Summary of *Study the Humanities* Workshops at the 2020 NHA Annual Meeting

At the 2020 NHA Annual Meeting, we hosted interactive workshops to explore effective strategies to recruit undergraduates to the humanities. Participants learned from leaders spearheading successful curricular innovations, marketing initiatives, and efforts to articulate career pathways. Small groups then brainstormed new ideas in these three areas and developed models to take back to their campuses.

Concurrent Session 1: Articulating Career Pathways

Moderated Discussions with Initiative Leaders:

The session on articulating career pathways began and concluded with reflections from leaders spearheading distinct initiatives of varying scale at diverse institutions.

Ascan Koerner of the University of Minnesota described how the College of Liberal Arts worked with faculty to illuminate workforce competencies gained through courses across the college. Faculty fellows integrated a pedagogical tool in their courses that helped more than 10,000 students identify the skills developed through their assignments and translate them to non-academic settings. Survey data demonstrate how students have gained greater confidence in their ability to communicate the value of their studies to employers as a result. Koerner emphasized the importance of building a broad coalition of partners across the institution to make such an ambitious initiative successful and sustainable, and the importance of being willing to sacrifice control and integrate others' ideas in order to do so.

Ana Menendez of Florida International University introduced *The Humanities Edge*, a Mellon-funded project that places students who have transferred from the local community college in guided internships with humanities faculty and cultural institutions. She shared how the program motivated underrepresented students to continue to advanced study in the humanities, while helping them rise to elevated scholarly expectations and gain valuable professional experience. Menendez also distilled practical lessons in accommodating first-generation students' financial, logistical, and personal challenges to make it possible for them to participate.

Eleanor Shevlin of West Chester University presented a variety of strategies she had employed to demonstrate the professional value of the English degree and connect them with alumni and exciting job opportunities. For example, she shared how she had used work study funds to research alumni career outcomes and worked to bring them to campus for an annual event entitled "What Can You Do With an English Major?" Shevlin emphasized the importance of consistent messaging through events, workshops, and various media to debunk misconceptions about career prospects and illuminate practical skills and professional possibilities to attract and retain students.

Collectively, the three presenters shared a variety of models for highlighting broad workforce competencies gained through humanities courses and connecting students to career opportunities, as well as strategies for gaining buy-in from colleagues and helping them get involved.

Brainstorm:

First, our four tables generated ideas for articulating career pathways to attract more students to the humanities. Below is a synthesis of the range of ideas developed.

- Outreach Strategies
    - Engaging alumni to demonstrate career possibilities in "real world"
        - Facilitating alumni mentorship; using alumni awards to encourage this
        - Getting alumni to talk about hurdles and challenges they've faced
        - Tracking alumni career outcomes
            - Can use LinkedIn/Facebook groups/email lists
            - Employ student worker to research alumni careers
        - Marketing the discipline with posters promoting alumni success stories
    - Engaging employers to connect students to career opportunities
        - ask them about skills, and then bring that info/vocabulary to instructors for implementation in classroom
    - Engaging admissions and recruiters to help them recognize the usefulness of the humanities
    - Early engagement: Highlighting transferable skills to high school and admitted students
    - Engaging student clubs (and club alumni) in career development programming
    - "Humanities czar" to unify messaging through coordinated communications effort
- Programmatic and Curricular Strategies
    - Asking students explicitly "Why/how do you think this will be important?"
        - Incorporating 20-minute reflection period on skills gained at the end of courses
    - Providing humanities-specific career advising to students
    - Extracurricular seminar or mini course exploring careers in the humanities (with career services)
        - Debunking the notion that a major leads to a specific career in a linear path
        - Reframing career question around what problems students want to solve
    - Integrating career development curriculum into capstone courses
    - Promoting Internships
        - Leveraging alumni networks
        - Info sessions to appeal to prospective interns
        - Creating a position to coordinate internships across humanities departments
        - Career conferences to publicize data and internship opportunities

Select Blue Sky Initiatives and Shoestring Initiatives

Then each group was asked to choose ideas to flesh out from the lists they generated in the brainstorming exercise. They first crafted their ideal vision assuming access to unlimited resources (a "blue sky" scenario), then sketched out a "shoestring" initiative that would require minimal resources.

