

CAS Strategic Planning Arts and Humanities Subcommittee Report (10/26/12)

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Mission Statement of the Arts and Humanities:

The Arts and Humanities are fundamental to the university's mission of enhancing critical and creative understanding of the human experience around the globe and over time through many modes of symbolic communication: language, writing, artistic expression, and performance. While each disciplinary perspective sharpens particular modes of analysis or expression, the Arts and Humanities are at the cutting edge of interdisciplinary scholarship, teaching and learning.

1. What are the most significant disciplinary strengths in the areas represented in the Arts and Humanities that the college should recognize and build on? How are these strengths manifest in educating undergraduates or graduate students? How are these strengths manifest in research or creative activity?

Research and Creative Excellence: Faculty in the Arts and Humanities enjoy national and international reputations for their scholarship and creative activities as demonstrated by awards, prizes, invited lectures/performances/exhibits, fellowships, visiting faculty appointments, and grants. These contribute to the visible profile of Washington State University in the state, the nation and around the world, especially in the following areas:

- Critical Culture, Gender and Race Studies: Film and digital media; transnational environmental and social concerns; sexuality; colonialism and globalization
- English: Intersections of race, gender, and culture in British, American, and global literatures; rhetoric and composition; the scholarship of writing and teaching; print culture, digital technologies, and new media studies; environmental literature
- History: World history (imperialism: Europe, Asia, Africa), public history (museums, preservation, archives and cultural resource management), U.S. history, U.S. West; environmental history, gender studies
- Fine arts: Environmental art: installations, exhibitions, performances, residencies, collaborations and lectures in Asia, Europe, Oceania and throughout the US .
- Foreign Languages and Cultures: European and Asian languages, literatures and cultures, film.
- Music: Composition and performance; jazz

Teaching: Excellence in research and creative activities informs Arts & Humanities classroom teaching, where our dedication to engaged and innovative pedagogy produces knowledgeable, critical, productive, nimble and successful graduates.

- **Arts and Humanities faculty and instructors share across the disciplines:**
 - High contact hours and individualized instruction with graduate and undergraduate students.
 - Utilization of the latest scholarship and theory to inform our instruction.

- Emphasis on deep global and cultural awareness.
- Emphasis on multiple forms of literacy: visual, written, voiced and aesthetic.
- **Teaching strengths and innovations include:**
 - Roots of Contemporary Issues (complete overhaul of the core freshman history requirement, incorporating orientation to university libraries, digital research skills, reading and writing standards, and assessment points)
 - Digital media (music, arts, English)
 - Computer-assisted language learning (FLC)
 - Digital recording and dissemination of musical performances.
 - Hybridization of media within Fine Arts—across media, language and cultures.
 - Critical perspectives and rethinking of received knowledge and cultural assumptions.
 - Cultivating students’ awareness of privilege and inequality and the means by which to intervene in discrimination or oppression.
 - Mentorship and tutorials—an old way of teaching that is innovative because of its flexibility. Its innovation lies in its flexibility on a one-on-one level of engagement.

2. What are the most important impediments to capitalizing on our established or emerging strengths so that the faculty can have impact equal to or greater than our aspirational peers? Please be more specific than “money.”

The Arts and Humanities at Washington State University have experienced a series of setbacks, beginning with salary compression (for more than a decade) and greatly exacerbated by the recent recession. While our accomplishments remain significant, they often seem invisible within the university and the state.

- **Weak visibility** of the accomplishments of departments and disciplines within the college and within the university. This is especially true in the Arts and Humanities where faculty prestige is not measured so much by the quantity of funding achieved but by the quality of our publications, performances, and exhibits and by invitations to present our work in public and academic fora.
- For the Arts and Humanities, **time is as precious a resource as funding**. Ballooning service expectations, uneven teaching loads for tenure-track faculty (ranging 2/2 to 4/4 by discipline) have a significant impact on the ability to produce quality scholarship. On top of course loads many departments conduct heavy loads of one-on-one tutorials.
- Because of persistent **budget cuts in tenure-track lines**, some departments have become bifurcated into research and clinical faculty. The service and advising loads fall to the tenure-track faculty, of which there are often too few. The diminishing numbers of new permanent faculty make planning for the future difficult when so many clinical faculty are vulnerable to budgeting vicissitudes.
- Some Arts and Humanities **disciplines have sustained deep cuts to graduate programs**, even while instructional demands are up due to increasing enrollments. More tenure-track faculty are needed for the important task of mentoring graduate students. At present, there are no mechanisms for “counting” graduate mentorship despite its importance. Teaching assistants require adequate membership by graduate faculty too.
- Sufficient **support for travel** is important, since our evaluation depends heavily on travel to archival collections, performances, lectures, exhibitions and conferences. Such travel enhances

our personal and institutional visibility globally; meanwhile, the scarcity of humanities grants means that travel funding often comes out of household budgets but WSU incomes are among the lowest of peer institutions. Adequate travel support is especially important for untenured tenure-track faculty, who are expected to make research contributions and develop a research profile early in their careers.

