

**NEH Next Generation Humanities Ph.D.
Planning Grant 2018/19**

University of Pittsburgh

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Grant Title:

**Humanities Careers:
Re-Imagining Doctoral Training**

White Paper

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“We simply cannot proclaim the fundamental necessity of humanistic thinking to a thriving democracy, to a rich and rewarding life, to a fuller understanding of our present circumstances, and then turn around and insist that the most highly-trained humanists are only fit for one professional context.”

Council of Graduate Schools, *Summary of Prior Work in Humanities PhD Professional Development* (2017), 13.

“this fantastic new initiative ... makes me feel optimistic about the future”

“I am thrilled graduate student input is a core part of this project”

Humanities graduate students, pre-grant survey, summer 2018

Preface

As we submit this White Paper to NEH in the fall of 2019, the University of Pittsburgh has recently been awarded a \$1,500,000 grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in support of “[Humanities Engage](#),” the implementation phase of our Next Generation Humanities Ph.D. work. In what follows, we summarize our NEH-supported planning process in 2018/19 and briefly outline the main strands of the implementation phase that will build directly on that earlier collaborative work.

Introduction and Process Overview

In late 2017, Humanities doctoral programs in the University of Pittsburgh’s Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences proposed *Humanities Careers: Re-Imagining Doctoral Training*. We acknowledged that Humanities Ph.D.s already pursue diverse, high-impact, satisfying careers across many employment sectors, but graduate education has not yet fully acknowledged and adapted to this reality. We committed to exploring strategies and practices to foster a cultural transformation in how our Humanities Departments, faculty, graduate students, and the University at large envisage the broader importance of Humanities Ph.D.s, and the societal impacts of humanistic training. By transforming the project of the Humanities – including by integrating professional development, mentoring, and collaboration throughout doctoral education – we committed to making the Humanities more fully integral to tackling the challenges of an interconnected yet divided world.

Our proposal to NEH envisaged that we would engage graduate faculty and students across a dozen Humanities programs in conversation with senior leadership, alumni, professional staff with expertise in learning, teaching, and mentoring, community engagement, alumni relations, and institutional advancement, allied Social Sciences graduate faculty and students, as well as selective representatives of regional cultural institutions, other non-profits, and private employers. Embracing multiple definitions of student and program success, we proposed to focus on student and alumni data; curricular change; partnerships across and beyond campus, including alumni relations; and experiential learning. Studying current culture and resources across programs, and investigating best practices nationally, we would start creating an initial suite of new resources and make actionable recommendations to the University, School of Arts and Sciences, and doctoral programs.

The core ideas of our proposal were developed in consultation between the Project Director, Holger Hoock, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research in Arts and Sciences and Carroll J. Amundson Chair of British History, and graduate faculty on the University’s Humanities Council and across multiple doctoral programs. They were informed by findings from focus groups of doctoral students; surveys conducted since 2013 of students at the point of graduation and career trajectory surveys of alumni three and seven years post-Ph.D.; insights gained through the Department of

History's participation in AHA Career Diversity Faculty Institutes; site visits conducted (e.g. [UChicagoGrad](#)) and conversations held with peer institutions by the PI; and evaluation of a pilot seminar for doctoral students, "Introduction to Professional Development," held by the [Center for Doctoral and Postdoctoral Career Development](#). This preparatory work had shown that our doctoral alums consistently felt better prepared for academic than other careers. Current students were eager to access enhanced career development resources, develop versatile competencies in a manner integral to their academic training, and interact with colleagues from across disciplines. Many were seeking validation from peers and faculty for their career exploration. We found significant information asymmetries and deficits as well as anxieties and active resistance regarding diverse careers on the part of graduate students as well as faculty. For students who overestimate their prospects of securing a tenure-track position, the perceived benefit of preparing for a wider range of careers is minimal. Conversely, attempts to do so can introduce additional (perceived) risk if faculty interpret them as a negative signal of students' academic motivation or confidence. Students face steep search costs for information about career pathways. The level and frequency of professional development programming, the alignment of academic and professional development objectives, and the quality of data provided by doctoral programs about postdoctoral career trajectories vary widely.

Our process to rethink Humanities doctoral education started with a small coalition of the willing and recent examples of curricular reform and partnerships piloted by a few programs:

- The Department of History of Art and Architecture's graduate program has for a decade foregrounded collaboration, versatile competencies, and public-facing research and creative activity. The thematically conceptualized "Constellations" structure, supported since 2015 by an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant, extended collaboration to prominent art and collecting institutions, including Carnegie Museum of Art, Warhol, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Heinz History Center, and Frick Pittsburgh, in the Collecting Knowledge Pittsburgh (CKP) Consortium. An annual graduate Mellon Fellow in Curation and Education benefits from professionally enhancing experiences; other students intern in local cultural organizations.
- The Department of History's three-year cycle of pedagogy training offers spaces for the development of versatile competencies relevant for careers in and beyond the university classroom.
- The Departments of English, Music, History, and History of Art and Architecture each host occasional events with Ph.D. alumni in academic-adjacent careers if not yet alumni working in government, non-profits beyond museums, or industry.
- In 2017, the Humanities Center started piloting a "Public Humanities Fellowship Program:" five (by 2019: 11) advanced doctoral students worked in local cultural institutions in positions that gave scope to their skills as highly trained researchers and writers.

We proposed to explore three interconnected sets of **Planning Themes**:

1. Data-Driven Approaches to improving student experience and doctoral programs.
2. Smart Curricular Interventions, identifying program efficiencies to enable more versatile training without increasing time to degree or course burden.
3. Partnering for Impact, fostering partnerships across and beyond our campus to create experiential learning opportunities and enhance mentoring for graduate students, with a particular focus on leveraging alumni expertise and capacity as well as exploring potential synergies between our distinctive programmatic strengths and regional industries.

