

# NEH Application Cover Sheet

## Digital Humanities Start-up Grants

### PROJECT DIRECTOR

---

Dr. Elmer Ray Block  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Political Science & Public  
Administration  
421 Wimberly Hall, Room 423B  
1725 State Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601-3742

**E-mail:** rblock@uwlax.edu  
**Phone(W):** 608-785-6646  
**Phone(H):**  
**Fax:** 608-785-8743

**Field of Expertise:** Politics: American Government

### INSTITUTION

---

Elmer Ray Block Jr.  
La Crosse, WI UNITED STATES

### APPLICATION INFORMATION

---

**Title:** *The Obama Synthesis Project (OSP): Using an Automated Digital Database to Archive, Organize, and Analyze the ???Obama Books Boom???*

**Grant Period:** From 5/2014 to 10/2015

**Field of Project:** Politics: American Government; Politics: Political Science, Other;  
Interdisciplinary: History and Philosophy of Science, Technology, and Medicine

**Description of Project:** Books written about Barack Obama, books authored by him, and the books he reads have become remarkably popular since he declared his candidacy for President in 2007. Unfortunately, we know surprisingly little about these aspects of the ???Obama books boom??? because the journalists and scholars examining them often rely on anecdotes, incomplete reading lists, and descriptive analyses. Developing and using the Obama Synthesis Project, an automated web-based digital database, I plan to offer the first systematic evidence about when the book boom started, how it has progressed, and what lessons we can learn from it. In addition to producing original scholarship, this project will generate a valuable and publicly-available database, one that could add to the ongoing conversation about Obama???'s deeds on the campaign trail and in the Oval Office while facilitating other scholars in the social sciences and humanities joining the conversation as well.

### BUDGET

---

<b>Outright Request</b>	\$59,060.00	<b>Cost Sharing</b>	
<b>Matching Request</b>		<b>Total Budget</b>	\$59,060.00
<b>Total NEH</b>	\$59,060.00		

### GRANT ADMINISTRATOR

---

Ms. Melissa Nielsen  
Director of Research & Sponsored Programs  
1725 State Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601-3742  
UNITED STATES

**E-mail:** mnielsen@uwlax.edu  
**Phone(W):** (608) 785-8007  
**Fax:** 608-785-8743

# **THE OBAMA SYNTHESIS PROJECT (OSP): USING AN AUTOMATED DIGITAL DATABASE TO ARCHIVE, ORGANIZE, AND ANALYZE THE ‘OBAMA BOOKS BOOM’**

*AN APPLICATION FOR A NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES (NEH) LEVEL  
II DIGITAL HUMANITIES START-UP GRANT*

## **1. TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. Table of Contents .....	1
2. List of Participants .....	3
Project Director.....	3
Statistical Consultant.....	3
Advisory Board .....	3
3. Abstract.....	4
Statement of Innovation.....	4
Statement of Humanities Significance.....	4
4. Proposal Narrative .....	5
Enhancing the Humanities through Innovation .....	5
Environmental Scan .....	6
History and Duration of the Project .....	7
Work Plan.....	8
Project Staff.....	10
Project Director: .....	10
Statistical Consultant.....	10
Advisory Board: .....	10
Final Product and Dissemination .....	11

5. Project Budget.....	12
Budget Narrative .....	12
Budget Form.....	14
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.....	17
6. Biographies.....	21
Project Director.....	21
Statistical Consultant.....	22
Advisory Board .....	23
7. Data Management Plan.....	24
Expected Data.....	24
Period of Data Retention.....	24
Data Formats and Dissemination .....	24
Data Storage and Preservation of Access .....	25
8. Letters of Commitment and Support.....	26
9. Appendices .....	33
References.....	33

## 2. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

### PROJECT DIRECTOR

Ray Block Jr. (Assistant Professor of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse)

### STATISTICAL CONSULTANT

- Betsy Jane Becker (Professor of Statistics in the College of Education, Florida State University)

### ADVISORY BOARD

- Christina S. Haynes (Assistant Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse)
- Robert Wilkie (Assistant Professor of English, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse)
- Marie Moeller (Assistant Professor of English, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse)

### 3. ABSTRACT

Obama books (i.e., books written about Barack Obama, books authored by him, and books he reads) have become remarkably popular since he declared his candidacy for President in 2007. Unfortunately, we know surprisingly little about these aspects of the “Obama Books Boom” because the journalists and scholars examining them often rely on anecdotes, incomplete reading lists, and descriptive analyses. These limitations prevent us from addressing a key question: how does this book boom advance our understanding of the American Presidency as both a *political* and a *literary* institution? The Obama Synthesis Project (OSP), an automated web-based relational database, will offer the first systematic evidence about when the book boom started, how it has progressed, and what lessons we can learn from it. In addition to producing original scholarship, the OSP will generate a valuable and publicly-available database, one that will add to the ongoing conversation about Obama’s deeds on the campaign trail and in the Oval Office while facilitating other scholars in the humanities and social sciences joining the conversation as well.

#### STATEMENT OF INNOVATION

The goal of the OSP is to facilitate the systematic review of the Obama literature: each book represents a single perspective in this growing literature, and the database collects numerous variables representing assorted features of these studies. Ultimately, the OSP will lead to the development of new kinds of text searches that make extensive use of metadata obtained from Obama books. For instance, a keyword search for “Hanes Walton”—one of the foremost experts on contemporary American presidents and a prolific publisher of Obama research (see, e.g., Walton et al. 2008; 2009A; 2009B)—would yield information about Professor Walton’s unique contributions to the literature as well as his professional affiliation and contact information. By providing a platform for storing, coding, and analyzing the information in Obama books, the OSP will allow users to create linkages across texts in a manner, and on a level, that would not be possible with conventional, less systematic literature review techniques. Finally, as faculty members at comprehensive universities with a strong commitment to undergraduate research, my collaborators and I will be able to expand the benefits of this project by training students. Besides receiving monetary compensation, teams of assistants will work closely with us, learning valuable technical skills while becoming familiar with an important literature. In this sense, the OSP is both a research and a mentoring opportunity, for these experiences will benefit those students who plan to pursue post-graduate education or work in fields requiring a proficiency in data collection and data analysis.

#### STATEMENT OF HUMANITIES SIGNIFICANCE

Beyond the methodological and pedagogical innovations mentioned above, the OSP has potential for fostering cross-disciplinary dialogue, particularly between humanists and social scientists. For example, the “Oprahfication” of American literacy has been a popular topic among those who study rhetoric and composition (see, e.g., Hall 2003; Wolff 2003). President Obama’s reading habits are the subject of similar discussions, for comparisons naturally arise between the President’s ability to endorse authors and the literacy-enhancing influence commanded by Oprah Winfrey’s book club (Weinman 2010). The OSP will allow scholars to explore the impact of the Obama administration on book sales and readership patterns, which, consequently, will help us to appreciate more fully Obama’s important but perhaps inadvertent role as “Bookseller in Chief” (Kehe 2008).

