



## ***Creating Connections Consortium***

*A partnership to strengthen diversity and innovation through enhanced interactions between liberal arts colleges and research universities*

Liberal arts colleges seeking to hire diverse faculty face unique challenges stemming from relative isolation and limited awareness about their enriching professional environment. Research universities face similar challenges in recruiting diverse graduate students because many liberal arts undergraduates lack exposure to and relationships with diverse faculty and thus do not envision lives in the professoriate.

A growing body of scholarship documents that institutional transformation will be necessary for both liberal arts colleges and research universities to be able to attract and sustain a diverse group of students and faculty. To this end, under the leadership of Middlebury College, Connecticut College, and Williams College, the C<sup>3</sup> Consortium has received a \$4.7M three-year grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to enable the 26 member-schools of the Liberal Arts Diversity Officers Organization (LADO) to establish a formalized, reciprocal relationship with the University of California, Berkeley, and Columbia University. The grant will enable five strategies for developing diverse and talented candidates (students and faculty).

**1. C<sup>3</sup> Summit for Diversity and Innovation.** Hosted annually by a different LADO college, the C<sup>3</sup> Summit will bring together underrepresented students from LADO institutions - juniors and seniors - and about 20 doctoral candidates from our R-1 partners. The summit will provide structured and informal time for the undergraduates and graduate students to network about one another's academic backgrounds, research interests, and the challenges they face in the academic environment. The summit will also allow academic officers from LADO schools to meet with attending graduate students to conduct mock interviews, provide feedback on research presentations from the perspective of liberal arts institutions, and discuss current employment opportunities at LADO member institutions.

**2. C<sup>3</sup> Postdoctoral Fellowships.** In each year of the grant, 12 underrepresented graduate students from partner research universities will be offered two-year post-doctoral fellowships spent teaching and conducting academic research at a LADO college (initially Connecticut, Middlebury, and Williams, with plans after the first year to add one other LADO member that best demonstrates readiness). Each LADO host college will provide a dedicated senior faculty mentor who will support the Fellows' academic efforts and social adjustment within the campus community. Time and resources will also be committed for the members of each of the three cohorts to periodically meet with one another, helping them feel part of a cohort beyond their chosen campuses. Fellows will be encouraged to explore open faculty positions at all LADO colleges.

**3. Experiential Opportunities for C<sup>3</sup> Undergraduates.** Underrepresented students, initially from Connecticut, Middlebury, and Williams, will be eligible to apply for C<sup>3</sup> Internships that provide funding to allow them to spend eight weeks at a partner university during the summer months, working closely with a faculty mentor from a similar background. C<sup>3</sup> internships will provide an invaluable introduction to the rigor and culture of graduate-level education, as well as successful role models who can help students navigate barriers and advance their goals.

**4. C<sup>3</sup> Faculty Exchange Program.** As a long-term goal, all LADO member schools will begin to explore how to create exchange opportunities for underrepresented faculty members to serve as C<sup>3</sup> Visiting Scholars. These appointments will improve retention of underrepresented faculty members by providing the flexibility to take advantage of unique programs and resources offered by other LADO schools, broaden their professional networks, and explore life within a new geography. They will also gain valuable perspective on diversity initiatives offered at other schools, making them valuable stakeholders in defining best practices and exercising leadership on their own campuses.

**5. C<sup>3</sup> Capacity Building, Integration, Reflection and Outreach.** Over the years, LADO has partnered with the Center for Institutional and Social Change (Columbia Law School), whose goal is to build diversity into the normal practices and routines of institutions of higher education. Throughout the grant, the Center will facilitate reflective inquiry sessions to catalyze expanded participation of underrepresented undergraduates, graduate students and faculty in C<sup>3</sup> programs. Time and resources will also be devoted to strengthening existing nascent partnerships, and strategically adding new partners. LADO representatives will continue visiting university partners to introduce liberal arts college teaching and scholarship opportunities, including the C<sup>3</sup> Fellowships, to large numbers of underrepresented graduate students. Outreach efforts will also include coordinated approaches to additional research universities with a goal of adding a third partner by 2014.