Example 1: Early Engagement (Blue Sky)

- Components
  - Conference for school counselors, advisors, etc. from local high schools
  - Mobilizing dedicated advisors/recruiters
  - Encouraging high school teachers to emphasize humanities majors
  - Targeting unhappy 1st year majors
  - Pedagogy development for intro-level classes in humanities
    - More $ for intro teachers to attract the best
- Audiences
  - Admitted students and parents, first-year students
  - High school teachers, guidance and career counselors
  - Sophomores - "sophomore slump"
- Messaging
  - Assuaging fears of students (particularly those switching majors)
  - Data-driven communication efforts (what employers want)

Example 2: Alumni Engagement (Shoestring)

- Components
  - "Lunch fund" - for individual lunch meetings (asking alumni for time, not money)
  - Alumni advisory board
  - Database to help find internships
  - Teaching students what an informational interview is/how to do one
  - Video testimonials
  - Skype informational interviews
- Audiences
  - Alumni and alumni associations
  - Students of ALL years
  - Learned societies
- Timing
  - Near reunion weeks/homecoming
  - When alumni are traveling for work

Example 3: First-Year Experience Programming (Blue Sky and Shoestring Variations)

- Blue Sky Vision
  - A First-Year Experience designed to identify and address core career competencies developed through humanities
  - Shadowing an Alum program
    - Identify key skills in use
    - Develop mentoring relationships
  - Help students chart academic and career path

- Adapting to a Shoestring Budget
  - Virtual mentoring
  - Access Local alum
    - What did they major in? How did this get them a job?
    - Including university professionals who are also alum
  - Outreach to local businesses
  - Upperclassmen as peer mentors

Concurrent Session 2: Curricular Innovations

The session on curricular innovations featured leaders of initiatives that demonstrate the value of the humanities for addressing important problems, engaging local cultures, and equipping students with broadly valued skills.

Ruth Mostern shared efforts to forge connections across disparate areas of study at the University of Pittsburgh to study human problems related to water in Eurasia in the past, present, and future. She outlined a multifaceted outreach strategy that successfully filled the courses and elevated the project's profile: (a) mobilizing a student ambassador to promote the courses to target student populations inside and outside the classroom and (b) connecting with leaders of the business and engineering schools to gain buy-in for the project. Mostern also reflected upon the challenges of sustaining a program that relied upon expertise in a very specific subject area covered through a postdoctoral fellowship funded by the NEH Connections grant that launched the project.

Jason Cohen of Berea College outlined how he invites both humanities and STEM majors to engage the history of an important local institution to deepen students' connections with local Appalachian cultures of which most of them are a part. Cohen emphasized that his local partnerships had proved extremely valuable to demonstrating the practical and personal value of humanistic knowledge and skills, but that they also brought challenges that required deft navigation. He also shared how facilitating a dialogue between humanistic analysis of language and AI algorithms for analyzing language illuminated the limitations of technology and the persistent need for humanistic skills.

Betsy Klimasmith shared an ambitious Mellon-funded project to incentivize and support curricular innovation at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. She described the model they had developed to distribute small and mid-sized grants to faculty to incorporate experiential learning into existing courses and develop new courses involving community partners to highlight real-world applications of various humanities fields. Klimasmith emphasized how the modest grants and professional development seminars had powerfully invigorated undergraduate humanities education in a context where the humanities are not always emphasized and good teaching often goes unrecognized.

Collectively, the three presenters showcased adaptable models for developing new curricula, forging community partnerships, and elevating the visibility of their efforts on campus to attract more students to the humanities.

<u>**Brainstorm:**</u>

First, our four tables generated ideas for curricular innovations to attract more students to the humanities. Below is a synthesis of the range of ideas developed.

- Interdisciplinary programs
    - "CSX"=humanities and computer science joint major
    - Concentrations that pair well with other disciplines
- Problem-centered/"grand challenge" courses (inequality, etc.)
- Local, community-focused service learning
    - Co-teaching with community partners
- Humanities Labs
    - Exhibition design courses
    - Creating materials for use in K-12 classrooms
    - Integrating grant-writing/proposals into coursework
    - Multimedia presentation to public with reception
- Co-teaching models
    - Gen ed courses: humanities + other discipline
    - Convince business folks you have worthwhile expertise and combine in courses
    - On campus staff/faculty pairings (i.e. service learning courses)
    - Bringing alumni into the classroom
- Internship programs - part of the progression of the major
    - Forging community connections with curriculum + classroom + students
    - Supporting that work - in teaching, department level, institution
- Content themes
    - Rethinking contemporary cultural objects and how to link to our fields (memes)
    - Data in the Humanities: stories of humanists using data in their work
    - Experiential learning; "theory and practice of service learning"

<u>**Select Blue Sky and Shoestring Initiatives**</u>

Then each group was asked to choose ideas to flesh out from the lists they generated in the brainstorming exercise. They first crafted their ideal vision assuming access to unlimited resources (a "blue sky" scenario), then sketched out a "shoestring" initiative that would require minimal resources.

