

University of Cincinnati Next Generation Humanities PhD Planning Grant

1. Narrative

Abstract and Overview

The University of Cincinnati (UC) grants doctoral degrees in several humanities fields: Classics, Creative Writing, English and Comparative Literature, Rhetoric and Composition, German, History, Philosophy, and Romance Languages and Literature. While we see continued strong placement of our graduates in academia, especially in Classics, Creative Writing, and Romance Languages, many of our graduates are interested in finding positions outside of higher education. We anticipate that these non-traditional post-doctoral career paths will become increasingly important as universities decrease the number of faculty in the humanities. For this reason, we see great potential for the creation of a shared, interdisciplinary curriculum that would better prepare students for a fuller range of professions.

This shared humanities curriculum would take advantage of UC's size and its urban setting in multiple ways. First, our university has thriving programs in business, medicine, engineering, and pharmacy – all fields where our students might find positions upon graduations and from which they can learn. Second, Cincinnati is home to many national corporations that have standing relationships with the university. These include giant corporations like Procter and Gamble, Federated Department Stores, and Kroger, as well as smaller, creative corporations like Dunhumby and Fisher Design. Innovative employers such as these could provide invaluable guidance as we consider curricular changes, especially related to internships. Third, UC has recently renewed its tradition of community engagement. Our campus sits in the center of a demographically diverse city, with all the usual urban challenges and opportunities. Our humanities doctoral students should more fully engage the community through existing institutions, including non-profit organizations.

The principal activities of our proposed planning process will include facilitating interdisciplinary discussions to determine the desirability and feasibility of creating a shared curriculum that would help our graduates push the humanities into the broader public, through employment in what can be called the public humanities and in positions within corporations. We anticipate this shared curriculum will have room for internships and will emphasize mentoring from within humanities departments and from humanities professionals outside the university. We have decided to undertake an interdisciplinary approach to highlight the acquisition of skills that transcend individual humanities homes and trajectories. An interdisciplinary approach has the side benefit of improving the practicality of operating this program, since, individually, most of our humanities programs are relatively small. Furthermore, it will provide a novel avenue for enhanced collaboration among several departments, at a time when UC's McMicken College of Arts & Sciences is strongly promoting interdisciplinary activities.

The expected result of this program will be to institutionalize preparation for non-academic posts, providing an antidote to the palpable, if anachronistic, view that positions outside of the academy are merely consolation prizes. We understand that teaching is not the only noble path for people with doctoral degrees and that there is a genuine need for new directions in humanities doctoral education that reflects this. We know that graduates with humanities doctoral degrees find fruitful employment in a variety of areas outside the academy, including consulting firms, publishing companies, non-profit organizations, governmental agencies, museums and other cultural institutions, and positions within corporations seeking employees trained with broad, flexible analytical skills.

The planning process will involve current graduate students and recent graduates, as well as humanities professionals from around the region. We anticipate that the process will result in innovations that create structured participation by these individuals and their organizations in the shared curriculum. In particular, we envision developing new mentoring structures that can work across

humanities disciplines, perhaps staffed by advanced doctoral candidates or recent graduates, who can help students hone skills that are not always well developed in existing coursework and research. These might include entrepreneurial thinking and management skills. We also hope that colleagues from non-humanities fields will contribute to the planning process, including faculty in Anthropology and Sociology, where engagement with the public outside the academy is routine. In sum, our planning discussions with students, professionals, and colleagues will help us identify valuable skills beyond those traditionally acquired in doctoral training that would be useful to those seeking non-academic positions. These might include training in management, statistics, and in Geographical Information Systems, among others – tools that can be useful in a wide range of settings.

Over the course of the last two months discussions among potential planning committee members have already yielded common ground among three humanities programs at UC. We have outlined several priorities for broadening the career preparation of humanities PhDs. First, we must create a curriculum that retains the intellectual rigor befitting a PhD. This is essential to ensuring broad buy-in from humanities faculty. Second, we must assess and utilize resources already at the university, while exploring the possibility of regularizing relationships with other institutions, including publishers, museums, non-profit organizations, government agencies, and corporations, possibly through the establishment of co-operative programs. Third, while a shared curriculum in public humanities must augment rather than replace existing doctoral programs, we must work to create curricular space for internships, mentoring, and interdisciplinary coursework so that we do not lengthen already long times to degree. Keeping these principles front-and-center will help the planning committee obtain broad faculty support for this next-generation curriculum.

An important dimension of our planning effort will be a series of guest appearances by humanities professionals in an open colloquium on topics related to humanities outside the academy, ranging from project management to the digital production of humanities products. We will likely invite experts from a variety of fields, including publishers, librarians, and corporate consultants. A number of these speakers will be graduates of our doctoral programs. We expect that these speakers can help us develop a flexible and useful curriculum.

The budget will fund stipends for participants of the committee, travel, materials and supplies, and a graduate assistant who will conduct research on topics identified by the committee, make arrangements for visitors, and advertise the colloquium.

Planning Committee

The departments of History, English and Philosophy will take the lead in planning. The planning committee will consist of all required parties as outlined by the NEH Guidelines.

