

*Report Submitted to the Public/Academic Relations Committee, a Subcommittee of the
AFS Building a National Infrastructure Initiative*

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I. OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The American Folklore Society's (AFS) "Building a National Infrastructure Initiative," discussed at AFS in 1998, grew out of regional folklore retreats held in the south, mid-Atlantic, and the west during 1997 and 1998. These retreats and the resulting AFS Initiative were designed to build and strengthen connections between people working in the discipline with the hope of strengthening the field as a whole.

Seven committees were created under the Initiative: the Communications Committee, the Public/Academic Relations Committee, the Identifying and Articulating What We Do Well Committee, the Access to Collective Knowledge Committee, the Leadership Committee, the Building Partnerships Committee, and the Evaluation Committee. The Public/Academic Relations Committee was created from the assumption that improving relations and communication between these two areas would strengthen the discipline overall. Original members of this committee were Erin Roth, Lisa Higgins, Gregory Hansen, Hanna Griff, Phil Nusbaum, Riki Saltzman, Sally Van de Water, Margaret Mills, and John McDowell.

The following short-term goals were developed to help fulfill the Committee's purpose:

- survey public folklorists to identify critical skills needed for public folklore but not addressed in graduate school
- identify academic programs interested in developing workshop exchanges to benefit public folklorists and academic folklore programs
- create a task force of public programs, academic programs, and grad student representatives to develop strategies for training
- identify successful models of academic/public folklore/state arts agency collaborations that go beyond grant programs
- identify successful internships¹

The committee communicated by email and wrote a TAG grant in order to fund this report, which fulfills the goal of identifying models of academic/public collaborations.² In an era when boundaries are being explored and hybridity celebrated, it is appropriate that collaborations top the list to be investigated. Although many of these collaborations may already be known to a number of folklorists in greater detail than can be offered here, a written report formalizes this information and makes it widely available.

QUESTIONS OF DEFINITIONS

As folklorists, we pride ourselves on being interdisciplinary and collaborative. For those who conduct fieldwork, the research process begins by partnering with people in the field. In light of collaboration as a basic, all-pervasive aspect of our work then, What constitutes a collaboration for the purposes of this survey? Who counts as a collaborator? These were some of the questions that first arose. Should the survey cover fieldwork relationships, for example, perhaps the most important collaboration of all? Should it cover collaborations between

individuals or between organizations? Should an exhibit produced as the result of a class project count as a collaboration? How complex must a project be? Additionally, Who should be interviewed? If examining a multi-party project, for example, should only folklorists be interviewed or should all participants, including museum personnel, directors of not-for-profits, fundraisers, performers, and artists who may or may not have a connection to the discipline?³ Should collaborations involving folklorists but that are not specifically “folklore” projects be included?

A more difficult and stickier question is, What do we mean by a public or an academic folklorist? Many academics are activists at heart and view teaching and classroom activities as a form of social and civic engagement. Many also are involved in non-profit organizations such as arts agencies or restoration societies, and most would be infuriated if they were not thought of as public intellectuals. And there are many people for whom “public” folklore is of primary concern, but who teach at universities. Are they public or academic? What about those who work outside the university, but who publish regularly, debate the issues, and continually take a thoughtful or critical stance on their work? Independent folklorists constitute yet another category. Where do they fit in?

Such questions remain unresolved. The reality is that collaborative work is done in various guises by many different people and neither the work nor the people conveniently match analytic categories and labels. The real answer is that such categories, including those of “public” and “academic,” exist largely because we ourselves have helped create them. They do not describe what many folklorists actually do, which is a combination of scholarship and public outreach. Rather, a basic reality—and seemingly one source of these labels—is

that people work in different contexts. Like culture itself, each professional context offers a range of choices from which an individual may choose, and people are both constrained by their particular contexts as well as offered particular kinds of freedoms. If there are tensions between these areas of the discipline, one problem is of perception; we do not understand the context in which our colleagues work. This is a sad misunderstanding since although we did not invent the concept of context, it has been a longstanding part of our intellectual history and professional training.

Although this survey uses such terms, therefore, they are largely as fuzzy categories and not meant to contribute to the distinction. The author agrees with a statement made by Alan Jabbour recently posted on Publore:

I vote with Regina [Bendix] in regarding our field as one—a unified concept with many ramifications, and a unified network with many activities. Overdoing the public-academic distinction weakens us all. To the degree that we all keep ourselves both publicly and academically engaged, we are all strengthened.⁴

Instead, this report is a preliminary exploration of what some members of the Society are actually doing and what they think about collaborative work; it is not definitive or comprehensive. Rather, it is hoped that this survey shall provide an initial point of departure for discussion or a basis for future, more comprehensive evaluations and in doing so, provide a service to the field.

GOALS

In light of the above questions, a few main goals emerged. The first was simply to begin to understand the range of collaborative projects in which folklorists are engaged. Although the initial goal was to identify successful models, this proved impractical because there were no set criteria that determined a model's success. As one participant put it, "Even if a project is not stellar, we still learn from it." A second goal was to document people's feelings and experiences about collaborative work, including what is important to them, what strategies have been useful in accomplishing collaborations, whether there are re-occurring problems, and what kind of information would facilitate future engagement.

METHODS AND PARAMETERS

As noted above, most AFS members are involved in a combination of public, applied, and academic work. To establish initial parameters, Erin Roth of Traditional Arts Indiana at Indiana University sent a brief survey via email to members of Publore in 1999. Participants chosen for this more extensive telephone survey included people who responded to her request; others were chosen from the membership list of the AFS Public Programs Newsletter. Some participants were included in an attempt to ensure geographic and/or institutional diversity; others were targeted specifically because of their reputation for doing extensive and/or high-quality collaborative work. In keeping with the goals outlined above, discussions of student internship

programs were not actively pursued, although the topic of internships appears towards the end of this document. Additionally, persons and programs having institutional affiliations were highlighted at the expense of the inherently collaborative role played by independent scholars and independent public folklorists. This was, in large part, due to the difficulty of defining “collaborative work,” as well as what “academic/public” actually meant. Thus, it was decided that collaborative work between people working in institutions was a starting point, although by no means an end. In focusing on institutional collaborations then, this survey also excludes most informal collaborations that continuously occur such as guest lecturing or serving on grant panels or advisory boards. Finally, rather than trying to obtain a comprehensive overview of an individual’s work—in many cases, an overwhelming task—interviewees were asked to focus on just one or two examples of successful collaborations that had happened within the past ten years.

Potential participants were sent an introductory email explaining the purpose of the survey and then contacted by phone if they responded and expressed interest. In-depth, qualitative interviews were conducted by telephone with forty-two people during the fall of 2000. Conversations lasted anywhere from one-half hour to one-and-a-half hours. Notes were taken by hand during the interview and then typed into a computer. While a sincere attempt was made to include all interviewees, it was not possible to include every single person due to document length, time restrictions, and relevance of topic. At the suggestion of Debora Kodish, participants were given their comments for review and approval before this report was distributed publicly.

All changes were incorporated into the report. The result, as Kodish proposed, is a more collaborative document, one in which many voices are present.

QUESTIONS ASKED

Although the exact nature of questions varied from person to person, interview questions/topics included the following:

- background on self and/or the organization
- description of one or two collaborations over the past ten years
- why it was successful
- skills and strategies useful in doing collaborative work
- challenges or barriers encountered

INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION

Interview content was primarily examined for the purposes of comparison. Common concepts, themes, and ideas were sought. The purpose of this strategy was to generate a normative baseline for both the types of collaborative projects that have occurred and also for the challenges involved in making those collaborations happen. Section II, entitled “Collaborations,” provides general descriptions of various project types. Often, a number of interviewees had participated in similar kinds of projects (for example, a festival). In such cases, only a few or even a single example was chosen as representative, since the survey’s primary purpose is to stimulate ideas for others, to demonstrate the breadth of “academic/public” collaborations within the Society, and to provide basic information and a contact in case others are interested in pursuing similar projects. In other cases, interviewees talked less about specific projects and more

about their general experiences. This more personal side of collaborative work—the common themes, challenges, and suggestions—are elaborated in Sections III and IV. Section III outlines some of the systemic challenges identified by participants while Section IV discusses various perspectives about the nature of “academic” and “public” work. Section V provides a summarizing schema. Contact information for participants is provided in the Appendix.

