



Rhodes College

Rhodes Community,

I am absolutely delighted to announce we are receiving an \$800,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation to establish the Institute for Race and Social Transformation (iRaST). This Institute will serve as an intellectual hub for research and curricular development focusing on racial equity, discrimination, and justice in Memphis and the Mid-South region. I am so grateful to Natalie Person, Kathy Bassard, Lydia Spencer, and all the wonderful faculty listed below for their work on this application, and I am very excited about the important projects this grant will support.

With funding from the three-year grant, the Institute for Race and Social Transformation will include work and activities that document and share stories of Memphians who are absent from the narratives about the city, expand the pipeline of faculty and students trained to do racial justice research and advocacy, elevate the success stories of incarcerated women participating in Rhodes' Liberal Arts in Prison program, and coincide with racial justice missions of some local non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Dr. Natalie Person, dean for curricular development at Rhodes, will serve as the Institute's director. Specific projects supported by the grant and those who will lead them include:

- Neighborhood Narratives Project -led by Charles McKinney, supported by Charles Hughes, Robert Saxe, and a visiting assistant professor
- PhotoVoice Project in Raleigh Literary Zone -Laura Taylor
- Reimagining Memphis Through the Eyes of the Unhoused - Hadi Khoshnevis and Evie Perry
- Historical Racial Justice Project - led by Tim Huebner, supported by Robert Saxe and a visiting assistant professor
- Prison to Rhodes Transition Project - Steve Haynes

The Mellon grant will also provide support for an annual Race and Social Transformation Symposium and summer fellowships for Rhodes and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) students to work with Rhodes and HBCU humanities faculty on justice-centered research. In addition, visiting assistant professors with relevant expertise will contribute to the scholarship of the Institute and work closely with student fellows.

The Institute will be located on West Campus where many of our community-facing programs reside, including the Lynne and Henry Turley Memphis Center, the Institute for Health Equity and Community Justice, the Department of Urban Studies, and the Department of Educational Studies.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is the nation's largest supporter of the arts and humanities, and we are thrilled to receive this grant and be able to carry forward this important work.

Jennifer M. Collins
President

About The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is the nation's largest supporter of the arts and humanities. Since 1969, the Foundation has been guided by its core belief that the humanities and arts are essential to human understanding. The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom that can be found there. Through our grants, we seek to build just communities enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive. Learn more at mellon.org.

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