



**OFFICE OF GRANTS &  
SPONSORED PROJECTS**

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# OGSP Newsletter

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## Duct Tape and a Dream

Research and Creative Activities at Georgia College & State  
University

Dear Bobcats,

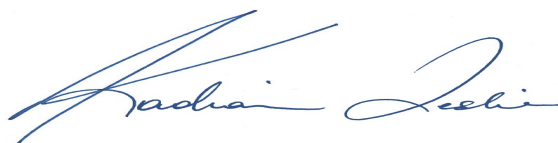
Welcome to the first quarterly edition of the OGSP Newsletter. This is the place where you can find all things grants. Each quarter we will highlight faculty research, grant events, funding opportunities, emerging themes in research administration, grant jobs in the local/regional area, and much more.

OGSP is enthusiastic about playing our role in fostering excitement for undergraduate research, community-based engaged learning, and other high-impact practices to elevate the student experience.

This approach is what I call duct tape and a dream because it embodies the role of creativity for successful learning. This month we highlight the work of Executive Director of the Rural Studies Institute, Dr. Veronica Womack. Her conversation delineating the process of obtaining a competitive USDA Grant exemplifies this approach of duct tape and a dream. I hope you enjoy this enlightening conversation!

I look forward to seeing you on campus,

Director of OGSP,



# USDA Grant Preserves Culture Heritage in the Black Belt: Conversation with Rural Studies Institute Executive Director, Dr. Veronica Womack

## What do you think stood out about your application compared to others?

I think it was the asset approach to developing Black Belt communities. Typically, when people look at the Black Belt, they always see the deficits, so that's the approach people often use. "This is a very poor community," "this is a community that is undereducated," "there's health disparities," which there are, but if you really knew the communities, you would also know that the region is a hidden gem.

While many people around the world know our history, we [African Americans] don't really know it. We don't utilize it for the advantage of our communities. This particular grant is about identifying the jewels within the Georgia Black Belt by asking, "Where are the historic churches and the historic farms, and where did Martin Luther King, Jr. stay when he came to southwest Georgia? What area of the community did that happen?" so that we can start doing community asset mapping and get organized around work that we can do as a collective, educating people on what's available.



[Courtesy of Dr. Womack's website](#)

**Right now, I'm a board member for the Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network. I specifically got on that board so that I would know what resources the state has available for historic preservation because oftentimes, our communities are not the communities that get preserved. Even in Milledgeville, the street over from the campus, that was the Black business district that has been completely erased. The things that we have left, we have to make sure that they're well-preserved and that they're on the historic preservation list that opens them up to protection and to resources.**

This grant is really a model that I would love to get right and be able to replicate in other sites so that we use what we have. We don't have a lot of monetary assets, but our culture is so rich, it's so rich. People go to Atlanta to the MLK museum, people go to Atlanta because of the culture of Atlanta. That's a draw. They go to Selma and cross that bridge every year for the cultural experience and the history. Georgia has that same history of overcoming struggle, but they don't market it in the way that my state, Alabama, does. In Alabama, you've got your Birmingham experience with the church bombing, you've got the walking across the bridge, then you go into Montgomery, and they've got museums. Other entities in Georgia are capitalizing on our cultural heritage and experiences. We've got to take ownership of that so that it benefits our communities.

## What advice would you give GC faculty, staff, and students who are applying for federal funding for the first time?

The best advice I could give them is to be very clear about what your objectives are. That's one of the things that I think helps because in my mind, I have what the objective is going to be as I write the grant. For my last USDA grant [a seed grant], I needed to gather information about African American farmers. Now that I got this grant: My knowledge that I got from experiences with those farmers. So, it's about capturing your knowledge about your subject and then having an objective for that grant. I think it makes it easier. It's more poignant when you're clear about your idea. A lot of times, people write grants, and they're not clear on their objective. I think it comes through to the readers and the reviewers when you're very clear about what you hope to accomplish with these funds.

