

## Next PhD Committee Report

To: Peter Hahn, Divisional Dean of Arts and Humanities, Lead of Humanities and Arts Discovery Theme; Susan Williams, Vice-Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; Bruce McPheron, Executive Vice President and Provost; Scott Herness, Interim Dean of the Graduate School

From: Barry Shank, Professor and Chair, Comparative Studies; Simone Drake, Professor and Vice Chair, African American and African Studies, Rick Livingston, Associate Director of Humanities Institute

### ***History of the Project and Rationale for the Work:***

The Next Generation PhD Project at Ohio State began on December 4, 2015, when a small group of faculty met with Vice Dean Susan Williams to discuss a call for proposals from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to develop programs that would prepare Humanities PhDs for careers outside academia. The NEH call read in part:

“Next Generation Humanities PhD Planning Grants support universities in preparing to institute wide-ranging changes in humanities doctoral programs. Humanities knowledge and methods can make an even more substantial impact on society if students are able to translate what they learn in doctoral programs into a multitude of careers. Next Generation PhD Planning Grants are designed to bring together various important constituencies to discuss and strategize, and then to produce plans that will transform scholarly preparation in the humanities at the doctoral level. Students will be prepared to undertake various kinds of careers, and humanities PhD programs will increase their relevance for the twenty-first century.”

The outcome of the meeting was a plan to develop a proposal for a planning grant from NEH. Barry Shank was named the point person. Susan Williams, Bethany Dickens (program manager for the Humanities and the Arts Discovery Theme in 2015-16), and Shank developed the initial proposal, which was submitted to NEH on February 17, 2016.

While that proposal was being drafted and revised, a request for interested participants went out to the departments in the Arts and Humanities. Twenty-four respondents to that request joined the planning committee. Initial background research began during the summer of 2016, including requests for alumni data and relevant coursework. We requested data about non-academic careers from Humanities PhD alums and coursework of value to non-academic careers from units across the university, and met with a number of individuals across the university who worked with organizations outside of campus. The NEH application was not successful, but the Humanities and Arts Discovery Theme agreed to provide a \$50,000 grant to fund the committee’s work for one year, in line with its emphasis on student engagement and on demonstrating the value of the humanities beyond academia.

By August 2016, the planning committee had grown to 32 participants, including representatives from the Ohio History Connection, the Wexner Center for the Arts, College of Arts and Sciences, ASC Advising Career Services, Honors Advising, UCAT, and twelve departments from across the College of Arts and Science's division of Arts and Humanities. A central administrative committee of Melinda Nelson, Andrew Smart (PhD student in English), Rick Livingston and Barry Shank formed and developed an initial plan for the year. The remainder of this report describes the activities of the full committee, our findings, and our proposals for continuing this project. (For the purposes of this report, the humanities should be understood as those fields of inquiry and teaching that are encompassed by the departments in the Division of the Arts and Humanities.)

### ***Activities of the Committee:***

The Next PhD Planning Committee held monthly formal meetings beginning in September 2016 and continuing through May 2017. At the first meeting, the committee divided itself into five Working Groups. Each group received a specific charge.

WG 1: Survey OSU Humanities PhD alums who found careers outside the academy.

WG 2: Survey existing courses, workshops, and special training sessions aimed at non-academic careers and already available at OSU.

WG 3: Survey peer institutions regarding their activities in the arena of training Humanities PhDs for work outside the academy.

WG 4: Survey non-academic employers, asking about their interest in and requirements for hiring Humanities PhDs.

WG 5: Design a structure that responds to the surveyed needs and expectations garnered from alums and potential employers and that actively promotes preparation for alternative careers.

In addition to reports from the Working Groups, the committee and the administrative sub-committee hosted visits and presentations from Paula Chambers, OSU alum and founder and CEO of Versatile PhD; Matt McNair of OSU Corporate Engagement; Amul Tevar of the STEAM Factory; Rob Piotrowski, Research Fellow at Smuckers; Kim Gernhaelder, Senior Human Resource Business Partner, Research and Development at Nestle; Alison Goebel, Executive Director, Greater Ohio Policy Center, & Rebecca Bryant, Senior Program Officer at OCLC; Provost Bruce McPheron; Vice Provost Kay Wolf.

