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LIS 658 – Archival Management

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<u>Assignment 4 – Grant Writing</u>

Greetings and salutations to the audience of the National Endowment for Humanities, who is in charge of providing grants to institutions who can prove that their respective projects are worth the loaned money. Allow me to take this opportunity to properly introduce myself. My name is Gavin Nelson, and I am here to respectfully make the case that the National Archives of Japan is worthy of a grant that could help them bring awareness of their collections to the public on a global level. Not only will a grant help the NAJ achieve their goals, but it will also help the library information field make progress as a whole as well. That is the message that I aim to get across with this grant proposal.

In this proposal, I not only lay out the specifications of what this grant would be used for, but I will also explain how the project would be supported and carried out as well. From project's mission to the required staffing and budget to more, I will justify every single area of the project that your grant will be put into. The NAJ is a paradise that consists of rich, historical, cultural, Japanese materials that deserves to be shared with the world. With your assistance, we will be able to make that dream a reality. Every single collection that is eternally preserved and shared with society is a boon that benefits mankind as a whole. It allows different cultures of human history to come

together for the purpose forging an enlightening and bright future for the human race as a whole.

     As I just mentioned, the mission that the NAJ is diligently striving to accomplish is to make global society aware of the Japanese materials that call the organization its home. Along with that, they want to encourage global society to come and explore the vast Japanese content that is within their collections. The best, as well as the fastest, way to connect the rest of the world to Japanese history and culture is through the process of digitization. That is the project for which I am hoping to use your grant for. In the 21st century, where the world of information is almost virtually dominated by online resources, digitizing collections is rapidly becoming more and more important. More and more archival departments have begun adopting availability as the theme that influences the way they operate. According to an archive journal that discusses digitization, "Among librarians, scholars, and other users, the consensus is that the increased availability of digital surrogates is a good thing, and digital technology is frequently portrayed as a means of democratizing the archive."[1] For archives, both modern and past, digitization is a tremendous help in making sure that collections are available twenty-four seven. However, an undertaking such as this does not come cheap. That is where you and your grant will come in.

     To begin, I figure the NAJ could start small and gradually work their way from there. For this, the specific archival materials that will be focused on for this project will

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[1] Andrew Prescott and Lorna Hughes, "Why Do We Digitize? The Case for Slow Digitization," *Archive Journal* (September 2018), https://www.archivejournal.net/essays/why-do-we-digitize-the-case-for-slow-digitization/ (Accessed May 1, 2019).

be historical documents, like photographs and letters to name a few. These kinds of

materials seem to be easier to digitize than videos and audio. Also, these materials will

also be less sensitive, which means that there would be less risk of them getting destroyed

in the process. We will be using a criteria to determine the level of risk that each

materials has before considering to digitize them. As stated by a blog that talks about

sensitivity assessment, "A judgment on the level of risk is made using criteria such as

how old the record is, whether it relates to living individuals, how the information is

structured, and how detailed the catalogue description is."[2] These factors are what we are

going to use to ensure that only low-risk materials get digitized. The reason why this

project would only focus on low risk materials is because they put less stress on staffing,

resources, and the budget.

The hands of reliable people that you can trust should only handle even low-risk

archival materials. To accomplish this objective, staff members who have at least

medium-level technical knowledge would handle the project. Staffing would consist of

senior archivists, digital librarians, interns and volunteers, etc. Not only would they be in

charge of the bulk of the project, which is to digitize these materials, but they would also

be in charge of the outreach efforts as well. Some of the staff would double as

ambassadors or outreach specialists who will mostly hold webinars, which would allow

NAJ to showcase the newly digitized materials. Other than online presentations, some of

the staff would be sent to events in different libraries to promote the organization's

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[2] Rada Vlatkovic, "Sensitivity Assessment: The Finer Points of Archives Digitisation,"
    Informed Comment Blog, entry posted December 6, 2012,
    http://blog.wellcomelibrary.org/2012/06/sensitivity-assessment-the-finer-points-of-archives-digitisation/ (Accessed May 1, 2019).

collections. While taking on multiple roles might be a bit taxing on the staff, it would

also not require an abundance of money as well. After all, who better to let the world

know about Japanese history than the very librarians who researched and digitized them?