3. Are there new strategies for supporting departmental excellence that the college should consider? How would these strategic initiatives help us meet our goals? Are there metrics that would allow us to define success?

- The **Washington State University Center for the Humanities** promotes interdisciplinary research and teaching that emphasizes the enduring value of humanistic endeavor, increasingly critical in a global and technological society. Dedicated to the cultivation of a community of intellectual discourse, the Center establishes a forum both virtual and real for fellows, research groups, seminars, symposia, and workshops, on topics intrinsic to the Humanities. It encompasses disciplines such as literature, languages, philosophy, ethics, history, ethnic and gender studies, fine arts, architecture, and music. The impact of the Center's activities extends beyond the Humanities to issues arising in the social and natural sciences, medicine, business, and communication. The Center honors and enhances the university's intellectual core by presenting itself as a focal point for humanistic work now being carried out at our university in separate academic units. By providing material support in the form of internal faculty course releases and stipends for research and research-related seminars, this unified entity will help increase the productivity for which WSU's Humanities departments are renowned. Through programs that bring prominent guest lecturers and collaborative seminars to Pullman and other campuses across the state, utilizing the institutional network of our regional campuses and extension, the Center will significantly augment the contributions of WSU's humanities faculty to the university's land-grant mandate. Events already planned for the current academic year include lectures by Mahmood Mamdani, a world expert in African politics and culture, and by the eclectic and prolific author Rebecca Solnit. Stressing interdisciplinary research, the Center transcends boundaries between fields across the humanities and beyond, between colleagues on the various WSU campuses and throughout the extension network, and between the university community and the public in the state of Washington.
- **Recognition of distinctive metrics** for research and teaching in Arts and Humanities disciplines.
 - Like the Sciences and Social Sciences, the Arts and Humanities measure research/creative success via publications (books are generally more highly valued than articles, unlike in some other programs, but are not usually "captured" by database-bots), but also exhibits, performances, invited lectures, conference papers, reviews, fellowships, media, and prizes; as in other disciplines this acclaim is tiered by institution, press, journal, etc.
 - Arts and Humanities achievements, in keeping with the land grant mission, transcend academia and receive high visibility in the public sphere, whether through public lectures, exhibits, and performances, via traditional media (television, radio, film) or over the internet. In creative arts and other fields, good work is happening in a variety of spaces, such as the internet, public sites and commissioned projects. Even with traditional print media, many sources are now online. A greater openness to electronic media and nontraditional forms of publishing, and a greater recognition of the legitimacy of those forms, would enhance our strategies for success. Subventions for

publication (in open-access journals) or for shipping art installations, etc. would be helpful.

- Success for Arts and Humanities graduates might be best investigated at 5- and 10-year markers, since it often takes our alumni a few years to break into the professional spheres where they generally excel.
- **Decreasing the amount of bureaucracy** required to implement various kinds of innovation. We need to be more nimble on issues such as collaboration, including (1) how we establish partnerships and (2) how we measure and reward innovative projects.
 - Create competitive short-term (1 semester) course reductions to be administered at the departmental level to advance individual and collaborative research projects
- **Greater support for faculty creativity in teaching.**
 - Create support for team teaching opportunities.
 - Support innovation in teaching through short-term course reductions and/or mini-grants.
 - Advocate for strategic curricular synergy with programs within the college but especially in other colleges and programs. For example, require foreign language, history and cultural instruction for certificate programs in Global Studies and International Business.

4. Are there opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration that we aren't doing already that would advance the missions of the college and units in the college? Can you identify strategies for fostering those collaborations?

The Arts and Humanities programs are already highly interdisciplinary in their scholarship, creative endeavors and instruction both internally (within the Arts and Humanities disciplines) and externally (with other units in CAS as well as other colleges and schools). We might build on this capacity in the following ways:

- **Build on current strengths:** Our disciplines and programs already share deep capacity in the following areas:
 - Environmental studies (connections to History, English, Fine Arts, CCGRS, DFCL)
 - New media/popular culture (connections to English, Fine Arts, CCGRS, Music, History, DFCL)
 - Digital arts/ DTC/ English/Fine Arts/Music
 - Digital media across the disciplines —collaborations with Engineering/Computer Science
 - Digital Technology and Culture could be connected with Communication and Music.
 - Music and Neuroscience
 - Fine arts and Architecture
 - The Asia program could be built up into a collaborative experience.
- **Inventory classes** in these units that might contribute to new interdisciplinary certificate tracks.
- **Identify new hires** that can contribute to more than one discipline/unit.
- **Facilitate formal working groups** to encourage interdisciplinary scholarship and grant production.