Overview and Summary

Provost Steinmetz announced a discovery theme in the humanities and arts in February 2015. This fourth discovery theme has recommitted the university to the importance of a liberal arts education and the specific importance of the humanities and the arts to understanding, representing and addressing pressing social issues and to creating a diverse, engaged research and learning community. He named Vice Provost Michael Boehm and Vice Dean Susan Williams as co-leaders. He committed $2.5 million in permanent, annual rate funding, stipulating that it could be used to hire tenure-track faculty and to support programming. He also committed $2.5 million in one-time cash for grants and programming over a five-year period.

During its first year, the Humanities and the Arts Discovery Theme allocated almost $2 million in short-term grant programs and identified an inclusive process for identifying long-term investment areas. Our efforts were organized around three goals established by the provost:

1. **Build intellectual community among faculty within the College of Arts and Sciences and across the university**
   - Our summer 2015 faculty fellows program brought together five faculty members to gather contextual information and engage in strategic planning.
   - Eight “Mobile Coffee” events engaged faculty from across the university in conversations about the role of the humanities and the arts in society.
   - Our Best Practices Travel program provided funds for interdisciplinary groups of faculty to learn from the successes of other institutions and universities.

2. **Deepen student engagement in the humanities and the arts**
   - We augmented funds to the Division of Arts and Humanities' Graduate Research Fund, enabling our graduate students to travel around the world to conduct research and present at conferences.

   • Through social media and a bi-weekly newsletter, we are improving communication and providing new opportunities for exchanging ideas.
   • We have engaged with more than 50 units and 100 faculty members, and are actively involved in facilitating partnerships across campus.
• Through a proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities – which we co-wrote and provided cost-share for – we are rethinking humanities PhD education.

• We received funds from the American Council of Learned Societies to bring a cohort of humanities postdoctoral fellows to Ohio State in fall 2016, beginning a process that will enable us to identify and report on best practices for their continued development while filling gaps in our undergraduate curriculum.

• We worked with the Second-Year Transformational Experience Program (STEP) to pilot a digital storytelling experience for students that highlights our humanities and arts departments.

3. Increase Ohio State’s national recognition and distinction in the humanities and the arts

• A $1.1 million grant to the Division of Arts and Humanities called for pilot projects that will advance our three overarching goals while identifying signature areas of study within the division. These areas will be considered for future investment by the College of Arts and Sciences and help us determine long-term focus areas for the Discovery Themes initiative.

• Through a 25 percent increase in the Arts and Humanities Small Grants program, we provided funds for faculty travel, manuscript publication, performances, and exhibits.

• Our departmental block grant program augmented and highlighted areas of excellence in the Division of Arts and Humanities. Our program manager worked with Ohio State’s Office of Sponsored Programs and Office of Foundation Relations to strengthen arts and humanities proposals and provide increased resources for faculty.

• Through a grant to the English department’s Project Narrative, we partnered with the Infectious Disease Discovery Theme focus area to pilot applied storytelling projects to assist faculty in describing their research to the public.

By the end of 2016-17, we plan to identify at least one topical area of permanent focus based on the 1.1 million pilot programs in the Division of Arts and Humanities and several facilitated focus groups with faculty across the university. We anticipate launching our first faculty searches in 2017-18. We will also continue to offer postdoctoral fellowships, grants, and support for rethinking humanities PhD programs. We believe that the strategic conversations and short-term programs we have launched will ensure the long term success of the initiative.