Of course, the staff would not be able to accomplish all of this without the proper

tools. To make sure that they are well equipped to carry out the project, they would be

using the following resources:

- Scanners

- Cameras

- Digitization training and techniques

- Video equipment

- Web design tools

These tools will of course be up to date with the most recent software updates that

are currently out at the time. Staff will be taught to handle this equipment with the

utmost of care. Should any of the items mentioned above sustain damage beyond

repair, or is misplaced, spares tools would be on hand. With the exception of the

scanners, there will at least be one spare per item. The staff will be extensively

trained and careful, so the project shouldn't require no more than one spare for each

of the listed items. It should keep the project from grinding to a halt and forcing us to

wait and extensive period of time before we acquisition replacement tools.

When it comes to situations like this, you have to include them in your strategic

plan for the project. Always be expecting the unexpected as they say. I believe that

no matter what project you are undertaking, whether it is big or small, you should

always be constantly planning for both expected and unexpected scenarios, like

having more than one of the same tools on hand for example. This belief is actually

shared by organizations that give grants, and it is actually required in any grant

proposal. To give an example, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners,

which is basically a state agency that helps libraries in the state of Massachusetts,

require that grant proposals have a strategic plan before they consider giving a grant

to the library in question. According to this article that was written by Michelle

Eberle, "It's common knowledge that the MBLC requires a strategic plan in order for

a library to qualify for LSTA funding or construction grants."[3] While it seems that

only MBLC requires a strategic plan in their grant proposals, all grant organizations

would feel more assured if there is a very detailed schematic of the project that the

library is trying to get money for. At the end of the day, it is somebody else's money

that is entrusted to another organization. Therefore, it is very important that the

organization that receives the grant uses that money wisely.

Speaking of money, everything that I have mentioned up to this point will require

a decently small grant to help NAJ see this digitization project to fruition. After

taking everything into consideration, we have estimated that the entire project would

need a budget of at least $3,000 dollars, which should cover the tools needed, as well

potential travel expenses. We've crunched the numbers, and came to the projection

that every task taken to complete this project will be able to fall within this proposed

budget. This budget should also allow us to complete the project within the timeline

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[3] Michelle Eberle, "Strategic Planning: Is Your Future-Ready?" *Massachusetts Library System,* February 12, 2018, https://www.masslibsystem.org/blog/2018/02/12/strategic-planning-is-your-library-future-ready/ (Accessed May 2, 2019).

that we have set, which is at least two months but no more than three months.

Obviously the majority of the budget will be put towards digitizing Japanese

documents, as well as outreach efforts. The rest of the budget will be devoted

towards any potential travel expenses, like food and hotel lodging for the staff.

All of the parts that make up this digitization project will be directed towards a

global audience. As I said, the goal of the National Archives of Japan is to become

an information center where anyone can explore the vast history that made Japan the

magnificent country that it is today. As stated by NAJ, "We will work to make the

National Archives an information center where anyone can touch through our

holdings on the past events that have shaped Japan."[4] To achieve this goal, we want

to reach out an inviting hand to not just the people of Japan, but also the rest of the

world as well. We want to share Japan's story, history, and culture with anyone and

everyone. To accomplish the National Archive of Japan's dream of sharing the

country's experiences and traditions with the global community for the betterment of

the human race as a whole. That is the mission that not just the NAJ wants to

accomplish, but all archives want to accomplish as well. That is the kind of impact

that the organization hopes that this project will have on the global community.

With this project, it is our sincerest hope that it will spark the beginning of a

cultural enlightenment that will bring humanity together as a whole. We believe that

by sharing Japanese archival materials with the world, we can create a personal

connection that will transform into a mighty bridge that can never crumble. The goal

is to not only connect the outside world with Japan, but also to create a curiosity that

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[4] Our Vision, *National Archives of Japan,*
http://www.archives.go.jp/english/abouts/outline.html (Accessed April 10, 2019).

will make them want to connect with other countries around the world as well. Again, while we don't believe that this project will be the end all-be all of this dream, we hope that it will be the catalyst that will get us moving towards that coveted destination.

That is pretty much the overall project that we hope that you will consider giving us a grant for. We believe that this project will be a boon to not just the archival field, but for the global community as a whole as well. Bringing people together through stories and adventures is what the archival field is all about. With your assistance, we can make that happen. On behalf of the National Archives of Japan, I would like to thank you for your time and consideration, and we look forward to hearing back from you.

<u>Works Cited Page</u>

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