**This grant is a way for me to start identifying cultural heritage sites that could be used as an economic development strategy. In the state of Georgia, agriculture is big business, so the state already has an agritourism component to it. I want to tap into what the state is doing and present our communities as communities that also want to play a role, so if the state has an agritourism map, all of those heritage farms need to be on there.**

I think it also helps when you have a history of work in the subject. When I got the first USDA grant in 2017, I had done work in the Black Belt region since 2000. I think that helped, too. My background fit what I said I was trying to do. Don't oversell if you haven't done work because I think the reviewers will pick up on it.

## Have you ever applied to federal funding and been denied?

I did apply for a federal humanities grant, and we were a couple of points short. I mean, it was so close. Robin [Lewis, former OGSP director] asked me to reapply, and I didn't want to do it. I was wounded... For me, this is not work, this is my life, this is my family heritage, this is my cultural heritage. When I'm writing a grant, I see my family, I see the people that I've grown up with, I see the old people that I've worked with, and so, it's personal.

## How did you bounce back from that rejection?

**I wrote a book. After that rejection, I said, "Okay, I've got to educate people on what the Black Belt is," so I wrote my book about it [[Abandonment in Dixie: Underdevelopment in the Black Belt](#)]. It's time for it to be updated, so that's going to be my next big project.**

## What support did you receive from the Office of Grants and Sponsored Projects during the proposal writing process?

A lot. As a social scientist, I write in a particular way. That's how I've been trained. I love that I was matched with a creative writing graduate student in your office, and I hope that the office will continue to connect with creative writers because it was a beautiful blend.

Not only was the editing superb but also just the support on the technical assistance that was provided, the support on how this process is going to shape up, the flexibility on the tight deadline. I received a lot of wonderful support from the office, and I was very pleased with it.

## What else do you think is important for your colleagues to know about the process of applying for federal funds?

Give yourself enough time to be successful. Typically, federal grants want some preliminary data, and so you've got to have that research readily available to be able to write your narrative. If you don't have the research background, you need to educate yourself on your subject matter. That's going to be very important. Find out what other people are doing. What are the gaps in the research that they may be interested in funding? I think that that goes a long way, too: for you to be knowledgeable about the subject that you're trying to get funding for, finding out who's already been funded is a big piece of it as well.

# Upcoming Funding Opportunities

Name	Agency	Application Deadline	Funding Amount
<a href="#">Food and Agricultural Sciences Needs Graduate and Postgraduate Fellowship</a>	National Institute of Food and Agriculture	6/8/2023	Funds: max amount per award is approximately \$262,500; institutions may only receive \$525,00 max
<a href="#">Georgia's Own Foundation</a>	Georgia's Own Foundation, Inc.	Letters of Inquiry accepted through 12/31	Small Grants: up to \$5,000 Large Grants: >\$5,000
<a href="#">FY 23 Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) for the Office of Naval Research (ONR) STEM Program</a>	Office of Naval Research	4/2/2024	Varies depending on the technology area and the technical approach to be pursued

# Job Opportunities

Job Title	Organization	Location	Where to Apply
Assistant Grant Writer	The Actionary	Work from home	<a href="#">Work For Good</a>
Grant Project Coordinator	Mercer University	Macon, GA	<a href="#">Higher Ed Jobs</a>
Award Analyst I (Research Grants & Contract)	Emory University	Work from home opportunity with commute to Emory University location as needed (Atlanta, GA)	<a href="#">LinkedIn</a> or <a href="#">Emory University Careers</a>



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# NEH Summer Stipend Program Junior Faculty

NEH has release an invitation for the Summer Stipend Program for early faculty in the amount of \$6,000, due **September 30, 2023**. The program aims to stimulate new research in the humanities and its publication by supporting the work of individual scholars doing research or writing. NEH allows 2 applications per institution. If there is interest, please contact [grants@gcsu.edu](mailto:grants@gcsu.edu) by May 31, 2023 and we will coordinate a nomination process.

<https://www.neh.gov/grants/research/summer-stipends>

Thanks so much!



[www.gcsu.edu/grants](http://www.gcsu.edu/grants)



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