



For Immediate Release

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ENGAGING FIRST-YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS IN PRIMARY SOURCE RESEARCH

Brooklyn Historical Society Launches “Students and Faculty in the Archives” Project

Brooklyn, June 29, 2011- Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS) is proud to announce Students and Faculty in the Archives (SAFA), a three-year, U.S. Department of Education Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE) grant that will create a replicable pedagogical model for collaboration between archives and institutions of higher learning.

Over five semesters, BHS will work with eighteen partner faculty from three neighboring schools: Long Island University, Brooklyn Campus; New York City College of Technology; and St. Francis College. Participating faculty represent a variety of disciplines, including English, History, Religious Studies, Architectural Technology, Art History, and American Studies. With the help of Public Historian Julie Golia & Outreach and Public Services Archivist Robin M. Katz, participating faculty will integrate BHS’s rich archival collections into first-year undergraduate courses.

During the next academic year alone, the SAFA project will bring more than 800 college students into BHS’s beautiful Othmer Library, designated a New York City interior landmark. Students and faculty will utilize archival material in assignments, projects, and class visits, and produce a class website chronicling their learning experiences. Students selected for SAFA’s summer internships will also have the opportunity to curate a physical exhibit featuring materials from BHS’s remarkable collection.

By introducing students to archival research, SAFA aims to develop students’ research and critical thinking skills, leading them to greater academic and professional success. The project will track and evaluate the impact of SAFA participation on key inquiry and archival literacy skills, student engagement, and retention.

By 2013, the final year of the grant, partner colleges and cultural repositories from other states will model similar collaborations on the Brooklyn model. In this way, SAFA will introduce a nationwide group of students to archival research and exhibition development. As BHS President Deborah Schwartz explains, “We hope to demonstrate that there is tremendous value in developing rigorous partnerships between cultural institutions and college faculty.”

If you would like more information about Students and Faculty in the Archives (SAFA), please visit <http://www.brooklynhistory.org/exhibitions/safa.html>.

The mission of the Brooklyn Historical Society is to connect the past to the present and make the vibrant history of Brooklyn tangible, relevant, and meaningful for today's diverse communities, and for generations to come. Founded in 1863, BHS functions as a library, museum and urban education center dedicated to the people of Brooklyn, providing opportunities for civic dialogue and thoughtful engagement.