II. COLLABORATIONS

STRUCTURAL COLLABORATIONS

Collaborations in which institutional resources and infrastructures were significantly combined emerged as one primary way in which universities and public agencies worked together. The types of projects outlined below illustrate this kind of collaborative structure.

Academic/public positions and centers. One way in which to conceptualize collaboration is vis-à-vis the structure and responsibilities of a particular position. There are a number of people who occupy positions emphasizing public projects but housed within a university setting. These positions themselves can therefore be considered “collaborative.”

Maida Owens, folklorist at the Louisiana Division of the Arts, established the Louisiana Regional Folklife Program in 1999, although several other folklorists in Louisiana universities were involved in designing and lobbying

funding for the program

(http://www.crt.state.la.us/folklife/main_reg_folk_program.html).

This program seeks to house professional folklorists at universities who then assist communities in researching, documenting, and recording the region's traditions and folklife. Modeled on the state's regional archeology program, the Louisiana Regional Folklife Program divides the state into five regions with a public folklorist at a state university in each region. Three of the five positions were funded in 1999; the remaining two positions were funded in FY2002. The total amount of money to fund these three positions is \$350,000.00, which comes from the State General Fund appropriation to the Louisiana Division of the Arts as a separate line item. The current regional folklorist positions are: Susan Roach/Louisiana Tech University (see below) and Dayna Lee/Northwestern State University. Ray Brassieur/University of New Orleans resigned his position in August 2001. The UNO position will be filled first and the two new positions will be filled soon thereafter.

Although each regional folklorist participates in different activities, the overarching goals remain the same. According to the Louisiana Regional Folklife Program Impact Statement, "The Regional Folklife Program has been working closely with the Office of Tourism and historic and cultural sites across the state to improve the quality and enhance the visitor experience at sites through better interpretation. Projects have included helping sites, communities, parishes, and regions identify and document its folklife and identify individuals who can present or demonstrate traditions at existing fairs and festivals."⁵ Folklorists and cultural folklife surveys are being used, for example, to enhance the Louisiana Scenic Byway Program by identifying people and activities along the routes to

enhance the heritage and cultural traveler's experience. Regional folklorists also work with the Office of Tourism as well as various communities, attractions, and sites to enhance interpretation in an effort to increase visitation and repeat visitation and develop themes and storylines for welcome centers.⁶

Susan Roach, Professor of English at Louisiana Tech University, serves as one of Louisiana's three regional folklorists. Roach has been with the English department at Louisiana Tech University since 1989. Like many other faculty housed in non-folklore departments, she found herself "doing folklore on the side" (e.g., doing contract work during summers or working on projects supported by grants). Folklore research was not something integrated into her faculty position. She says, "As a folklorist working in the English department, I wanted to expand the folklore work I was doing, which was minimal at that time. I was lucky enough to have a Chair who was already sympathetic to folklore. We applied to the state and received the position." Roach notes that she applied for the position because it allowed her more opportunities to serve the public and gave the university more credit for that service.

From 1996–July, 2001, Carolyn Ware ran the Pine Hills Culture Program at the University of Southern Mississippi (<http://www-dept.usm.edu/~ocach/pncp.html>). Within the university structure, the Pine Hills Culture Program is housed under the Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage. The Center was originally solely an oral history program and staffed by an anthropologist and an historian.

According to Ware, the Center decided it wanted to branch out and look at culture. They hired a folklorist, establishing the Pine Hills Culture Program in 1996. Rather than create a separate program or division, the university president

chose to house the Pine Hills Culture Program under the existing Oral History Center so that the program would be less vulnerable to budgetary cuts. The position is funded by both the university and state and federal grants. Since Ware's job entailed public outreach, they argued for her position by pointing out that it served the university's community mission, a strategy employed by many people occupying positions similar to Ware's.

At the time of the survey, the staff of the Pine Hills Culture Program consisted of Ware and one work-study student. Her projects included field school training for students and community scholars; an exhibit produced from the field school research; a regional folklife survey and subsequent traveling exhibit; and a local music radio show featuring 16 four-and-a-half minute programs on Mississippi folklife. Interested persons should go to the website listed above for more in-depth descriptions.

Laurie Sommers holds a similar position. She directs the South Georgia Folklife Project, which she founded in 1996 and which is housed at Valdosta State University in Georgia (<http://www.valdosta.edu/music/SGFP/index.htm>). Trained in both folklore and ethnomusicology, Sommers was originally an adjunct faculty member in the Music department. At Valdosta, the normal faculty teaching load is four courses per semester. Sommers' current position is highly unusual for a faculty member, since she teaches only two courses per year. This is due to the fact that the majority of her job is outreach and applied research.

Sommers created her job entirely from grants. The job remains grant-based, making it tenuous. Since 1998, it has been a full-time temporary position funded by NEA grants with matching funds from the university. Although

initially her position was paid for by NEA, Sommers also points out that she had to convince the university that the South Georgia Folklife Project was a good idea. Since Valdosta is a regional university and her position covered forty-one counties in the state, like Ware and Roach Sommers argued that her position and work provided outreach and service to these underserved counties. One of the keys to her success, she says, has been a strong emphasis on region and on very successful, highly visible programming.⁷ Her projects include a regional folklife survey, a traditional music survey, and a radio series called *Wiregrass Ways*. Each radio program is approximately five minutes long and includes both music and narration. Funded by the state arts agency, *Wiregrass Ways* was a collaboration between the university and the public radio station. “This was one of my most successful projects,” Sommers says, “because it was highly visible and reached a wide audience. I then put the university’s name on it which made them very happy and made my program and position within the university much stronger.”

Not all efforts to institutionalize programs within universities, however, are consistently triumphant. City Lore partnered with the Bank Street College of Education to form the Center for Folklife and Education. The Center was originally founded by Steve Zeitlin of City Lore and Nina Jaffe, a faculty member in the Graduate Program at the college. The purpose of the Center was to serve as an oral history library, a folklife resource center for teachers, and to provide programming such as training for artists in schools. They also produced the CARTS newsletter.

According to Amanda Dargan, City Lore’s Education Director, while both City Lore and the college considered the collaboration successful, the Center did

not become a permanent part of the institution. During the period of the grant, the college experienced growing pains which required the Center to move its offices each year. The Center was relocated off-campus to an area that was not easily accessible to faculty and students. After the third year of funding, City Lore decided to move the Center to a permanent home at City Lore to avoid the annual moves and integrate the Center with City Lore's archives. The collaboration with the college continues, however, with co-sponsored events. Examples include workshops on folk-arts-in-education and teacher training institutes. "Although we do not sponsor ongoing programs at the college as we did when we were located there, we have found that more Bank Street students use the Center at its current location than when it was located at the college. Moreover, visitors to the City Lore location can use the resources of the City Lore archive and the entire staff," says Dargan. In the end, she adds, you need to decide if the collaboration is best served by having the program institutionalized within the college or by cooperating from independent organizations. "We decided that this program was best served by the latter."

Tim Evans, assistant professor of Folk Studies at Western Kentucky University, worked as a public sector folklorist in the American Studies Program at the University of Wyoming. That position also lasted approximately four years and no longer exists. Like those described above, Evans' position was mainly one of service and outreach. The American Studies program, a public-service oriented program, used his work to gain support from the university since outreach fell within the university's mission statement.

Evans lists the advantages and disadvantages of this kind of position. One great advantage of being housed within the university, he says, is that the

university has graduate assistants, which allowed him to utilize student labor to transcribe, label, archive, and file. Evans points out that this work is extremely time-consuming and a drain on resources for many public programs. Evans also believes that—at least in Wyoming—outreach was easier to do from within the university than state programs since universities are more flexible. A main emphasis of his programming, for example, was helping local organizations achieve their own goals. Evans helped the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone on the Wind River Reservation establish their own apprenticeship program, a program which was eventually picked up by the tribe itself.⁸ Evans also secured money for a collection of Arapaho stories, which were collected by the Arapaho themselves and published both in the Arapaho language and in translation. He also helped secure money to start a Native language camp, which also taught crafts, games, and religious ceremonies. Evans points out that such projects would have been extremely difficult to accomplish under the rubric of the Wyoming Arts Council, for example, which narrowly focuses on “elite” arts. “It would have been difficult to demonstrate that a language camp fell within their horizon,” he notes.

