I. **Unit Title:** Delta Center for Culture and Learning

**Unit Administrator:** Luther Brown

II. **Data and information for department:**
Our programs are diverse, but all promote Delta culture in some way.

We worked regularly with **visiting groups**. During this time period, we hosted University level classes from:

- **Millsaps College:** Civil Rights History
- **Vanderbilt University:** Delta Culture and Service Learning
- **The University of Missouri:** Delta Culture and Service Learning
- **Gustavus Adolphus University and the HECUA group:** Civil Rights
- **Louisiana Technical University:** Civil Rights
- **Brandeis University:** Economic Development
- **Wake Forest University:** Civil Rights
- **Western Carolina State University:** Civil Rights

We also hosted research and service groups from **Duke** and **University of North Carolina**. These students have been serving in various placements throughout Bolivar County.

We again were visited by the higher administration of **Indiana University**, who want to copy our approach to regional culture for their own students and faculty. This was their second site visit to DSU.

We also provided educational tours and curricula for **The Blues Today Symposium** at The University of Mississippi, the Oxford **Conference for the Book** literary symposium, The Mississippi Superintendent’s Academy, The Bologna Performing Arts Center, The Marks (MS) school district, Phi Theta Kappa, New DSU Faculty, the DSU School of Nursing, The Robertson Scholars, and The Alluvian Hotel.

With support from the National Association of Foreign Student Advisors, we provided heritage tours for our international students, including a tour of the Delta, an overnight tour of Memphis, and a three night tour of New Orleans.

We provided workshops and oral presentations to the MS/AL Rural Tourism Conference, the International Heritage Development Conference, The Chicago Blues Festival, The Book Babes literary club of Jackson, The Chancellor and faculty of Indiana University NW, Greenville Rotary, and Natchez National Wildlife Service Conference on Nature and Cultural Tourism. We provided
major academic support to the Iowa Campus Compact symposium on service learning in the sciences.

In collaboration with the Capps Archive and Museum, we produced a series of four culinary tour events to coincide with the Smithsonian Institution’s *Key Ingredients* exhibit.

We expanded *The Blues Highway Association*, which now includes over 250 members, all of whom promote the Blues and heritage tourism to the public, and participated in a Washington, DC, lobbying trip to promote the National Heritage Area.

We played an instrumental role in The Mississippi Blues Commission, especially in the preparation of the final report to the State Legislature, and we are now appointed (by law) to the Mississippi Blues Commission, signed by Governor Barbour. In the name of the Commission, we wrote and submitted major funding projects in the name of the Commission to both the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts.

We produced and printed a poster of all known Blues festivals in Mississippi during 2005, and distributed 5,000 copies at the Chicago Blues Festival.

We prepared a formal proposal to have the entire Delta declared *The Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area* under the auspices of National Park Service. This request was given to Senator Thad Cochran and Congressman Bennie Thompson. It asks that the Delta Center be made the management authority of the Area, and awarded an annual budget of $1 million.

We continued to work with historic preservation initiatives in Drew (the Rosenwald School), Mound Bayou (the Historic Bank Building), and the world famous Dockery Farms plantation. We prepared and printed a booklet entitled *The Mound Bayou Story*, now being used by local tourism groups.

With support from The Tri-State Educational Foundation and the Mississippi Arts Commission, we presented a multi-media show on the history of the Blues, written and performed by Frank and Eddie Thomas, to 19 Delta schools, including over 7,500 students.

With support from the Institutions of Higher Learning, we hosted two two-week long summer camps that focused attention on Delta heritage. Each camp served approximately 20 students.

We began a major oral history project on the murder of Emmett Till.

We provided tourism training for the staff of the Alluvian Hotel and proposed a Certified Guide training program.

