# Fondren Fellows Project

**Any questions can be directed to fondrenfellows@rice.edu**

## Name

Thumy Webb

## Project Title

The Rice University CatOWLog: A Comprehensive Bibliography of Rice Creators

## Description:

The Rice University CatOWLog will be a comprehensive database of books, music, and other works created by people who have worked or studied at Rice University. In this initial phase of the project, the fellow will develop a plan for the database's creation based on stakeholders' needs and best practices.

## Project Summary

Rice University's faculty and alumni have produced countless academic and artistic works since our founding in 1912. Among our distinguished creators are writers Larry McMurtry and Joyce Carol Oates, neuroscientist David Eagleman, and *Encanto* composer Germaine Franco. These are just a few examples of the myriad Rice people who have contributed their expertise and creativity to society in the form of books, music, visual arts, and more. Although Rice takes great pride in these endeavors, there is no single authoritative resource that compiles information about Rice's creators and their creations.

The Rice University CatOWLog will be a comprehensive bibliography (bibliowlgraphy?) of works created by people who have worked or studied at Rice University. It will consist of a database that contains data about the Rice-affiliated creator (e.g. name, time at Rice, courses taught or degree earned, etc.) along with bibliographic descriptions of their work (e.g. title, collaborators, date of creation, format, etc.). The database will be made publicly accessible through a web interface.

The CatOWLog will serve the scholarly community by providing authoritative bibliographic data about Rice authors and their works. It will serve Rice University by showcasing the talents of Rice's creators to prospective students and alumni donors, and by providing data to university administration about these accomplishments. The CatOWLog will serve as a valuable resource for Fondren Library staff in various departments, who need to identify Rice-authored library materials

because they require special processing.

Due to its scale and scope, the CatOWLog will be a multi-year project, but the effort is proportional to benefits to be gained. This first phase will lay the conceptual groundwork for the project. A few examples of questions that should be answered in this phase are: What data do stakeholders want in the database? Which Rice creators and works should be included (or excluded)? How should the data be presented to users? By May 1, 2025, the fellow is expected to deliver a detailed plan, in the form of a written report, for creating the CatOWLog. Alternatively, the report should suggest better alternatives to the CatOWLog if any exist.

This project is suitable for the Fondren Fellows program because it benefits the library, university, and scholarly community, and adheres to the Rice Office of Undergraduate Research and Inquiry's Student Learning Outcomes:

> Framing – The fellow will generate aims for the CatOWLog based on their experience, expertise, and the literature.

> Methodology – The fellow will collect and record information such as stakeholder interviews, similar projects at peer institutions, academic literature about best practices, and other self-selected sources based on their own methodology.

> Evaluation – The fellow will rigorously evaluate the information they have gathered using self-generated criteria.

> Synthesis – The fellow will analyze and synthesize the information to fill gaps in their understanding and enhance their current understanding.

> Dissemination – The fellow will communicate their findings in a written report, suitable for a lay audience, that is persuasive, clear, and concise.

## Number of Fellow(s)

1 Fellow

## Key tasks:

- Contact stakeholders in Rice University, Fondren Library, Rice alumni, and others to determine what data they would like to see in the CatOWLog.

- Identify and evaluate similar projects at peer institutions.

- Research best practices for creating a bibliographical database.

- Based on the collected information, create a plan for creating the CatOWLog or suggest better alternatives to the CatOWLog.

• Present findings, recommendation, and next steps in a high-quality, data-supported written report that is suitable for sharing with stakeholders.

## Qualifications for applicants:

• Strong written and verbal communication skills

• Strong time management skills

• Familiarity with, or ability to learn about, academic database searching

• Familiarity with, or ability to learn about, bibliographic description

## What would students learn through their participation in this project?

By the end of the project period, the student will be able to:

• Communicate professionally with project collaborators and stakeholders •

Define bibliographic description and describe how it is used in libraries •
Explain why bibliographies are important to the scholarly community

• Compare and contrast data formats, metadata schema, and database types •
Differentiate between user requirements and user preferences

• Apply understanding of the above topics to design a database