The ultimate problem, Evans says, was one of positioning and funding. The position depended on joint funding from the university and particular state agencies. While the university picked up its share, the arts council and state division never came through and the position fell by the wayside. “When you are in between agencies,” says Evans, “you can get overlooked.”⁹ The state never picked up the slack and was not supportive of this kind of work.”

Field schools. A number of folklore field schools occur around the country. Perhaps the largest and best known is the “Field School for Cultural Documentation,” an intensive, hands-on course in basic techniques for cultural documentation that is organized by the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress in conjunction with an institutional partner. It is a good example of collaboration between institutions.

According to David Taylor, the Center’s Field School Director, the idea for the project arose when he and his colleagues, who frequently hire folklorists to work on the Center’s large-scale field research projects, noticed that the quality of fieldwork training provided to graduate students often did not measure up to the Center’s professional standards. A Center-sponsored field school was seen as a way to provide a service to the discipline by providing practical training in fieldwork techniques.

The Center has sponsored an annual field school since 1995. It is open to undergraduate and graduate students in folklore as well as others who are interested in acquiring the skills needed for effective cultural documentation, including school teachers, librarians, museum curators, community scholars, staff members of arts organizations, and undergraduate and graduate students in other fields. Normally, fifteen participants are selected from a pool of applicants every year.

The Center’s field school lasts three weeks and is divided into two main parts. The first half of the course is devoted to classroom lectures, discussions, and workshops regarding documentation equipment. Topics covered include ethics and responsibility, project planning, interviewing, documentary

photography, sound recording, fieldnotes, archiving, and an introduction to the course's research topic.

During the second half of the course, the participants are divided into several teams. Each team plans and carries out fieldwork using techniques learned during the first half of the course. The course concludes with a public program during which each team presents its research findings. The teams are also expected to fully organize the documentary materials they collect in the field—audiotapes, photographs, fieldnotes, photo logs, tape logs, etc.—and present them for archival deposit. “Our plan,” says Taylor, “is to take the participants through every step of a typical field project, from project planning all the way to a public presentation and the archiving of a field collection. It’s a lot of work for the participants to do, but we feel they come away from the course with a good understanding of a successful model for field research and a lot of confidence in their ability to apply it in their future work.”

According to Taylor, the Center endeavors to move the field school around the United States by developing partnerships with institutions willing to host it. The Center provides the model for the field school, one that is based on its extensive experience with team-based, multi-disciplinary field research. It also supplies instructors and documentation equipment, and works with the partner institution to plan and carry out the course and select participants. The partner institution provides a course co-director, instructors, classrooms, lodging, food service, and documentation equipment. It also selects the topic that will be the focus of the course's field research, conducts advance fieldwork, and recruits and selects participants.

Usually, the Center's field school operates in a single location for one or two years and then moves on to a new partnership in a different part of the country. Although forging new partnerships is time consuming, this allows the Center to achieve greater geographic coverage and share its training model more widely. Partners are encouraged to continue to use the field school model as a university course or a training program open to the public after the Center has moved on. It is hoped that such on-going training opportunities will eventually exceed what the Center currently offers to a relatively small number of participants during its annual course. At the time of this survey, the American Folklife Center had conducted field schools in partnership with Colorado College, the University of New Mexico, Kenyon College, and Indiana University.

Taylor thinks that one of the reasons the field schools have been successful is that the Center is willing to work as a "true collaborative partner." He points out that the Center is very willing to adapt its model to meet its partners' needs. For example, the Center is especially receptive to choosing research themes that meet local needs. Taylor also stresses the importance of being open about what each partner can bring to the table and of not assuming that one party has all the answers. "It would be easy for us to be perceived as the people from Washington who come in and tell others what to do," he said, "but that's not what we're about."

Teacher training institutes. Gwen Meister of the Nebraska Historical Society described a recent collaboration in which the Society partnered with Ron Nagle, a faculty member in the History department at Wesleyan Nebraska University. The collaboration resulted in an annual, two-week long institute to

train teachers to teach Nebraska history using cultural folklife materials such as photographs, oral histories, artifacts, and documents found in the Historical Society's archive. For its part, the Institute provides instruction, worktime, field experiences for participants, and attendance at cultural performances. The Institute then helps teachers apply these new skills to improve classroom units. The university provides the graduate credits teachers require to attend the Institute, along with operational facilities such as room and board. The Historical Society provides the historical and folklife materials, as well as staff support. Meister notes that although Nagle is not a folklorist, he has an abiding interest in Nebraska and local history.¹⁰ This was the primary link between Wesleyan Nebraska University and the Society. The Society might potentially have partnered with the University of Nebraska for example, Meister says, but no one in that history department had an interest in local history.

The Historical Society and the university collaboratively obtained funding from the Cooper Foundation, a large private foundation in Lincoln. Although the university previously had received Cooper Foundation funding, the Historical Society had not. Meister thinks that the Foundation was impressed by the collaborative nature of the Institute since it granted them long-term (three years) funding/seed money. Meister emphasizes that obtaining long-term funding for large projects is extremely important. "One year is just not enough," she says, "and in that case it may be better to get none at all."

Please see (<http://www.nebraskahistory.org/museum/teachers/institut.htm>) for more information.

Matching funds. James Leary, Professor of Folklore and Scandinavian Studies and the Co-Director of the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, said that one of the most useful aspects of being situated within a university with respect to collaborative work is that university monies can be used as matching funds by outside organizations. Leary says that the University of Wisconsin-Madison partnered with a local non-profit organization called *Folklore Village*, with which independent folklorist Janet Gilmore was working on contract. “This organization came out of the international folk dance revival movement but was seeking to expand its mission to embrace the folk culture of its surrounding region,” Leary says, “We wanted to help them expand their horizons a bit and reconceptualize what they consider to be folklore.” Leary says that as a faculty member, he was able to apply for university money and that *Folklore Village* used that money as leverage when applying for other grants, thus increasing its viability.

PRODUCT-ORIENTED COLLABORATIONS

Another category that emerged was collaborations resulting in a media project or product. Such products came in a variety of forms, a few of which are outlined below.

Publications. Apart from creating the kind of statewide infrastructure outlined above, Maida Owens feels that one of the Louisiana Folklife Program’s most successful collaborative projects was *Swapping Stories*. The project has been

ten years in the making and has led to a website, publication, video, and recording (<http://www.lpb.org/programs/swappingstories/>).

Swapping Stories began as an inter-agency collaboration to present storytelling performances around the state. Owens says that approximately 1000 storytellers and 600-700 storytelling sessions were taped. Because no one knew what to do with the tapes, Owens took them thinking they would be useful. She then applied to the NEA to publish a booklet on ten participating storytellers and hired a recent University of Louisiana graduate to index the tapes and propose narratives. Owens says that the graduate compiled a large number of transcriptions, many more than would have been possible to publish in a pamphlet. Owens then realized that the project had larger possibilities and cast around for a narrative scholar. She ended up collaborating with Carl Lindahl, a folklorist at the University of Houston who has done extensive work in Louisiana. According to Owens, Lindahl was amazed at the amount of data they had compiled and put a great amount of time into the publication. He wrote the summarizing essay, indexed the stories, and linked them up with current scholarship. The final result was a substantial book entitled *Swapping Stories: Folktales from Louisiana*, published by the University Press of Mississippi (1997). Owens later collaborated with a filmmaker to produce a video to accompany the book, which has also led to the website. "The whole thing," says Owens, "was incredibly collaborative."

Films and documentaries. Steve Stuempfle, a folklorist, is Chief Curator at the Historical Museum of Southern Florida (<http://www.historical-museum.org/>). His biggest challenge in doing public/academic collaborative

projects, he says, is that there are no academic folklorists or ethnomusicologists in the Miami area with whom he might work. This is a great loss, he adds, because southern Florida's rich and diverse cultural traditions are not well-documented as a result.