Example 1: One credit add-ons to General Education to Forge Interdisciplinary Links

- Blue Sky Vision
    - Incentivize interdisciplinary connections; Additional financial option for faculty
    - Payoff: get faculty talking across disciplines, get students to learn about other disciplines
    - Adaptable - could be add-on specific to particular course, practitioner, learning community, etc
    - Could be an interstitial course

- ○ Add-ons from different disciplines (film & science, business & GIS, etc.)
- ○ Tap someone to serve as interdisciplinary ambassador, guiding the development of the courses and promoting them
- ● Adapting to a shoestring budget:
  - ○ Grad student as instructor for one credit add-on
  - ○ Either decrease size of lecture or have graduate students teach several small sections of add-on course

Example 2: Connecting Content to Competencies (Blue Sky and Shoestring)

- ● Blue Sky Vision
  - ○ Establish central institute to serve colleges and universities across the country
  - ○ Bring faculty together for instruction and support re connecting their content to career competencies (problem solving, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, etc.)
    - ■ Distribute effective models broadly and avoid reinventing the wheel
    - ■ Reach rural campuses
    - ■ Bring faculty to institute for extended workshops
    - ■ Continued remote participation after visiting institute
    - ■ On campus workshops
    - ■ Consortium model: participating institutions support
  - ○ Open-access database for course materials
    - ■ Tap someone to manage this
  - ○ Subsidizing team teaching (course buyout)
  - ○ $ for travel
  - ○ $ for tech and training
  - ○ $ for internships: travel; stipend; equity
- ● Adapting to a shoestring budget:
  - ○ Focus on one institution
  - ○ Faculty cohort focused on fewer competencies
  - ○ Focus on particular audiences
    - ■ Med school/law school applicants, nursing students, etc.
  - ○ Partnerships - inviting different groups into humanities institutes/centers
    - ■ Career services
  - ○ Small stipends for faculty interested in developing materials ($2,000?)
  - ○ Faculty coordinator to track faculty, facilitate workshops

Concurrent Session 3: Cultivating a Marketing Mindset

The session on cultivating a marketing mindset highlighted multifaceted campaigns leaders have crafted to promote humanities disciplines, courses, centers, and initiatives to distinct audiences.

Sylvester Johnson of Virginia Tech described how the *Tech for Humanity* initiative seeks to reframe accelerating technological advancement as a comprehensive, human-centered issue that demands the

analytical and ethical tools of the humanities. He presented a multi-pronged communication strategy including (a) outreach and programs directed toward prospective and current students and their parents, (b) gaining a "seat at the table" to help shape a major community and economic development project (Virginia Tech's Innovation Campus), and (c) gaining buy-in from faculty and extending support to them however directly or indirectly their work connects with the initiative. Johnson explained how all of these efforts combined to increase interest before students arrive and expanded opportunities after they graduate, thus "game-changing the pipeline" of humanities students.

Brett Rushforth highlighted several strategies the Department of History at the University of Oregon has used to attract more majors. He explained how diversifying course offerings and renaming courses to emphasize exciting themes and topics (e.g., "US to 1815" became "Inventing America") had boosted enrollments. He emphasized the importance of leveraging the gen ed pipeline by certifying as many courses as possible and assigning gen ed survey courses to the most dynamic and experienced teachers. And he described a multifaceted strategy for making the case for the professional value of the history major, from career night events to engaging advising staff and equipping them with AHA's Careers for History Major pamphlets.

Brainstorm:

First, our four tables generated numerous ideas for marketing messages and strategies to promote a variety of opportunities to engage the humanities as undergraduates. Below is a synthesis of the range of ideas developed.

