



A More Complete Record: The Case for Archival Partnerships The Radcliffe Workshop on Technology & Archival Processing

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Transcript

1:00-1:15 Welcome & Opening Remarks

- **Sarah Thomas**, Vice President for the Harvard Library and University Librarian, Roy E. Larsen Librarian for the Faculty and Arts and Sciences

1:15-2:45 The Past is Present | *Keynote Conversation*

- **Craig Wilder**, Barton L. Weller Professor of History, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- **Beverly Guy-Sheftall**, Chair of Women's Research & Resource Centers, Anna Julia Cooper Professor of Women's Studies, Spelman College

- Good afternoon. Hi, everybody. If you can end your conversations and get seated. Thanks so much. It's great.

The reason I'm saying that is because I see we're already nine minutes behind our start time, and I had a little problem managing my time earlier today. So I want to try to get us back on track.

I'm Sarah Thomas. I'm the Vice President for the Harvard Library and University Librarian. And I'm really, really honored to welcome you to the 2018 Radcliffe Workshop on Technology and Archival Processing. Inaugurated in 2011, the workshops have looked at issues in access and innovation, transforming spaces, accelerating and scaring pro-- "scaring," yes. "Scaring processing." Scaling processing, and in digital humanities.

And this workshop focuses on effective partnerships. Collaboration is really, really essential for libraries and archives to function in a global society. And the Harvard Library itself is a network of partnerships. We are, and this is putting it mildly, "administratively diffuse."

[LAUGHTER]

Yeah, those are the insiders laughing at that. But we seek common goals which advance a strategic vision, and we celebrate the innovation and contribution of Radcliffe-Schlesinger Library to the coalition of Harvard libraries.

The Schlesinger, with Marilyn Dunn as Executive Director-- Marilyn, where are you now? Are you here? Ah, OK, Marilyn. You could stand up, Marilyn. Yeah.

Woo!

[APPLAUSE]

And Jane Kamensky, who is the Pforzheimer Director of the Schlesinger Library who's, I think, right in front of me wearing a pink scarf. Yes? OK. Let's give Jane a hand too.

[APPLAUSE]

So the Schlesinger Library, under their leadership and with their fabulous colleagues, it's alive with ideas, and I've learned very much from them. Whether experimenting with scanning archival collections first and then processing afterwards, or appointing Kenji Phillips as Harvard's first curator of Race and Ethnicity creating a new perspective--

[CHEERING]

Yeah, OK. Shout out-- where? Kenji? OK. So she created a new perspective on what should be collected, or pulling together advisers who could create and conceive of a leadership institute, which was held this morning. And this has created an opportunity for discussion among senior administrators on diversity and social justice.

In all of these ways, Schlesinger Library is a great leader. And within the Harvard Library, it is one of the smallest members, if not the smallest members of this confederation. But in terms of its value to our endeavors, it's a major contributor.

As we speak about partnerships today, let us understand that all, whether from a large university such as Harvard, or a small college or historical center, have important contributions to make. I'd like now to invite Jane Kamensky to open the 2018 workshop on Archival Partnerships. Thank you, Jane.

- Good afternoon, everyone.

- Good afternoon.

- As Sarah, said I'm Jane Kamensky. I'm the Pforzheimer Foundation Director of the Schlesinger Library, and a professor of history here at Harvard. And I'm delightf-- delighted to welcome-- I'm not "delightful," actually. I'm delighted to welcome you all on behalf of Schlesinger's staff, especially our Executive Director, Marilyn Dunn.

I'm not going to make her stand up again, but I am going to make other Schlesinger people stand up. Our Special Projects Manager, Amanda Strauss. Amanda, where are you? Who has spearheaded the local arrangements group on the library that has done so much to bring today to fruition.

And if you're on the Local Library Committee at Schlesinger, could you stand up, please, so we can give you a round of applause?

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

So it's a multi-part, two-day extravaganza. It's like arranging a wedding. I am encouraging my colleagues to sit back and enjoy the fruits of their labors.

This workshop began, as Sarah said, in 2011, with the goal of leveraging technology to improve access to archival information. Since then, it has explored various stuck places in the world of special collections, where technology might be used as a key to unlock heaps of treasure that would otherwise remain more or less locked away.

This year marks Schlesinger's 75th anniversary. That's what those shiny stickers on your folders celebrate. An occasion, as all such moments are, both for reflection on the past and for projection of the future.

Working with an advisory group of historians, archivists, public intellectuals, and other history makers, we wanted to dedicate this anniversary workshop to furthering one of our highest strategic goals, which is deepening the diversity of our collections to help researchers create a more complete and nuanced historical record. And let me call out that that advisory group.

A'lelia Bundles, author and journalist. Reggie Chapple from the National Park Service. Beverly Guy-Sheftall, who you'll hear from in a moment, from Spelman.

Athena Jackson from Penn State. Brenda Johnson from the University of Chicago. Khalil Muhammad, who spoke this morning. Monika Rhue from the HBCU Alliance.

Julieanna Richardson from History Makers, who has done a tremendous amount to catalyze diversity and inclusion work at Schlesinger. Dino Robinson from Shorefront, and Sarah Thomas from Harvard Libraries. Thank you all so much for your work to make this day happen.

[APPLAUSE]

So we wanted in this anniversary workshop to explore how best to further our strategic goal of diversity in the archives. Not only through our own acquisitions, as with the recently announced news that Angela Davis's papers have come to Schlesinger, but through collaboration. Through archival partnerships.

The idea is to bring together the different kinds of strengths of resources that different kinds of institutions have. Kinds of resources like depth of staffing, or context, relationship, accumulated wisdom, community. The idea for the diverse institutions represented here today is to be stronger and of greater service together. To think about access alongside ownership, especially as we wrestle with the proliferation of born digital and digitized collections, which break down boundaries in so many ways.

To grow pipelines and staff expertise, as well as collections, and so on. We hope to come away with models of collaborations that are robust and exportable to many kinds of asymmetrical institutions. But our exemplars for this year's workshop are, for lack of a better word, "elite majority institutions," which are often rich in their endowment balances and other measures of accumulated wealth. And historically, black colleges and universities, which are often rich in collections and in the dedication and knowledge of their staffs.

And I'm thinking about something that Armando Bengochea said this morning. A way of thinking about Harvard through this lens of collaboration, to think that this here, in the mound of treasure that is Harvard University, is an impoverished place without greater attention to collaboration in the service of a more complete historical record. Which brings me to today's keynote, the first of two keynote conversations in this workshop.

The wealth disparities between HBCUs and institutions like mine have deep, tangled, and painful historical roots. And so we thought it appropriate to begin the workshop with a conversation between two eminent historians that centers on how we got here.

Craig Wilder and Beverly Guy-Sheftall are in many ways yin and yang, north and south, ivy and ebony. I'll introduce them very briefly, and then they'll each speak quickly and have a conversation with each other, and then a conversation with all of us here. After the discussion concludes, there will be a 15-minute break before the scholars panel begins at 3:00.

Dr. Craig Steven Wilder, the Barton L. Weller Professor of History at MIT here in Cambridge is a historian of American institutions and ideas. Professor Wilder's most recent book, *Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities* catalyzed what has

become a national conversation about the ways in which slavery was bred into the bone of American higher education at the most elite and ancient institutions, including this one.

Last spring, Wilder played an important role in a conference organized by Harvard's President, Drew Faust, which was hosted here at Radcliffe, on the topic of universities and slavery. Ta-Nehisi Coates, who keynoted that conference with President Faust, called for universities like Harvard to think about reparations about making right, as well as exploration, or bringing to light its past. I hope that today's conversations will seed fresh thinking about collaboration as an imperative that will bring a form of reparation to the historical record in higher ed.

Dr. Beverly Guy-Sheftall comes to us from the world of special collections and the world of HBCUs at Spelman College, where she is the founding Director of the Women's Research and Resource Center, which houses the Spelman College Archives, whose treasures include the papers of Audre Lorde, among so many other collections, and I think in many ways a sister institution to Schlesinger and Radcliffe.

And I'm proud to say that a pilot collaboration between archival collections and staff at Spelman and Schlesinger is already underway. Guy-Sheftall is also the Anna Julia Cooper Professor of Women's Studies. She has published a number of truly foundational texts within African-American and Women's Studies, and African-American Women's Studies, including the first anthology on black women's literature, *Sturdy Black Voices: Visions of Black Women in Literature* all the way back in 1979, so only two years after *Comahee*, which she co-edited with Roseann P. Bell and Bettye J. Parker.

Among her most recent publications is a coauthored monograph with Spelman's storied President, Johnnetta Cole, *Gender Talk: The Struggle for Equality in African-American Communities*. In her role as Director of Spelman's Women's Center, she has also been involved with the development of student activism around misogynist images of black women in hip-hop, as well as a broad range of social justice issues, including reproductive rights and violence against women.