## 4. PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

### ENHANCING THE HUMANITIES THROUGH INNOVATION

Barack Obama's historic candidacies and two-term presidency have inspired volumes of commentary from sympathizers and critics alike, and if the current trend continues, there will be more ink spilled about him than about any other African-American political figure (Walton et al. 2009a, 195). When the first reviews went into print, there were fewer than 100 Obama books (Walton et al. 2009a, Table 1). A quick search on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) reveals that there are now more than 10,000 books that include the keywords "Barack Obama" in the title—which is a conservative estimate, for there are many other books that do not mention the president by name in the title (see Block 2012). Yet, as scholars scurry to understand what Ronald Roach (2009) calls the "Obama Books Boom," no web portal provides universal access to Obama books or offers tools that make the most of the research potential of these books as both *artifacts of* and *sources for* scholarly inquiry. In collaboration with faculty members at Florida State University, the University of Michigan, and the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, my colleagues and I propose an open-source, Internet-based tool that not only archives the Obama literature, (i.e., the books that the president writes, those written about him, and the ones he reads and/or endorses) but also showcases methods for analyzing information from this rapidly-growing corpus of text.

Archiving Obama books online represents a costly preservation initiative. As long as this ever-expanding literature is divided among academic and popular publishers, this investment is in some measure squandered because readers cannot find the books they seek, or they cannot browse a comprehensive body of Obama studies that meet their criteria. Existing archives may offer an assortment of Obama books, but the inability to compare across authors, publishers, copyright dates, etc. makes traditional book collections a problematic gateway into the literature. The OSP will eliminate this problem because it will be the first freely-available web resource to synthesize digital book information and, as a result, it will provide a new level of access to the texts that helped define the Obama literature. Moreover, this book synthesis will contain thousands of cases, span several disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, and will therefore result in a compendium of Obama books—arguably the largest and most comprehensive of its type. Moreover, the OSP will allow users to create linkages across Obama books in a manner, and on a level, that would not be possible using conventional, less systematic literature review techniques.

With the support of a Level II NEH Digital Humanities Start-Up grant, my collaborators and I will devote the next 18 months to building a relational database of Obama books. This database requires four phases of data collection. We will spend the first month recording "meta-data" (i.e., contextual details about the processes my colleagues and I use to locate Obama books). We will devote the next four to five months to matching search-related with author-related information. In phase three (6 months), we will develop tools for codifying the content of Obama books. While the first three phases of the OSP archive qualitative data, the final phase (6 months) harvests quantitative details from the Obama books. Specifically, we plan to apply the techniques of research synthesis (Cooper and Hedges 2009) to summarize numerical values in figures and tables.

The OSP does more than simply organize the superabundance of Obama books scattered across the Internet. Unlike other attempts to archive this literature, the OSP will link books together in dynamic sequences and display this literature array before the researcher's eyes. This would solve

a critical problem in the Obama literature: one reason for the mixed conclusions about Obama's rise to prominence (compare Hopkins 2009; Zernike and Sussman 2008 to Lewis-Beck and Tien 2008; Lewis-Beck, Tien, and Nadeau 2010) is the limited access and slow process of viewing Obama books as physical objects in reading rooms. To discover how literary perceptions of the president evolved over time, or to witness how the perspectives of researchers from different professional and academic backgrounds diverge, researchers must compare several Obama books simultaneously. Such comparisons can be analytically challenging, but making it easier to identify and situate Obama books will increase the number of scholars who use them as data sources, and, ultimately, enrich our understanding of the literature. Beyond its obvious usefulness as a "means to an end", my team and I anticipate that the analytic tools cultivated by the OSP will benefit scholars in any field in which detailed systematic literature reviews are necessary, and the resources provided by the OSP have the potential to foster synergistic activity among collaborators.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

There are several peer-review academic journals devoted exclusively to Obama's candidacy and presidency. A non-exhaustive list includes the 2009 special issue of *Public Opinion Quarterly*, the 2009 report from the *Applied Research Center*, the special issue of the 2007 *Journal of Black Studies*, the October 2008 *PS: Political Science and Politics* symposium on the 2008 presidential election, the March 2009 edition of the *Du Bois Review*, the June and September 2010 volumes of the *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, the spring 2010 edition of *Pathways: A Magazine on Poverty, Inequality, and Social Policy*, and the summer 2010 volume of *Perspective on Politics*. The aforementioned list does not even include the many publications that do not appear in special issues (e.g., Gaither, Wilson, and Young 2013; Harlow 2009; Teasley and Ikard 2010).

Our focus here, however, is on a smaller and more specialized line of inquiry, one that contributes to "meta-discussions" of Barack Obama (i.e., the literature about the literature). It is from this line of inquiry that research on the Obama Books Boom emerged. Although notion of a "books boom" dates back to a press release submitted by the Agence France Press (AFP) on November 24 2008,<sup>1</sup> to our knowledge, the first empirical analysis of the Obama Books Boom comes from Roach (2009). Although he does not describe it using this catchphrase, Walton was one of the leading books boom researchers, and he and his colleagues have published several reviews of the rapidly-growing Obama literature (Walton et al. 2009a; 2009b). Recent investigations of the book boom include Jeffries (2010) and Mead (2013). These and related studies take a macro-level approach: Rather tackling a specific subject in the Obama literature, these scholars examine the literature itself, synthesizing the diverse perspectives provided by multiple books to show what they reveal (in the aggregate) about the 44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. To date, the literature only tests one aspect of the books boom: the proliferation of books written about Obama. The remaining two characteristics (i.e., the appeal of the president's memoirs and the marketability of the books he endorses) remain under-researched. The current research breaks new ground by examining all three features of the Obama Books Boom simultaneously, and, in so doing, allows for a more complete investigation of this important topic.

---

<sup>1</sup> In the weeks following the 2008 election, the Agence France-Presse (AFP) wired a press release commenting on how the then-President-Elect, Barack Obama, had instigated a veritable groundswell of literary interest: "The literati are back in charge of Washington as sales of books by, related to or merely mentioned by Barack Obama rocket ahead of the author-politician's entry into the White House..." (Agence France-Presse, November 24, 2008)

In addition to broadening the conceptual scope of the Obama Books Boom, there are no archives as extensive as the one we propose. Although digital databases of political text are common in other disciplines, namely library science, psychology, and literature (see, e.g., Conturbia and Oberla 1993, Harris and Cooper 1985, and Johson 2012, respectively); the OSP distinguishes itself from previous book collections in terms of its sheer size and analytical flexibility. For example, there is no single, coherent resource that offers an extensive body of both scholarly and popular accounts of Obama's political career. The OSP will offer a broad overview of the Obama literature, and it will be the first to use the widespread availability of digital book information to organize this plethora of disaggregated content.

## HISTORY AND DURATION OF THE PROJECT

My collaborators and I conceived of this project in the summer of 2010 during a series of workshops on Meta-Analysis hosted by the Department of Measurement and Statistics at Florida State University's College of Education. These workshops inspired us to synthesize the Obama literature. As the number of Obama studies increases exponentially, so too does the importance of understanding this burgeoning literature. Initially, the goal was merely to organize the Obama literature by themes that seemed relevant at that time. Determined to get our bearings on this burgeoning literature, we worked our way through as many Obama books as we could find, hand-coding aspects of their content in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Inevitably, we struggled in vain to keep up with the influx of new books that appeared each month, and it became quickly apparent that my collaborators and I would need a more systematic and perhaps automated approach.