### ***Key Findings:***

#### **1. Combination of Push Factors and Pull Factors driving the project**

##### ➤ Push

- Precipitous drop in number of tenure-track jobs in Humanities after 2008, no real recovery afterwards.

- Humanities PhDs significantly less likely than other fields (including Life sciences, Physical sciences, Engineering, Education and others) to look for jobs outside the academy
- Pull
  - Increasing complexity of the world and its problems
  - Need for high level interdisciplinary humanities skills to complement other kinds of expertise, including:
    - Analyzing information, grasping its essence, and presenting it clearly
    - Facilitating consensus-building
    - Promoting problem-solving.

## **2. From the Survey of Peer Institutions**

Conventional Wisdom in Projects like Ours as our peer institutions see it:

- Subscribe to Versatile Humanists, Versatile PhD, Lilli Group and Similar Online Sources.
- Overcome faculty resistance; inform and train the faculty about the value of these options
- Steady consultation among Graduate Studies Chairs, grad school and students, regular communication needed
- Improve data-gathering from alum careers and degree satisfaction
- Rope in alumni as mentors and pipeline connections via workshops, social media networks, etc. (most effective at departmental level.)
- Degree-long career advising: from opening proseminar to graduation. Students interested in non-academic careers encouraged to construct 5-yr plans.
- Internships with business and nonprofits (but someone has to pay to maintain the students); and within university administration
- Develop alternative qualifying exam and dissertation formats

## **3. From Survey of Humanities PhD Alums working outside academy**

- Skills in demand in non-academic employment
  - *Humanities PhD training provided skills*
    - Analytic, qualitative
    - Ability to design and organize a complex, multi-layered project
    - Presentation
    - Relational
    - Motivation/Disposition
    - Writing
  - *Skills they had to learn elsewhere*
    - Project Management
    - Numeracy
    - Technological
    - Marketing

## **4. From Survey of Existing Curricular Resources at OSU**

- Glenn College offers Graduate Minors in Non-Profit Management and Public Policy and Management.
- Courses in quantitative skills (statistics, coding, modeling, etc.) exist across the College.
- Over 40 Internship courses exist across the College.
- Many individual departments offer workshops on resume writing, interviewing for non-academic jobs and other job-search skills.

**5. From Survey of Non-Academic Employers** (organizations surveyed include Buckeye Careers Network, American Alliance of Museums, Wexner Center for the Art's list of curators and museum directors, Association of American University Press Directors, Library and Information science organizations, Association of Arts Administration Educators)

- *Only 9% of potential employers target PhDs. However, 49% are willing to engage with PhDs when encountered at hiring fairs and the like.*
- Those who see positive potential in hiring PhDs, typically engage in *research, publication, instructional programs (public humanities, public policy, advocacy groups, etc.)*
- Negative beliefs include
  - 50% of all respondents see PhD training as irrelevant to the job at hand and so having completed this gives no indication of how the individual will be as an employee.
  - 25% see PhD holders as frustrated academics who will be less likely to be motivated to do their best work elsewhere.
  - 20% believe PhD holders lack transferable skills to be successful outside academia.
  - 20% believe PhD holders have not received appropriate mentoring for how to succeed in non-academic environments.