PROJECT DIRECTOR:

Dr. David Stradling, Associate Dean for Humanities, McMicken College of Arts and Sciences, and Professor of History, will chair the committee. For four years Dr. Stradling served as the Director of Graduate Studies in History, and in his new post as Associate Dean for Humanities he will be in a position to encourage interdisciplinary participation in the planning process.

FACULTY AT INSTITUTIONALLY-RELEVANT LEVELS:

Dr. Jay Twomey, Head and Associate Professor of English. Dr. Twomey has been active developing academic ties between English and other colleges with the goal of offering students new, career-enhancing skills (e.g., in digital tools and methodologies).

Dr. Angela Potochnik, Associate Professor of Philosophy. Dr. Potochnik is the Director of Graduate Studies in Philosophy, and her research interests include the social and political engagement of philosophy of science.

Dr. Charles Fritz Casey-Leininger, Educator Associate Professor in History, Director of Public History. Dr. Casey-Leininger has worked in Cincinnati for forty years, developing a large set of contacts with professionals outside the academy that he has used to develop placements for internships for students in the history department, as resources for his classes on the Civil Rights Movement, the history of Cincinnati, and various public history classes and seminars, and as sources of information for his research.

Dr. Lora Arduser, Assistant Professor of English and Comparative Literature and Acting Director of the Professional Writing Program. Dr. Arduser's interdisciplinary research focuses on the connections between the humanities and health and medicine. She has numerous connections in the UC College of Medicine and with area corporations, which will be useful for finding guest speakers and identifying skills PhD students need for a non-academic job. She worked as a writer and editor in industry before returning to academia, so is familiar with the skill sets employers are looking for in writing/communication positions.

HIGH LEVEL ADMINISTRATOR:

Dr. Arnold Miller, Senior Associate Dean, McMicken College of Arts and Sciences, Professor of Geology.

HUMANITIES-ORIENTED CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL:

Marcy Hawley, Publisher, Orange Frazer Press, Wilmington, OH, has been specializing in cultural and multi-region book publishing for the commercial and custom book markets for 28 years. Her company's resource of writers, editors, and photographers educate those interested in books and book publishing, culminating in the creation of high end, award-winning publications. The company's use of college interns has developed careers as diverse as a director of hospital marketing to division head of e-romance novels at Random House.

(See also Dr. Bryan Smith, below.)

CURRENT HUMANITIES GRADUATE STUDENTS:

Anne Delano Steinert, current doctoral student in History with a concentration in Public History.

Niven Abdel-Hamid, current doctoral student in English and employee in the Office of Nationally Competitive Awards

ALUMNI OF THE HUMANITIES DOCTORAL PROGRAM:

Dr. David Merkowitz, Assistant Director of Ohio Humanities, Columbus, OH (UC PhD in History, 2010)

Dr. Bryan Smith, Director of the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, UC (UC PhD in English and Comparative Literature, 2014)

Planning Themes

1. RESOURCE ASSESSMENT:

The McMicken College of Arts and Sciences is part of a comprehensive university with a wide range of faculty expertise. The primary funded activity will be to assess resources across the university aligned to support this endeavor. This task will involve communicating with faculty and staff who work in areas that might be particularly useful to humanities scholars. In addition to identifying allies in this endeavor and stimulating the collaboration of the departments that have PhD programs, the planning committee will draw on the experience of other departments in the McMicken College of Arts and Sciences, likely including Anthropology and Sociology, which have a strong tradition of public engagement, and Libraries, where faculty are trained in digital humanities. We will likely tap into management expertise in the College of Business and in the Center for Organizational Leadership, identifying faculty to work with humanities doctoral students and finding existing courses that fit into our developing curriculum.

We will also assess regional assets for Public Humanities, identifying willing partners for career development and employment opportunities after graduation. These partners will likely include the substantial cultural institutions in the region with which the university has long-standing, active relationships, such as the Cincinnati Museum Center (the Cincinnati History Museum and the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History), Cincinnati Art Museum, National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, and the William Howard Taft National Historic Site. In addition, Cincinnati is home to facilities operated by government agencies, including NIOSH and EPA, both of which also have multiple ties to UC. We will seek engagement from regional corporations that hire professionals with PhDs.

2. IDENTIFICATION OF SKILLS:

The second most important task will be the identification of skills not typically associated with the humanities that would be of greatest use to graduates pursuing careers outside of academia. The acquisition of these skills would lay at the heart of proposed curriculum and the development of new courses. These skills range from management techniques to proficiency in GIS and on specific software, such as Adobe InDesign. UC has a prolific GIS program in the Department of Geography that is becoming increasingly accommodating of collaborations with other programs.

This process will require considerable involvement from current and past doctoral students. Recent graduates who have taken work outside traditional faculty positions will be especially important to this discussion, as they contribute their views about the skills that would have made their transitions into their positions easier, and their success more certain. Current students must also be at the table so that they can convey to the committee their own sense of the gaps in current curricula. The planning process may involve a formal survey of current students and recent graduates.