Dr. Guy-Sheftall has also served, as I said, as a member of the advisory group that helped us to bring together and bring to fruition this workshop. So even before she says a word this afternoon, we are all already in her debt. So let's welcome them to the stage and begin the conversation. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

- Hello everybody.

- Hi.

- Hello.

- The mics are working?

- Yes.

- Yes?

- Very well. I am very happy to be here. I do see the Schlesinger Library as a sister institution to Spelman. And Craig, this is my first time having met you, and I want to say to you personally as I did on the email, your book is one of the most extraordinary history texts I have ever read. And I mean that really seriously. And I wish I had written it.

[APPLAUSE]

- So we're going to talk a little bit at the beginning, and then we're going to be in a conversation. And what I want to do at the beginning is to just share how I got here.

I had intended to just be an English professor, and somehow my academic, professional journey went in some very different kinds of ways. And that's what I really want to talk about today, coming from my own location, primarily at Spelman.

I have spent my entire childhood at HBCUs, and I say voluntarily. Not by default, voluntarily. I was a student at Spelman as an undergrad in the '60s during the-- that activist period. Actually marched with Martin Luther King.

I was at graduate student at Atlanta University, where I got an MA. And then I taught at two historically black colleges. One very large public, Alabama State University, my first teaching job. And then I went to Spelman in 1971, where I thought I would just be for a few years, and I'm still there.

I have spent also a lot of time among many HBCUs trying to seduce them into starting women's studies programs, and also trying to seduce them into taking very seriously their archives. However, I want to say that I am not speaking this afternoon as an expert on HBCUs.

We are not monolithic. We are an extremely heterogeneous group, thank goodness. We have different histories, different genealogies, different constituents, different resources, different priorities. Different leadership, thank goodness. Different faculty and student cultures, as is the case with PWIs.

However, there are a few generalizations that I am comfortable about making right now, though this may change in two weeks. The first is, as everyone knows we are under-resourced in every imaginable financial way. And I will just mention very quickly that the top three of us, Howard University has a less than \$600 million endowment, Spelman which is number 2, has about a \$350 million dollar endowment. And Hampton, which is number 3, has about 250. And the rest of them are, generally speaking, under 100.

Archives assume, relatively speaking, a low priority at most of our institutions with respect to budget matters, what we value, how we brand ourselves. Even at a place like Spelman College.

And I will just mention-- and I'm going to-- I'm going to be talking a lot about Spelman it's a case study. For 14 years we had a wonderful archive in the new concert building. And there were two persons there, the archivist, and an administrative-- no, I'm sorry. Just an archivist. Not an administrative assistant until 14 years later. And Holly Smith, who was our college archivist, who's sitting there, can correct me if I say anything that's incorrect.

The third generalization that I will make, for lots of complex reasons, is that there is lingering distrust of PWIs around partnerships, given our differential status in the US Academy. And I want to just say from the beginning that I have not been in the category of persons at an HBCU who have been distrustful of partnerships.

I think it's my race-gender politics and my feminist politics that has pushed me to at least try certain kinds of partnerships. And I would say that all of the ones that I've been engaged in have been very positive. And I'm thinking about NYU's Faculty Resource Network, and an archival project collaboration that we did starting in the 1990s with Wayne State University, which was very productive.

The fourth thing that I want to say-- and I just thought about this, Craig, this morning on the plane, and this doesn't come up very much. There is tremendous anxiety among our HBCUs about what our archival collections can reveal, or will reveal. There are controversial aspects of our history, if scholars really probed our archives in very particular kinds of ways. I mean, tremendous anxiety.

I'm going to just mention one book that's getting ready to come out in September, which I was-- Holly knows this, which I was very happy about and cooperated with. This was a white male historian at NYU who is writing a book about Howard Zinn's tenure at Spelman College.

Howard Zinn, a famous historian, was fired at Spelman College, actually, when I was a sophomore at Spelman. Fired as a tenured faculty member for being an activist, and supposedly persuading students to get involved with activism. He kept a diary the last year of his tenure at Spelman, and in that text is that diary that he kept for a year.

And the portrait that emerges of the then president of Spelman College, Albert Manley, is not pleasant at all, nor is the portrait that emerges about factory culture at Spelman during the '60s, which was punitive and difficult. And I'll just mention one other thing, and I mention it because it's all in the book.

He was able to get-- have access to the Board minutes of that famous incident. And one of the things that he found, which was amazing even to me, was that finally when he was pushed-- I mean, when President Manley was pushed by the Board to explain why Howard Zinn was fired,

he indicated that Zinn had had an inappropriate sexual relationship with one of the student activists, which is just mind-boggling.

And so when that text comes out in September, Spelman is going to be very unhappy. And I have invited him to Spelman. I'm going to have a conversation with him, and really want to have a panel discussion afterwards. Because it's the kind of history that is indicative of where we were in the '60s, despite our narrative about how much we supported student activism.

And so I'm saying that one of the things I hope we will talk about, it is not just PWIs that are sometimes nervous. And I could mention many, many, many more examples. So those are the four claims that I'm able to make with respect to HBCUs.

I want to now just say a little bit about my own history with connect-- in connection to HBCUs archives. And if Donald Stewart had not asked me in 1980, I was a doctoral student at Emory, to write the Spelman Centennial History, I don't think I would be saying any of what I'm saying. Anyway, he asked me if I would do that, and I s-- not knowing anything about archives, at least archives of Spelman, I said, yes.

And I want to describe, this is 100 years after the founding of Spelman. Spelman was founded 1881. This is 1980, 100 years later. I want to describe what my situation was as a scholar in the Spelman archives, and I want you to just hear this.

And this was the proposal, which I had forgotten I had written to Donald Stewart, which Holly found, where I made the case to Donald Stewart that we needed to keep our archives, not let it go to Woodruff Library, and have it be a part of the Women's Center. And this is the, really, first point in which I realized how significant Spelman's history is in the annals of educational history, and around women's political history.

But anyway, this is what I found in 18-- in 1980. At present-- and I said this to him. I don't even know if he realized it. At present, the archives of Spelman consist of a small room on the fourth floor Giles Hall, that's the main classroom building, in which are housed over 1,000 cubic feet of materials related to the history and development of the college from its founding in 1881 to the present.

Archival material on deceased alumnae-- and I was just like a little detective running around trying to find this. A deceased alumnae is housed in an even smaller room in the basement of the Administration Building. And I'm saying all of this because there's no way to have partnerships until you get archives organized. An extensive photograph collection-- which we have recently gotten funding, which Holly, I think, will mention.

An extensive photograph collection, as well as other historically significant documents, including the President Reed Papers, are housed in file cabinets contained in a special collections room of the library, totally inaccessible, locked up. A complete listing of this unorganized and uncatalogued material is contained in the appendix, and includes such

important documents as the diaries of the founders, which I read with amazing-- I don't know what I felt at first.

There are letters and correspondence-- I wrote an essay about the racial politics of our founders, who are revered and got into big trouble at Spelman. Their letters and correspondence, which includes, among other things, their conception. This is what I was really interested in.

I was really interested in who these two white women, missionaries, were who came from New England. I wanted to get into their heads, and so I read absolutely everything there. Nobody had-- no one had ever written about Giles and Packard, even though women presidents of the other seven sisters have been written about a whole lot. There was a visitor's register there, which I could hardly pick up, which began in 1888, and included such notables as Booker T. Washington, Susan B Anthony, Frances Harper, to name only a few.

I mean, just incredible, incredible material. So that's how I got hooked and seduced by the amazing archival collections that are at HBCUs that needed to be attended to. The second thing I will just mention, so we can have a conversation, is this incredible partnership that Spelman's Women and entered into with Wayne State University. It was the first comprehensive project which enabled us to do a survey of over 100 archives at HBCUs.

And I don't have time really to summarize it, but I want you to know that you can read about this. Taronda Spencer, who ended up being our first archivist at Spelman, wrote the article, and it's in the journal *The Society of Georgia Archivists*. It's called *The Evolution of Caste*, and it explains the entire project. The thing that's really amazing about this project is six years after our involvement with Wayne State, they decided not to continue the collaboration.

And the Women's Center at Spelman College decided that this project was so important we moved the project to Spelman's Women's Research and Resource Center and actually finished that project. I want to just end this part by saying that this was a very productive partnership prior to Wayne State's deciding that they did not want to do it anymore. And it was so robust and so correct until we were able to take the project and complete it, and do all of the things that we intended to do.

We got an NEH grant, and I would say that without this Caste Project, it would be very difficult for us to know at that particular point what the status of archives was at HBCUs. And there were over 90 of them that we actually ended up surveying. So I'm going to stop right here. Hope I haven't talked too long.

- No, no. But we could start the discussion right now. You took all the good points.