Our project sought to model a collaborative, transparent, and inclusive approach to student-centered, data-driven, and outcomes-focused graduate education. The planning process was carried by two committees and three working groups corresponding to the planning themes (see also Appendix A):

The Planning Committee modelled the Dietrich School's disciplinary breadth and inclusive approach: Humanities graduate faculty, both senior and junior, graduate students, and alumni across historical disciplines, languages and literatures, and creative disciplines, as well as focal areas in Digital and in Public Humanities; and institutional leaders in graduate training and professional development. It was a challenge to identify alums willing and able to participate in monthly discussions.

To mobilize the whole School and University, and to foster partnerships beyond our campus, a **Consultative Committee** of additional stakeholders was convened to offer expertise and best practice knowledge:

- (a) University senior leadership and professional staff with expertise in learning, teaching, mentoring; community engagement; alumni relations and institutional advancement; data analytics; international programming; communication; Digital Studies and Methods;
- (b) allied Social Sciences faculty and graduate students;
- (c) representatives of regional cultural institutions and non-profit organizations, as well as private and public employers with expertise in applied Humanities training and career pathways for Humanities Ph.D.s.

The Planning Committee met monthly from September through April, with the Consultative Committee joining for plenaries at the first and last meetings of the academic sessions. Between monthly meetings, three working groups (each composed of 8 to 10 faculty, graduate students, and additional members) met for working lunches to discuss research, best practices, and input from additional interlocutors and prepare draft recommendations for discussion and adoption by Planning Committee. Turnout varied according to competing pressures on various constituencies but was broadly representative of disciplines and constituencies. In April 2019 we also hosted a one-day visit by Dr. Ed Balleisen, Vice Provost for Interdisciplinary Studies at Duke University and a national leader in the Next Gen space. In advance, we shared various data and our working groups' draft recommendations with Dr. Balleisen. We orchestrated conversations with our Planning Committee, working group leaders, and the University of Pittsburgh's Vice Provost for Graduate Studies, invited Dr. Balleisen to reflect with us on preliminary lessons learned throughout our planning process, and consulted on strategies to structure an ambitious implementation phase.

As Project Director, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies Holger Hoock coordinated and directed all grant activities; advocated for career diversity across the School and campus; collaborated on related School-wide efforts with Graduate Council, the statutory body composed of faculty and students; and assumed responsibility, through the Graduate Dean Office's staff, for the administrative support of the project.

Our budget primarily funded a full-time, 2.5-term Graduate Student Assistant (GSA) who was identified in an open search that emphasized insight and competencies to be gained: advanced networking, capacity to navigate complex organizations, academic administration, surveys, website development, etc. The GSA, an advanced Ph.D. student in History of Art and Architecture, worked closely with the Project Director, committees, and working groups on research and programmatic dimensions (interfaced with University resources supporting career diversity; helped organize

committee meetings and follow-up, administered surveys; researched and developed resources and deliverables), and developed content for the project website including blog posts. Along with the graduate student members of the Planning and Advisory Committees, we wanted the GSA role to help ensure that graduate student voices were at the center of the project throughout. Throughout our project, graduate students had distinctive and valuable experiences to share.

We created a [web portal](#) to collate resources, including through AHA, MLA, CGS, and NEH, other national studies, and reports on promising practices adopted by Humanities Ph.D. programs in leading R1 universities. The website will transition to support the Andrew W. Mellon-funded implementation phase, *Humanities Engage*, and serve as an expanding repository of resources for graduate students and faculty.

Our Next Gen Vision

Our year-long conversation enabled us to refine the preliminary Next Gen vision we had put forward in applying for the NEH grant.

Over the past 25 years, national studies and pilot projects have underscored the importance of rethinking Humanities doctoral education in the face of unacceptably low completion rates, high times to degree completion, and stale, hermetic degree structures that pay insufficient attention to training students for the diverse careers they pursue in a changing knowledge economy and global society. The long-term contraction of tenure-track opportunities and the casualization of academia lend added urgency to the project of reimagining doctoral training. Yet, calls for graduate education reform have been met with considerable inertia; implementation of change in graduate education has often been ad hoc and additive rather than holistic and transformative.

As citizen trust in universities has eroded and public support for the Arts and Humanities once again appears to be under threat in the United States, institutions of Higher Education must demonstrate the relevance of the humanities to the social fabric of our communities and to the nation's civic, economic, and cultural life. This is particularly urgent from the perspective of doctoral programs, as graduate education is currently “virtually absent from public discourse about the creativity, competitiveness, and prosperity of the United States.”¹ We therefore must uphold the fundamental value of graduate education as a public good and exalt its strategic role in sustaining the intellectual, cultural, and economic vitality of regions and the nation.

As we recognize the need to articulate – toward a broad range of publics – the value of the Humanities and of humanistic doctoral training, we accept a corresponding imperative to reimagine the doctoral training our programs provide. As CGS has formulated: “We simply cannot proclaim the fundamental necessity of humanistic thinking to a thriving democracy, to a rich and rewarding life, to a fuller understanding of our present circumstances, and then turn around and insist that the most highly-trained humanists are only fit for one professional context.”² We thus take on the challenge spelled out in *Reforming Doctoral Education* (2016), namely that humanists must promote a cultural change in the definition of the Ph.D. degree as offering disciplinary expertise applicable across employment

¹ The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, *Report* (2018), 22–3.

² CGS, *Summary of Prior Work in Humanities PhD Professional Development* (2017), 13.

sectors in addition to preparing the future professoriate in a changing academy.³ We know that incoming students are unevenly informed about job markets and often dissociate educational and career aspirations. Over time, many students' career aspirations shift away from the professoriate. Committed to fostering a culture change that will make a broad spectrum of Humanities careers broadly visible, valued, and viable, we are normalizing the conversation and are taking strides toward making fully transparent the range of careers open to Humanities students – from recruitment via introductory professional seminars through the entire life span of the graduate degree.⁴

We posit that excellence in 21st-century doctoral education combines a focus on deep disciplinary knowledge, methodological rigor, and innovative scholarship with enhanced versatile preparation that fosters students' ability to articulate and demonstrate strategic skills that apply across a range of post-doctoral professional settings. Doctoral programs must urgently change orthodox assumptions and conventional structures to reflect the actual array of high-impact career outcomes and move from business as usual to embrace experimentation with holistic professional mentoring at all levels of curricular reform, publicly-engaged and digital scholarship, and funded, professionally enhancing immersives. Superior research training in R1 doctoral institutions and orienting students to a broad spectrum of careers that impact all sectors of a global society are mutually enhancing missions.