- Things to Promote
    - Publicly engaged humanities and scholars/community events
    - successful/famous humanities majors
    - Undergrad research opportunities
    - Smaller course size/contact with faculty = rigorous experience
    - Images that capture student engagement with humanities
    - Interdisciplinary programs/certificates
    - *Branches of the Same Tree* report from the National Academies
    - Course: "How to get a job with a humanities major"
    - Promoting new pedagogy to gen ed students and majors
    - Flagship humanities courses (HUM 1-2)
    - Existing courses/particular dimensions of a humanities class
- Messages/Themes to Highlight
    - Positive career opportunities/financial future
        - Alumni experiences: promoting the broad value of the humanities through those who work outside them
    - Humanities' usefulness/skills
        - Professional writing and communication
        - Languages and culture
        - Technology leadership/ethics
        - Skills related to creativity

- ○ Passion and purpose
    - ■ Changing the world as an imaginative endeavor
    - ■ Meaning-making
- ○ So-called "Soft" skills essential:
    - ■ For companies
    - ■ For living in a changing world
- ○ How humanities are important to every major/opportunities for collaboration
    - ■ Stories about the human side of X (STEM subjects, policy issues, etc.)
- ○ To Faculty: "you have a big impact on students now and where they go next"
- ● Strategies and Audiences
    - ○ Regional networking
    - ○ Selling value of humanities to provost and president
        - ■ Impact vs. numbers of majors
    - ○ Reaching K-12 schools
    - ○ Advise advising offices
    - ○ Faculty buy-in and collaboration
    - ○ Marketing the meta value of studying the humanities for donors, etc
    - ○ Students as co-creators/ambassadors
        - ■ Spearheading social media campaigns
        - ■ Promoting study abroad opportunities
        - ■ Humanities activism
        - ■ Creating short alumni video profiles

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Example 1: Promoting Humanities' Importance for Technological Leadership/Ethics
(Blue Sky and Shoestring)

- ● Blue Sky Vision:
    - ○ Components
        - ■ Innovation challenges (connect with employers) ($)
        - ■ Student-centered showcase events
        - ■ Course development
            - ● Bridging across disciplines through team-teaching
        - ■ Bring in visible/famous person (i.e. Will.I.Am)
    - ○ Audiences
        - ■ Employers - internships
        - ■ Parents
        - ■ Students (prospective and current)

- - - - ■ Alumni ($)
        - ■ Development/Foundation ($)
        - ■ Admissions
        - ■ Public Relations
        - ■ Media
- ● Adapting to a shoestring budget
    - ○ Parents' weekend events/Homecoming
    - ○ Alumni events, bring into classroom
    - ○ Build on existing events/resources
    - ○ Crowdsourcing: pay for staff/labor
    - ○ Social media outreach
    - ○ Mobilize work-study/internship students and grad students (professional exp.)
    - ○ Collaborate with local employers and community partners
    - ○ Advisory boards
    - ○ Service learning project for existing class
    - ○ Bridge to expertise elsewhere

Example 2: Showcasing Fascinating Faculty

- ● Blue Sky Vision
    - ○ Create brief videos to disseminate
        - ■ Dimensions to focus on
            - ● Researchers
            - ● Teachers
            - ● Life story/experiences
    - ○ Record and disseminate great lectures-connect to TED talks, etc.
    - ○ Live events
        - ■ lifelong learning ("dinner w/ X")
        - ■ Travel/bus tour
        - ■ Community events
        - ■ Summer immersion gateway (free?)
        - ■ Lead study abroad
    - ○ Audiences to target
        - ■ Students
        - ■ Parents
        - ■ donors/alumni
        - ■ Administration
        - ■ Faculty in other departments
        - ■ Employers
        - ■ Media
- ● Adapting to a shoestring budget
    - ○ Put fascinating faculty in intro courses
    - ○ Craft written blurbs for media and internal websites

- ○ Podcasts - students can help develop
  - ■ Fascinating faculty introduced by student in their course who went on to do cool things
- ○ Events for students (high school/admitted)
- ○ Social events with alumni
- ○ Students articulate light bulb moments in alumni mag, etc./student ambassadors
- ○ Partner with Speakers bureau/State humanities councils for community events
- ○ Parents weekend events
- ○ Department awards in magazine

Example 3: National marketing campaign

- ● Blue Sky Vision
  - ○ Meta-Messages:
    - ■ How to be human: How we are/how we were
    - ■ Data analytics
      - ● Humanities are everywhere/all around us
    - ■ Taglines/Memes
      - ● "Make your mark as a humanist"(™)
      - ● "Oh! The humanities!"
      - ● …"that's (the) humanities!"
  - ○ Content:
    - ■ Stories of humanists at work
    - ■ Examples
    - ■ Crowdsourcing?
    - ■ Specific stories/examples
  - ○ Platforms
    - ■ Instagram
    - ■ Whatsapp
    - ■ Tiktok/YouTube
    - ■ Conventional advertising
- ● Adapting to a shoestring budget
  - ○ Leveraging humanities influencers (e.g., Lin Manuel Miranda)
  - ○ Group assignment for class: design/launch social media influence campaign