[LAUGHTER]

So now I'm left with the PWIs. It's like, OK, someone's got to. But the anxiety that you describe, I think, is actually quite important. The anxiety that's happening on HBCU campuses right now about their archives. You don't have to really convince two historians that the archives are important.

But the archives are actually playing, I think, a distinct and different role right now in the sort of public politics and histories of universities as they're unfolding in this moment. And several years ago, talking about this topic, I sort of noted that universities fearing their archives is like you or I fearing our diary.

- Mhm.

- That it just-- it's a nonsensical act, although it's an emotionally sensible one. But that's what we're challenged with. And if we think about how we got to this moment, just to do a quick history of what's been happening on elite university campuses, to bring their histories and their archives, therefore, to the fore. You know, back in 2001, and many of you know this already, so I'll do it quickly, back in 2001, Yale had its 300th anniversary.

That 300th anniversary moment included, in fact, like most universities that are approaching their anniversaries, the writing of an official history. The official history included a significant amount of commentary on Yale's contributions to-- the university's contributions to the abolitionist and anti-slavery movements. One of the problems of that is that what they were really talking about, to be perfectly blunt, were the contributions of alumni, graduates of Yale, to the anti-slavery movement.

Those alumni were often effectively excommunicated during that period from the university, and had, in fact, quite tense relationships. Many of them, actually, right in New Haven, were mobbed by mobs, in fact, that included students. And so you had this rather one-dimensional portrait of Yale's relationship to the story of slavery, which gets corrected by the website "Yale and Slavery," are a product of graduate students and staff, undergraduates. And that site's still there.

And it simply attempted to document Yale's much longer, much deeper history and involvement with slavery and the slave trade. There was-- a whole whirlwind of accusations surrounded it. Some alumni accused the people who produced the website of embarrassing Yale at a historic moment.

But what was fascinating about it was the way in which the history of the university got sort of projected, forced into public view, and for this public discussion. And just a couple of years later, the trustees at Brown University and their good wisdom elected Ruth Simmons as their incoming president, and you had a black woman, the first woman, first person of color, to head an Ivy institution. And she happens to be heading one of the ones that's actually named after slave traders.

And so the public secret of Brown's relationship to slavery and the slave trade produces yet another swirl of controversy, and, in fact, another engagement with university history. But this time, for the purpose of really trying to correct records and resolve attention. President Simmons, in her great wisdom, inaugurated the Yale-- I'm sorry, not the Yale, the Bro-- the Slavery Injustice Commission, which produced three years later the Slavery Injustice Report, which I think is just a model for all of us still, right?

12 years later, it's an extraordinary document in its courage. Both in its willingness to face Brown's history directly, in its willingness to go deep-diving into the archives, both at Brown and at all of the relevant surrounding private and public institutions and repositories, and to come forward with sort of unvarnished accounts of Brown's long history with slavery and the slave trade, and how it benefited the university over time. But not stopping there. Also looking at recommendations for how to begin to repair that past, what, in fact, social justice and restoration-- actually, restorative justice actually looks like at that moment.

And so one of the things I was sort of fascinated by is that Brown moment by itself has always fascinated me. Because that's when I started doing the work for Ebony and Ivy. It was the year before she became president. And let me say, when she when she became president, it changed the book. Because the year before, I started doing research I didn't know I was doing the research for Ebony and Ivy.

I was just sort of running around not quite clear what I was doing, kind of looking for a project. And it was close enough do what she had initiated and launched at Brown that I could drift toward that, and that could provide me some direction over time. But the reason why I found that fascinating is the fact that at Brown, like at Yale, like at Harvard, like at Georgetown, the history of the relationship between the university and slavery and the slave trade was not, in fact, hidden at all. It wasn't a secret at all.

I was just at Georgetown last week, and Jesuits had been writing about the Maryland plantations that funded the Catholic church at least since the 1970s. They'd been writing dissertations on them. Brown's history with slavery and the slave trade was a public secret on the Brown campus. But what was striking about-- what's striking about it was the-- it exposes, I think, the power of race in higher education and in American society more broadly.

Because part of racial power is the capacity to have things that are not unknown, remain untold. The power to actually keep things from-- to prevent any narrative or any discussion that actually leads to a challenge of the sort of status quo, and particularly, the status of elite institutions. And so it's not surprising-- the thing that had initially disappointed me certainly shouldn't have shocked me. That right after the Brown report in 2006, if you think about that sort of "not unknown but still untold" capacity, that power, right after the publication of the Brown report, what I expected to happen was that all of the Ivies would initiate commissions to examine their history with slavery and produce reports like Brown. And none of them did.

And it was a perfect example of that kind of power. That kind of influence, and how it gets wielded. And so Brown kind of lived for a while as if it was the only institution that had this history. And what happened instead is what I think is one of the great lessons in why the archives are so important to us, and why having archives on our campuses is so important to us. Really, a grassroots movement to keep the story of the relationship between elite universities and slavery alive.

So at Harvard, Sven Beckert's course on Harvard and slavery. At Williams College, Shanti Singham did a course on Williams' history with race, both in African-Americans and Native Americans, and the kind of false memorialization of the past that decorates and shapes the campus. At Princeton, Martha Sandweiss's course on Princeton and slavery. Karl Jacoby at Columbia on Columbia and slavery.

All of these projects moving forward without, in fact, any significant university support or administrative support whatsoever. In fact, often with a lot of tension or some discouragement from the central administration for precisely the reason that you suggest. There was a great anxiety about what was in those archives and how it might get wielded against the institution over time.

And so you know what's amazing is that it was only the presence of the archive, and the willingness of graduate students and undergraduates, faculty, archivists, and librarians to take up the topic of slavery on those campuses that brings us to the moment that we're in right now. We wouldn't have had the 2016 conference-- the 2017 conference without that sort of movement Right?

That, in fact, actually, one of the things that's so striking in each of these cases, it was the accessibility of the archives that allowed this to happen. One of the great documents at Princeton is still the 2008 undergraduate senior thesis on Princeton and Slavery, which is one that-- when I went to Princeton, it was one of the first things I read. She's credited in the book, and then I went from there. But it's sort of-- and that was often the case.

And so you had this very grassroots movement. And I want to add one more variable into this, which has mattered quite a bit in getting us to where we are, which is another kind of activism. The student activism organized around-- through organizations like Black Lives Matter on our campuses, which has begun to, or began to over the past several years, take some of these historical findings, take some of these discussions about the university's past, and really weaponize them in ways where they're being used to embed and to contextualize the claims that students are making on campus, that black students are making on our campuses. And the claims that they're making on toward the larger society. To provide a kind of historical context for it.

And so, for example, Rutgers did an extraordinary study of Rutgers and slavery. But that project begins only because of student activism on the campus. It only begins because of the Black Student Union and the Black Lives Matters groups on campuses really, in fact, brought their

protest right into the chancellor's office and demanded change. It's important for me, therefore, to always come back to the fact that so much of what we know about our institutions comes out of the archive, and that it has been central in the past 12 years, 15 years of creating, in fact, a radical transformation in the way that we talk about ourselves.

And there's really no better measure, I think, of the importance of the archives on our campuses than to look at the past 15 years of the histories of elite white institutions, historically white institutions in the United States. 15 years ago, I don't think any of us would have imagined that virtually all of the Ivies would have websites that not only announce their historical relationships to slavery and the slave trade, but took institutional responsibility for investigating those relationships and making them public, and, in fact, raised the question of restorative justice and compensatory justice within that context.

And so I'll pick on my own institution. You talked about Spelman. I'll talk about MIT.

MIT actually launched-- and I teach with my colleague, Nora Murphy, our archivist, a course on MIT and slavery, which we just launched last fall. And it's a perfect example, I think, in some ways of how this transformation has happened, and how powerful it has been. Because I think, generally, speaking the story of MIT was assumed to be a story that really-- it didn't involve slavery at all.

MIT is chartered in 1861 on the eve of the Civil War in Boston. Boston has an abolitionist mythology to it. MIT was certainly wrapped in that mythology. We use the sort of "modest" anti-slavery commentary of the wife of our founder and her family to dress ourselves up a little bit more in anti-slavery garb. And so we assumed we had no connection to slavery, and we moved forward with something largely unexamined.

And then last year, thanks to the President's Office, we actually launched an MIT and Slavery project in which the undergraduates do the research. And what has happened there? And again, I think in part this is also MIT responding to activism on our own campus and on neighboring campuses. What has happened from that project?

Well, one of the things is that we've discovered, MIT has very close relationships to slavery. That our founder was the slave owner. That he's a slave owner just before he arrives in Boston. We still don't know what happened to his slaves as he leaves Virginia to head to Boston.

We also realize that MIT is established in Boston precisely because cotton is arriving in New England, and as cotton textile manufacturers who need skilled engineers. And so it's the other end of the slave economy that is actually leading to the founding of institutions like MIT, and in fact, what's really an engineering revolution in the decades before the Civil War. So not only are we not unrelated to slavery, in many ways, we wouldn't exist without it.