Humanities departments need to relate career preparation to the distinctive rationale and foci of their programs as they strengthen and diversify students' intellectual-professional trajectories. Our planning process concluded that all our Ph.D. programs ought to re-clarify their purpose, e.g., as preparing the next generation of scholar-leaders and producers and disseminators of new humanistic knowledge in the public interest.⁵ As we rejoice in the diverse, high-impact careers we know our doctoral alums have long pursued, we share a widely-adopted core competency approach to the preparation of future versatile scholar-leaders and ambassadors of the Humanities at a time of critical societal and global need. Competencies critical for successful professorial careers in the early 21st-century map very closely onto the competencies required for high-impact careers in other professional settings. Since contemporary academics are rightly expected to engage more directly with audiences well beyond their disciplines, including with decision-makers and with society at large, graduate students must develop a broader set of communication skills. Given our complex world requires interdisciplinary and team-based approaches, we must expose graduate students to interdisciplinary collaboration, project management, and leadership opportunities. And with new technologies impacting research, publication, and teaching, our graduate curricula must provide scope for students to learn about and through technology in the context of humanistic research. Throughout, we must empower Ph.D. students to build and narrate their training as a story of growing competencies in research, synthesis

³ Weisbuch and Cassuto, *Reforming Doctoral Education*; [White Paper](#), NEH Next Gen, UC Berkeley (2017); L. Maren Wood and Robert B. Townsend, *The Many Careers of History PhDs: A Study of Job Outcomes. A Report to the American Historical Association* (2013); CGS/ETS, *The Path Forward: The Future of Graduate Education in the United States* (2010), 44; Julie R. Posselt, *Inside Graduate Admissions: Merit, Diversity, And Faculty Gatekeeping* (2016), 2; [AHA Five Skills](#); [Report of the MLA Task Force on Doctoral Study in Modern Language and Literature](#) (2014); M. T. McCarthy/CGS, *Promising Practices in Humanities PhD Professional Development* (2017). See also the resources curated through our Next Gen [website](#).

⁴ Our programs, along with the AAU, have adjusted language from “placement” to “career outcomes” and moved toward transparently displaying career outcomes across employment sectors. See, e.g., the program websites of the Departments of [English](#); [History](#); [HAA](#); [Music](#); [Slavic](#); [Theatre](#).

⁵ This is the suggestion for History Ph.D. programs offered by Jim Grossman and Emily Swafford, “The Purpose-Driven PhD: The Third Stage of Career Diversity Emphasizes History as a Public Good,” *Perspectives in History* (Apr. 15, 2019).

and analysis, communication, project design and management, collaboration and leadership, as well as cultural sensitivity skills as they equip themselves for careers in the academy and beyond.

We believe our integrative approach has the added potential to enhance the diversity of cohorts while increasing completion rates. Our graduate programs foster diverse and inclusive excellence through holistic graduate admissions and dedicated fellowships, thus helping us to recruit and mentor a diverse student body. These same programs encompass innovative and inclusive activities to raise awareness of – and sensitivity to – the differences and distinctions we use to define and understand ourselves and each other. Diversified training, too, speaks to the University’s strategic priority of enhancing inclusive excellence, as programs that foster versatile competencies for high-impact careers are well positioned to attract applicants with varied backgrounds and experiences, intellectual perspectives, and professional aspirations. This requires that programs signal consistently that they value diverse career outcomes, starting with admissions processes and departmental cultures in which all Ph.D. students feel a sense of belonging. At the same time, the relationship between our diversity mission and the career diversity mission requires careful attention lest students underrepresented in their disciplines are inadvertently deterred from faculty careers.

Planning Themes and Lessons Learned

Smart Curricular Interventions to Prepare Tomorrow’s Versatile Humanists

Curricular reform grounded in broad faculty and student support is a challenging yet essential element of any effort to re-imagine doctoral training. This entails identifying program efficiencies to enable versatile training without increasing course burden and TTD. The refreshment of doctoral curricula should be an integral part of any Next Gen project, not least because engaging students (and faculty) with co-curricular programming continues to severely test institutions.

Our exploration focused on how Humanities graduate curricula can optimally combine rigorous scholarly training with strategies to enhance students’ ability to articulate and demonstrate the relevance of their skills for diverse professional settings, *and* develop skills currently underdeveloped in doctoral training but relevant in professional settings within and beyond the academy. We aimed to articulate how curricular changes can support the “intellectual mission of fields and departments” (UC Irvine, NEH White Paper), and draw on integrative approaches piloted by programs such as NIH BEST and AHA Career Diversity, to explore strategies for embedding career diversity objectives in existing program curricula, and align academic milestones with broad professional development. Our working group explored questions such as:

- Which formal requirements, courses, and assignments should be revised to integrate training in quantitative methods, collaboration, and public-facing scholarship and products?
- How can we incentivize ‘Mellonizing’ graduate seminars with revised writing assignments (public-facing genres, blogs, op-eds, object descriptions) and embedded collaborative work?
- How can re-thinking the Humanities doctorate be related better to broader changes in Humanities scholars’ environment, and integrate experimentation with new media and modes of scholarly production in curricular spaces?⁶

⁶ Sidonie Smith, *Manifesto for the Humanities: Transforming Doctoral Education in Good Enough Times* (2016), 55-66, 157, *passim*.