With funding from a University of Wisconsin-La Crosse College of Liberal Studies Small Grant, research support from the departments of English, Political Science, and Computer Science, and the participation of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse library and the software developers at Wing Technology Center at the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse, we are on schedule to complete a prototype of the database by the spring of 2015. Over the course of the 2014 – 2015 academic year, we plan to design the database's field structure, experiment with analysis and visualization approaches, and define the primary data collection and research objectives. In the spring of 2015, my team advisors and my colleagues and I plan to recruit a database architect to help with the editing of the OSP and to create metadata for each Obama book that we collect. We will maintain and add to this database throughout the rest of the project's term. We also forged partnerships with the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Digital Humanities Initiative to make use of their web interface technology and their network of faculty, students, and librarians. We are also working with developers at Automation Anywhere (a software program that allows me to automate the process of extracting [i.e., "scraping"] web-based data) to create new software to display interactive information about Obama books. Finally, to solicit feedback on the project and its implementation, my colleagues and I gave a series of presentations at political science and digital humanities conferences across the country.

In the spring of 2015, we plan to recruit consultants from Baker Diagnostics, an independent software and database design firm, to help with the editing of the OSP and converting the aforementioned fields for use with software such as Metadata Object Description Schema (MODS), a new .xml standard for displaying electronic library catalog data for online applications. This conversion will enable us to create metadata for each Obama book collected. We will maintain and add to this database, providing its content for use in the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse's Political Science and Public Administration's "Articles and Databases" web portal, which is maintained by the university library and which will, in return, host the OSP as a subordinate site



with its own distinct home page as well as several specialized features. This Internet site will contain a number of innovative tools that we will adapt to our use, and the resources on this web site will be made available to everyone. Among the most important of these innovations is an automated sidebar that would query text to identify “additional features of possible interest” about the Obama books. This feature is important because there is a vast, unorganized world of Obama books on the World Wide Web, and specialized queries of the text in the OSP database could put the information in these books into much-needed historical and political context. Moreover, there is not enough money or people-hours to devote to hand-referencing each Obama book in our database to this vast body of author- and publisher- related material, but targeted, automated searching that meshes the scholar’s search terms with metadata offers a promising way to put Obama books together with contextualizing information.

To sustain the database beyond the 18-month grant period, we plan to create a digitization “needs list” of additional record-features for inclusion in the OSP but for which no digital copy exists. This list should focus on strategies for coding the content of Obama books into themes that can be analyzed (using, for example, automated text analysis techniques like Centering Resonance Analysis [CRA], see Corman, et al. 2002) and displayed graphically. This list will support applications for future funding. Furthermore, we will outline a plan for the inclusion of user-added records and metadata so that every serious Obama scholar has her or his own personal archive of study features, each of which represents a distinctive research orientation. These, my own among them, tend not to be carefully organized and maintained. Future phases of the OSP will offer scholars a way to add their own data to the database—for their own use and others’—in much the same way that programs such as “Endnote”, “Papers2” and “Zotero” supply rigorous and precise information resources for individual’s bibliographic collections. User-customized data might be uploaded for use of the OSP via third-party site such as Google Scholar or Microsoft Academic Search.

Ultimately, our goal is to make the OSP a widely-utilized resource for the intellectual history of Obama research. Once my collaborators and I have obtained the records and metadata of Obama books, we plan to find ways to bring scholars together to share ideas and comments about the Obama literature. As part of this potential component of the project, users will be able to connect Obama books to one another using a Wiki-based model of collective editing, group collections that bear upon particular research questions, and merge Obama studies and collections with the most relevant print and online text resources.

Going forward, we will create a plan for automating the generation of new Obama records. As the universe of Obama studies grows continuously, my colleagues and I will need to employ exploratory data analysis techniques to add Obama records that meet the criteria of the OSP as they become available. For example, the current project focuses solely on the Obama Books Boom, but the analytic and visualization tools provided by the OSP apply equally well for synthesizing information from academic or non-scholarly journal articles. This plan for generating new Obama data should include a prospectus for the protocols that need to be put in place that describes how research assistants will process, tag, and cross-reference alternative forms of Obama records generated by automated searching after the OSP is completed and the resource is launched.

## WORK PLAN

A summary of the tasks required to complete the objectives of the Obama Synthesis Project (OSP) appears below.

	2014									
Project Tasks	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec		
Step 1: Launch working prototype of the OSP										
Step 2: Create Obama books data analysis tools										
Step 3: Revise and refine automated text-searching capabilities										
	2015									
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Step 4: Create Obama books data visualization tools										
Step 5: Data collection, processing, and verification										
Step 6: Reviewing and launching the final production model of the OSP										
Step 7: Maintaining the database and planning the next phases of research										

Here, we offer specific details about this work schedule.

Step 1: Launch working prototype in collaboration with the department of Political Science and Public Administration, the University of Wisconsin, Madison’s Digital Humanities Laboratory, and the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse’s Wing Technology Center.

- Complete any remaining database field and table revisions.
- Complete conversion of FileMaker prototype to a PostgreSQL database, an open source platform, with a back-end structure enhanced by Automation Anywhere (a web-scraping software) and UWLSTORE (a file storage server).
- Publish password protected working version of OSP through University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Articles and Databases portal.

Step 2: Create Obama books data analysis tools in collaboration with consultants at Baker Diagnostics company.

- Create converters to adapt interactive referencing functions to the standards for web-based text maintained by several repositories whose Obama books appear as OSP records.
- Create a web portal within UW-L’s Political Science and Public Administration web site that integrates the OSP with qualitative and quantitative analysis applications in NVivo, and R, respectively.
- Create a fast-cache server to house Obama book records temporarily in support of high-volume, real-time book data display online.

Step 3: Revise automated text-searching capabilities in collaboration with consultants from Automation Anywhere and the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse’s Computer Science department.

- Identify and integrate relevant text databases to support author- and publisher-related data, and include these in the “Additional Resources” sidebar on the OSP web page.
- Improve search indexing by enabling the use of Obama book metadata in automated searching.

Step 4: Create Obama books data visualization tools in collaboration with the consultants at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Digital Humanities Initiative.

- Design a two- and three-dimensional graph template that allows for "open" (i.e., user-defined) characteristics to be displayed from OSP metadata.
- Create associations of influence/derivation among Obama book records that can be displayed on this visualization as hyperlinks.

Step 5: Data collection and processing with the assistance of the Statistical Consultant, student researchers, and members of the faculty Advisory board.

- Research assistants will review bibliographic materials, books, and articles, to identify Obama records for inclusion in the database.
- Metadata will be obtained through the data-mining of online book catalogues and by requesting relevant information from participating libraries and archives.
- Research assistants will convert Obama book records for use by the OSP into MODS format, add metadata designed for the OSP, and use text-referencing software to incorporate contextual data for each record in the database.
- For record-keeping purposes, and to emphasize the value added provided by the OSP, research assistants will also compile a list of sites currently maintaining digital collections.
- Research assistants will edit and review data, links, and displays for accuracy, user-friendliness, and consistency.

Step 6: Reviewing and launching the OSP with members of the Faculty Advisory Board.