But there's one more thing I want to go to in there, which is the partnership part. Because there's another part of the story of MIT that in our course we don't really examine that much,

but we've looked at in the history of the institute quite a bit. Our first black graduate, Robert Taylor, who goes on to Tuskegee to work for Booker T. Washington, and he graduates from the Architecture Department at MIT.

And in fact, actually, if we trace our history will, we find it, in fact, arriving at the doorsteps of HBCUs all the time. There's a history for these partnerships, and there's a reason for us to look to those institutions. My concern is different than the concern that most people have with these kinds of partnerships as-- I think these partnerships are things we should have been doing anyway.

They're not restorative. They're not compensatory. They're not reparations. They're just what we should have been doing because we're intellectual institutions, and because we have a responsibility for exploring our own past. And so MIT should have been writing Taylor's history beyond his graduation day and into Tuskegee, and seeing, in fact, Tuskegee, therefore, as part of our story. But we should have been doing that anyway.

The real challenge, I think, for us is that these partnerships have to be partnerships based upon a certain equality. They can't be partnerships that are based upon the fact that elite white institutions have far greater resources. Many HBCUs have far fewer resources, and therefore, there's an opportunity for some partnering.

I actually think that the partnerships need to remind us of the transformative work that needs to be done, and needs to be championed by elite institutions in the United States, which routinely use black people, Native Americans, Asian-Americans, Latinos, use people of color for advertising our goodness within a society. We name fellowships after our first black graduates, and you've got 1,000 things named after Duboise here. We've got lots of things named after Taylor, including a professorship at MIT.

We constantly, in fact, invoke brown people, people of color, to advertise our goodness. But there's something-- there's a responsibility that comes with these partnerships. Which is that it has to be more than the archival work is centrally important, but it-- there's a good reason for people to fear those partnerships, be ambivalent about them, or even be hostile to them, until our institutions at the level of their leadership begin to stand up and talk about our commitment to diversity, our commitment to inclusion, and our commitment to democratic education is hollow if HBCUs are struggling.

If our commitment to diversity ends, in fact, at the front gate of Harvard Yard or at 77 Massachusetts Avenue, entrance of MIT, then we're not committed to diversity. We're committed to a kind of cosmetic diversity that works well for us. Real diversity requires, in fact, that we actually be engaged in the work of solving, fixing, addressing the national crisis of higher education, including the funding inequities between these institutions. And that's the basis for partnerships at all levels of the university underneath.

- Let me mention another uncomfortable controversial topic as it relates to HBCUs. And it's one of the arguments that I have been making and not getting very far. And that is that we have to address diversity within HBCUS. And one of the things that we need to do is to explore issues of gender and sexuality within the HBCU context. We are narrowly focused on race, narrowly focused on class, but not focused on gender and sexuality.

And I just want to mention the problematics of secrets. One of the biggest secrets as it relates to Spelman College is who our founders were, with respect to their lifelong committed partnership. We would, in the year 2018, locate them on a lesbian continuum. We are unable as Spelman, even in 2018, even though I've given them some nice little sweet language, have been unable to say that Packard and Giles were in a lifelong committed partnership.

I learned this by being in the archives and reading those diaries and lots of other things. I was blown-- I was absolutely blown away. Spelman is the only HBCU that was founded for women. And I think that you cannot understand Spelman's history, you cannot, unless you probe who these founders were with respect to their deep commitments to women. They wouldn't hire male faculty. I'm very interested in the first African-American woman faculty person that they hired.

And so that is a silence and a secret that we just need to expose. And it's not that it has not been exposed. That the Spelman founders, if you read-- finally Spelman is included in histories of women colleges. If you read standard, mainstream histories, Packard and Giles will be listed as who they are. Our LGBTQ students on campus have stumbled upon a really important article that a Spelman alum wrote in a newsletter called Spelman's Dirty Little Secret, which exposed-- and not exposed in a negative way.

But one of our lesbian alums said what-- she said how thrilled she would have been to have known when she was at Spelman who our founders were, and how, rather than hearing, we're a Christian college, and LGBTQ stuff is-- you know, whatever. And so our LGBT students want us to tell that part of our history. So I want us to-- when I think about HBCUs, we also need to focus on that as well.

I got a very disturbing call from a historian friend of mine who was in the Howard University archives. And what she found there around gender and sexuality issues just made her-- I mean, she was just stunned. She said-- I cannot believe the heterosexism and the misogyny that I am seeing in the papers of black male faculty. So these are things that we have to grapple with and deal with.

And so while this is not a Brown moment, I do think that archivists at HBCUs, we have another kind of story to tell, and it's not all about race. And it helps us to understand who our institutions are as well. And I would say that we can be in partnership with-- certainly at Spelman, can be in partnership with our seven sisters, who have been much more open about their complex histories around LGBTQ issues.

- And I actually think it is a Brown moment, right? One of the things you have is the capacity-- for instance, if you think about the way we talk about diversity on our campuses today. We can talk about diversity in courtyards that are framed by memorials to the slave trade, and to Native American massacres and colonialism, precisely because we can control the conversation about those things. And so diversity can happen in this really quite violently contradictory space, because we can actually control the kinds of conversations that people have.

And I think there's a direct parallel to what you're describing, of the way in which sexuality actually can be compartmentalized and control-- the conversations about it. And therefore-- and so I think that's an important way of thinking about-- yet another way of thinking about how the archives are challenging and changing us.

And for those of us who have faith that a deep engagement with the archives is a way to get our students not just to think about the institution's history, but to think about their own positions within the institution. To change the way they think about their position, their location within it. This is-- certainly resonates.

- How are we doing on time?

- [INAUDIBLE].

- Oh.

- OK.

- You can continue.

- OK. All right. Well, I'm going to ask you a different question.

- OK.

- A slightly different one. I wanted to ask you about the curriculum. You know, that one of the things that's also implicated in these discussions is of the archives, the place of the archives at HBCUs. And in our conversation, you pointed out that potentially, one of things that's going to get sacrificed because of these financial constraints are the archives. When the archives get sacrificed, what happens to the curriculum?

- Well, that's a v-- that's a-- let me let me say something very positive about Spelman in this regard first. Because we have the Toni Cade Bambara, and the Audrey Lord Archives, and I won't go into the history of that, we've had two courses. An Audrey Lord course, which is connected to the archives, and a course as well on Toni Cade Bambara. We would not be able to have that kind of-- most major author courses focus on James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, and so forth. So because of the archives at Spelman we are able to have those amazing major author courses.

I'm not sure that that is the case at most HBCUs. I would say that I am not sure that most HBCUs take advantage of their archives with respect to curriculum. Somebody in the audience can correct me if that's true. But I would say that having those collections at Spelman, the Audre Lorde and the Toni Cade collection, enable people to do-- work on Audre Lorde with respect to curriculum in other places.

I am not sure that HBCUs themselves take advantage of their archives with respect to their curriculum. But it would be very difficult for us to mount our comparative women's studies curriculum without attention to our archives. And that was serendipitous. I mean, we-- the main reason that the Audre Lorde archives have been processed-- which we had for over 20 years-- is that the Women's Center wrote a proposal to the Arcus Foundation and got those papers processed.

So I would imagine that there is still amazing archival material at HBCUs unprocessed, and therefore, difficult to access with respect to curriculum. Holly might want-- Holly, can you say something about the curricular connection with our archives at Spelman and say, if you can, whether that's fairly typical at HBCUs?

- Uh, sure.

[LAUGHTER]

- Stand-- yeah.

- I don't have a problem with [INAUDIBLE]. I'll be good and use the mic. So I'll try to stand like this. Well, first of all, I just really do want to take a minute to say, in terms of-- Dr. Guy-Sheftall is very extremely humble. But the fact that she herself is the founding director of the archives-- and I feel like a personal mentor, but also a supporter where you don't have to justify why the archive's important-- is a dream. So I want to say that publicly to her just for all her support of me personally and the archives.

[APPLAUSE]

See, even now-- because I do want to say something quickly about her support. We received-- the Women's Center-- because the archives is part of the Women's Center-- the Women's Center received a very generous gift from Dr. Alison Bernstein, who was on the board of the Women's Center. And without hesitation, Dr. Guy-Sheftall was like, well, because of Doctor Bernstein's commitment to the Women's Center, Spelman, and women's education, why don't we use that funding to help digitize the audio-visual materials from Audre Lorde and Toni Cade Bambara?

So that's what we're currently working on. Because it has been previously inaccessible. So I say, again, it's refreshing to not have to beg, borrow, and steal for-- now these pieces of-- these

records that people have been really wanting to get access to-- they haven't been made accessible-- will be accessible. So that's exciting.

- And, excuse me-- and that was a partnership. That was a partnership between, in many ways, Ford Foundation and Spelman, which has been very productive with respect to the archive.