**6. Contrasting experience of PhD Alums with Expectations of Non-Academic Employers, we see that:**

- *Skills provided by existing PhD programs are valuable*
  - focus on data; often qualitative
  - research degree
  - content knowledge
  - sense-making, pattern analysis, drawing larger conclusions
  - interface between social realities and analytical thinking/ specialized strategies
  - disciplinary: specific modes/ways of knowing within each discipline
- *However, awareness of these transferable skills is poor*
  - inside academic humanities
  - among businesses
  - among students

## **7. We have a Multi-Faceted Problem that requires a Multi-Directional Solution**

- *How do we prepare Humanities PhDs to work outside of academia?*
- *How do we establish a niche for Humanities PhD students outside of academia?*
- *Need to provide complementary skills to meet employer needs*
  - Quantitative, technical, project management, teamwork, much of this exists NOW at OSU
- *Need to develop documentation of full package of skills*
  - Program certificates, track record of successful contributions, publications reflecting on success/failure
- *Need to communicate effectively inside and outside OSU*
  - Staff, including dedicated graduate career services, full-time communications director
- *Need to develop reporting structures for faculty and departments that recognizes the value of and rewards successful preparation of PhD graduates for work outside the academy*
- *Need to maintain effort over many years, until it becomes common sense that hiring Humanities PhDs is good for many organizations*

### **Next Steps:**

Our recommendations for the future of the project can be grouped into four categories:

- **Creating the Center for Humanities in Practice**
  - Physical and conceptual space for
    - Demonstrating the value of high-level humanities skills outside the academy
    - Providing experiential learning opportunities for graduate students
    - Documenting the successful contributions of individual students to particular team projects
  - Faculty director with partial appointment in this center
    - Identifies and recruits external (non-OSU) partners for projects in conjunction with the university's corporate engagement team and office of outreach and engagement
    - Coordinates teams for collaborating with external partners
    - Manages staff (at least one full time person)
    - Works with Chairs of Graduate Studies across Division
    - Works with Graduate Career Services (wherever located)
    - Oversees curriculum organization
    - Coordinates funding proposals for the work of the center
  - Associate Director, full time in the center
    - Assists director with all operations
    - Point person for identification and organization of curricular resources (see below)
    - Point person for organizing communication efforts inside and outside university (see below)

- Point person for connecting with graduate programs
    - Point person for connecting with PhD alumni networks and potential employers, coordinates with other OSU career services units (see below), as well as Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences
  - Humanities graduate (and potentially undergraduate) students rotate in for a semester, work in teams organized around specific projects, for course credit and/or as part of a graduate associateship
  - Successful completion of projects results in
    - Value for outside partner
    - Documentable experience for graduate students
    - Track record of success for OSU Humanities PhDs working outside the academy
- Organizing and (in a few discrete areas) creating curriculum
  - Full census of existing offerings across the university
  - Designing new courses where needed
  - Packaging of these existing (and new) resources into coherent certificates/minors/etc.
  - Potentially the responsibility of the Associate Director of the CHiP
- Establishing Career Services for Humanities PhDs (possibly including Arts & Social and Behavioral Sciences)
  - Charged with gathering, tracking, developing, and organizing non-academic career opportunities
  - Contributing to effective mentoring for non-academic careers
  - To be located where best effective—(e.g., Career Services, Graduate School, Center for Humanities in Practice)
- Creating an effective communications, publicity, and marketing strategy (internal and external)
  - Charged with developing opportunities to spread the knowledge of this project, its purpose and public function, along with its deep connections to traditional humanities concerns
  - Potentially located inside the Center for Humanities in Practice (part of role of Associate Director, working closely with Director)

*Short Term Pilot Project Proposal:*

We plan to present a formal proposal soon that will request seed funding from the Humanities and Arts Discovery Theme in order to enable the Center for Humanities in Practice to function for two years. During this two-year period, the focus will be on identifying, recruiting and collaborating with an initial external partner; bringing this initial pilot project to completion with demonstrable value for all partners; working with graduate programs across the division to identify 3 to 5 graduate students to work on the pilot project and determine credit and/or funding mechanism to support their work; developing and promoting the strategy for internal and external communications, publicity, and marketing about the Center; coordinating the

curricular development; coordinating career services activities with appropriate partners; developing and enacting future funding strategies.

We propose creating a *small* board of advisors to oversee the pilot project *and* to work with the director on funding proposals and communications.