- Before the end of the grant period, we will make a version of the OSP available to members of an advisory board and solicit their reactions and critiques.
- After refining the database based on their reviews, we will launch the OSP as a freely-available and public Internet resource.

Step 7: Planning the next phase.

- Create data collection "needs list."
- Develop plan for including user-requested variables (raw text, citation records, meta-data, etc.) in the OSP database.
- Recruit Obama scholars to make use of (and contribute to) the resources available in the OSP.
- Finalize a sustainability plan for automating the collection and storage of future Obama records.

## PROJECT STAFF

*PROJECT DIRECTOR:* **Ray Block**, Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse

*STATISTICAL CONSULTANT:* **Betsy Jane Becker**, Professor of Statistics in the College of Education, Florida State University

*ADVISORY BOARD:* **Christina S. Haynes**, Assistant Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse; **Robert Wilkie**, Assistant Professor of English, the

University of Wisconsin-La Crosse; **Marie Moeller**, Assistant Professor of English, the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

## FINAL PRODUCT AND DISSEMINATION

By the end of the grant-funded period, my colleagues and I will have completed a working, open source prototype that will be freely available as a web application and as downloadable source code via a dedicated public website. The prototype will have been tested by University of Wisconsin, La Crosse, University of Michigan, Florida State University, and University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee students and faculty members in the Political Science and Public Administration, Women's Studies, English, and Africology departments, and the prototype will incorporate design refinements based on their feedback. The public site will allow any student or educator to test the prototype and provide additional feedback that will guide the subsequent implementation phase.

We will write a traditional white paper that we plan to distribute through the website as well as a multimedia, interactive report documenting development of the OSP platform and the "lessons learned." To further support dissemination, we will present the project at a number of research conferences. For example, the Campbell Collaboration (C2) is an international network whose mission is to advance evidence-based research in the social sciences ([http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/about\\_us/index.php](http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/about_us/index.php)). C2 not only provides guidelines and resources for scholars and practitioners seeking to conduct "systematic reviews" (i.e., scientific syntheses of research on a given topic), but the organization also hosts a yearly colloquium that serves as a forum for exchanging ideas and innovations in the techniques of research synthesis. It is imperative that my colleagues and I stay connected to such a network and that we present paper drafts at C2's annual meetings.

Final products will also include a proposal for an American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) Digital Innovation Fellowship to build out the platform with additional features suggested by user feedback during the start-up phase. Findings from the ACLS conference may for peer-review publications in academic journals like the *Du Bois Review* and the *Digital Humanities Quarterly*. Subsequent funding will also facilitate the widespread deployment of the OSP in colleges and universities throughout the country.

## 5. PROJECT BUDGET

### BUDGET NARRATIVE

We are requesting \$59,060 in funding support. Below, we offer an itemized budget, along with brief justifications for the proposed expenses.

*1. Salaries and Wages:* As noted, the project will take place over 18-months (from May 1 2014 to October 31, 2015), a period that spans across two academic years. The bulk of the data collection will take place during the summer semesters, so we are requesting summer salary for both years. Because my monthly salary is \$6,222, we seek two months of compensation per summer. This amounts to a request of \$24,888, which is a little more than \$12,444 for each academic year. Also, we plan to recruit three students to work with me during this project, and their compensation (\$960 each for a total of 100 hours of service) reflects the central role these students will play in the research process. Ideally, two assistants will major in the humanities, while the other will come from the computer sciences. We will assign duties to students based on their academic backgrounds and skill sets, and my hope is that mixed-disciplinary make-up will enhance the research and mentoring experience we provide to students.

*2. Fringe Benefits:* The fringe benefit rates for University of Wisconsin, La Crosse faculty are 50.13% (for the 2014-2015 fiscal year) and 52.63% (for the 2015-2016 fiscal year). The fringe benefit rates for UW-L students are 4.19%. This translates into \$12,787 of financial support (\$6,238 for the first fiscal year, and \$6,550 the next year) for the Project Director, and \$121 for the student assistants (for one fiscal year).

*3. Consultant Fees:* The Obama literature is fairly recent, the earliest books date back to no more than a decade, and many of my data can be obtained online, using keyword searches on the web pages of book vendors like [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and [www.books.google.com](http://www.books.google.com). Hand-recording information from these web searches would be time-consuming, so we seek to purchase a multi-user copy of Automation Anywhere, a software program that allows users to automate the process of extracting (i.e., “scraping”) data from the Internet.<sup>2</sup> We discuss the costs of that software package in the “Supplies and Equipment” portion of the budget narrative. Representatives from Automation Anywhere offer intensive, one-on-one help for customers with complex programming needs. Because Automation Anywhere is not software that my university currently supports, we will purchase a 12-Month Support plan for an additional \$349, which includes phone and email assistance for the Automation Anywhere software package. The complex nature of this database requires not only that we customize existing commercial software to suit our unique research needs but also that we create new software to support the OSP platform. Accordingly, we are budgeting \$5,000 to pay for consultation from a specialist at Baker Diagnostics (<http://www.bakerdiagnostics.com/>)--a web programming and database designing firm. Representatives from Baker Diagnostics mentioned that the estimated price of the OSP can range

---

<sup>2</sup> See the following link for details about this software: <http://www.automationanywhere.com/index.htm>.

from \$500 to \$1,500, depending, among other things, on the style of design, use of flash or multimedia, level of database integration, website component costs (e.g., domain name, hosting fees, web design and graphics development, maintenance) etc. We request the minimum estimated amount. The subtotal for consulting fees is \$849 (\$500 for Baker Diagnostics and \$349 from Automation Anywhere).

*4. Travel:* According to page 9 of the request for proposal (RFP) for the Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant, all Project Directors must attend a planning meeting at the NEH office in Washington, DC during the first year of the requested grant period. We are budgeting \$1,730 to meet the estimated travel costs. Assuming the Project Director travels on November 29, 2013 and departs on December 2, 2013, he would need approximately \$767 for airfare, \$293 for three nights of lodging, a \$125 meal per diem divided over 2.5 days, and \$42 to cover the costs of public transportation.

*5. Supplies and Materials:* As noted above, we will use the Automation Anywhere software package to extract web-based data on Obama books. Accordingly, we request \$995 to support the purchase a copy of this software.

*7. Total Direct Costs:* The direct costs of funding the Obama Synthesis Project are \$43,748.

*8. Total Indirect Costs:* Indirect costs are requested at the university's federal negotiated rate of 35% of modified total direct costs. This amounts to \$15,312.