- Absolutely. So not to take up too much time at the mic on the program. I did want to say in terms of our involvement with curriculum-- but I'm also thinking of AUC Woodruff's libraries archives. And I see my dear sister and friend Andrea Jackson, who now is the executive director of the black metropolis resource consortium. But also my other colleague, Sarah Tanner. There she is. Sarah, who is now the director of AUC.

So having the pleasure to work with them directly, I think, particularly speaking, at Spelman and also AUC Woodruff's archives to see the connection with curriculum there. Because there are such-- we complement each other. Like you said, we don't compete. But we really complement each other. We have different collecting strategies.

So the archives-- prior to my getting there with Taronda Spencer-- worked with Professor Opal Moore in English and Jerry Weaver in sociology and anthropology on the Audrey Lorde course. And it continued when I got there where the students would read *Zami*, *Sister Outsider*, other works by Audre Lorde in the class. But then they would come and do a unique research project in the archives. So we would lead course instruction-- kind of an embedded archivists. You hear that conversation talked about.

And when you see the richness, when you have the students continuously coming back, when you see the same faces in other classes working with dance, and drama, and other departments, I think-- I joke and say we have a good problem kind of being inundated now with students. Can I come in? I want to-- so that helps there. But also wanting to-- working with our colleagues in the Women's Center around the Toni Cade Bambara annual celebration scholar activist conference. But wanting to work with-- or I'm not going to say want. I'm going to say will-- speaking life to that-- working with a faculty member right now to do a course in a similar fashion on Toni Cade Bambara. Because those are our two most heavily used special collections. But like Dr. Guy-Sheftall alluded to, there are a lot of really rich treasures.

But I don't want to steal the time. I wanted to ask whether Sarah and Andrea want to talk about their experience at AUC. But again, thank you both.

- Yeah.

- [INAUDIBLE]

- Can you go to the mic, please? Thanks. Yeah.

- So Andrea, my mentor and predecessor, was essential in starting a role in the archives as the public services and outreach archivist. And this position's role is to specifically design curriculum around our archival collections. So having a specific designated archivist in this role, she is now able to go out and sort of market our resources to professors. And we've been able to successfully build up our instruction and curriculum around our collections.

We found a lot of that work comes from the archives. So I think it's important funding wise, having bodies in the archive and all that sort of thing, to really stretch ourselves, and go out on campus, and market these resources. And that's really come from the archives. We've had a lot of success. Our instruction has increased almost 50% in the past two years. So I think that's important, too.

- Do you have any advice about how we can break these silences with respect to HBCU history around gender and sexuality?

[LAUGHTER]

I mean, it seems if you can-- if you can get--

- I haven't been Catholic in a long time. And that just seems--

- If you can get those instances that you mentioned that deal with slavery, it seems like this would be a very tiny--

- No, I mean--

[LAUGHTER]

No, no, no. No, no, no. But I think I had a question for you that I'll turn into the answer, which was, in fact, what are the sources? What are the other sources besides financial of the HBCU-- the declining importance of the archives in HBCUs? The funding issues and all of that, right? Part of it you can talk about as a funding issue.

But there are other things happening on our campuses that also help to explain it and certainly facilitate the process of thinking about the libraries and the archives differently, including an increasingly occupational-focused curriculum in education, the sort of vocationalism that's come into virtually everything, the tyranny of STEM rhetoric on our campuses. Which actually, oddly enough, at MIT produces a kind of funny counter response.

But there are other things happening on our campuses besides the funding issues that matter a lot to this conversation. And so I think that one of the big challenges in getting people-- getting institutions to acknowledge their history with slavery had nothing to do, obviously, with finances. It had nothing to do with the capacity to do it or even student interest or interest in broader constituencies.

I think one of the biggest challenges was something really simple that we don't like to acknowledge. Historically white institutions, predominantly white institutions, elite institutions tend to have a hard time with any conversation that seems to empower black people and other people of color to make claims upon them, rather than to be targets of their benevolence. That's the position we prefer. We prefer to actually make benevolent gestures, which is how we use African-American history within these institutions. It's why we name, in fact, fellowships and all this other stuff after our first black graduates. And we do this other stuff without even interrogating the experiences of those black graduates on our campuses and thinking about the historical moments in which those students arrived, the way they were treated on our campuses. And so with no real context beyond that in this very celebratory way.

And I think one of the things that's changing that is not only have we-- because of this sort of grassroots archivally driven push to just confront the past-- the other part of it is actually we are now forced to deal with something that we really, truly sought to avoid. If we have problems with conversations that seem to empower people of color, part of the reason we have problems with those conversations is the empowerment part. It suggests, in fact, that we actually have to deal with the history that we uncover. And we have to, as Georgetown's president put it, atone for that history.

And so one of the things that's interesting is actually, for me, what's happening at Georgetown right now. Because Georgetown, I think, is going through a very difficult process of trying to reconcile its history with slavery with continued identity as a Catholic institution. It's the only college or university established before 1800 that maintains its religious identity.

And it's precisely because of that that Georgetown, in this conversation about PWIs and slavery, has had to walk a slightly different path. It's had to acknowledge, almost from the very beginning, that there's a moral consequence to what's been uncovered and to the institution's decision to actually embrace the project of researching and revealing that history. There's an immediate moral consequence to it. And the moral consequence to it is that the institution has to, then, deal with the question of restorative justice.

That's the thing that I think-- even over the past five years where you've had what is pretty much sort of-- an avalanche is probably too great a term. It's too dramatic. But you've had quite a few elite institutions really taking major steps to acknowledge their histories with slavery. What's been missing is, in fact, the sort of understanding, or the commitment, to actually addressing that past in more than just rhetorical terms and in more than just acts of memorialization. Monuments and markers. To balance out, in fact, all the violently contrary monuments and markers that adorn our campuses already.

And so I think in some ways, actually, it's-- for me, it's there. That we all need to go with all of these projects. There's a whole story about Native Americans on our campuses that we're just beginning to unravel.

- Hampton has that.

- At Hampton, at Howard. So it goes from the oldest institutions in the United States that are founded in that tradition of colonialism right through the establishment of the HBCUs where the 19th century model of plantation education had arrived. And so you have, in fact, large numbers of native students, indigenous students, studying on historically black colleges and campuses.

And I think in the same way that we're wrestling with this moment, we're going to be wrestling with that one. And I hope soon.

- I'm going to say something that I could-- may regret saying. But I'm going to say it anyway. I don't believe, generally speaking-- except for maybe Atlanta University, which had Du Bois, and Howard, which had this legendary faculty-- I do not believe that historically black colleges have really confronted or named how important they are as intellectual academic spaces.

I mean, if you think about it, what HBCUs say about ourselves is that we train students who can't go elsewhere. That we deal with first generation students. We say all kinds of things about ourselves other than our academic intellectual prowess. It's not a part of our brain. I mean, one of the things that I've-- and Holly knows this. One of the things that I've been trying to say to Spelman is, you will not-- when Spelman talks about itself, it doesn't talk about our archives. It doesn't talk about the fact that we have the Audre Lorde and Toni Cade papers. It doesn't talk about our curricular stuff.

I think that we've got to get leadership at HBCUs to be as vocal, and loud, and in your face about our academic intellectual treasures. And those are in our archives. We don't talk about our faculty very much, except for Atlanta University and Howard, maybe. And a long time ago, Fisk.

But just think about it. What do we-- when I go on black college campuses and I start asking about faculty, the only thing we talk about is presidents. We talk about the presidents. If you look at the narratives about HBCUs, it would just tell you all kinds of things that presidents do. It would not single out faculty.

I did a little bitty talk on Spelman faculty going back to the 1880s. So a group of alumni. They were stunned. And even the president was stunned. We do not say enough about the ways in which HBCUs have contributed to the academy, and our histories, and our archives, and our intellectual stuff as a part of that. And that's what I think we have to get HBCUs to do, rather than just talk only about how we help disadvantaged students.

- And I think part of the problem is that so much of the way we talk about ourselves at all these institutions is driven by, in fact, how we market ourselves for development and for fundraising.

- Absolutely.

- And disengagement with the archive will only worsen that. It will only make it even harder to recover, rescue, and really begin to centralize the way we think-- or center the way we talk about and think about ourselves on something other than our fundraising priorities. And I was just at Fisk, actually, about a week and a half ago. And it was my first time in Tennessee. So I had to go there. Went there and wandered around in the cold for about three or four hours. And just really kind of interviewed students and chatted.

And one of the things that was fascinating is that the students actually know the history of Fisk. It's extraordinary the way that the students' engagement with the history of the institution and their desire, in fact, to know more about the history of the institution and its legacies are there. And so there's a demand for it.