Stuempfle did discover, however, that he and Sanjeev Chatterjee, Director of the Documentary Unit in the School of Communication at the University of Miami (<http://www.miami.edu/com/documentary.htm>), shared an interest in cultural expressions. Their shared interests led to the *Indo-Caribbean Community Arts Project*. Unlike participants in many of the collaborative projects described in this document, Stuempfle and Chatterjee did not know each other beforehand. Both were interested in exploring and documenting the Caribbean East Indian community in southern Florida. Stuempfle, who had previously worked with this community, contacted Chatterjee after browsing the Documentary Unit's web page.

With funding from the Fund for Folk Culture (Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Community Folklife Program), Stuempfle, Chatterjee and members of the Indo-Caribbean community chose ten high school students to document various cultural activities of the community for a full year. High school students were paired with undergraduate and graduate mentors from the University of Miami, and the resulting video and photographs led to a traveling exhibit. Technical expertise, still cameras, digital camcorders, and editing facilities were provided by the University of Miami, while Stuempfle offered documentary guidance and contacts with the community. Stuempfle emphasizes that the community itself was a full participant. He says, "The community leaders were instrumental in getting this project together. They chose which cultural activities to document as

well as which high school students to do the documenting. This was very important to the project's success."

Cassette and CD productions. Craig Miller of the Folk Arts Program of the Utah Arts Council <http://utahfolkarts.org> said that in 1995 they contributed to an educational website and CD ROM produced by Media Solutions at the University of Utah. The Folk Arts Program had already produced a series of three cassettes and a booklet of Hispanic cultural traditions in Utah called *Hecho en Utah: A Cultural History of Utah's Spanish-Speaking Communities*. The Folk Arts Program offered to assist the University put these materials on-line and into CD ROM format for Media Solutions' encyclopedic series called *Utah Collections*. This collaboration provided an excellent opportunity for the Folk Arts Program to make its archival materials more easily available to the public. Says Miller, "The university provided the infrastructure, while the Folk Arts Program provided content and context. It was a lot of work, but well worth it." The *Utah Collections* project was done in collaboration with the State Historical Society and funded by the University of Utah.

A similar project was recently initiated by David Stanley, Professor of English at Westminster College, also in Utah. Stanley received a grant from the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, a research center at Brigham Young University. The purpose of the grant is to produce a recording of ethnic music utilizing the Utah Folk Arts collection of music from Carbon County. Stanley notes that the Folk Arts program staff doesn't have the time or money to do many projects with the archives, and that this project provides a perfect opportunity to work together. Stanley, who worked at the Utah State Arts

Council for six years before coming to Westminster College, has a close personal relationship with the Folk Arts program staff. This makes collaboration easy, he says, “because these are my friends.”

Museum exhibits. Museum exhibits and other forms of display constitute a huge area of public/academic overlap. John Burrison, Professor of English at Georgia State University, has been involved in museums and exhibits throughout his career and considers public folklore as simply “another way of communicating my work.” For Burrison, being a good academic necessarily entails a public dimension because “one wants to reach as wide an audience as possible.” His latest project is a permanent exhibit of Southeastern traditional art called “Shaping Traditions: Folk Arts in a Changing South.” The exhibit is drawn from his own collection and located at the Atlanta History Center (http://www.atlantahistorycenter.com/Exhibitions/html/shaping_traditions.htm).

Burrison notes that museums are often “a different animal” and that occasionally his folklore students encounter difficulties working there since museums may not understand or appreciate their particular skills. He says that this is because museums are basically about objects and artifacts. “Art museums especially tend to want to let the object ‘speak for itself’ while folklorists tend to be interested in people. For most folklorists, objects and artifacts are secondary—important because they are extensions of human existence.” Burrison thinks that this particularly folkloristic perspective leaves some students feeling like outsiders in a museum setting. He points to Japan as a country where a lot of folklorists work in museum settings rather than

universities and suggests looking to that country as a model for developing museum-based relationships.

Margaret Yocom, Associate Professor of English and Cultural Studies at George Mason University, (<http://mason.gmu.edu/~myocom/>) has been involved in the Rangeley Lakes Region Logging Museum (<http://pubpages.unh.edu/~mbp/museum/index.html>) in Rangeley, Maine since 1985. This collaboration grew out of her own academic research into the logging folklife in Maine when the loggers themselves grew interested in presenting their own traditions. They established the museum in 1979, four years after Yocom first met them. As a volunteer, Yocom curates exhibits for the museum and writes most texts, including forms, articles, accessions, and exhibit signage. "The most difficult part of this kind of collaboration," says Yocom, "is that this work is in addition to my full-time teaching responsibilities at George Mason. Oftentimes this kind of work is not credited as being academic work." Therefore, she says, everything she does with the museum must be done outside of her job. She also points out that there is not enough money when she takes academic leave to work on these kinds of projects full-time and so most of the work tends to happen only over the summers.

Musical tours. This collaboration, entitled *Southern Musical Roots Tours* (SMRT), was described by Peggy Bulger, who administered the project when she was working for the Southern Arts Federation (<http://www.southarts.org/index.html>). SMRT was a series of pre-packaged musical tours organized by the Southern Arts Federation, which worked at times in conjunction with the Student Activities Offices at various colleges and

universities to book the tour on campuses throughout the South. The project was funded in part by an NEA grant and in part by the presenters who booked the tours (many of which were colleges or universities). Bulger said the fact that the tours received partial funding from the NEA made it possible for smaller colleges to book the tour. Example of tour titles include “Bluegrass, Blues and Membe,” “The Deep South Musical Roots Tour,” and “Sisters of the South.”

The tour was curated by Peggy Bulger and Barbara Lau who discussed, for example, the role of music in the South and demonstrate how different strains of music intersected with southern heritages. Additionally, the tour exposed audiences to different types of traditional music, and thus the educational component of SMRT was very strong. This collaboration helped colleges and universities to better understand the benefits of a curated tour. “There was a built-in educational component,” Bulger says, “but it wasn’t hitting you over the head, either.” Along with in-depth interpretation, there was also a program book; in some cases, SAF produced a CD. Additionally, the project provided artists who had never toured with an opportunity to learn to do so—SAF did everything from booking to driving the van. In many cases, says Bulger, the artists learned the skills to tour on their own.

Festivals. There are many folklife festivals produced throughout the country. The Louisiana Folklife Festival, (<http://www.louisianafolklifest.org/default.htm>), directed by Mike Luster, is one of the most successful and well known.

“A festival,” Luster says, “is a giant collaboration between many different parties. The biggest challenge in my job is to balance the different points of view

of all the parties involved.” Luster says, for example, that folklorists in general (whether academic or public) are more interested in the educational dimension of the event and less interested in the crowd pleasers, logistics, or sponsors. He points out that “these are all various interests that compete with each other, and it is my job to find a balance between the various voices.” In the Louisiana Folklife Festival, academics participate by either serving on the program advisory panel and/or as emcees and presenters. Luster says that panel members and presenters are generally chosen by their area of expertise and experience and not simply because they are associated with a university. Luster also emphasizes the importance of understanding local politics. “You can’t come in with ideas that don’t match,” he says, “You absolutely must figure out what makes a good presentation that won’t be too out of line with the local culture and politics.”

Fred Fussell, Director of the Chattahoochee Folklife Project, and John Lupold, Chair of the History department at Columbus State University, collaborated on the Festival of Southeastern Indian Cultures from 1991 to 1996. According to Fussell, the collaboration occurred because he and Lupold were friends and had collaborated on previous projects. The basic strategy of this festival was to use the university as a vehicle through which to funnel NEA and other grant funding. The university also had support staff, which Fussell’s organization (staff of 1) did not. Fussell says, “We were very clever in getting festival visitors to participate in the panel discussions that were a part of the festival. We placed the discussion area near the food booths, and the only place to sit down and eat was in front of the panelists.” Panel discussions included the meaning of local place names in native languages, the ethics of presenting

esoteric knowledge and ceremonies publicly, and Indian stereotypes and popular perception of American Indians. The festival also included traditional craft, music, games, and dance forms.