- What can our programs learn from the institutional trailblazer, the Department of the History of Art and Architecture, that has started to transform exams to build in public-facing, non-traditional, and other elements geared toward versatile competencies?
- What alternatives to the proto-research monograph should programs consider for the Ph.D. capstone (curation; documentary films; translation with critical edition; born-digital projects; public-facing scholarship with a metacritique of the experience of community-engaging)?⁷
- Can MA and/or qualifying exams include a public component, and should presentation of research to a general audience be a graduation requirement?

The working group met twice in the fall term to prepare draft recommendations. To inform the working group's deliberations, we requested that each participating doctoral program share as examples of 'Mellonizing' graduate seminars: sample syllabi that model embedding versatile competency development (e.g., collaboration; communication with non-specialist audiences; public-facing scholarship and products; quantitative methods), sample assignments that go beyond conventional seminar writing assignments (e.g., blogs, public-facing genres, op-eds, object descriptions, etc.) and embedded collaborative work; innovative milestone formats (e.g., portfolio approach to comprehensive exams; public-facing elements in comps), and Ph.D. capstones in formats or media other than the conventional proto-research-monograph (e.g., translation with critical introduction; curation; public-facing scholarship with a metacritique of the experience of community engagement; projects that incorporate the Digital Humanities; a series of published articles; pedagogical research, to name just a few possibilities). We also asked each Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) to host one pedagogical conversation among departmental graduate faculty in the first half of the spring term around the key issues raised in the working group's draft recommendations within the broader disciplinary, national, and institutional conversations on career diversity. Programs that yet had to engage with our agenda were encouraged to partner with us. We received responses from circa half of our Humanities departments. Very few shared sample assignments and syllabi at that stage, and few discussed a potential broadening of capstone modalities.

Recommendations on Rethinking the Humanities Doctoral Curriculum

Our Planning Committee urges all doctoral programs to transform disciplinary training in a manner that:

- is student-centered and data-informed, focused on the formation of the adaptive scholar, and grounded in an articulation of the profile, behaviors, and capacities of the contemporary intellectual, scholar-teacher-leader and communicator;
- is grounded in necessary self-study and in the articulation of program mission;
- aligns degree requirements with learning needs and diverse career goals and actual outcomes;
- relates to broader changes in Humanities scholars' environment and integrates experimentation and engagement with new media and modes of scholarly production;
- appreciates the procedural and experiential elements of graduate education as much as final products such as dissertations;
- supports faculty as they transition from an uneven awareness of career diversity to normalizing it, adopt new models of training and mentoring, and embrace the intellectually exciting opportunities entailed in communicating the value of the Humanities to a broad range of publics.

⁷ Smith, *Manifesto*, 143; L. Cassuto, *The Graduate School Mess: What Caused It and How We Can Fix It* (2015), 132–42.

Seminars, Milestones, Dissertations Within the Disciplines

Planning Committee strongly recommends that programs:

- refresh their doctoral curricula starting from multiple definitions of success and diverse, high-impact career outcomes;
- pursue integral and transformative, not additive change, by identifying program efficiencies that allow for enhanced versatile training without increasing TTD;
- enhance the development of skills that enhance the impact of research, including by embedding collaborative work and revised written assignments in a wide range of graduate seminars (e.g., public-facing genres, blogs, op-eds, object descriptions, funding proposals, etc.);
- create space to address the skills embedded within orthodox seminar assignments – book reviews, presentations, historiographical essays, and research papers – and empower students to articulate their value within and beyond the academy (e.g., ability to survey complex material, analyze the nuances of informed opinion, develop and express original ideas, close attention to evidence and argument);
- broaden options for comprehensive exams, moving toward a portfolio format where that has not yet been implemented;⁸
- broaden options for the media and formats of Ph.D. capstone projects; empower students to explore the spectrum possibilities for capstones in their areas of research, considering in addition to the proto-research-monograph the kinds of projects that are already being pursued both locally and nationally, e.g. curation; documentary films; video essays as chapters in multi-media dissertations; translation with critical introduction; projects incorporating Digital Humanities; public-facing scholarship with a metacritique of the experience of community engagement; pedagogical research; program-development components;⁹
- create spaces and possibly requirements for public-facing humanistic scholarship, public engagement, and the communication of research to audiences beyond the home discipline and the academy, e.g.: public components of milestones; presentation of research/creative activity to general audience as graduation requirement;

Cross-Program Innovation and Sharing of Promising Practices

The Planning Committee, with the leadership of participating Directors of Graduate Studies, encouraged all Humanities DGSes to form a standing committee to advance awareness of Humanities careers, communicate information about national and institutional contexts for doctoral training, share promising practices, and foster collaboration in curricular innovation, including but not limited to:

- opportunities for innovations at the institutional level;
- possible development of a Humanities Core Curriculum for all Ph.D. students, e.g., Seminar, “Introduction to Advanced Studies in the Humanities” and a menu of cross- and interdisciplinary (mini-)courses, including on theory and methods;

⁸ Prior examples in the Dietrich School: ethnographic work in arts organizations (English); cumulative exam (History); curation and exhibition as components in exam dossiers (History of Art and Architecture).

⁹ For a concise discussion of opportunities and challenges, see the UNC Chapel Hill NEH White Paper, [Rethinking the Traditional Dissertation](#) (2017). Prior examples in the Dietrich School: English: video essay as a “chapter”; multi-platform role-playing video game; writing in multiple genres; significant pedagogical and program-development components; “zine” with sections collaboratively authored or coauthored by research participants; ethnographic components. Music: multi-genre dissertations in Composition and Theory combines a major composition with a long essay on a theoretical or analytical topic; Film and Media Studies: video essays and participant observer fieldwork.

- cross-departmental pro-seminars to deepen students' intellectual and professional development and foster cross-disciplinary dialogue and peer mentoring, orient graduate students to campus-wide resources, and minimize duplication;
- Micro-Credentials in areas such as public and/or community-engaged humanities research and/or pedagogy;
- curricular spaces that expose students to cross-domain and interdisciplinary experiences, including with the sciences, and expand research opportunities that connect students with networks beyond their disciplines and programs. Promising examples initiated this year include “The Wicked Problems Collaborative” across multiple schools and colleges and “The Pop Up Ideas Kitchen” sponsored by the Departments of Chemistry, School of Medicine, and History and Philosophy of Science.

