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Williams has led a number of interdisciplinary research and programmatic initiatives supported by prestigious fellowships and grants from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, Fulbright, North-South Center, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Rockefeller Foundation, the United States Institute of Peace, the United States Agency for International Development, the United States Department of Education, and the United States Department of State. He has a long record of commitment to diversity and inclusion at UF, including his advocacy in support of undocumented students.