BUDGET FORM



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE  
**Humanities**

# Budget Form

OMB No 3136-0134  
Expires 7/31/2015

Applicant Institution: *University of Wisconsin, La Crosse*

Project Director: *Ray Block Jr.*

Project Grant Period: *05/01/2014 through 10/31/2015*

[click for Budget Instructions](#)

	<b>Computational Details/Notes</b>	<b>(notes)</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>(notes)</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>(notes)</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Project Total</b>
			05/01/2014- 04/31/2015		05/01/2014- 10/31/2015		01/01/20__ - 12/31/20__	
<b>1. Salaries &amp; Wages</b>								
Project Director (Ray Block)	Summer Salary	%	\$12,444		\$12,444	%		\$24,888
Undergraduate Students	Student Employee (Fall and Spring)	%	\$2,880	%		%		\$2,880
		%		%		%		\$0
		%		%		%		\$0
		%		%		%		\$0
		%		%		%		\$0
<b>2. Fringe Benefits</b>								
Project Director			\$6,238		\$6,550			\$12,788
Undergraduate Students			\$121					\$121
<b>3. Consultant Fees</b>								
Database design	Baker Diagnostics; Automation Anywhere		\$849					\$849

<b>4. Travel</b>								
Mandatory meeting with NEH representative	Airfare, lodging, meal per diems, and public transportation		\$1,227					\$1,227
<b>5. Supplies &amp; Materials</b>								
Computer Software	Automation Anywhere		\$995					\$995
<b>6. Services</b>								
								\$0
<b>7. Other Costs</b>								
								\$0
<b>8. Total Direct Costs</b>	<b>Per Year</b>		<b>\$24,754</b>		<b>\$18,994</b>		<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$43,748</b>
<b>9. Total Indirect Costs</b>								
	<b>Per Year</b>		<b>\$8,664</b>		<b>\$6,648</b>		<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$15,312</b>
<b>10. Total Project Costs</b>	<b>(Direct and Indirect costs for entire project)</b>							<b>\$59,060</b>
<b>11. Project Funding</b>	<b>a. Requested from NEH</b>							
							Outright:	\$59,060
							Federal Matching Funds:	\$0
							<b>TOTAL REQUESTED FROM NEH:</b>	<b>\$59,060</b>
	<b>b. Cost Sharing</b>							
							Applicant's Contributions:	\$0
							Third-Party Contributions:	\$0



Project Income:	\$0
Other Federal Agencies:	\$0
<b>TOTAL COST SHARING:</b>	<b>\$0</b>

**12. Total Project Funding**

**\$59,060**

# UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-LA CROSSE INDIRECT COST RATE AGREEMENT



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Program Support Center  
Financial Management Service  
Division of Cost Allocation

Room 732  
1301 Young Street  
Dallas, TX 75202  
PHONE: (214) 767-3261  
FAX: (214) 767-3264

September 20, 2012

Ms. Deborah Durcan  
Vice President of Business & Finance  
University of Wisconsin System – LaCrosse  
The University of Wisconsin System  
1752 Van Hise Hall  
1220 Linden Drive  
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Ms. Durcan:

A copy of your Facilities and Administrative (F&A) cost Rate Agreement is being faxed to you for signature. This Agreement reflects an understanding reached between your organization and a member of my staff concerning the rate(s) that may be used to support your claim for indirect costs on grants and contracts with the Federal Government.

Please have the original signed by an authorized representative of your organization and fax it to me, retaining the copy for your files. Our fax number is (214) 767-3264. We will reproduce and distribute the Agreement to the appropriate awarding organizations of the Federal Government for their use.

An F&A cost proposal, together with the supporting information, are required to substantiate your claim for F&A costs under grants and contracts awarded by the Federal Government. Thus, your next proposal based on actual costs for the fiscal year ending 06/30/15 is due in our office by 12/31/15.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arif Karim", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Arif Karim  
Director, Central States Field Office  
Division of Cost Allocation

Enclosures

PLEASE SIGN AND FAX A COPY OF THE RATE AGREEMENT

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES RATE AGREEMENT

EIN: 1396006461B1 DATE:09/20/2012  
 ORGANIZATION: FILING REF.: The preceding  
 University of Wisconsin System - LaCrosse agreement was dated  
 1752 Van Hise Hall 08/27/2009  
 1220 Linden Drive  
 Madison, WI 53706

The rates approved in this agreement are for use on grants, contracts and other agreements with the Federal Government, subject to the conditions in Section III.

---

**SECTION I: Facilities And Administrative Cost Rates**

---

RATE TYPES:     FIXED            FINAL            PROV. (PROVISIONAL)     PRED. (PREDETERMINED)

EFFECTIVE PERIOD

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>	<u>RATE(%)</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>APPLICABLE TO</u>
PRED.	07/01/2012	06/30/2016	35.00	On Campus	All Programs
PRED.	07/01/2012	06/30/2016	12.00	Off Campus	All Programs
PROV.	07/01/2016	Until Amended		"Use same rates and conditions as cited for FYE 6/30/16."	

\*BASE

Modified total direct costs, consisting of all salaries and wages, fringe benefits, materials, supplies, services, travel and subgrants and subcontracts up to the first \$25,000 of each subgrant or subcontract (regardless of the period covered by the subgrant or subcontract). Modified total direct costs shall exclude equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, student tuition remission, rental costs of off-site facilities, scholarships, and fellowships as well as the portion of each subgrant and subcontract in excess of \$25,000.

ORGANIZATION: University of Wisconsin System - LaCrosse  
AGREEMENT DATE: 9/20/2012

---

SECTION II: SPECIAL REMARKS

---

TREATMENT OF FRINGE BENEFITS:

The fringe benefits are charged using a rate(s) which are not shown in the Rate Agreement. Over/under recoveries from actual costs are adjusted in current or future periods. The directly claimed fringe benefits are listed below.

TREATMENT OF PAID ABSENCES

Vacation, holiday, sick leave pay and other paid absences are included in salaries and wages and are claimed on grants, contracts and other agreements as part of the normal cost for salaries and wages. Separate claims are not made for the cost of these paid absences.

OFF-CAMPUS DEFINITION: For all activities performed in facilities not owned by the institution and to which rent is directly allocated to the project(s) the off-campus rate will apply. Grants or contracts will not be subject to more than one F&A cost rate. If more than 50% of a project is performed off-campus, the off-campus rate will apply to the entire project.

Equipment Definition -

Equipment means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit.

FRINGE BENEFITS:

FICA  
Retirement  
Worker's Compensation  
Life Insurance  
Unemployment Insurance  
Health Insurance  
Income Continuation Insurance

ORGANIZATION: University of Wisconsin System - LaCrosse

AGREEMENT DATE: 9/20/2012

SECTION III: GENERAL

A. LIMITATIONS:

The rates in this Agreement are subject to any statutory or administrative limitations and apply to a given grant, contract or other agreement only to the extent that funds are available. Acceptance of the rates is subject to the following conditions: (1) Only costs incurred by the organization were included in its facilities and administrative cost pools as finally accepted; such costs are legal obligations of the organization and are allowable under the governing cost principles; (2) The same costs that have been treated as facilities and administrative costs are not claimed as direct costs; (3) Similar types of costs have been accorded consistent accounting treatment; and (4) The information provided by the organization which was used to establish the rates is not later found to be materially incomplete or inaccurate by the Federal Government. In such situations the rate(s) would be subject to renegotiation at the discretion of the Federal Government.

B. ACCOUNTING CHANGES:

This Agreement is based on the accounting system purported by the organization to be in effect during the Agreement period. Changes to the method of accounting for costs which affect the amount of reimbursement resulting from the use of this Agreement require prior approval of the authorized representative of the cognizant agency. Such changes include, but are not limited to, changes in the charging of a particular type of cost from facilities and administrative to direct. Failure to obtain approval may result in cost disallowances.

