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Xavier University of Louisiana Receives Grant through Mellon Foundation's "Humanities for All Times" Initiative

New Orleans – Xavier University of Louisiana is one of 10 institutions selected to receive a grant from the Mellon Foundation, the nation's largest funder of the arts, culture and humanities, as part of its [*Humanities for All Times*](#) initiative. On the cusp of celebrating 100 years of service, Xavier will receive \$1,500,000 for the project "Restoring the Black Intellectual Tradition at an HBCU through a Centralized University Honors Curriculum." Referencing a recent past when HBCUs drove each successive wave of African American advancement and empowerment by producing the leading Black thinkers of their respective eras, this project would revive the tradition whereby HBCUs served as the primary context within which Black students were educated in the history and major currents of Black intellectual thought.

"As Xavier prepares for its next century, this grant will support our mission to create leaders who will impact their community, country, and world." said **Dr. Shearon Roberts**, director of Xavier's Exponential Honors Program, an associate professor of Mass Communication and an affiliate faculty member in the university's African American and Diaspora Studies Program. Dr. Roberts is leading the initiative at Xavier funded by the grant. "As a top HBCU, honors education is vital for preparing our students to innovate in society and continue the legacy of our institution of empowering Black communities and those marginalized in society."

Initially launched in 2021 as a \$16 million-plus initiative, *Humanities for All Times* awarded grants to its first cohort of 12 liberal arts colleges across the US that same year. Through dynamic projects developed in a total of 22 liberal arts programs, the initiative aims to demonstrate the power of the humanities in addressing societal challenges. These distinctive analytical projects ensure students acquire skills to diagnose the cultural conditions hindering the achievement of a fully just and equitable society, and to identify the steps necessary to change. As a long-time champion of social justice and the nation's only historically Black and Catholic institution, Xavier's grant through Humanities for All Times will help the university continue its mission to promote a more just and humane society by elevating its honors program, Xavier Exponential.

This year, the Mellon Foundation announced that more than \$14 million has been awarded to 10 liberal arts colleges through the grant. *Humanities for All Times* humanities-based education provides tools for future visionaries and the next generation of social justice leaders and aims to support newly developed curricula that both instruct students in methods of humanities practice and demonstrate those methods' relevance to broader social justice pursuits.

Fifty liberal arts colleges were invited to submit proposals for the second cohort, and each selected institution received a grant of up to \$1.5 million to be used over a three-year period to support the envisioned curricular projects and help students to see and experience the applicability of humanities in their real-world social justice objectives.



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About Xavier University of Louisiana

Xavier University of Louisiana, America's only historically Black and Catholic University, is ranked among the top three HBCUs (historically Black colleges and universities) in the nation. Recognized as a national leader in STEM and health sciences, Xavier produces more African American students who graduate from medical schools each year than any other university in the United States. Additionally, Xavier's College of Pharmacy is also among the top producers of African American pharmacists in the country.

Established in 1925 by Saint Katharine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament as a place for African Americans and Native Americans to receive quality education, Xavier has since expanded its programs in art, business, education, biological sciences, chemistry, pharmacy and political science. More recent additions in robotics, bioinformatics, engineering, data science, neuroscience and genetics, in addition to new STEM-based master's programs, have provided Xavier students (3,419 students) an unbeatable combination of traditional classroom study, hands-on research, service-learning opportunities and life experiences. Xavier students collaborate with world-renowned faculty, who are experts in their fields, to produce award-winning research and notable work. The winning Xavier formula provides students with a well-balanced curriculum and an environment that nurtures their intellect and feeds their souls, thereby facilitating a more just and humane society for all. For more information about Xavier University of Louisiana, visit us online at www.XULA.edu or contact Melissa Newell at (504) 520-5240 or XULANews@XULA.edu.