

CALL FOR SESSION PROPOSALS FOR THE 2016 National Humanities Conference

HUMANITIES PARTNERSHIPS: *Meeting Local and Global Challenges*

Salt Lake City, Utah • Thursday, November 10–Sunday, November 13, 2016

Deadline for submitting proposals: January 25, 2016

THEME STATEMENT

THE FEDERATION OF STATE HUMANITIES COUNCILS AND THE NATIONAL HUMANITIES ALLIANCE are pleased to announce the first in a series of three joint national meetings that will bring the humanities community together as whole to consider how, by leveraging our strengths, we can achieve broader public impact and showcase the fundamental role the humanities play in addressing both local and global challenges.

This conference will encourage the deepening of collaborations among a wide array of institutions engaged in the humanities, including state humanities councils, colleges, universities, museums, libraries, and historical societies, as well as with publicly engaged scholars at all phases in their careers. It will provide a forum for discussing best practices for engaging a broader public in humanities research and programming. It will also foster discussion that will enlighten both public and academic humanities practitioners about their respective concerns, convictions, and challenges, and how to foster collaboration in light of these issues. Finally, it will provide an opportunity to consider the multiple ways we can harness the power of the humanities to address society's major challenges.

In an era of constrained resources, members of the humanities community—whether scholars, university administrators, grant-makers, or public humanities practitioners—recognize that the case must be made for the critical relevance of the humanities to contemporary society. This is essential not only for the vitality of our institutions, but also for ensuring that the humanities play a key role in shaping how we understand and respond to the major challenges of our time.

A great number of collaborations have already demonstrated how much the humanities have to offer learning communities. Similarly, contemporary scholarship and public programs have addressed local and global challenges—from community divisions to geo-political conflicts—in a variety of ways. You can find examples [here](#). It is time to learn from the wide array of collaborative work and to facilitate new connections and concrete projects nationwide that showcase the value of the humanities.

We look forward to your participation in the 2016 national conference.



FEDERATION OF
STATE HUMANITIES
COUNCILS



National Humanities Alliance

FOCUS AREAS

The program committee invites proposals focusing on the **concept** or **practice** of collaborative work to demonstrate the broad relevance of the humanities.

CONCEPT-FOCUSED sessions will explore how publicly engaged humanities programs might address grand challenges of our time.

- How can the humanities address challenges to our communities? For example: community health, educational access, and economic development.
- How can the humanities address global challenges? For example: environmental sustainability; bridging cultural divides; and peace, conflict, and security.
- How are these programs constructed and how do they engage diverse audiences?
- How do they build from emerging research and showcase its value?
- How do they enhance or create new forms of scholarship?

PRACTICE-FOCUSED sessions will consider how cross-sector collaborations are built and sustained.

- How can humanities organizations, colleges, and universities strengthen collaborations and what strategic and practical goals do these collaborations serve?
- How can scholars, at all stages of their career, engage with public-facing institutions to enhance their scholarship and their public engagement?
- Have any curricular changes or new areas of scholarship gone unrecognized in the public humanities that might offer opportunities for public engagement?
- How can humanities organizations connect with organizations and individuals outside of the humanities community—including civic actors and public or private institutions—to strengthen the impact of their work?
- What challenges do different types of humanities organizations face when collaborating with each other?
- What does the scholarship of public engagement look like today?
- What does the lifecycle of this humanities scholarship look like, and what learning communities are involved in building it?
- How can these collaborative projects engage diverse communities?
- What are models for funding collaborative work?
- How can collaborative work build the capacity of the partners?
- How can we assess the impact of public engagement both for humanities scholarship and within the community?

FORMATS

THE NATIONAL HUMANITIES CONFERENCE strives for lively and thoughtful discussion. To this end, we strongly encourage presenters to deliver ideas without reading directly from papers. We also ask all presenters to be mindful of time and ensure that audience members have the opportunity to ask questions and participate in the conversation. Sessions should not simply present public humanities projects, but should examine methodology and contain takeaways that others can apply to their own practice. Many conferences are experimenting with new session formats. We invite proposals as described below and encourage other innovative formats that promote audience engagement and collegial exchange. All sessions should be highly participatory, encouraging active discussion.