C. FIXED RATES:

If a fixed rate is in this Agreement, it is based on an estimate of the costs for the period covered by the rate. When the actual costs for this period are determined, an adjustment will be made to a rate of a future year(s) to compensate for the difference between the costs used to establish the fixed rate and actual costs.

D. USE BY OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES:

The rates in this Agreement were approved in accordance with the authority in Office of Management and Budget Circular A-21, and should be applied to grants, contracts and other agreements covered by this Circular, subject to any limitations in A above. The organization may provide copies of the Agreement to other Federal Agencies to give them early notification of the Agreement.

E. OTHER:

If any Federal contract, grant or other agreement is reimbursing facilities and administrative costs by a means other than the approved rate(s) in this Agreement, the organization should (1) credit such costs to the affected programs, and (2) apply the approved rate(s) to the appropriate base to identify the proper amount of facilities and administrative costs allocable to these programs.

BY THE INSTITUTION:

University of Wisconsin System - LaCrosse

(INSTITUTION)

Deborah Durcan  
(SIGNATURE)

Deborah Durcan

(NAME)

Vice President for Finance

(TITLE)

10/4/12  
(DATE)

ON BEHALF OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT:

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

(AGENCY)

Arif Karim  
(SIGNATURE)

Arif Karim

(NAME)

Director, Central States Field Office

(TITLE)

9/20/2012

(DATE) 5580

HHS REPRESENTATIVE: Shon Turner

Telephone: (214) 767-3261

## 6. BIOGRAPHIES

PROJECT DIRECTOR Ray Block, Jr. is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse, where he has taught since 2010. Ray has a long-term fascination with the study of social identity. His dissertation research examined racial and ethnic group differences in levels of “political interest” (defined as a citizen's psychological connection to politics), and some of his more recent articles explore the political consequences of social identity more generally. The desire to understand how group identity shapes political involvement inspires his current curiosity with presidential politics. He is working on several projects that seek to put Barack Obama's candidacies and two-term presidency into perspective, and he collaborates with Christina Haynes in the Women's Studies department at the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse to examine the influence of racial and gender stereotypes on perceptions of Michelle Obama.

**STATISTICAL CONSULTANT** Betsy Jane Becker is a Full Professor and the coordinator of the program in Measurement and Statistics in the College of Education at Florida State University, where she has been on faculty since fall 2004. For the previous 21 years, she was in the Measurement and Quantitative Methods program at Michigan State University.

Becker earned both B.A. and M.A. degrees in Psychology from The Johns Hopkins University in 1978. Becker earned her Ph.D. in Education from The University of Chicago in 1985, where she worked with Larry Hedges and completed a dissertation on combined probability methods for meta-analysis. Her dissertation won the American Educational Research Association's Outstanding Dissertation Award in 1985.

Becker has published widely in the area of meta-analysis and also on psychometric issues in education. Becker's current research involves methods for synthesizing correlation matrices and regression slopes, and she is also involved in two synthesis projects regarding teacher knowledge and teacher qualifications. Becker and her collaborators currently have had four grants to support this work, through the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education.

She is a founding member and past president of the Society for Research Synthesis Methodology. She recently received the Mosteller Award from the Campbell Collaboration, an international organization whose goals include the promotion of evidence based analysis for policy making in the social sciences. She has served as a member of the Technical Advisory Group for the "What Works Clearinghouse."

Becker is a member of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Design and Analysis Committee, as well as the State of Florida's K-12 Assessment Technical Advisory Committee. Becker is a Fellow of the American Statistical Association, and in the past has served as associate editor of Psychological Methods, and on the on the editorial boards of Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics and the Journal of the American Statistical Association's Applications and Cases Section.

ADVISORY BOARD members have had numerous conversations with me about the project, and they volunteered to provide feedback on drafts of subsequent grant proposals, white papers, and conference presentations. They will receive quarterly updates on research methods and findings for the OSP. They have agreed to provide written or oral comments to the project participants then or at other intervals during the project. There will be no formal meetings convened of the project's Advisory Board during the Start-Up grant period. Advisory Board members include:

- Christina S. Haynes (Assistant Professor of Women's Studies, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse): Christina Haynes completed her doctoral degree at The Ohio State University and is currently an Assistant Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Her research focuses on African American women, feminist geography, Black feminist thought, intersectionality theory, and educational achievement gaps.
- Robert Wilkie (Assistant Professor of English, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse): Professor Wilkie specializes in Writing and Technology, Digital and Visual Culture, Cultural and Critical Theory, and Twentieth and Twenty-First Century American Literature and Culture.
- Marie Moeller (Assistant Professor of English, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse): Marie's research specialties include issues of Gender and Disability in Technical/Professional Writing, Feminist Rhetorics, Writing Pedagogy, and Online Education.

None of the Advisory Board members are applying for separate NEH support.



## 7. DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN

### EXPECTED DATA

The primary data to be produced, maintained and distributed by the OSP is the digital archive we propose to create. This archive will ultimately consist of search-related, author-related, and content-related information about Obama books. It will also contain programming source code, configuration files, generated source code documentation, and higher-level system and user documentation. We will refer these components collectively as the “database.” The database will be developed as a publicly-available and open-source project from the outset. The development team will use the PostgreSQL as the database platform.

In addition to the relational database, we also plan to collect digital facsimiles of Obama books to use in developing and testing the application. This collection will, as permitted by copyright law and licensing restrictions, be made available to the public for download via the OSP project web site. Where copyright law or licensing restrictions prevent such distribution, we will provide sufficient detail to enable those who are interested in synthesizing the Obama literature to locate and retrieve these documents. We will maintain the metadata associated with these documents (e.g., author, publisher, publication date, etc.) internally using a within-database linkages. This metadata, along with the linkages across data fields, will be made publicly available for download at our web site.

Throughout the project, my collaborators and I plan to create and use data files that describe the visual features extracted from Obama books. To enable the analysis and evaluation of my work, we will prepare public versions of these data sets to be distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 license, and we will make these data sets available from the OSP web site.

### PERIOD OF DATA RETENTION

The files comprising the database will be made accessible throughout the course of the project as it is developed. The visual feature data-sets will be prepared and made available once we anticipate that no more work will be performed to extract visual features from the Obama books. Upon completion of the project, the web site and all related data will be transferred to servers maintained by the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse or another hosting institution. The OSP will be maintained for a period of at least 5 years.

### DATA FORMATS AND DISSEMINATION

The books data in the OSP will be stored and disseminated as PDF documents, compressed as a zipped .tar file for convenience. Data containing visual features (images, figures, tables, etc.) will be stored and disseminated as ARFF (Attribute-Relation File Format) and CSV (Comma Separated Values) files. All resources will be made publicly available. With the exception of the digital facsimiles for the images in Obama books, we do not anticipate any privacy, confidentiality, security, intellectual property or other rights or requirements that will affect my ability to store and

disseminate this data. For those digital files that we are not permitted to re-distribute, my colleagues and I will provide documentation explaining where we obtained these sources so that users may retrieve the relevant materials from Obama books themselves. All digital copies of restricted data will be destroyed upon completion of the project.

#### **DATA STORAGE AND PRESERVATION OF ACCESS**

All data (excluding software) will be stored and managed for the duration of the project on a server provisioned by the UWSTORE, the University of Wisconsin La Crosse's file server. As is university policy, the data in UWSTORE will be automatically backed up on a consistent basis. All software created for the project will be stored using GitHub and accessible through that program's source code control application and via the GitHub web site.