Students are another way in which collaborative work occurs within a festival context. Bob Gates, Director of the Kentucky Folklife Program, works closely with approximately 15-20 Western Kentucky University students and their professors while producing the Kentucky Folklife Festival, which began in 1997. Says Gates, "The Festival gives students great hands-on experience in presenting folklife traditions to the public. About a year before the Festival, we meet with the Folk Studies professors and students to develop class research and presentation projects that fit the upcoming themes. For example, last year several students in the Fieldwork class conducted interviews in the fall with artists. Then they developed background exhibits later that year in their Museums and Folklife Class. These same students helped set up their exhibits at the Festival and assisted the artists in presenting their cultural traditions. For example, one exhibit area recreated a famous community center called the Quonset. Other students constructed exhibits about traditions along Highway 31, one of the main themes of the festival."

Gates likens the festival to a laboratory in which students experiment with different modes of interpretation, since helping visitors understand what's going on is important to folklife festivals. For example, Gates explains that one time the Festival featured a group of marble-players, which was a little complicated to present. "We had a student go out, interview the crowd, and explain the rules to them so that they could understand what they were seeing," Gates says. He also adds that the professors from Western Kentucky University play a vital role.

“The students and the Festival greatly benefit from the supervision professors provide. The professors are in charge of keeping track of students, giving advice, and monitoring their involvement. There absolutely needs to be faculty involvement,” an aspect of working with students also noted by Nancy Nusz (see below).

INTELLECTUAL EXCHANGES

Other collaborations that emerged were those in which the primary function was to provide a format for intellectual exchange or networking. Such collaborations were frequent, both formal and informal, and occurred in a number of guises.

Retreats. Theresa Hollingsworth of the Southern Arts Federation thinks that one of the most successful collaborations they have organized is the Folklorists in the South (FITS) retreat. Started in 1988, this annual retreat is an informal weekend gathering in which folklorists participate in workshops, meet artists, take field trips, and hone analytical and fieldwork skills. The 2001 FITS theme, for example, was “Collaborative Ethnography and the Folklorists Tool Kit.” Participants come from all over the south and include public sector folklorists, academic folklorists, graduate students, and independent folklorists. Hollingsworth notes that “It is a great opportunity to network because the gathering is small and informal. You get to know people on a pretty intimate level.” She also thinks that this interaction and intimate level helps strengthen the region overall.

Hollingsworth says that one of the ways they have improved the retreat recently is by incorporating a reading and discussion forum. Participants are asked to read five or six articles, jointly chosen by an academic and public folklorist, who then lead a discussion at the retreat. In 2001, Glen Hinson and Margaret Yocom chose the readings and led discussion on the topic of collaborative ethnography. Hollingsworth notes that the reading and discussion have become an important component because “a lot of people in the public sector have been out of school for a long time and have a hard time keeping up with the field. Even if you read articles, you don’t discuss them with anyone, and it is the discussion that helps provide insight.” For more information about FITS, please go to (<http://www.southarts.org/folklorist.htm>).

Conferences and symposia. Texas Folklife Resources (TFR), (<http://www.main.org/tfr/>) formerly directed by Pat Jasper, has collaborated in the past with the University of Texas at Austin to produce several symposia, which were organized as a combination of conference and performance event. In the mid-90s, for example, they produced a symposium that paid tribute to Américo Paredes. Texas Folklife Resources brought together a range of people including academics, public folklorists, lay people, and artists who had been influenced by Paredes; participants walked a line between giving a scholarly paper and paying tribute to him. Jasper believes that what makes TFR’s conferences particularly successful is that they move beyond the conventional lecture format. They include, for example, panels, forums, and evening performances, ensuring especially the inclusion of artists and tradition-bearers.

For Jasper, having multiple voices “thickens” the experience for the audience and contributes to a successful collaboration.

Jasper says that, in producing any of the symposia, TFR works hard to help academics understand their audience and thinks that this is a strength of the organization. She says, “TFR is very interested in promoting scholarly folklore issues in the public domain. It is important for academics to speak to the issues at hand, but in the manner of a public intellectual and using everyday parlance.” On the other hand, Jasper also notes that such translation involves a significant time commitment and that TFR often simply doesn’t have the resources to do so. She says, “I feel like most of my colleagues at UT are responsive to these concerns. The basic issue is, given limited time and resources, whether or not a particular collaboration is worth it to TFR.”

Tina Bucuvalas says that the Florida Folklife Program (FFP) doesn’t often collaborate with academics, in part because they have a hard time drumming up support for public folklore in that area. She pointed to one successful collaboration, however, in which the Florida Folklife Program participated in a conference on Latin American dance and music in Florida. The conference was organized by ethnomusicologist Martha Ellen Davis of the University of Florida in Gainesville. Bucuvalas says that this conference was successful because Davis is very enthusiastic and supportive of folklore. Davis included people from many different areas such as the FFP, people within the university, and presenters/artists within the art world—a strategy similar to Jasper’s. Bucuvalas says that the FFP’s role during the conference was to explain its work to the public and increase public awareness.

Classroom work and public/applied projects. There are a number of ways in which students, professors, and public sector folklorists collaborate in the classroom. The most common manner is through internships, but other, less formal collaborations exist as well. Willie Smyth, for example, of the Washington State Folk Arts Program, (<http://www.wa.gov/art/fa/index.html>), says that although the folk arts program does not usually collaborate with academics, they did team up with Professor Sam Schragger of the Evergreen State College in Olympia to get his students' assistance in producing one of the four heritage audiotape driving tours available in Washington. According to Smyth, the students in Schragger's class did some of the fieldwork for the heritage driving tour, and their interviews and photos were included in the project. Smyth said that one of the benefits of this collaboration was that he received a great quantity of field data for little expense. The students were able to gain hands-on fieldwork experience, as well as have their work used in the final project. "A drawback," Smyth says, however, "is that fieldwork conducted by undergraduate students may not always be the same quality of an experienced fieldworker. For example, the content of the interview might be wonderful, but the quality of the sound recording might not be at the professional standard necessary for inclusion on our releases."

David Stanley (see above) uses public folklore to enhance the classroom experience for his students in three primary ways. First, Stanley teaches a folklore course during his college's inter-term, which coincides with the Living Traditions Festival produced by the Utah Arts Council. As part of the course, Stanley sends students to that festival to do documentation, interviews, and examine festival structure. The students write reports and essays based on their

fieldwork experience. Second, Stanley takes his students to the Chase Home Museum, a museum of traditional art in Salt Lake City affiliated with the Utah Folk Arts Program. Finally, Stanley uses public program material as pedagogical devices. He uses, for example, a tape called "Listening In: Utah Storytelling" which he produced while working at the Utah Arts Council as a public folklorist. He also uses videotapes available through the Folk Arts Program and occasionally borrows equipment as well. "In each case," Stanley says, "the public sector provides the resources. These events, displays, and materials help enhance the students' understanding of their own fieldwork experience and obtain a sense of what their own projects might accomplish."

Michael Miller is Manager of the Delaware Folklife Program of the Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation. The Division occasionally has the opportunity to partner with academic organizations, such as the University of Delaware. When appropriate, graduate student interns from the University's Center for Historic Architecture and Design help document and preserve structures owned by the Division. Says Miller, "We have 450 buildings, and eighty percent of them are historical. Interns document the buildings and make recommendations for their preservation." Miller says this is useful not only because students are another source of labor, but because funders and managers receiving the preservation recommendations perceive graduate students as an objective third party. "This is a great advantage," says Miller, "They back up our own perspective but are still outside the system."

Yet participants also pointed out that working with students needs to be carefully planned. Nancy Nusz, Director of the Oregon Folklife Program, says that taking on interns creates extra responsibilities for an already small staff.

