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DAILY NEWS

## Mellon Foundati on Awards Five Colleges \$800,000 For Online

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# Collections

By **BusinessWest Staff**

📅 November 1, 2019

AMHERST — The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded the Five College Consortium \$800,000 to reimagine the way museum collaborations can share their online collections with each other and the world.

The current shared collections database at Five Colleges was developed more than 20 years ago, and this commitment to a consortial

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enriched collaboration across the Five Colleges and opened up discovery and access to museum collections for students, faculty, staff, and the public. It remains one of the few collections databases in the country that is shared among several museums, but with advancements in technology and new accessibility needs on the part of the user, this database has revealed its age and limitations. These facts, combined with Five Colleges' long history of collaboration, was what originally led the Mellon

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request a grant proposal from the consortium.

“We’re honored to receive this generous grant from the Mellon Foundation,” said Sarah Pfatteicher, executive director of Five Colleges, who led the grant-application effort.

“This is a groundbreaking model for how a variety of museums can work together to connect, leverage, and facilitate access to collections data.”

The museums that are a part of the current collections database are the Hampshire College Art Gallery, the Mead Art Museum at

the Mount  
Holyoke College  
Art Museum, the  
Smith College  
Museum of Art,  
the University  
Museum of  
Contemporary Art  
at UMass  
Amherst, and  
Historic Deerfield,  
an independent  
museum that  
works closely with  
the campuses.

The award from  
the Mellon  
Foundation's Arts  
and Cultural  
Heritage program  
is a 30-month  
planning grant  
that will be used  
to assess the  
museums'  
collections-  
management  
needs within the  
broader  
landscape of  
research  
collections within

focus on the needs of users, the planning project seeks to identify the requirements for a next-generation collections-management system that will allow the integration of museum data with library discovery systems. This project supports the long-term priority of making it easier for students, faculty, scholars, and the general public to find and access the extraordinary cultural-heritage collections distributed across the Five College campuses and Historic Deerfield.

“This planning

groundwork for developing what could be a truly transformative cross-collection network of knowledge and discovery," said Jessica Nicoll, director of the Smith College Museum of Art and lead author of the grant proposal.

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