And then the problem, as you point out-- we have to understand, actually, that part of building healthy institutions is actually having three dimensional historical records that account for the totality of our past. In the same way that diversity is just a slogan-- if you're celebrating your first black graduate, and you won't acknowledge your first black slave, then it's just a slogan. And it's not real.

And so historically white institutions need three dimensional past into which we can all locate ourselves. Or in which we can all locate ourselves. But HBCUs equally need-- perhaps in some ways more, in more need of that three dimensional past that allows them to tell a story that actually matters so much to American history. You know, it's one of the most compelling stories in the history of American higher education. Both the founding, the arrival, the triumph, and the survival of HBCUs is a fascinating story that the nation should know.

- So maybe we should open it up. How much more time do we have? I'm not paying any attention.

- We have until 2:45.

- OK, what time is it now?

- [INAUDIBLE]

- What time is it now?

- 2:18.

- OK, good.

- 2:20. We've got 25 minutes.

- Did you have more questions? OK.

- I can do a tally.

- So I'm sorry we jumped off again. But Sarah and I just tag teamed. On that note, I wanted to mention a CLEAR grant that Spelman is a partner with with AUC about digitized materials that tell these stories that are--

- Move your mic over a little bit.

- I'm sorry.

- OK.

- Would you like to go ahead, Sarah?

- So one of these very meaningful collaborations I think that we can build on and use and go into the future with-- so we're partnering with Spelman, the AUC Woodruff Library, and the University of Georgia, the digital public library there. And we're taking this time to digitize the print and published materials from the HBCUs that we serve. So Spelman, Morehouse College, Clark Atlanta University, and ITC.

And we're able to now digitize and make available print and post materials, photographs, and the histories of these schools that have never been available before and in some cases, have been locked away and completely inaccessible. So this is a chance that we're making some of the scholarship on these institutions available for the first time ever. We just wanted to mention that.

- Thank you.

- Great.

- OK, so I have-- I was just sitting here listening to the conversation. So I have two remarks. The first remark, when you talk about sexuality and gender and why HBCUs are not addressing those particular topics, I think that's more of a broader question. Because as African-Americans, we have not embraced that topic. And you got to realize that HBCUs is rooted in the African-American community. So I think once African-Americans begin to embrace and have that discussion, you'll see more of that coming out of the archives and research. So I just wanted to say that.

Also I think HBCU has done a great job of talking about our legacy, and who we are, and our value in higher education. I mean, you even have now recent publication of stating our value because it's being questioned. But I do think we can use more of the archives to state that case even better. I mean, when we talk about the history and legacy of HBCUs, the word archives does not come up.

But I think our stories come from the archives. It comes from the community. And it comes from the collection. Maybe not giving credit for where that resource came from. But I think we do a great job as HBCUs telling our stories.

You also mentioned about faculty. I think on a local level, many of us who work in archives do try to uplift our faculty as far as their research that's in our archives and share that maybe on a local level with our historians or with people in higher education in our area. May necessarily not on a national level. But I do say it could be-- it is done on maybe a local and regional level. So I just wanted to say that.

- I absolutely agree with you about the generic community issue around gender and sexuality.

- I wanted to-- how you doing? I'm from the HBCU Library Alliance. And I am in a community college in Mississippi. When we were talking about how there needs to be a three dimensional aspect to the stories, can you speak to how sometimes our archives are censored or cleansed prior to our getting the materials, and that is to inform or protect how the story is told?

If we look at some of our information we get on our presidents and we find that in their efforts to go and get funding from majority institutions, they-- what's the politically correct word for it-- they edited the story to give the institution, the benevolent institution, what they needed in order to give us the money, whatever little bit that was?

- Sure. On the cleansing and pruning of archives-- I mean, there are things you know, and there are things you don't know. There are the things you suspect. And when I was working on the book, you run into a lot of these where there are just sort of missing pieces to family records and all sorts of stuff that, just in their absence, actually, tells you a lot.

I teach the MIT and slavery course with Nora Murphy, who's here. And Nora-- actually, one of the many great instructional things she does with the students is she has them look at William Barton Rogers papers, the published versions of his letters, and then the originals. And in part to show them, in fact, actually the heavy editing, redacting that occurred by Emma Savage Rodgers, his wife, before they were published. In fact, some of the letters bear very little resemblance to the ones that were published. Because now you're telling what's much more of a triumphant story of the rise of MIT, the founding and the rise of MIT.

And so, absolutely. The archives, in that way, are imperfect. But like the census, they have, in fact, an extraordinarily important purpose for us. Because they're the-- not just the basis from which, but the site from which so much intellectual activity happens on our campus. And partly-- one of the things I'm excited about with the MIT and Slavery project-- just to use it as an example-- is that we really meet in the archives. We team teach it, a historian and an archivist.

And the students, these engineering and chemistry majors, are now, in fact, actually the humanities evangelicals of MIT. They're the ones running around talking about the importance

of the humanities and lecturing our president on how students should be required to take more humanities courses earlier. And they should all start in the archives.

And it's just one way of thinking about the importance of this kind of work for shaping our students' undergraduate experiences.

- Let me just say that one of the most important presidents at Spelman, Florence Read, who was there about 30 years-- and I was interested in doing some work on her-- nothing is there. And I think we know why. She had an interesting-- and I'm just going to say interesting relationship with the president of Morehouse College. And so all of those papers are not there.

And so they-- I mean, I would say that she had the most impact on Spelman College before Johnetta. And I think those papers were purged. And so we can't get that. But it's a very interesting thing to think about.

- So you all have been-- and Dr. Guy-Sheftall brought up the fact of using the archives in the curriculum. And my colleagues Holly and Sarah were talking about how you use the papers of Toni Cade Bambara. And so I think part of the problem, too, is that there's not enough deep collaboration between archivists and faculty members. And I think oftentimes archivists are intimidated. Because there is a power dynamic there, even when librarians and archivists are tenured, still.

But I think that maybe to empower archivists and everything-- if people who have experience in doing this would propose a workshop through the Society of American Archivists to show how they have created these kind of partnerships, or have used archival materials to create curriculum, or through the rare books and manuscripts section of ALA-- they have workshops as well-- in order to give an opportunity, so archivists, special collections librarians can see en masse how to do that. And so they'll have tools in the tool kit, so to speak, and can go to their institutions and start making steps in order to do that. I guess that was more of a comment. Sorry.

- But it's not. I mean, I think there's-- in what you're saying is really important. That one of the things that we need to do a much better job of is advertising the role of the archives at the 21st century college and university. And one of the benefits-- the externalities, as the economists would say-- one of the positive externalities of the MIT and Slavery project is that we've actually been able to really demonstrate for our senior administration the centrality of the archives to the educational experience for our undergraduates and our graduate students, for that reason.

And so it's-- and I think a lot of our upper level executives looked down at spreadsheets with numbers on them. And they think about all of these little parts of the institution as just, in fact, costs. Things that need to be paid for. And one of the great things about the MIT and Slavery project, I think, is actually that we put a real face on that cost. We put the value-- I think we actually helped to show the value of the archive to MIT in ways that now our senior

administrators are embracing, celebrating, and talking about, which is for a predominantly engineering school was kind of weird. But good.

- Hi. Pleasure to be here. And this opening keynote is wonderful. And I'm glad to also hear from my Spelman sister, of course, right after Founders Day. I want to just add to [INAUDIBLE] comment, too. I think that we do a decent job, or we are beginning to do a decent job of talking about our collaborations with faculty. But I'd also like to see it from the faculty side as well. When we do like a SALA conference, we've tried to branch out and make sure that we have faculty on those panels. So that when you talk about how are archives introduced into the curriculum, it's important for the faculty to be there as well to say that they've done these kind of projects. And then I think other faculty will also follow. So I think that's important.

I also wanted to do a quick plug. Ida Jones and I will be at Society of American Archivists conference doing a panel about respectability politics in black collections and black archives. And we are talking about what you all are just mentioning about sanitizing many of these records. And what are the implications of that? How we need to correct that.

But also the reasons for it and the fact that so much of what African-Americans have had to do was to uplift the race. And that's really a lot behind that. So hopefully you all can come to that. I think it's Thursday of SAA. So looking forward to that.

- Are you looking at particular archives or just generically talking about respect--

- No, we are looking at particular archives.

- Which ones are you looking at?

- So--

[LAUGHTER]

So Ida is talking about-- she's at Morgan State now. But she will be talking about Howard and Morgan. I think there's a collection. We have also Kerrie Cotton Williams from-- she's at D.C. Public Library. But she will be talking, actually, about the creation of the African-American lesbian and gay archives in Atlanta. And one other woman-- and I'm so sorry. I'm blanking on her name. But she's going to be talking-- actually, I said African-American. But it's people of color. She's going to be talking about Cuban records in Florida and some of the politics that she's encountered of, I guess, kind of wealthy Cubans versus other not so wealthy Cuban populations having their voices told in the archives.

- That's great.