3. ALTERNATIVE DISSERTATIONS:

Although each humanities department has its own culture surrounding dissertations, they all tend to be in-depth, monographic studies steeped in existing scholarly literature. We recognize that the production of the typical dissertation might not develop the skills or expertise most appropriate or useful for those seeking careers outside the academy. A curriculum in Public Humanities should therefore develop guidelines for alternative dissertations. To achieve this, the planning committee, with the help of a proposed graduate assistant, will survey existing programs in Public Humanities to assess the range and utility of alternative dissertations.

4. RELATIONSHIPS WITH NON-ACADEMIC PARTNERS:

Preliminary discussions with current doctoral students and recent graduates have convinced the committee that the next-generation curriculum must integrate non-academic institutions. Part of the planning committee’s work will be to establish formal and informal relationships with partner institutions and organizations that could help doctoral students gain relevant skillsets through internships and co-op employment and through regular participation in colloquia. These partners will likely include: publishers and presses; museums and other cultural institutions; and private sector corporations.

5. STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE FACULTY SUPPORT:

The Planning Committee includes representatives from departments with doctoral programs in the humanities, but additional faculty voices must be brought into the process. We will develop means for committee members to share ideas with and seek input from faculty in all humanities departments. The Associate Dean for Humanities, who will chair the committee, will initiate individual conversations with critical faculty, including the heads of relevant departments. The proposed curriculum must also include an administrative structure that allows for broad participation. The creation of this structure and the identification of appropriate support staff, will be an important part of the planning process.

6. APPROACHES TO STIMULATE COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIPS:

Several members of the Planning Committee already have strong relationships with outside partners. For example, Dr. Casey-Leininger has worked closely with the Cincinnati Museum Center, and Dr. Arduser has connections in the publishing industry. Dr. David Merkowitz is the Assistant Director of Ohio Humanities and is well connected to humanities professionals across the state. These relationships should be reinforced and replicated with a broader array of institutions and businesses. Discussions, especially with visitors to the colloquium, must address how to create and maintain these relationships.

Fundraising

We have secured agreements from Dr. Ken Petren, Dean of the McMicken College of Arts & Sciences, and Dr. Chip Montrose, Dean of the University of Cincinnati Graduate School, to supply matching grants in support of Next Generation PhD planning. Additionally, the Department of English has access to funding that can be used to bring in relevant speakers.

Timeline

Date	Meeting	Task	Individuals Responsible	Expected Results
September 9, 2016	Committee meeting	Outline goals, align expectations, and establish responsibilities for individual members and the graduate assistant	Planning Committee	A clear articulation of goals for the year
September	Stakeholder	Publicize the goals	Committee, college	Refined expectations

23, 2016	meeting	related to creating a degree in Public Humanities and identify willing partners; receive stakeholder feedback on the planning process	and university stakeholders (potential partners in the Graduate School, University Libraries, the College of Business, the College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services, and the Center for Organizational Leadership)	for the process; strengthened relationship with key stakeholders
October 7, 2016	Colloquium	Potential invitee: Dr. Kathleen Fitzpatrick, Director of Scholarly Communication of the Modern Language Association	Visit to be arranged by Jay Twomey, Department of English	Discussion of career opportunities in professional organizations
October 21, 2016	Colloquium	Potential invitee: Dr. Ken Reisman, management consultant and Stanford Philosophy PhD	Visit to be arranged by Angela Potochnik	Understanding corporate expectations for employees with advanced humanities degrees
November 4, 2016	Colloquium	museum director	Visit to be arranged by Charles Casey-Leininger	Assessment of career opportunities and skill requirements in cultural institutions; establishment or cementing of a partner relationship
November 18, 2016	Colloquium	publisher or editor of a regional press	Visit to be arranged by David Stradling	Assessment of career opportunities and skill requirements in publishing; establishment of a partner relationship
December 2, 2016	Second Committee meeting	Assess contributions from the colloquia; discuss advising and mentoring, especially in relationship to internships	Planning Committee	Draft goals for structured advising and mentoring of doctoral students.
Early 2017 (TBD)	NEH workshop in	Discuss strategies & anticipated outcomes	Program Director	

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January 27, 2017	Second Committee meeting	During this meeting the Planning Committee will discuss potential curricular developments, with an eye toward integrating internships and structured internal and external mentoring	Planning Committee	Draft shared curriculum in Public Humanities
February 24, 2017	Third Committee meeting	The planning committee will discuss alternative dissertations, making use of materials gathered by the graduate assistant	Planning Committee	Draft descriptions of alternative dissertations
March 17, 2017	Fourth Committee meeting	Members will assess the advisability and feasibility of establishing the shared curriculum lines discussed and, if appropriate, develop a plan for its administration	Planning Committee	Draft administration plan
March 31, 2017	Second Stakeholder meeting	Discuss the draft with stakeholders who attended the September 23, 2016 meeting, describe potential next steps, and refine recommendations	Planning Committee	Stakeholder feedback
April 14, 2017	Present recommendations and deliver White Paper to NEH		Planning Committee, Dean Ken Petren, McMicken College of Arts and Sciences, and Dean Chip Montrose, Graduate School	