Thus, it is essential to work with a professor who is very committed to overseeing the interns. Nusz notes that a couple of years ago the Folklife Program agreed to work with ten graduate students from Portland State University (PSU). The professor required an internship as part of each student's coursework, directly connected to the grade he/she would receive at completion. Nusz says that at the time this was important to her because "In the past, we have spent far too much time training interns and then trying to get them to do the work." She continues, "In this case, however, the PSU professor wasn't strict with his students. Although we reported that some of them were not completing the minimum requirements with us, he never followed up with them. A couple of the students did an excellent job, others did mediocre work, and a few did little. The professor did not consult with us on the final evaluations for the internships so I have no idea how he was able to grade them. These kinds of collaborations really need to be a two-way street from the beginning. Unfortunately, as a result of that experience, I'm pretty particular about who I accept as an intern these days."

Listserve. Craig Stinson of the South Carolina Arts Commission (<http://www.state.sc.us/arts/>) created a Listserve in order to network together people interested in folk arts and traditional cultures in the state. Members include folklorists, community scholars, traditional artists, state government staff, members of the media, and museum and arts council professionals. Although not a formal collaboration, Stinson thinks the Listserv has been very useful in getting people to talk to each other and in helping to make connections. "I created a network that was previously not there," he says, "Folklorists at

different institutions worked on individual projects together, but they were not all networked together. This was a very easy way to promote dialogue.” Stinson notes that in May, 1999, for example, there were only 10 people on the list, but by the fall of 2000, there were over 120. The Listserv recently incorporated themselves into a 501C3 called the South Carolina Traditional Arts Network (SCTAN) which, along with a website (<http://www.traditionalarts.org/>) and a quarterly publication, serves as a resource for traditional arts in the area.

THE INDIVIDUAL

While descriptions of particular projects such as those above are one way to understand collaborative work, focusing on individual experiences provides a different kind of insight. James Griffith, a folklorist who has done highly successful collaborative work throughout his career, sheds light on how collaborative work gets done over a long period of time.

James Griffith: In his own words. “During the period 1979–1998 I ran the Southwest Folklore Center at the University of Arizona. For most of this time the Center was part of the Library system at the University. My basic job was as a public folklorist, although I taught one and later two courses in Folklore each year for the Department of English from 1990 on. My job description was as follows: To maintain and add onto the Arizona Folklore Archive (in existence since the 1940s), to serve as a public information resource concerning the folk lore, folk arts, and folklife of the peoples of Arizona and the neighboring

Mexican state of Sonora, and to prepare and present programs and materials concerning the above subjects.

The collecting and archiving speaks for itself. I served the campus as a resource by giving guest lectures on my topics upon request. I spoke in classes in the English, fine arts, music, anthropology and geography departments. I also gave lectures and talks to any off-campus group requesting them; at one point I was averaging three public talks of some kind each week. Finally, I answered questions from students, media, and the general public on just about any imaginable topic dealing with the living traditions of the region.

The programs and materials included an annual folklife festival, Tucson Meet Yourself (started in 1974), well over 100 articles in various popular and professional journals, about ten museum and gallery exhibitions (ranging from quite large to quite small), concerts of various kinds, various audio productions, two weekly, year-long series of radio spots, and about fifteen years of weekly, three-minute TV spots over the university-affiliated public TV station, KUAT-TV.

I found that each aspect of my work helped the other ones. For example, after the TV series had been going for a while, I had high recognition within the local Mexican-American communities, which paved the way for more fieldwork and more projects.

My basic strategy was to request as few grants as possible (they take a lot of time, for one thing), but rather form alliances with individuals and institutions for individual projects. For instance, I would approach a local historical society with an idea for an exhibit. They would provide gallery space, we would split costs of printing (or xeroxing) handout material, and I would do the fieldwork,

photography, curating, and writing. Often I would raise small sums of money for projects by feeding any speakers' fees I might receive into the Center's Discretionary Fund. This meant that I usually had a few hundred dollars to play around with—and it's surprising how far that will go if one is careful. Of course, I was sure that the cooperating institutions got equal billing with the Center... and I was not interested in getting my name out there. That pleased both my partners and the university, which was the important thing.

I was also careful not to take on projects over which I had no control—after all, if they failed and gave the university a black eye it would be seen as my fault. I discovered that the administration paid little attention to what I did as long as it was successful, relatively non-controversial, and they got credit right up front.

Longevity in the same place was an important factor in my work. Not only did I become well-known, but I was able to wait for projects until the time was right—until people sympathetic to my goals and interests were in appropriate positions within the various potential partner institutions.

Finally, my work has been stamped by my talents, skills and limitations. I tend to prefer informality to institutionalized relationships. That plays out in a circle of friends to whom I turn for advice rather than an Advisory Committee, a preference for working with individuals rather than organizations, and a fieldwork style that can best be described as 'hanging out.' Having a strong sense of showmanship has also been helpful. My projects have all been educational, but they have been entertaining as well, and sometimes the sugar coating has been pretty thick. The skills of a snake oil salesman come in pretty handy at times, and a sense of humor has always been a strong part of my tool kit."

IMPORTANT COLLABORATIVE SKILLS IDENTIFIED BY PARTICIPANTS

- nurturing and developing long-term relationships with people
- doing meaningful, excellent, and visible programs that reach broad audiences
- flexibility, openness to new ideas and perspectives
- persistence in a soft-mannered way
- being a good listener
- openness about what each partner can bring to the table
- willingness to compromise and give up control
- starting early
- ensuring similar goals
- clearly outlining expectations
- clearly understanding the needs of each partner
- sharing credit and power
- ensuring that all partners are involved from the beginning
- being selfless and willing to put one's own needs in background

III. CHALLENGES

Another goal of the survey was to identify challenges to “academic/public” collaborative work commonly observed or experienced by participants. These challenges fell into the following areas: language, time, institutional cultures, integrating work, and power.

DISCOURSE/AUDIENCE

The interconnected issues of language and audience were often pointed to as one of the most challenging aspects of public/academic collaborations. Many folklorists, both public and academic, point out that in producing exhibits, radio

programs, or giving news interviews, one must speak and write in language intelligible to the public. Laura Marcus, a recent Indiana University Ph.D. currently working at IRCO (International Refugee Center of Oregon), describes herself as raised in “deep theory.” She says, however, “You simply can’t speak in jargon to a public audience. For me, the trick is therefore to somehow convey the theoretical issues that make the work interesting.” Pat Jasper agrees. She says that Texas Folklife Resources works very hard when they collaborate with academics to help them speak plainly to their audience. “You can’t read an hour-long paper filled with academic jargon to a public audience,” she says. “TFR is very interested in building an audience for the kinds of scholarly issues that surround folklore, so when we do collaborations with academics, part of our role is one of a translator. We help them deconstruct the message and make it accessible to the public.”

Like Jasper and Marcus, David Shuldiner, who in Fall 2000 was with the Elderly Services Division at the Connecticut Department of Social Services and has a faculty appointment at the School of Family Studies, University of Connecticut, is very interested in theoretical issues. He says that it is possible to take complex concepts and translate them into plain language without talking down to people. For Shuldiner, issues of language are really about understanding the context in which each linguistic mode operates. He says, “The most important thing I learned in folklore is the concept of context—the context of a particular experience, of traditions, of the various ways that people experience the world. That doesn’t mean that you get rid of scholarly discourse but rather that you recognize the context in which it is appropriate. It also means that there are no hierarchies of discourse.”

The issue of audience seems to be central to the language issue. Riki Saltzman, Director of the Iowa Folklife Program, (<http://www.culturalaffairs.org/iac/guidebook/gb32.htm>) says that differences in audience affect not only language, but the kinds of questions asked and the particular goals sought. Saltzman points out that she is always pitching folklore to the public and to politicians and therefore that everything she does has a political dimension. “This affects how you frame things,” she says. “For example, I can’t pitch my work with immigrant communities as something radical because I work for the state and cannot take a political stance. I have to use nice words like ‘promote cultural understanding’—ways of speaking I wouldn’t necessarily use on my own or within a university setting.” Shalom Staub, Director and CEO of the Institute for Cultural Partnerships, (<http://www.culturalpartnerships.org>) aptly summarizes the situation Saltzman describes: “the organization of the public world is driven by its constituency.”