**Influencing the Present and Ensuring the Future**

For five years, we have had a Lighthouse Partnership funded through Learn and Serve America. This program was renewed during the evaluated period, and refocused as *The Delta Heritage Lighthouse Partnership*. The major program sponsored by this partnership involved an after-school arts and culture project offered at the D.M. Smith Middle School in Cleveland. Partners included Communities in Schools of Greenwood, Mississippi, and the Cleveland School District. Approximately 20 students participated. Primary products of this program include a
a book called Heroes of the Mississippi Delta, a Christmas art show and sale, and the “Photo Road Show,” which is an ongoing effort to collect and interpret historic pictures of the region, funded by a grant from The History Channel.

**Delta Volunteers**, funded by Bolivar County United Way, continued to be a clearing house that places volunteers in the community. Delta Volunteers’ (a United Way Agency) mission is to support volunteer projects that address poverty-related issues, promote positive social change, and develop cross-cultural understanding. Its web page is located at [www.deltavolunteers.org](http://www.deltavolunteers.org).

Volunteer efforts place students from DSU in hospice care, head start, early childhood centers, schools (through mentoring and tutoring), mental health, area hospitals, the animal shelter, community beautification, blood drives, Habitat for Humanity, and other needs and agencies. Delta Volunteers partners with community agencies and groups to meet needs, and maintains a community agency clearinghouse that is maintained as a resource of volunteer and partnership opportunities.

**The Entergy Environmental Stewardship Project** is funded by Entergy Foundation, and partners with Dahomey Wildlife Refuge, DSU and Cypress Park Elementary school to create environmental learning kits and interpretive kiosks for the school and the wildlife reserve. As it did last year, it continued to host *The 9-11 Week of Service*, which was an outstanding success. It created butterfly gardens, installed dozens of bird houses, and established three huge kiosks at Dahomey.

**The Friends of Dahomey Wildlife Refuge** was established as an independent 501c3 organization by the Center. It promotes the refuge by producing posters and interpretive materials and working with the National Audubon society to establish birding trails.

**The Cleveland Youth Council** was created with support from the Kellogg Youth Innovation Fund. It is a partnership that includes the Cleveland School District, Cleveland Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce, and Bolivar County Community Action Agency, empowering high school students to create their own service learning projects, while building leadership and citizenship skills. The Cleveland Youth Council, a body of 20 high school students, began operation in the requested time period. The Council attended training programs in Florida, Tennessee, and Washington, DC. They initiated an assessment of community needs and resources, established several working committees, and began the process of awarding grants to local youth driven initiatives that will attempt to solve problems in the City of Cleveland.

The DSU Scholar’s House is not directly related to the Delta Center, although the Center spent considerable effort in its creation. This house is used to support visiting scholars and small student groups, and it has played a very important role in our Break Away and visiting scholars programs. A second Scholar’s House, currently called The Simmon’s House, is now also renovated, with major input by the Delta Center.

During the requested evaluation period, the Delta Center for Culture and Learning received these grants:
2005- The Three R’s of the Delta, Mississippi Geography Education Fund (National Geographic Society). $20,000.


2005- Support for Blues in the School performances. Mississippi Arts Commission, Tri-State Educational Foundation, and Delta State University, $17,100.

2005- Delta Center Blues Initiatives. Tri-State Educational Foundation. $13,500


2005- The Delta Photo Road Show: Discovering the Unknown Photographs. Save Our History Program of The History Channel. $10,000.

2005- Emmett Till Oral History Project: Remembering Emmett Till. Mississippi Humanities Council. $2,000, with subsequent renewal to create a traveling exhibit.

2004- Lighthouse Heritage Coloring Book Project, Cleveland Youth Council. $2,000.

III. Personnel:
Luther Brown, Director
LaTonya Hurskin, Secretary, replaced by Tonya Anderson half way through the year
John Martin, Program Associate for Student and Community Engagement
Henry Outlaw, Program Associate for Heritage Studies
Sarah Leonard, Coordinator of the Cleveland Youth Council
Bootsie Lyon, Coordinator of Environmental Stewardship Programs
Anna Long, Program Associate for Healthy Families
Linda Coleman, Parent Liaison
Dorothy Grimm, Parent Liaison
Jennifer Scott, Parent Liaison
Marsha Cherry, Parent Liaison
Carrie Small, Ellie Brown, Whitney Hall, Mathew McCain, D’Karris Hilley, Trevell Smith, and Jordan Soloai all worked as paid student interns through the Cleveland Youth Council grant.