- I think I'm missing one. But I wish we did have a Native American one. But no. But that's all I can think of right now. But it will be good.

- Hello, everyone. I just wanted to tell you thank you so much for the opening conversation. This has been amazing. And I have a question that harkens back to one of your first points, Dr. Guy Sheftall. And the thing is, it may or may not be able to be answered or addressed at this point in time. But I just wanted to go back to the point of, when entering into these partnerships, especially with majority institutions, the issue of distrust, mistrust.

So when you are in certain areas where there are certainly these histories in place in terms of histories of segregation, black students not even being allowed to enter into these institutions-- so I wanted to ask the question about donors. And when I'm talking about donors, I'm talking about people that are actually donating their collections to an archival repository, not necessarily a financial, monetary donor.

But especially when you have donors that have donated collections to, say, an HBCU, and they're still alive, or they have these living family legacies that are very concerned about their collections, how do you even have these conversations with donors that are perhaps adamantly opposed to having any type of dealings with these majority institutions because of the history, because of their just problematic nature and implications that it might mean for the collections at an HBCU or a less well-funded institution? So I don't know if you've had any experience in terms of communicating, entering into these partnerships with donors of this nature? But certainly the repository where I am now, it would be a big problem.

Because a lot of these donors-- like I said, they're still alive. And also they represent a large part of our board and advisory board. So I don't know if anybody else would want to speak to that as well. Because it's certainly an issue.

- You've raised a really complex question. I get-- Randall [? Burkett, ?] where are you? What I get all of the time is why would black people take their collections to white institutions? OK. That is-- and I'm-- OK. I mean, I get that. Why did Toni Morrison take her collection to Princeton? Why did Alice Walker-- whom I encouraged to do that-- why did Alice take her collection to Emory?

And I don't know. Randall, I hope I'm not putting you on the spot. But I want to say that it took Alice about three years, about three years to feel comfortable with her collection at Emory. Because she remembered that when she was at Spelman and in Atlanta, you couldn't step foot on Emory's campus.

And so, Randall, you should say something, since you have been able to get a really amazing African-American collection. You should say something about that.

[LAUGHTER]

Go to the mic. OK.

- [INAUDIBLE]

- But I think it would be important. Because you don't want me to-- I'll let you say it. Because I might say something else.

- I think I might prefer to hear what you say. I was hired a little over 20 years ago to build research collections in African-American history and culture, really through faculty determination that we shouldn't have only the papers of white folk. The late beloved Rudolph Byrd. You were part of that. And we went-- we looked-- the library administration made a serious investigation with the head of the library, to the provost, to the-- is this something we should do? What kind of support would be required? And they made the decision to hire someone to build those collections. I was, for some reason, the lucky guy that got to have that job.

But we really-- one of the questions-- I remember a group of Morehouse students came over and said, why are all these collections at Emory? Why do you collect African-American materials? And I said, well, what would you think of us if we didn't collect these? If we thought these were unimportant and not a part of American culture?

We're trying to reflect in our archives in American studies all aspects of American life and culture. And who we are as a nation is this complicated interaction of white and black over 400 years. So we have to do as broad a range of that source of materials as we can. And we've been able to get some strong support. And it's been a terrific-- it's really changed-- it's changed the special collections.

My modest goal was to try to change Emory University to be a slightly different place in its self-understanding and in terms of the kinds of undergraduate students, and graduate students, and faculty who would want to come to Emory. And I'm not sure to what extent we've-- we certainly got some wonderfully rich collections. As I say, many as gifts. But we also purchase.

So it's been a great-- I think when I came, there were two collections at Emory created by people of color. And we've got a significantly larger number than that now. It's been a dream job. It's been really exciting.

- And I can-- and Alice has been very, very pleased, very pleased with the care with which her papers were handled. Very pleased.

- So thank you both for a conversation that really is a conversation. It's incredible that you've not met before, because you're great interlocutors for each other. And like all real conversations, you've surfaced things that I had thought about separately but never together and that have produced a kind of revelation for me. And that is that the anxiety Beverly describes, which is sort of institutions facing in to their archives themselves, and the suspicion and distrust, which we've thought about institutions facing out to potential collaborators, actually reinforce each other.

So that if you're anxious about surfacing the content of your collection, then some other differently-resourced institution coming in and wanting to help you do that like Lady Bountiful seems more suspicious than it would if you were confident of the contents of your collection. And then that suspicion, in turn, fuels the anxiety. So there's a kind of negative reinforcement between those two things.

And I guess I'm wondering how a space like this workshop that's meant to incubate real collaboration on a basis of mutual strength might intervene to disrupt that. I think my colleagues and I had thought a lot about how to allay mistrust and examine ourselves and our motives from wealthy, predominantly white institutions around mistrust. But I hadn't thought about it in relation to the infra-politics of anxiety.

- [INAUDIBLE]

- Oh, me? OK. All right. Thank you. This is part of our shorthand that we've picked up very quickly.

[LAUGHTER]

Well, I feel like I already know you for a long time. So that's what's so strange. It's odd for me that we haven't met. But I mean, I think part of this, actually, is told in the story of the past dozen or 15 years. That the tension in the archives about what's there, the tension in the archives about what might be revealed, going all the way back the Yale and Brown examples and coming all the way forward.

One of the sort of fascinating consequences of that, I think, is that it turned the archive into a kind of activist space. And it turned archivists into activists. So when I was at William and Mary the first time to do research on the sort of history of slavery on campus, I actually didn't get into the archive. Because that lobby that you go through to get to the archive had an exhibit on slavery at William and Mary that the archivist had put up. There was a temporary exhibit in that temporary space that just showed, in fact, a lot of the early documents relating to slavery on campus.

And so the first day I spent literally with my laptop just walking from glass box to glass box typing away. And the second day, actually, asking people, are you going to take those books out of the glass boxes so I can flip the pages. When is that going to happen? And so really, in some ways, actually, I think part of the answer is to really embrace the way in which archives have become activist spaces on our campuses, the way that archivists have actually been central to-- and librarians-- to things like the Black Lives Matter movements on our campuses. The protests at Yale and Princeton on the naming controversies of their buildings have actually been-- the librarians and the archivists have actually been really quite important to informing those student demands.

And so part of, I think, that tension starts to get resolved there. Or I should put that differently. The archives themselves are helping us to resolve that tension by helping us to understand, in fact, that the things we fear from the outside, the institutional concerns about what might be revealed and those external tensions about coming in, swooping in to take and explain, that, in fact, the real mediation of that happens in the archive. And it's the archivists who are helping us to understand both the value of these sort of painful parts of our institutional past, the intellectual value of them-- but I also think that actually, ultimately, really in some ways the value of them in terms of sort of development and financing.

It's precisely because of those tensions, it's precisely because of those controversies and those unresolved historical issues-- those are the opportunities for our fundraising. Those are the opportunities for really talking about our institutions as being sites from which we can tell a national and international story and really change the way we understand US history and the position of HBCUs and PWIs within that history.

- So I wanted to say thank you to both of you for the discussion today. So I am Reggie Chapel. I am from this other PWI institution called the National Park Service. You may be familiar with it. So the staff there is about 80% white. And so the way in which we do a lot of our interpretation comes through that lens.

And so we as a staff, over the past, I think, 10 years, have been diversified in some ways in a lot of our leadership positions. And so I am now in charge of partnerships and philanthropy. And so I'd just like to say that I would like to work with both of you and other folks in the room around putting together fundraising proposals, so that we can actually be a force for you from the external side, from the outside in, to actually help interpret these stories.

Because many times the universities are situated in communities in which we have parks. And so I just want to give a little shout out to some of my colleagues that are here. So we're going to start over here with Dr. Joy Kinard. And so she is the superintendent of Colonel Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers, which is-- offices are right in the basement of Wilberforce University's main administrative unit. And so there is the first HBCU in the United States.

And so we have this kind of deep ingrained kind of history. And so we really want to be able to participate with you all on that. I just want to give some examples, so that folks really get a good sense. We also have in the room Dr. Rolando Herts, who's in charge of one of our-- there he is. He's in charge of one of our heritage areas. So the Mississippi Delta Heritage Area, which has this cool partnership with the Delta Blue-- Delta State University and the Delta State-- the--

- Delta Center for Culture.

- Delta Center for Cultural [INAUDIBLE]?

- Culture and Learning.

- Culture and Learning. But he also had this kind of cool partnership with the Grammy Blues Museum. Grammy

- Museum.

- See, there it is. And so that.

[LAUGHTER]

And so there's all these kind of cool partnerships that we have to be able to tell this extended story that actually deal with the issues that you're talking about. And on the issue of LGBTQ stuff, QI, however you extend that out, we also have the opportunity to interpret that through the Stonewall site that was actually written into law-- it's a monument-- by President Obama. And so we are looking for these kinds of partnerships to expand this story out. And there's just all these neat ways of doing those kinds of connections.