PERCEPTIONS OF TIME

Issues involving time arose on a number of levels. Participants cited differing institutional timelines, time constraints, and even views of time as constant challenges to effective collaboration—and all advised to start work as early as possible.

For Susan Roach, whose position is housed both within the university and the state, time issues arise due to the differing objectives of each institution. Roach points out that the state has very different goals from the university: it is extremely product-oriented and expects things to be done quickly. The

university structure, however, allows flexibility, enabling people to take their time to ensure that things are done correctly. Roach even occasionally wonders whether or not she did a good job on certain state projects because of the constant bureaucratic push to get things done. “In the state,” she says, “plans tend to be made overnight.” This sentiment was echoed by numerous other people. Riki Saltzman, for example, says, “In the university, you don’t have this kind of ‘produce’ pressure...I think that the public sector might benefit more from muddling along and thinking things through.” On the other hand, Saltzman also points out that Iowa’s legislature changes every two years. We simply can’t spend five years on a project, she says, and this limits the long-term effects of any particular project. Carolyn Ware holds similar views. She says that academics tend to want perfection and generally think at least a year in advance. The public sector, however, often gets grants for only a year. Thus, she says that they think in the short-term and work on tighter timelines. “In terms of deadlines in the public sector,” she says, “there is no wiggle room.”

A second challenge involving time is the fact that collaborative projects simply take longer. Many participants point out that the more agencies and people involved, the longer the project will take. Gwen Meister notes that it takes an especially long time to accomplish a project if the collaboration is between agencies and persons from different cultural backgrounds. She points out that funders need to recognize this fact and not simply think that they are getting “two for the price of one.” Maggie Holtzberg, Folk Arts Coordinator for the Massachusetts Cultural Council, says that such collaborations take time because the learning curve is high and getting the relevant background information takes time. Peggy Bulger agrees, but also notes: “Collaborations do

take much longer, but they also allow for a maximization of resources and the project ends up having more of an impact.” Tina Bucuvalas adds, “The more multi-layered you can make a collaboration, the better the collaboration is. It is more effective because you are reaching a greater audience. You also have greater access to funding.”

A third challenge involving time is perceptions of time within an institutional framework. John Wolford, for example, is Museum Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Missouri—St. Louis and the Urban Anthropologist at the Missouri Historical Society, a position split 1/3 at the university and 2/3 at the Historical Society. He writes, “Many have told me that my position is ideal, since it is a combination of aspects of our field and of our training that is rarely available to folklorists.”¹¹ Yet Wolford also notes that people are on the clock at the Historical Society, while at the university, people are flexible, independent agents. Thus, when he is doing the university part of his job he is perceived as being “off” by people at the Historical Society. At the university on the other hand, Wolford says that he does not have much power or status because he is not tenure track. Ware echoes Wolford: “The university doesn’t know what to do with people who are neither really faculty nor staff. They don’t know what to do with non-tenure track positions. They pay less for the work, but the university really needs to figure this out if they are seriously committed to doing this kind of outreach.”

INSTITUTIONAL CULTURES

A third challenge in working collaboratively is understanding the institutions with which one works. John Burrison emphasizes that folklorists working in any institution *really* need to be educated about the culture of that institution because, he says, “that institution won’t change overnight.” Tina Bucuvalas agrees, saying knowing how to work with institutions is essential. She says that this is a skill developed over time, especially in government work: biding time, learning who to talk to, how to network, and how to conceive of funding strategies are important skills. Maggie Holtzberg says that you need to think outside your institution’s own box and to be aware that any project is not simply for one’s own benefit.

Inta Carpenter, Director of Special Projects at the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology, Indiana University, initiated *Traditional Arts Indiana (TAI)* by securing initial funding through grants. *TAI*, a public sector organization headed by Erin Roth, is housed both at the Folklore Department and at the Indiana Arts Council. Carpenter thinks that an important aspect of working successfully within institutions is getting beyond personal relationships by building institutional memory. “I have learned that if partnerships remain at the grassroots level,” she says, “then you are always in a position of having to explain who you are and what you are doing to those higher up. You can’t just depend on certain people being in place forever. You need to look beyond that. Rather than depend on individual relationships, I am trying to build infrastructure carefully—to make it long-lasting by building institutional memory and making a track record of what has happened in the past. That way,

when the next person comes in they will know that a partnership has already been established. This approach makes collaborative work less dependent on individual good will.” Carpenter continues, “I do this in part at IU by being on lots and lots of committees, which might interest me personally, but are important because my potential partner may have a much broader interest than folklore. It is my job to make those connections between what they are doing and what we are doing.”

INTEGRATING MULTIPLE KINDS OF WORK

One of the most difficult obstacles in collaborations seemed to be lack of time and resources. Many people mentioned the difficulty of keeping up with both the public and academic sides of the discipline. Several persons working in the public/applied sector, for example, said that they were not easily able to stay in touch with the academic and intellectual side of their work and would like an expanded work structure that allowed them to enhance their work with theory. Mike Luster, for example, has the festival aspect covered, but occasionally feels out of touch with the big folklore picture. Laura Marcus wants to bridge both the academic and applied worlds in her own work in the social services, but this is difficult because there is no formula for how to do this in the field. She says that it can be difficult to be a scholar in social service agencies because the structure can hinder participation in scholarly life. Marcus had to attend the applied anthropology meeting on her vacation time, for example, because it was not perceived as part of her job. She has heard of this phenomenon among others like herself working in social service agencies. This is a frustrating limitation, she

says, since the intellectual/theoretical dimension of folklore is an important part of her identity.

Faculty have the same problem. Margaret Yocom (see above), points out that outreach activities can be misunderstood or not appreciated by colleagues. "It is difficult," she says, "to justify local, grassroots museum work to people in an English department." This makes outreach work "in addition to" regular faculty duties. Says one participant, "Faculty teach, do independent studies, attend meetings, mentor, and sit on committees, while public sector folklorists sit on grant panels and planning committees, all of which is very time consuming. If you have a job that does both, it is very draining."

One way some faculty have partially solved this dilemma is by demonstrating the importance of public work for folklorists. James Leary (see above) worked in the public sector for many years before transitioning to the university and based his tenure case partly on his public service record. Leary says that although it was difficult to find a tenure home, when he finally got tenure he went directly to full professorship. "Having all that public background helped," he says. Like several other people, Leary used the AFS Statement on public folklore to demonstrate to the university that public projects should count toward tenure, thus making "public" work "academic."

A second approach to the difficulty of integrating work is recognizing the limitations of collaborative partners. Riki Saltzman finds academics useful in many ways, but says, "You have to respect what academics do, otherwise the relationship won't work." She says that Ph.D.s conduct excellent research and finds their research and language skills especially useful in immigrant communities. She also thinks faculty are good at working with community

scholars since “community scholars often need a bit of mentoring and faculty are really good at this because they already know how to teach.” Adds Michael Miller, “It is really important to understand what faculty can and cannot do. They can do internships and generate studies with recommendations, but they can’t be the ‘doers’ because they have classes and university administration stuff. You avoid problems by not expecting them to do stuff they can’t do and avoiding problematic goals.”

POWER

Jane Beck, Director of the Vermont Folklife Center, and Debora Kodish, Director of the Philadelphia Folklore Project, both brought up issues of power. Beck said that sharing credit is important because smaller organizations need the credit to become more viable. She also pointed out that the big partner tends to eat up the smaller organization and that this causes problems. Kodish readily acknowledges this problem and says that for her, power-sharing is the biggest challenge in doing collaborative work. Says Kodish: “Small organizations tend to be the ones who have less power, more risk, and less benefit when they collaborate with large institutions. In situations of unequal power, it is the powerful institution that tends to benefit.” Thus, she says, one of the most important issues to her to address in doing collaborative work is how the organizations will share the power, risks, and benefits equally. Important questions that address these issues include: How can we share power equally? How can this collaboration benefit both parties? What is at stake for both parties? How can the risk be equal? Since often there is less investment or risk on

the part of the bigger party, how does one forge an equitable collaboration?

“These are questions that the PFP is used to addressing when we work with smaller grassroots groups. We know how to share risk and look for what makes a partnership equitable for everyone, but we are less skilled at convincing large bureaucracies (including universities) to play by rules that are fair to all,” she says.