Approximately half way through the reporting period, the Healthy Families Initiative moved out of the Delta Center into the School of Nursing. This move was deemed necessary to better link Healthy Families with Nursing’s Delta Health Alliance funding and ensure the program’s future. Activities for this program will be included with the School of Nursing’s annual report and are not include here.

Noteworthy activities and accomplishments:
John Martin:

- Attended three Lighthouse Partnership trainings in Hattiesburg and gave Powerpoint presentations on the Lighthouse Arts & Heritage Program.
- Served as a reviewer of other Lighthouse Programs throughout the State.
- Attended the Gulf South Summit on Service-Learning: giving a poster presentation on the Lighthouse Program

Sarah Leonard:

- Attended (with several youth representatives) national Youth Innovation Fund meetings in San Francisco, Ypsilanti, and Nashville.
- Presented at the Practitioner’s Conference on Civic Engagement in New Orleans.
- Received an $8,000 service learning grant from Learn and Serve America (through the Cleveland School District) and a $1,200 grant from Dreyfus Health Foundation in support of a youth newsletter.
- Sponsored civics classes at East Side and Cleveland High Schools with funding from the Kellogg Foundation.

Luther Brown:

- Was named to the Mississippi Blues Commission by act of law
- Was named “State Scholar” by The Mississippi Humanities Council, in support of the Smithsonian Institution’s Museum on Main Street
- Was interviewed by National Public Radio’s All Things considered for their two-part special on the Mississippi Delta
- Presented oral papers on the Blues and Delta Heritage to the Mississippi-Alabama Rural Tourism Association annual meeting, the International Heritage Development Association, and the annual meeting of Fish and Wildlife Service archeologists.
- Served as a consultant to Indiana University Northwest on the design and development of interdisciplinary centers.

Henry Outlaw:

- Obtained funding for and implemented an oral history project on the murder of Emmett Till
- Obtained funding for and implemented a Blues in the Schools program that served over 7,500 Delta youth

**New position(s) requested, with justification:**

None were requested during this period

**Recommended change of status**

(such as promotion/change in title/change in responsibilities):

None were requested during this period
IV. Department Goals for 2004 or 2004-05

A. Goal #

Programs, and respective goals, are divided into these major categories:

- Courses for DSU students: increased knowledge of and respect for the Delta (not applicable this year)
- Courses and tours for visiting classes and academic tour groups: increased knowledge of and respect for the Delta
- The Blues Highway Association/Blues Commission: Blues maps, posters, booklets, etc.
- Historic Preservation: building preservation
- Oral History collection: recordings and transcriptions
- Delta Heritage Lighthouse Partnership: increased knowledge of and respect for the Delta
- Delta Volunteers: volunteer placement
- Volunteers for a Healthy Community: service to young mothers
- Entergy Environmental Stewardship: 9-11 Week of Service
- Friends of Dahomey: Service to Dahomey
- Youth Innovation fund: Funding to youth initiatives

B. Institutional Goal which was supported by this goal:

Institutional Goal (listed on pages 14-15 in the 2004-06 DSU Bulletin)

The Delta Center helps DSU accomplish its mission by offering educational opportunities to DSU students while serving as a major community engagement and outreach arm of the university. Increased public awareness and recruitment are major consequences of our activities. We specifically address goals 5, 7, 8 and 9 as noted in the University catalogue.

C. Expected Results:

What happens if the goal is met?

Unlike traditional academic Departments, Delta Center programs are grant funded or survive because they generate their own enrollment and participation. This means that any program that is not meeting the needs of its constituents ends, and that all programs must continually evolve to meet the demands of the grantors or supporters. Essentially, our programs are “zero based.”

See attached evaluations of the various individual programs.

D. Evaluation Procedure(s):

How will you determine if this goal is met?