Digital Studies and Methods

All Humanists operate in fast-developing digital environments; increasingly, they embrace advanced digital methods; some are scholars of the digital. Digital methods programming, grounded in a lab-model, embeds collaborative as well as public-facing approaches. We considered how we might best integrate fundamental digital methods training in the doctoral curriculum and enhance both the ability of graduate faculty to advise digitally-inflected doctoral research and the digital competencies of graduate students. In addition to the Graduate Certificate in [Digital Studies and Methods](#) (DSAM, which first enrolled students in fall 2018), a Micro-Credential in Digital Studies and Methods might consist, e.g., of the DSAM core seminar and practicum (6 credits) and serve as an on-ramp for students who might continue to complete the certificate. The Planning Committee encouraged faculty to consider participating in DSAM courses alongside graduate students. Future programming might in addition integrate digital pedagogical methods at the graduate level and provide faculty research seminars in digital methods to help prepare faculty to use such methods in their own research, in the mentoring of graduate students who wish to adopt digital methods in their research, and in graduate seminars. The Office of Graduate Studies should ascertain interest, and potentially coordinate workshops, to support faculty preparation in digital methods.

Implementation (2020–23):

With Andrew W. Mellon Foundation support, we will continue to incentivize and foster curricular change, emphasizing moving fully toward portfolio comprehensive exams, broadening options for the format and media of Ph.D. capstone projects, and embedding collaborative and public-facing research in core curricula, as well as developing teaching strategies to foster career diversity.

Partnering for Impact – Alum Engagement – Immersive Experiences

We anticipated that our planning process would focus heavily on initiating, consolidating, and leveraging relationships across and beyond our campus, including with regional institutions and with our doctoral alums near and far. Our objectives included: to strengthen professional development training for doctoral students, create opportunities for experiential learning, and enhance the mentoring of our doctoral students. Early in our planning process, personnel changes in our external partner organizations left seats on our consultative committee vacant. In addition, faculty participants who had not previously been directly involved in external collaborations expressed a strong preference to keep initial discussions within the Planning Committee and working group, while drawing on the insights that some colleagues and units had gained from earlier and ongoing collaborations.

Engaging the Whole University

Building on the mapping of existing resources and on pilot programs, we had set out to move from previous ad hoc offerings with uneven visibility and footprint to annual, highly visible, and well-attended, integrated professional and career development programming for all Humanities Ph.D. students. We further planned to design a Humanities-focused Individual Development Plan (IDP) template, create databases to support students' career explorations, including of Humanities Ph.D.s at Pitt who are not in tenure-track faculty positions and Humanities faculty with professional experience across sectors beyond the academy. Moreover, we sought to expand our alum engagement efforts by improving the tracking of alum career trajectories, hosting more frequent, and more diverse, panels with alums who had taken their training to careers beyond the academy, and launching an Alum-in-Residence Week. Positive changes, effected in part through our collaborations across units, schools, and the with the Provost's Office, had us adjust some of our initial planning. Before we launched our grant, [ImaginePhD](#), the career exploration and Individual Development Plan resource went live. Now widely adopted by Humanities and other graduate students nationally and internationally, it supports students as they ascertain their values, identify and build skills, and track their academic and broader professional goals in concert with their mentoring teams. Our planning committee has strongly recommended that all our programs encourage – and consider requiring – that all students and their mentors regularly use an IDP and the tools provided by ImaginePhD.

Data

The Dietrich School is building a culture of evidence-based program improvement. Our NEH planning process was grounded in findings from focus groups and surveys of doctoral students; insights gained through the Department of History's participation in AHA Career Diversity Faculty Institutes; site visits and conversations conducted with peer institutions by Dean Hooch; and evaluation of a pilot seminar for doctoral students, "Introduction to Professional Development," held by the [Center for Doctoral and Postdoctoral Career Development](#).

Summer 2018: Pre-Grant Student Survey (see also Appendix B)

In the pre-grant period, we surveyed doctoral students' career aspirations, awareness of current professional development resources, and career development needs (similar to [CGS Career Pathways Student Survey](#)). As laid out in CGS's [Understanding Career Pathways for Program Improvement](#), data about career aspirations informs our understanding of multiple definitions of success and can help build student and faculty awareness and support. We expected the data to allow us to refine our planning themes, inform the piloting of initial program improvements, and support the case for enhanced resources for career development.

Survey

- modeled on CGS Career Pathway student survey: career aspirations, professional development opportunities, etc.
- 106 respondents [c. 30% of active Humanities Ph.D. students]
- circa one half of respondents in pre-candidacy; one half years in 5+
- respondents from across all programs; largest numbers in English, History of Art and Architecture, Music, History and Philosophy of Science, Hispanic Languages and Literatures

Key findings included

- a significantly greater share of students consider a career in non-profit, and also in business, (highly) desirable than, e.g., a career in 2-year or community colleges
- many factors play into what students value; intellectual challenge and contribution to society ranked especially highly
- perceived weaknesses in curricular preparation: public-facing humanistic scholarship; writing in non-strictly academic genres; project management

- professional development that students have taken advantage of: pedagogical preparation, some others; but very limited experiential learning, site visits, internships, in any sectors

Humanities post-doctoral career trajectory data nationally have been woefully inadequate. The Dietrich School is committed to collecting and publicly disseminating data about students' post-doctoral career paths. Since 2010, we have administered Ph.D. alumni surveys 3-years post-Ph.D., following up with surveys 7-years post-Ph.D. from 2017. Response rates have ranged from 50 to 71% across Humanities departments.¹⁰ As we share these data with departments, awareness among faculty and students of career possibilities and actual outcomes for Humanities Ph.D.s is gradually increasing. Our alumni have so far felt better prepared for academic than other careers. Our programs, along with the AAU, are adjusting their language from “placement” to “career outcomes” and moving toward transparently displaying career outcomes across employment sectors.¹¹ This will inform the career exploration of current students, help prospective students make informed decisions about Ph.D. programs, inform program reform, and demonstrate how graduates are putting their humanistic training to work across sectors.¹² Committed to implementing the 2017 AAU data transparency standards and to practicing data-informed decision making, in 2018/19, the Dietrich School launched phase I of a [doctoral program data dashboard](#); we next aim to integrate career outcome data.

