The Great Lakes Colleges Association is pleased to announce the creation of the Oral History in the Liberal Arts (OHLA) program. OHLA is a multi-institution initiative with a primary focus of promoting and supporting the teaching of oral history methodologies and the development of oral history projects as “high impact” teaching practices in the liberal arts environment. Supported by the GLCA’s Expanding Collaboration Initiative and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, OHLA is a collaborative comprised of GLCA faculty, librarians, and instructional technology professionals brought together to provide guidance and technical support in the design and implementation of teaching strategies for incorporation of oral history methodology into the classroom. OHLA is intended to assist faculty with a wide range of pedagogical objectives, experience with oral history production, and differing levels of access to and familiarity with digital capture, processing, and presentation technologies used with inquiry-based learning. This project seeks to curate best practices for interview production through its development of an online “tool kit” for the teaching of oral history methods and practice as well as reflections from faculty and students engaged in these processes.

In furtherance of its mission to promote effective teaching of oral history approaches, OHLA will issue a Call for Proposals for mini-grants in amounts up to $3,600 to support faculty projects that incorporate oral history pedagogy into their classes or otherwise have as a major component the provision of instruction about oral history method as well as opportunities within a class for students to create and pursue oral history projects. A second Call for Proposals will encourage limited duration student-faculty collaborations through which faculty will work directly with students to design and implement oral history projects. These mentorships ordinarily anticipate students working fulltime with the guidance of a faculty member for a minimum of 9 weeks; most will take place over the course of a summer, although a few might be doable over an academic term depending upon the requirements and curricular structure of a particular institution. Funding for these collaborations will include fellowships to students in the amount of $3,500, stipends to their faculty mentors at $1,500, and up to $300 for a technology allowance.

Professor Brooke Bryan of Antioch College and Professor Ric Sheffield of Kenyon College will visit campus on Thursday November 17th to talk with interested faculty about this new initiative, share some examples of projects that are benefiting from OHLA resources, including his own involving the African American experience in rural America, and answer questions about participating in these opportunities. For more information, see the OHLA website at http://ohla.info/ or contact Prof. Sheffield at sheffler@kenyon.edu.