Our programs are evaluated continually by outside evaluators. In some cases, these evaluators are the funding sources, who require annual or final reports. In other cases, evaluators
are hired specifically to examine programs. Finally, other Universities, grantors, and partners evaluate our programs before deciding to continue using our services or partnering with us.

This year was unusual in that the Center was evaluated by an outside reviewer. Tom Rankin, Director of the Duke University Center for Documentary Studies, met with Center staff and interested parties and advised the University on the Center’s operation. A copy of his formal report is attached.

Courses and tours for visiting classes and academic tour groups are evaluated by the people funding them. The Blues Highway Association/Blues Commission reports to the Mississippi Legislature, which either renews or decides to eliminate the program. Our Historic Preservation and Oral History projects are grant funded and report to the grantors. Delta Heritage Lighthouse Partnership is evaluated and renewed annually by the Mississippi Higher Education Consortium. Delta Volunteers is evaluated annually by The United Way. Volunteers for a Healthy Community is evaluated annually by The Delta Health Alliance, a Federally funded program. Part of this evaluation process involved an external reviewer. Entergy Environmental Stewardship was evaluated by an external reviewer. The Youth Innovation fund is evaluated by Policy Studies Associates and the staff of the Kellogg Foundation funded National Service-Learning Partnership at the Academy for Educational Development.

E. Actual Results of Evaluation:
(Explain if the evaluation is not complete)

Detailed evaluations of the Lighthouse Program, the NAFSA Project, (National Association of Foreign Student Advisors), Blues in the Schools project, Gear-Up Summer Camp, and the Cleveland Youth Council are attached. All have been refunded except NAFSA (which was a one-time only event), meaning that they meet the criteria for success defined by their sponsoring organizations. All other grants during this period were successfully completed and reported to their funding organizations. In most cases, the portfolios or final reports identify goals and assessment procedures.

F. Use of Evaluation Results:
(How were the results used to improve programs, operation, or services? Indicate if this led to a new goal for the next year.)

We rely on past portfolios and final reports when planning new events. These documents provide the record of what did and what did not work, and they mold the future of the Center.
V. Learning Outcome Assessment Plan

A. Learning Outcome 
What should a learner know, value, or be able to do as a result of this outcome?
The goal of all of our diverse program is increased knowledge of the history and culture of the Mississippi Delta.

B. Assessment Tools and Methods
What assessment tools and/or methods will you use to determine achievement of the learning outcome?
Limit measures to three.

Measure One: regular use of Delta Center services: self reported and repeated use

Measure Two: demonstrate knowledge of Delta heritage: pre and post tests

Measure Three: ability of students to show learning through products they produce: interpretive materials

C. Data Collection and Analysis
Describe how the data from the assessment tools and methods will be collected. Explain the procedure to analyze the data.

Data Collection Procedure: Use of the Center is documented by field trips and visits. Most field trips involve pre (and sometimes post-) testing. Interpretive materials range from student art projects to formal Center publications

Analysis Procedure: Feedback from visiting groups affects future tours and classes. Pre and post test results help structure our presentations. Interpretive materials provide physical demonstrations of success/failure.

D. Results of Evaluation
What were the findings of the Analysis Team? List any specific recommendations.

Findings: Given that virtually everything the Center does is funded by external grants, it has been surprisingly successful.

Recommendation 1: Additional staff are needed in the general field of Delta heritage

Recommendation 2: The Gear-Up and Lighthouse projects succeed best when they include formal publications of student produced materials

Recommendation 3: The Center may be too diverse in its operations, and needs to focus more on heritage and less on youth empowerment

E. Use of Evaluation Results
The Healthy Families program was moved out of the Delta Center into the School of Nursing and two VISTA workers were obtained to assist with heritage training in the Lighthouse program.

Response:

F. **Assessment Team Members**

*List members of the Assessment Team.*

**Members:** Luther Brown, John Martin, Rose Hurder, Henry Outlaw, Sarah Leonard

*Note: All sections must be addressed*