Alum Engagement: Pitt Humanists in the World

Many of our alums pursue high-impact careers beyond the academy: they are broadly engaged Humanists and powerful advocates for the career diversity agenda. As part of our NEH Planning Grant we created a new online group, *Pitt Humanists in the World*, on Pitt's new mentoring and networking platform *Pitt Commons* to bring together current graduate students and graduate alums with versatile humanists on the faculty and other Pitt humanists who are not on the faculty. We are in the process of onboarding current Humanities Ph.D. students and are making progress with tracking contact details for a very significant majority of our alums who graduated over the past decade and a majority of those who graduated between ten and twenty-five years ago.

During the grant period, and in part as a result of our efforts to draw attention to the urgency of tracking doctoral career outcomes to improve programs, reverse-engineer training, enhance alum engagement, and make diverse visible and valued, the University became affiliated with the [CGS Ph.D. Career Pathways](#) project.

In 2018/19, our programs hosted an increased number and range of panels with doctoral alums from beyond the academy. It will be critical to continue to move from previously typically student-led, volunteer-produced events to regular, official departmental events attended by both graduate students and, crucially, faculty.¹³ The University's Center for Doctoral and Postdoctoral Career Development, whose Director participated in our NEH planning grant, is in the process of building a pan-university program to enhance doctoral alum engagement with current doctoral students. By partnering with the Center, we will be able to draw on their suite of tools such as alum questionnaires and integrate

¹⁰ Among recent cohorts (PhD 2010 to 2015, surveyed three years post-PhD), between 38 and 52% of our Humanities Ph.D.s had obtained FT/TS positions, with very wide variations across programs; extremely few obtain positions in R1 institutions. 13–32% were in NTS teaching positions in various types of institutions. 20–38% had obtained positions in government, public, non-profit, and industries – from CCI to Tech.

¹¹ See, e.g., the program websites of the Departments of [English](#); [Music](#); [Slavic](#); [Theatre](#). [History](#); [HAA](#).

¹² <https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2017/09/20/aau-sets-expectation-data-transparency-phd-program-outcomes>

¹³ Cassuto, *Graduate School Mess*, 123.

Humanities doctoral alums in the broader program, which will initially be primarily based on remote advising via Skype, Linked-In, etc.

Implementation (2020–23):

As our alum data tracking efforts were slower than anticipated and will now benefit from university-level investment, we deferred the launch of our planned annual Alums-In-Residence Week (now expected for no later than spring 2021). Humanists practicing in different sectors (e.g., public/government: federal/state/local; different industries; non-profit world at large) will visit our campus for four days to participate in public fora and offer workshops. In addition, students entering candidacy, and those preparing for summer internships, will be paired with alum mentors for one-on-one consultancy, resume review, and informational interviews, based on their Individual Development Plans, survey of interest, and completion of prior career diversity programming. Every alum-in-residence will be offered the opportunity to immerse themselves in the intellectual life of the Dietrich School and University, attend lectures and other events, have access to the libraries, and workshop a project of their own with a community of faculty and graduate students.

Versatile Humanists Boot Camp

Building on our recognition that professional development programming for Humanities Ph.D.s should be carefully curated and offered reliably, we expect to host an annual, week-long, immersive career diversity boot camp at the end of the annual academic session starting in spring 2021. We aim to co-design and deliver the program in collaboration with faculty, students, alums, the Center for Doctoral and Postdoctoral Career Development, stakeholders in the local public Arts and Humanities ecosystem, and regional employers. We envisage drawing on approaches of the *Humanities Without Walls* program.

Sample content for Boot Camp

- values, identity, and skills discernment
- CVs, resumes, cover letters for non-academic careers
- shaping your professional presence online
- core professional competencies (e.g. best practices in office communication)
- mapping and forging mentoring networks
- informational interviews
- networking beyond Higher Ed
- demonstrating your value to non-academic employers
- negotiation
- site visits (local public Humanities ecosystem; government agency; for-profit business)
- networking lunch with regional employers and alums

Immersive Experiences

We believe that doctoral programs must make experiential learning opportunities viable, visible, and valued for their students. NEH Next Gen, MLA Connected Academics, and AHA Career Diversity work have established the value of professionally enhancing immersives that amplify Ph.D. students' intellectual trajectories. When graduate students collaborate with professionals of various backgrounds in the non-profit world, public sector, or industry/business, they can explore their values, priorities, and career aspirations within concrete professional settings. They develop core competencies in collaborative and cross-disciplinary work as well as communication and practice articulating the value of research in relation to organizational mission. The networks they build during such placements continue to serve them for the remainder of their time in the degree program and beyond. Students

who have completed professional immersives report added benefits, such as combatting a sense of isolation and tackling tasks that are more immediate and less overwhelming than the dissertation marathon.

