



# Documenting the Impact of the Humanities in Higher Education

Through the National Humanities Alliance's *Study the Humanities* and *Humanities for All* initiatives, we are working with higher education institutions and community partners around the country to document the impact of humanities initiatives on participating students, faculty, and community members.

We work closely with each partner to learn about their goals, determine the appropriate research method to employ, and design and implement the research instrument (e.g., surveys, focus groups, interviews). This document highlights a few of the impact areas we focus on, as well as samples of questions we have designed and data we have gathered.

Overall, we are interested in how various initiatives make the case for publicly engaged humanities work and the value of studying the humanities as an undergraduate. If you would like to learn more about partnering with us, please email our research associate, Younger Oliver: [yoliver@nhalliance.org](mailto:yoliver@nhalliance.org)

## Impact Areas

### CAREER PATHWAYS

How can faculty and administrators showcase that a degree in the humanities can lead to a lucrative and fulfilling career? We use impact research to document how humanities initiatives are shifting students' perceptions about the value of the humanities in the job market. Examples of questions we ask, on an agree/disagree Likert scale, include:

- [This initiative] helped me understand how the humanities can help me in my career.
- [This initiative] helped me feel more prepared to enter the workforce or attend graduate school after graduation.
- [This initiative] made me consider new career paths.

In High-Impact Humanities courses at UMass Boston,  
**87%**  
of surveyed students agreed that their class helped them see how the humanities can help them in their career.

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Our impact research can help humanities initiatives identify how they are contributing to the civic education of their participants. We ask how these humanities initiatives build connection to community and influence the civic actions of participants, such as voting, volunteering, organizing/marching, and more. Examples of questions we ask, on an agree/disagree Likert scale, include:

- [This initiative] helped me see how knowledge and skills gained through humanities courses help me to better serve my community.
- I feel more connected to my community.
- How likely are you to volunteer in your community? (Asked before and after the initiative)

100%  
of surveyed **Study  
and Struggle** participants  
agreed that their study  
group helped them put  
their own experiences  
into perspective  
or context.

## PERSONAL REFLECTION AND ENRICHMENT

Through impact research, we can learn more about how exposure to the humanities helps participants better understand themselves, others, and the world. Examples of questions we ask, on an agree/disagree Likert scale, include:

- Participating in [this initiative] helped put my own experiences into perspective or context.
- [This initiative] helped me understand others who are different from myself.
- [This initiative] broadened my understanding of what it means to be a global citizen.

## LIKELINESS TO ENGAGE MORE WITH THE HUMANITIES

To support faculty and administrators in recruiting more students to the humanities, we ask how different initiatives shape students' likelihood to engage more with the humanities through their studies and in their communities. Examples of questions include:

- [This initiative] made me want to take more classes in the humanities. (Agree/Disagree Likert scale)
- Did [this initiative] make you consider changing/adding a major or minor?
- How has your conception of the humanities changed as a result of [this initiative]?

Graduate students who participated in the **Wayne State Humanities Clinic's** summer internships noted:

“I understand how an education in the humanities can be put to use in the community. Prior to this internship I viewed my skills as purely academic.”

“I always appreciated the humanities as a whole, but as a student in Engineering it is at times frustrating because it isn't focused on my core education. But, with learning more about research and the history of everything, I've become a bigger fan of the humanities. ... [The] humanities can teach you how to approach situations, deal with conflicts, and broaden your knowledge.”

—Student after completing a Clio app profile