Kodish suggests that one of the most important ways that these issues can be addressed is by involving all parties in the negotiations and planning from the beginning. “Everyone should be able to contribute to the vision, or a collaboration rarely works well. As well, you need to assume that everyone is a teacher and that everyone has something to offer. A good collaboration should be one in which both partners’ resources and knowledge are shared, respected. Otherwise the collaboration can turn into an ‘extractive process’ in which the smaller partner is asked for goods and services, without full regard for the meaning or cost of the request.” Kodish also stresses that there is much to be gained from each party coming to understand (and to frame collaborations) in terms of more than just its own particular needs, benefits, and perspectives.

IV. PERSPECTIVES

David Shuldiner says that, if there are differences between academic and public sector folklorists, it is that the public sector tends to be more aware that they are not just doing documentation—that the work has an impact on the community. Riki Saltzman says that perhaps this is because public folklorists mostly live in the community in which they conduct their fieldwork, while many faculty

conduct research in other countries and do not necessarily face these kinds of daily issues. "This means," she says, "that you have to be 'on' all the time. You must always check back with the community because if you mess up, you will hear about it from multiple sources."

John Burrison suggests that perhaps one of the problems is that public folklore tends to be a little perfunctory, a sentiment echoed by many others in the statement "public sector provides the breadth, academic provides the depth." Burrison says that because this is the case, the two really go hand in hand. He says, "Public folklore work has benefited me tremendously. It has been a great growing process and has improved my academic work. I don't separate them in my own life. I think that public folklore is necessary to the survival of the discipline as a whole."

Shuldiner agrees. He says that both modes are important to him because they help clarify his own thoughts and sharpen his wits: "I relish the skills I have as a scholar and what excites me is when I can cross boundaries and learn from other people. I have been humbled by my experiences with elders who may not have formal training, or have had very different training from mine. They have a lot of wisdom and I must keep an open mind to be able to hear it."

Although people had various specific ideas about how to begin to change problems of perception underlying academic/public relations, most suggestions revolved around the notion of dialogue and greater interaction. "Those of us in not-for-profit folklife agencies need to know the next generation," says Kodish. "Our lack of access is a sorrow to me. I would love to know what graduate students are doing and thinking." Laura Marcus also thinks that a way to talk about collaborations on a more regular basis might be useful. She suggested a

regular forum at AFS, or perhaps vis-à-vis the newsletter. Such a dialogue would not only provide information about the range of projects that people are involved in, but also a way to talk about how such projects are accomplished.

Many people said that incorporating public dimensions into the graduate curriculum would help address the issue. Kodish thinks that students should go out and do real work, rather than simply trying to incorporate another class. “Otherwise,” she says, “what you get in a classroom is a pale translation of what is actually going on and what people are actually doing.” Coming from a slightly different angle, Inta Carpenter agrees that integrating public work into the curriculum is difficult to do within the conventional university framework. She says, “You can’t do a public course in a semester. We [the Folklore Department at Indiana University] tried that. The time frame is too limiting and artificial. It would be much better to get involved in a year-long project for credit because practice (shared with peers) in an actual community-based application is what is important.” Carpenter points out that this approach has methodological implications as well. “Working more with action-based research models with collaborating agencies is quite different methodologically from doing independent ethnographic work.”

Shalom Staub suggests that one easy way to collaborate would be to compile a list of public folklorists who would be available as outside Ph.D. committee members for students. Others, such as David Shuldiner, suggest that a series of regular workshops would help strengthen ties with the academy. He would like to figure out ways in which the expertise of public sector folklorists could be drawn upon in academic settings, perhaps by showing students how to

develop their skills or working with instructors on projects where students could work in private/public sectors as interns or for credit.

Although internships were not specifically targeted, Robert Baron, Director of the Folk Arts Program at the New York Council on the Arts, expands on the link pointed to by Shuldiner. “Internships,” writes Baron, “enable students to learn public folklore practices that are integral to the discipline of folklore. Graduate students need to learn how to act as practicing professional folklorists, understand the different dimensions of what it means to be a folklorist, and experience the various capacities in which they will be expected to perform. Internships enable them to engage in producing field research based programming and learn administrative practices needed in any work situation. Their internships should be linked to the curricula at their graduate programs. Graduate students, especially in the doctoral programs, are often not well-prepared to work outside the academy, and fieldwork is less emphasized than in the past in some graduate programs. Students often lack experience and training in the use of cameras and tape recorders, and their graduate study may not adequately equip them to undertake documentation and organize programming for public folklore programs.”

Rory Turner, formerly of the Maryland Arts Council, believes that colleges and universities are currently very receptive to bringing education back into the community and connecting back to people’s life experiences. Turner believes that the service learning model is a powerful metaphor for folklife work. “In service learning,” Turner says, “you are not just providing texts, but resources, advocacy, and ways in which the community can come together—all of which working with folklife materials can provide.” In a more recent email he adds,

“Public and applied folklore, with its emphasis on both documentation and programming, both research and community involvement, is a particularly well suited activity for incredible service learning projects and experiences. It is somewhat surprising that there are not more ‘public sector’ projects and partnerships in higher ed from a sheerly curricular and pedagogical motivation. There ought to be.”¹²

V. SUMMARY

The schema below provides a visual overview of the kinds of collaborations covered in this survey, as well as a list of skills and challenges identified by practitioners as salient to the collaborative enterprise. As noted in the introduction, this inventory is necessarily abbreviated; the range of actual collaborative practices, exchanges, and experiences extends well beyond what has been documented here. The list, however, identifies some major areas of engagement and as such can be used to begin to understand, reflect upon, and expand who we are and what we do.

Structural Collaborations	Product-Oriented Collaborations	Intellectual Exchanges
Academic/public positions and centers	Publications	Retreats
Field schools	Films and documentaries	Conferences and symposia
Teacher training institutes	Cassette and CD productions	Integrating classroom activities with public/applied projects
Matching funds	Museum exhibits	Listserves
	Musical tours	
	Festivals	

Collaborative skills

- flexibility, openness to new ideas and perspectives
- doing meaningful, excellent, and visible programs that reach broad audiences
- nurturing and developing long-term relationships with people
- persistence in a soft-mannered way
- being a good listener
- openness about what each partner can bring to the table
- willingness to compromise and give up control
- starting early
- ensuring similar goals
- clearly outlining expectations
- clearly understanding the needs of each partner
- sharing credit and power
- ensuring that all partners are involved from the beginning
- being selfless and willing to put one's own needs in background

Challenges

- differences in discourse and audience
- differences in perceptions of time and time-management strategies
- differing institutional cultures
- integrating multiple kinds of work
- issues of power-sharing

ENDNOTES

I gratefully acknowledge all of the survey participants for their time and effort and wish more comments could have been incorporated into the report. I also thank the National Endowment for the Arts and Indiana University for financial and technical support, and particularly the members Public / Academic Relations Committee.

¹ "Building a National Infrastructure Initiative, Public / Academic Relations Committee." Handout.

² This goal, however, was slightly modified. See "Goals," p. 5.

³ This in-depth strategy was suggested by Rory Turner.

⁴ Email posted to PUBLORE@LISTSERV.NMMNH-ABQ.MUS.NM.US April 11, 2001.

⁵ Impact Statement, Louisiana Regional Folklife Program.

⁶ Memorandum, October 21, 2000, from Phillip Jones to Gerri Hobdy re: Regional Folklife Program Request for Additional Funding.

⁷ The importance of highly visible programming was pointed out by many participants.

⁸ In his interview, Rory Turner noted that the most successful kinds of cultural programming are those that are incorporated back into the community.

⁹ This problem was also noted by other interviewees.

¹⁰ Meister notes that they do not label teacher training as "folklife," but rather as "Nebraska history" or "local history."

¹¹ Email sent from John Wolford to Joseph P. Goodwin re: "careers column," dated July 01, 1997.

¹² Email posted to PUBLORE@LISTSERV.NMMNH-ABQ.MUS.NM.US April 12, 2001.

VI. APPENDIX

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