In 2018/19, we engaged with the community partnerships and internships structure forged by the Department of History of Art and Architecture's Andrew W. Mellon-funded Collecting Knowledge Pittsburgh Consortium and an internally funded Public Humanities Fellowship program (11 summer placements with six different regional cultural organizations, via the Humanities Center, 2017–2019). Studying also the models for graduate-level internship programs such as at Chicago, Princeton, Duke, Tulane, UNM and other universities, our Next Gen Planning Committee ascertained that for immersive experiences to be meaningful, accessible to a broad range of students, scalable, and sustainable, programming must consider structures, policies, timing, and funding in flexible ways. Placements should require graduate-level competency; meaningfully advance the agenda of host institutions; be ideally project based and result in concrete deliverables; be framed pedagogically (e.g., journal, blog, reflective essay, IDP); consider support structures such as preparatory sessions for participants and mentoring; be attentive to the special skills, needs, and constraints of international students as well as to ethical issues around internships and around community partnerships. Responsibility for successful design and implementation should be shared by the University and program, the students, and their organizational hosts. The scope of diverse Humanities careers targeted must include not just Higher Education and organizations in arts, libraries, Humanities-related non-profits, and Humanities Institutes but encompass the full range of public, private, and non-profit sector opportunities. Professional immersives outside the realms of historical, literary, or creative work can be particularly useful in helping graduate students think through the value of being a humanist. Immersives might occur along a continuum from close alignment with a student's dissertation research to primary alignment with broader career goals.

As we imagined a future immersive fellowship program, we considered a range of variables:

- Location: may be on-campus, local off-campus, national, or international; and may be on site, remote, or hybrid.
- Timing and Duration: may be during the semester, during summer, or aligned to partner needs rather than the academic calendar. Long term organizational and strategic projects at partner institution can allow more timeline flexibility. Fixed timeline projects resulting in higher profile public outcomes can involve more complex and changeable timelines. Student involvement in early project phases offer mutual benefit – but institutional commitment to project may still be unstable and subject to change.
- Source of Funding: may be the host, a grant, University, or unfunded; and if unfunded, potentially offer academic credit.
- Supervision and Mentoring: if internal to the University, may come from the student's primary supervisor, other department faculty, outside department faculty, staff, or none; if external to the University, supervision may span continuum of close active and personalized relationship to a more distant and passive supervision model. Partners are acutely aware of resource pressures of hosting and supervising interns/fellows – this is often the primary barrier to participation. While senior-level engagement is required for success, the resource benefits of hosting interns/fellows may be more obvious to mid-level staff. Because integrating fellows into existing team structures for short term roles is labor intensive, partners may prefer more limited supervisory structures. This can limit student experience. Workspace (desks, computers etc.) are a challenge for many cultural sector partners – virtual work can help here.

- Custom versus Generic Opportunities: may or may not be developed by and for specific students; may or may not be competitive.
- New or Existing Partner, and/or New and/or Ongoing Opportunity: with the varying resource implications that these models involve.
- Candidates and Recruitment: Partners understand that “advanced” skills of graduate students offer maturity and sophistication that undergraduates lack. Some concerns, however, over enthusiasm of graduate students for tasks that seems less high-level but might be essential to the project. For advertised roles, partners expect the University to recruit strong pool of candidates to select from. Back-up candidates may be required to deal with changing student availability. There are also opportunities for more customized roles that connect particular students with partner needs – but this is more labor-intensive for the University to help engineer.
- Communication and Development. Partners recognize the public relations potential of student placements, but communicating positive outcomes requires time and effort. Communication is essential to building relationships and securing ongoing opportunities but need to involve communications staff at partner institutions to avoid misunderstandings. Possibility for co-funded positions requires longer term planning but may be a beneficial addition to the broader grant and sponsorship efforts of partner institutions.
- Attention to Structures: facilitate coordination across disciplines and departments; accommodate the variations listed above and preferences of internal and external stakeholders for various models
- Attention to Curricular Opportunities: e.g., problem-based courses in which students identify solutions to real-world problems that the Office of Economic Partnerships may pitch to interested companies. Such courses could be shared between the Dietrich School and other schools such as Business, Computing and Information, or Engineering. The Wicked Problems Collaborative initiated by the Business School in collaboration with the Dietrich School and other colleges in 2018/19 is a potential alternative mechanism.
- Attention to opportunities to involve undergraduate students within graduate level internship projects as resources to expand and extend the impact of partnerships

Implementation (2020–23):

Support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation will now enable us to build a multi-tier immersive fellowship program across our existing network of non-profit partner institutions as well as by incorporating additional sites in the public and non-profit sectors and integrating doctoral training with the University’s ambitious Community Engagement agenda. Moreover, acutely aware that we must expand placement opportunities beyond the non-profit sector, we have initiated a conversation with the Office of Economic Partnerships regarding potential pathways toward collaborating with industry partners that may suit Humanities graduate students and that may invest in training them (e.g., finance, insurance, software). In addition, students will be able compete for funding to support summer immersives they design collaboratively with a prospective host organization that cannot pay interns (e.g. non-profits, small start-ups), for pre-existing, unpaid internships with nonprofit or public-sector organizations, and to support immersive experiences from short-term micro-consultancies to multi-month projects not aligned fully with the academic calendar. Finally, integrating our emphases on curricular innovation and professional development, a novel type of immersive dissertation research fellowship will be competitive, prestigious, and highly visible mechanism to incentivize and support projects that involved substantial professional development and would result in alternative dissertation formats. Projects will typically require students to embed themselves in, or collaborate with, institutions, communities, or groups and to develop professional networks beyond Higher Education.

Cultures of Advising and Mentoring

Advising and mentoring intersect with each of our primary planning themes. Halfway through our planning process, we hosted a facilitated conversation on graduate mentoring. Recognizing that effective mentoring is critical to graduate student success, and to foster culture change around career diversity, universities must more broadly redesign our cultures of advising and mentoring. Student-centered, holistic advising and mentoring must consider first and foremost students' values and interests and their academic and broader professional aspirations and development, recognizing that mentoring needs and career aspirations evolve over time. We are committed to moving fully toward team-based advising and mentoring and to strengthening program-level accountability for excellence in mentoring, including advising with career diversity in mind. We must empower students to identify, cultivate, and navigate mentoring networks across and beyond the university – including with our alums – and to intentionally build communities to counteract that widely-experienced sense of isolation which accounts in part for attrition especially at the research and writing stages. Our planning group strongly urges all programs to making the use of Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and the resources of [ImaginePhD](#) the norm for all doctoral students. All students should review their IDP with both their advisor and at least one additional faculty member on a termly basis. Furthermore, we are advocating for expanding the consideration of excellence in graduate advising and mentoring as a criterion in the University's promotion and tenure processes.