## 8. LETTERS OF COMMITMENT AND SUPPORT

04/06/2011 16:33

734-764-3341

CPSISR

PAGE

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

April 6, 2011

5700 HAVEN HALL  
505 SOUTH STATE STREET  
ANN ARBOR, MI 48109-1045

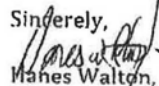
To Whom It May Concern:

Ray Block, Jr., has asked me to write a letter of recommendation in his behalf to your Institute for a grant to undertake an innovative and pioneering study on the literature, which focuses upon the historic and initial African American president, Barack H. Obama, Jr. Although Professor Block is not one of my students, but over the last three years I have gotten to know of his scholarly work by following his presentations at numerous academic conventions. And as a consequence of hearing his unique papers I am very pleased to write this letter for this young scholar.

When Professor Block contacted me and explained what he was doing, I was very excited simply because I had worked on a couple of research papers that addressed this very critical subject matter. Hence, I was more than pleased to hear that he was beginning a major comprehensive and systematic study of the topic himself. Both the historic event and this rare election truly need a thorough and careful study not only because it is a topical and exceptional study but also because it is an under-analyzed and under-explored area. Professor Block's study will be the scholarly groundwork on this candidate and his election and will become the central reference work for all future studies. It will be nothing short of a path-breaking analysis. Such support as your grant will enable this talented and very skilled Professor to gather the relevant data and produce the timely work that will be so essential to the ever-rising number of academics currently working on this man.

At this writing, so many of the current studies coming to the market have no decent literature reviews, especially on the publications dealing with past African American presidential candidates on either the major and/or minor parties. Hence, President Obama cannot be situated into these electoral contexts for not only some type of comparison and contrast but also for an effective evaluation and assessment. Professor Block's proposed project will immediately fill a major vacuum in the field and the literature and will provide a real scholarly pay-off.

Therefore, I highly recommend this brilliant proposal for support.

Sincerely,  
  
Mahes Walton, Jr.  
Professor of Political Science



Department of Africology  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee  
P.O. Box 413  
Milwaukee, WI 53201  
(414) 229-4155

To whom it may concern in the NEH Office of Digital Humanities:

I am pleased to provide a letter of support for Dr. Ray Block's proposal entitled "The Obama Synthesis Project: Using an Automated Digital Database to Make Sense of the 'Obama Books Boom.'".

I have known Ray Block for nearly fifteen years. When I was a graduate student at the University of Michigan I was among several students that tried to get him to think about coming to Michigan's Ph.D program in the Political Science Department from Howard University, where he was an undergraduate. Ray decided to go to Ohio State University for his doctoral degree instead. I have known Ray more formally since the fall of 2001, when I started my faculty career as an Assistant Professor in Political Science at OSU. Ray was one of the first students I trained while at Ohio State University, and I was his dissertation advisor.

I have been following Ray Block's career since he graduated from OSU, and it is fascinating to see the evolution of his scholarship. Ray's initial research was on racial differences in expressions of political interest. This topic was very interesting in that Ray was one of the first researchers to focus on this topic. That was the topic of his dissertation, and he has several publications in that area. It is clear that Ray is transitioning into the field of presidential politics. Some of his recent publications deal with issues of racial and gender identity as they pertain to the role of the news media on perceptions of President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama. Although he was trained as a survey researcher, his focus has shifted from examining individual's attitudes about Mr. and Mrs. Obama to exploring the Obama administration from an aggregate-level perspective: by combining the results of the existing research into a meta-discussion of Obama perceptions. The proposed project represents one of several avenues his future research interests will take him.

As I trust you will discover as you read the material in his application, Ray has established an ambitious research program, which includes the proposed research. In the long term, Dr. Block seeks to combine evidence from a variety of perspectives about Obama's 2008 and 2012 election campaigns and current presidency into an extensive and interactive web-based archive he calls the Obama Synthesis Project ("OSP"). Ray's proposal outlines a clear plan for designing this database, and I am confident in his ability to complete his research within the timeline stipulated in his research proposal.

In short, I highly recommend Ray Block Jr. for a National Endowment for the Humanities Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant. If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at 414-229-4155 or via email at [mcclerki@uwm.edu](mailto:mcclerki@uwm.edu).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. K. McClerking', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

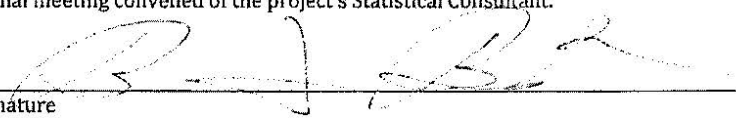
Harwood K. McClerking  
Assistant Professor of Africology

## Letter of Commitment to Serve as a Statistical Consultant for the Obama Synthesis Project (OSP)

I, Betsy Jane Beckers, hereby agree to participate as a statistical consultant for the *Obama Synthesis Project* (OSP), a Start-up Grant project being proposed to the NEH Office of Digital Humanities by Ray Block Jr. (Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse).

If funded, the term of the project and my participation as a Statistical Consultant will be from May 2014 to October 2015. There will be no remuneration for my participation.

As a Statistical Consultant, I will receive quarterly updates on the project's research. I will focus on the technical aspects of the project, paying particular attention to the methodologies used to synthesize information from Obama books. I agree to provide comments to the project participants then or at other intervals during the project. Comments may be written or oral. There will be no formal meeting convened of the project's Statistical Consultant.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Professor, Dept Chair, College of Education  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Title and Institutional Affiliation

9/4/2013  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Letter of Commitment to Join the Advisory Board for the Obama Synthesis Project (OSP)

I, Christina Haynes, hereby agree to participate as a member of the Advisory Board for the *Obama Synthesis Project (OSP)*, a Start-up Grant project being proposed to the NEH Office of Digital Humanities by Ray Block Jr. (Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse).

If funded, the term of the project and my participation in its Advisory Board will be from May 2014 to October 2015. There will be no remuneration for my participation on this Advisory Board.

As a member of the Advisory Board, I will receive quarterly updates on the project's research. I agree to provide comments to the project participants then or at other intervals during the project. Comments may be written or oral. There will be no formal meeting convened of the project's Advisory Board.

Christina Haynes  
Signature

University of Wisconsin - La Crosse  
Title and Institutional Affiliation

9/3/13  
Date

## Letter of Commitment to Join the Advisory Board for the Obama Synthesis Project (OSP)

I, Robert Wilkie, hereby agree to participate as a member of the Advisory Board for the *Obama Synthesis Project* (OSP), a Start-up Grant project being proposed to the NEH Office of Digital Humanities by Ray Block Jr. (Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse).

If funded, the term of the project and my participation in its Advisory Board will be from May 2014 to October 2015. There will be no remuneration for my participation on this Advisory Board.

As a member of the Advisory Board, I will receive quarterly updates on the project's research. I agree to provide comments to the project participants then or at other intervals during the project. Comments may be written or oral. There will be no formal meeting convened of the project's Advisory Board.



