BC AFRICAN AND AFRICAN DIASPORA STUDIES PROF. WINS AWARD FOR INNOVATIVE TEACHING

CHESTNUT HILL, MA (October 2007) -- Laura Murphy, a lecturer in BC's Department of African and African Diaspora Studies, is among six winners of the 2007 Award for Innovative Teaching from Aluka, an international collaborative initiative building a digital library of scholarly resources from and about Africa.

The Aluka award was developed to foster inventive uses of Aluka’s recently launched library of more than 300,000 digital objects of high-quality scholarly materials focused on Africa including botanical specimens, visual and contextual representations of cultural heritage sites, and periodicals and pamphlets documenting liberation struggles in southern Africa.

The six recipients were chosen for their innovative use and deep engagement with the material in Aluka to enrich teaching about or related to Africa. Submissions were open to teaching faculty, graduate students and post doctoral fellows and each recipient will be granted a $2,000 award.

Murphy, who also is a teaching fellow and PhD candidate at Harvard University’s Department of African and African American Studies, will use visual and documentary materials in Aluka to help Boston College students visualize Africa more accurately and to counteract the images of violence and corruption often encountered in the public sphere.

Students will be given a writing assignment on the production of “memory” and “history” in the African context by conducting a reading of images and documents in Aluka’s African Cultural Heritage Sites and Landscapes content area. They then will be required to integrate the visual, geographical, and documentary evidence provided on the Aluka site to create a thesis about the unique forms of memory which Africans have created as a response to their particular surroundings and pasts.

Other award recipients include Sara Dorman, University of Edinburgh, Scotland; Kim Miller, Wheaton College; Alex Perullo, Bryant University; Christopher Saunders, University of Cape Town, South Africa, and Benjamin Smith, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa.

More information may be found at http://www.aluka.org/page/about/news/AwardRecipients20071003.jsp

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