SAMPLE SESSION FORMATS

ROUNDTABLES: Roundtables consist of a group of experts discussing a topic in front of an audience. A moderator leads the discussion and poses questions, but all participants speak equally about the topic. These sessions typically include a moderator and three to five participants.

DEBATE: A debate is a discussion of an issue or topic with two or more individuals representing contrasting opinions. Usually an individual is tasked with moderating their discussion.

INTERVIEW: These sessions feature free-form dialogues between a humanities professional and an interviewer.

STATE OF THE FIELD: State of the Field sessions bring participants up to speed on subfields or specific areas in humanities scholarship. These sessions will present new research in a given area and explore new findings and approaches. While individuals may be familiar with the State of the Field format from discipline-oriented and scholarly conferences, these presentations will highlight subjects pertinent to local and global challenges. Sessions may include public humanities practitioners who explore how this emerging research will be relevant to broad public audiences. Similarly, scholars might consider new trends in their fields that have not been incorporated into the public humanities yet hold promise for new forms of public engagement.

LIGHTNING SHORTS/PECHAKUCHA/IGNITE: This session format is defined by short, timed presentations from a number of speakers, sometimes including visuals. These presentation formats require presenters to be brief and to make their points clearly.

READING AND DISCUSSION/PRE-CIRCULATED TEXT: In these sessions, organizers distribute in advance a (usually short) piece of writing for discussion. A facilitator is needed to moderate the discussion. The text can be humanities-based or issue-based. The piece may be written by the organizers who use the session to solicit feedback, or may be a published work.

TRADITIONAL PANEL PRESENTATIONS: This traditional format includes a chair and three or four presenters. A commentator may be included or additional time may be left for audience discussion.

SAMPLE NON-SESSION FORMATS

WORKSHOPS: A workshop is a training session in which the presenters teach skills and methods. Workshops may provide capacity-building skills for state humanities councils or train scholars in methods of public engagement. Interactive formats allowing participants to practice new skills are particularly effective.

WORKING GROUPS: Working groups are formed of individuals (typically about 10) interested in exploring a shared interest or problem and involve both pre- and post-conference participation by members of the group. Time is scheduled during the conference for members to meet and advance their project. Individuals interested in proposing a working group must articulate its purpose or the problem it will address. They should also identify an end product—such as a report, article, resource guide, website, or program—that the group will produce. Proposals should include only facilitators. A call for participants in the group will be made in advance of the conference. We encourage you to look at the National Council on Public History's description of how working groups function at <http://bit.ly/IHmyu49>.

FINDING COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS

The program committee has created an [online forum](#) to aid conference attendees in building sessions. If you are planning a session and looking to recruit participants or hoping to participate in one already taking shape, please consider posting on the forum.

TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL

Please submit a proposal via the online form [here](#).

The **deadline** for proposal submission is **Wednesday, January 25, 2016**.

If you have any questions regarding the online submission form, please contact:

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THE FEDERATION OF STATE HUMANITIES COUNCILS

THE FEDERATION OF STATE HUMANITIES COUNCILS, FOUNDED IN 1977, is the membership association of 56 state and territorial councils. Through its conferences, collaborative projects, information services, and communications to members, legislators and others on issues of public interest, the Federation supports the state humanities councils and creates greater awareness of the humanities in public and private life.

State humanities councils are independent, nonprofit organizations that support grassroots humanities programs and community-based activities in each state and US territory. Created by Congress in the early 1970s, councils receive an annual congressional appropriation through the National Endowment for the Humanities, which for most councils is supplemented by state and private funding. Councils are run by small staffs and governed by volunteer boards drawn from academia and the public.

THE NATIONAL HUMANITIES ALLIANCE

FOUNDED IN 1981, THE NATIONAL HUMANITIES ALLIANCE (NHA) is an advocacy coalition dedicated to the advancement of humanities education, research, preservation, and public programs. NHA is supported by more than 140 national, state, and local member organizations and institutions, including scholarly and professional associations; higher education associations; organizations of museums, libraries, historical societies and state humanities councils; university-based and independent humanities research centers; and colleges and universities. It is the only organization that brings together the US humanities community as a whole.

NHA cultivates support for humanities funding in the executive and legislative branches of the federal government; advocates for policies that advance humanities research, programming, preservation, and teaching; convenes its members, government officials, and policy experts to develop policy initiatives; and promotes engagement with and appreciation for the humanities among the general public.

