perspective.”

The University of Wisconsin-Madison has hosted CHCI since 2016, when Guyer began her term as President. UW-Madison Chancellor Rebecca M. Blank says, “CHCI has benefited from and built upon UW-Madison's longstanding dual commitment to international impact and local relevance, and CHCI's programs have in turn furthered the university's position as a leader in a new set of multilateral collaborations, demonstrating how research in the humanities affects our understanding of contemporary human experience.”

Chancellor Blank continues, “This grant will extend this mutually beneficial partnership by supporting CHCI's cross-regional activities and the consortium’s efforts to more fully develop an inclusive network for research and scholarly exchange in the humanities.”

Funding for CHCI’s *New Models of Inclusive Collaboration* begins in January 2020 and conclude at the end of 2024.

The international Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI) is a global network shaping the future of the humanities, cultivating new forms of multilateral collaboration and generating innovative models for research, pedagogy, and public engagement.