Signature

Assistant Professor, English Department, University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse  
Title and Institutional Affiliation

Date

9/4/13



## Letter of Commitment to Join the Advisory Board for the Obama Synthesis Project (OSP)

I, Marie A. Heller, hereby agree to participate as a member of the Advisory Board for the *Obama Synthesis Project* (OSP), a Start-up Grant project being proposed to the NEH Office of Digital Humanities by Ray Block Jr. (Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse).

If funded, the term of the project and my participation in its Advisory Board will be from May 2014 to October 2015. There will be no remuneration for my participation on this Advisory Board.

As a member of the Advisory Board, I will receive quarterly updates on the project's research. I agree to provide comments to the project participants then or at other intervals during the project. Comments may be written or oral. There will be no formal meeting convened of the project's Advisory Board.

Signature

Title and Institutional Affiliation

Date

## 9. APPENDICES

### REFERENCES

- Associated Press. 2008. "Sales boom for Barack Obama's books, up slightly for Hillary Clinton." *Boston Herald*, January 9, 2008).
- Block Jr., Ray. 2012. "The O(Bomb)ilation Compilation: An Innovative Approach to Making Sense of the 'Obama Books Boom.'" Paper presented at the annual meetings of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago IL, March 24-17, 2012.
- Block, Ray. 2011. "Backing Barack Because He's Black: Racially-Motivated Voting in the 2008 Election." *Social Science Quarterly* 92(June): 434 – 456.
- Cooper, Harris M. 1985. "Literature Searching Strategies of Integrative Research Reviewers." *American Psychologist*, 40, 1267 – 1269.
- Corman, Steven R., Timothy Kuhn, Robert McPhee, and Kevin Dooley. 2006. "Studying Complex Discursive Systems: Centering Resonance Analysis of Communication." *Human Communication Research* 28(April): 157 – 206.
- Da Conturbia, Sandra and Janet L. Oberla. 1993. "Bibliographic Data Regarding 20th Century Presidential Materials: A Comparative Analysis of OCLC/AMIGOS Collection Analysis CD and OCLC/EPIC Databases." *Technical Services Quarterly* 11 (October): 21 - 28.
- Harlow, Roxanna. 2009. "Barack Obama and the (In)Significance of His Presidential Campaign" *Journal of African American Studies* 13 (October): 164 – 174.
- Gaither, Sarah E. and Leigh S. Wilson, and Danielle M. Young. 2013. "Perceiving a Presidency in Black (and White): Four Years Later." *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy* 2 (June): 1 – 15.
- Hall, R. Mark. 2003. "The Oprahfication of Literacy: Reading Oprah's Book Club." *College English* 65 (June): 646 – 667.
- Itali, Hillel. 2008. "Writers Welcome A Literary U.S. President-Elect: Authors See Obama as A Peer, A Thinker, A Man of Words --- His Own Words ." *Today Book News* (January 6, 2008).
- Jeffries, Michael. 2008. "Obama Studies in its Infancy: Books on Obama, Race, and the 2008 Presidential Election." *Du Bois Review* 7 (December): 403 – 416.
- Johnson, John. 2012. "Webbots and Machinic Agency." *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 6 (September): 1 – 28.
- Kehe, Marjorie. 2008. "What Sells Books? A Nod From Obama." *The Christian Monitor* (November 17, 2008)
- 2009. "Obama as Bookseller in Chief." *The Christian Monitor* (May 5, 2009).
- Keller, Julia. 2009. "Of Books and Obama: What Does 'Literary President' Mean, Exactly?" *Chicago Tribune* (January 25, 2009).
- Kostoff, R. N. 1997. "Citation Analysis Cross-Field Normalization: A New Paradigm." *Scientometrics* 39(July): 225 – 230.
- Meade, Walter Russell. 2013. "Five Books on Barack Obama." *Foreign Affairs* 3 (March/April): <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138919/david-maraniss-james-mann-jeffrey-a-bader-jeffrey-toobin-dinesh/barack-obama-the-story#> (Accessed August 20, 2013).
- Miller, Laura. 2007. "Barack by the Books: The Works That Have Influenced Obama Illustrate That He Would Be the Most Literary President in Recent Memory -- and One Likely to Govern from the Center." *Salon.com* (July 7, 2008).
- Ong, Walter. 1992. "Writing is a Technology that Resurrects Thought." Pp. 293 – 321 in *The Linguistics of Literacy*, ed. Pamela Dowling et al. Philadelphia, PA: J. Benjamin.

- Parnes, Amy. 2009. "Move over Oprah? Obama Sells Books." *POLITICO* (May 30, 2009).
- Rich, Motoko. 2008. "For Books, Is Obama New Oprah?" *New York Times* (November 17, 2009)
- Roach, Donald. 2009. "The Obama Books Boom." *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* 26(July): 14 – 16.
- Schreibman, Susan, Raymond George Siemens, and John M. Unsworth. 2004. *A Companion to Digital Humanities*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Shepherd, Ken. 2008. "AP: 'Writers Welcome a Literary President-elect'." *NewsBusters: Exposing & Combating Liberal Media Bias* (November 6, 2008).
- Sornette, D., F. Deschâtres, T. Gilbert, and Y. Ageon. 2004. "Endogenous Versus Exogenous Shocks in Complex Networks: An Empirical Test Using Book Sale Rankings." *Physical Review Letters* 93(November): 228701-1 – 228701-4.
- Sorensen, Alan T. 2006. "Bestseller Lists and Product Variety: The Case of Book Sales." Working Paper.
- Smith, Zadie. 2008. "Speaking in Tongues." *The New York Review of Books*, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/22334> (Accessed June 24, 2011).
- Sternfeld, Joshua. 2010. "Thinking Archivally: Search and Metadata as Building Blocks for a New Digital Historiography." *Digital Humanities* [https://www.zotero.org/groups/blog\\_digital\\_arts\\_and\\_humanities/items/RS4RKKIW](https://www.zotero.org/groups/blog_digital_arts_and_humanities/items/RS4RKKIW) (Accessed September 4, 2013).
- Teasley, Martell and David Ikard. 2010. "Barack Obama and the Politics of Race: The Myth of Postracism in America." *Journal of Black Studies* 40 (May): 411 – 425.
- Walton, Hanes Jr. 1985. *Invisible Politics: Black Political Behavior*. New York, NY: SUNY Press.
- 1992. *The Native Son Presidential Candidate: The Carter Vote in Georgia*. New York, NY: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Walton, Hanes Jr. 2000. *Reelection: William Jefferson Clinton as a Native Son Presidential Candidate*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Walton, Hanes. Jr. N.D. *Remaking the Democratic Party: Lyndon B. Johnson as a Native-Son Presidential Candidate*. Typescript.
- Walton, Hanes, Jr. Josephine A. V. Allen, Sherman Puckett, Donald Deskins, Jr., Leslie Burl McLemore. 2009A. "The Literature on Senator Barack Obama's 2008 Presidential Campaign." *National Political Science Review* 12: 195 – 204.
- 2009B. "The Historic Election of President Barack Obama." *National Political Science Review* 4: 103 – 123.
- Wolff, Janice M. 2003. "Reading Oprah: Gender and Literacy in Book Club Culture." *WILLA* XII (Fall): 27-37.