I'll just give you some more. We've got the Booker T. Washington site. So we can talk about Tuskegee. We've got Mary McLeod Bethune, of which Dr. Kinard used to be in charge of the collections that are there. We've got-- I told you about the Colonel Charles Young site. The idea of Spelman being right next to the King site in Atlanta along the Sweet Auburn corridor-- and we're doing some work with some of the King family, and the homes that are there, and the collections that will get there. We want to be able to reach out to you, Holly, others to talk about, well, how do-- when we get these collections, what do we do? Do we work with the local community so that we can actually get the expertise there?

But also at the Park Service, we have, as you can see, doctors. We have PhDs and numerous subjects. We've got archivists. And our collection is larger than the Smithsonian. So I just want to put out there for folks that this is a resource for you. And our biggest alumni in the room right now is Dr. Kennedy Philips. She came--

- [INAUDIBLE]

[LAUGHTER]

- I know. But thanks for giving me your three minutes. So I just want to be able to show you all the interconnections that we have and the possibilities of fundraising, doing joint collection work, and doing this kind of story from the inside out and outside in.

- Thank you.

- Thank you.

- Hi, I'm Megan Sniffin-Marinoff from the Harvard University Archives. And I want to thank you for everything you've said so far. And I don't think I've ever been at a conference where

someone has told the dirty little secret about institutional archives, which is that institutions fear them. And I'm hoping you can expand upon that a little bit more today or even later on.

I can tell you from Harvard's experience, we're old. We're big. I hope we're too big to fail. Because actually, they should fear us, I suppose, at this university. But I'm wondering if the experiences that you've been able to have so far at Spelman, at Brown, at MIT have started to have an impact at the institutions in fearing their archives less, supporting them.

We're always a very hidden part of an institution, hidden part of a library. It's what distinguishes us, I think, from other special collections. Every day in an institutional archives you kind of live with that fear of what you're exposing and whether or not you will get shut down. And I don't think other special collections necessarily have that fear of being shut down. But it's very palpable in institutional archives. And I don't know if you could just say anything more about that.

- What I will say is, we have a really unusual situation. Our archives is part of an academic unit, Women's Center. So if you come after the archives, you're coming after me and the Women's Center.

[LAUGHTER]

So you've got-- I mean, seriously, the location of the Spelman archives is very unusual. So Holly doesn't have to negotiate the complex Rockefeller, Cosby situation in ways that she would have if she were not located with us. So you got all tenured faculty in Women's Studies. And you've got an archives who's a part of us. So that really, I think, makes a huge difference. And that was strategic on our part, very strategic.

I think you would be more vulnerable without that kind of institutional location. And so our endowment, our Women's Center endowment, which came as a result of the Ford Foundation, includes the archives. There are very few situations at HBCUs where you have an endowed academic unit in which sits an archives. So it would be very hard to shut the archives down without shutting us down. It would be very hard to shut us down given our financial situation with respect to our endowment. So that's a real plus for us.

- I mean, I think the-- shutting down, no. I think probably the concern at MIT, if I just use us as an example, wasn't really about the archive as a space-- there are tensions around the archive. But I think the archive was too hidden on our campus. And one of the great things about the MIT and Slavery project is that it's helped us to teach our administration and the five schools of MIT outside the humanities-- the historians know what the archives do. And our students know. But it's helped us to teach the five schools of MIT, our administration, our alumni how central the archives are to the educational experience of our students. And this brought that kind of attention, I think, that the archives and the archivists deserve in that matter.

Now, there were real politics to this. Although the president's office launched our project, there was a lot of concern about the MIT and Slavery project. And we did lots of things to try and deal with the politics of that. One of the reasons why it's an undergraduate class, to be perfectly honest, is to deal with the politics of exploring slavery on campus. I wanted us to be able to say-- I wanted to be able to say, and I wanted our president to be able to tell detractors, that MIT students are actually writing the history of MIT for MIT. You can't complain about that. This is-- MIT's story couldn't be in safer hands than its future alumni.

And so there were lots of decisions that we made anticipating the politics of talking about slavery and an institution that's not just predominately white, but also had convinced itself that it had no relationship to slavery. That sort of wore a historical white hat, to put it that way. So I think there are politics around there. For us, it's not been one-- I don't think. I'll speak to the archivists. I don't think our archivists were concerned in that way, because we were launched by the president's office. And there are lots of other things protecting us.

But the real value of this for me has been to watch my colleagues, to watch my institution, to watch the alumni communities come to recognize how critical the archives are to MIT and to the undergraduate and broader educational experience of students at MIT.

- One more quick question then we're going to take a break.

- Good afternoon. I'm Joy Kinard. I'm the superintendent of the Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers National Monument in Wilberforce, Ohio. And I appreciate you all's words today. It's been inspiring and motivating to me to continue to do the work I'm doing. But there is an undercurrent of activism that I'm hearing from both of you, especially you. And so I wanted to get a sense of what motivates you to do your scholarship and to preserve the collections. How are you teaching others to have that activism and to nurture it and to understand how to use it, so when certain presidents and administrations change, it can be silenced, but can raise up when it needs to in certain instances?

And so there's a subtle connection that I just want you to speak to that is not just at an HBCU, but at PWIs as well. When you do gender work, you have to have some sense of devotion that is unwavering. And so I just wanted to know if you can comment on that.

- OK. I'm a child of the civil rights movement. I mean, I grew up in Memphis, Tennessee. My grandfather was at the church when Martin Luther King-- his last talk. So I grew up with parents and in a community where you had no choice but to try to eradicate racism and poverty. The gender and sexuality stuff would have come-- would have come much later. And as I mentioned, I was a student in the '60s in Atlanta. And I'm not saying I was a real activist. Because I was too scared. And I was young. I mean, my parents said, I sent you to Spelman to get a degree.

So I have never let go of my history. And I'll never let go of hearing growing up that I had a relative who was lynched. I mean, that was something my grandfather said on a regular basis.

So there's just no way that I could not do that. And my gender and sexuality activism came as a result of being at Spelman and trying to transform it into a radical, out black feminist space. That was my mission.

And it started with locking up the board of trustees when I was an untenured faculty in 1976, because they had never had a black woman president in 100 years. And so my attitude was, the worst thing that could happen to me is that I'll get fired. I won't be stood up in front of a firing squad. I'll get fired. And I can go somewhere else.

And part of my motivation was I wanted Spelman to be something different than the way it was when I was an undergraduate. That's the disadvantage of hiring alumnae who haven't drunk all the Kool-Aid. And so that's what I've been committed to. And then I got hooked on this field called women's studies. And I got hooked on black feminist activism.

And so I just said to myself, this is what my work is. And it's been very rewarding, because of the impact that it's had on students. And I hope that Spelman is a different place as a result of this radical, out black feminist stuff that we've been doing. And I'm really proud and really happy when I think about-- and Holly knows this-- when I think about one of my major things is that archives. Because that archives would have gone over there to Woodruff Library. And it's not that going over there to Woodruff Library is a problem. But we would not have been able to develop this black feminist research unit outside of that context.

So yeah. Scholar activists, loud, in your face, trouble making. But it's been worth it.

[APPLAUSE]

- Hi. You're the first person I talked to downstairs. And you asked me the hardest question. I started out as a community organizer. But I don't think that helps answer this question. I was a community organizer in the South Bronx. And one of the things you take for-- that was a personal journey of a first generation college student who hated college. And so I was at Fordham in the Bronx. And I hated college. I didn't want to be there.

And so going into the South Bronx was my rescue. Because it's a Catholic university. They had all these sort of social justice missions in the South Bronx. Wrestling with this sort of anger and frustration of just being there and then turning that somewhere else.

On campus, I hope, as a faculty member as I've developed as a human being and become a more mature adult, that one of the things I recognize is that a lot of my students arrive, no matter what their background, with different kinds of frustrations and different kinds of things that they're wrestling with and that challenge them. And one of the things that we can do for them as faculty is really help them channel that. Take that and actually learn how to turn it into a strength, turn it into something that's transformative.

I think higher-- the reason I talk about activism at the university is I think universities exist not to transform the society, but to sustain the status quo. We have the potential-- and it doesn't matter what the universities are. That's why we're here. We have the potential to be transformative, but only if we make ourselves do that work, only if we put ourselves to that work.

And so from our incoming first year students, to our tenured faculty, to our presidents, to our librarians, and to our archivists, to everyone in this project, each of us from the site that we're in should, at some point in time. Ask ourselves, how can I transform my campus, my society from this location? And I just think that's a challenge we have to present over and over again. And one of the things I've been delighted in seeing-- because it happened so organically-- is the way in which over the past 15 years, precisely because of the political challenges facing universities right now, archives became actually sites of activism. And it's an extraordinary success story in a lot of ways and one that we need to advertise.

[APPLAUSE]

- That was good.

- That was fun.