Implementation (2020–23):

Our NEH-supported planning process confirmed that, at least in the short to medium term, our faculty cannot be expected to be the sole mentors for career diversity. We studied Duke University's [Versatile Humanists](#) project's innovative role of Director of Graduate Advising and Engagement. The role offers supplementary one-on-one advising focused on professional development and career orientation for Ph.D. students across Arts and Humanities and serves as a resource for DGSes and the wider graduate faculty. With Andrew W. Mellon support we will be able to create an analogous role to support supplementary graduate advising, career orientation, and management of an immersive fellowship program.

Perceived Barriers and Strategies to Increase Buy-In among Faculty and Students

We recognize that significant barriers remain that impede transformative and sustainable change across our programs within a decentralized structure.

We understand that many of our proposed approaches challenge conventional constructs of graduate Humanities education. The culture change required spans multiple levels, as Next Gen work asks for shifts in how faculty understand aspects of their roles and the mission of their programs. Leadership at the school and department level will need to continue to set the tone and structure conditions within which frank conversations and transformative change are possible.

Early in the project we asked DGSes who were championing the project agenda to share with us their reflections on broader issues. We asked: Have you found indifference, uncertainty, or resistance in your program regarding career diversity initiatives? Why might faculty be hesitant, and what are some of the key objections from faculty? Are students reluctant to participate? What are effective strategies to make the case for career diversity initiatives in your department and discipline?

There is as yet no widespread recognition among either faculty or students of the breadth or urgency of the changes required, even as faculty are broadly concerned about the standing and future of the Humanities. The Planning Committee experienced a continued spectrum of faculty responses from strong commitment to apathy, lack of understanding, and active resistance to Next Gen work even in disciplines that nationally form the vanguard. We routinely still see unhelpful binaries being reinforced, even as we model inclusive language to communicate about career diversity and stress the overlap between superb preparation for careers across sectors and the importance of aligning the academic foci of programs with the broader professional training they offer.

Some faculty express concerns about an attention to careers beyond the academy potentially watering down the academic rigor of degree programs and distracting them from their own research. Others voice anxieties that they may not be able to advise students on careers beyond the academy. Some argue that at most students should be oriented toward non-academic careers late in the graduate degrees via parallel processes and ad hoc offerings as opposed to aiming for integral and transformative change: the importance of consistent, intentional career exploration and of deepening and broadening professional development throughout doctoral careers is as yet far from universally recognized. Several programs have as yet to follow through on discussing the possibilities of curricular reform in relation to Next Gen. Some faculty enthusiastically embrace the need to articulate and hone students' core competencies whilst others skeptically see even this "long-hanging fruit" of Next Gen work (J. Grossman, AHA) as a major adjustment.

Awareness among faculty and students of the fuller spectrum of humanistic career possibilities and the actual career outcomes of our own doctoral alums remains limited. Until recently, many programs did not publicly acknowledge career outcomes beyond the academy. Where thus far students (and their advisors) faced fairly steep search costs for information about career pathways, our work and national initiatives have recently started to make the spectrum of possibilities more visible. The next phase of the doctoral data dashboard, enhanced alum engagement across the disciplines, and celebration of career success beyond the academy will build on these efforts.

The Planning Committee considered strategies to normalize the conversation and build faculty and student support, including:

- expand communication plan in next phase of Next Gen work, broaden mechanisms to engage all constituencies continuously across the school, campus, and beyond;
- stretch early-adopter model (e.g., career diversity faculty and student champions in each program);
- offer skills-focused workshops for students (online / embedded in professionalization seminars);
- continuously educate DGSes and faculty (showcase alternative Ph.D. formats; career outcomes);
- support faculty in mentoring graduate students for diverse careers, in use of IDPs, etc.;
- model importance of partnership work, public-facing humanistic scholarship;
- enhance faculty development in areas such as Digital Humanities;
- explore the possibility of dedicating graduate funding resources to incentivize dissertation research projects that involve students collaborating with institutions or communities;
- partner with regional organizations and local foundations to create funded immersives;
- lobby for change in tenure and promotion criteria to prioritize excellence in graduate mentoring, including mentoring toward diverse, high-impact careers.

At the broadest level, our planning process has reinforced and refined our understanding that student-centered, outcome-focused graduate education that fosters diverse and inclusive excellence must attend to the connections between curricular relevance, mentoring excellence, professional development and career exploration, completion rates, and partnering for impact. As we initiate the implementation phase of our Next Gen work in 2020, the Dietrich School will seek to further enhance a culture of excellence in graduate advising and mentoring, engage Ph.D. programs in the design and implementation of evidence-based, ambitious, feasible, and sustainable measures to increase completion rates, and enhance support for student mental wellness.

We are grateful to the National Endowment for the Humanities for supporting a planning process that enabled us to explore challenges and opportunities and develop an ambitious implementation project.

Appendix A

Planning Committee

Holger Hoock (Chair); Project Director; Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research, Kenneth P Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences; J. Carroll Amundson Professor of British History, Department of History

Jonathan Arac, Humanities Center, Director; English, Mellon Chair

Ben Barson, Music, PhD student

Don Bialostowski, English, Chair and Professor

Jennifer Boum-Make, French, PhD student

Jerome Branche, Hispanic Languages and Literatures, Chair and Professor

Lauren Collister, PhD Linguistics, Alumna; Scholarly Communications Librarian, University Library System

Patrick Dowd, PhD History, Alumnus; Executive Director of a child advocacy nonprofit in Pittsburgh; former elected official and High School Teacher. Advisory Team Member, Greater Pittsburgh Nonprofit Partnership; Board Member, Pittsburgh Foundation

Michel Gobat, History, DGS and Associate Professor; AHA Career Diversity Faculty Institute, member

Shelome Gooden, Linguistics, Chair and Associate Professor

Randall Halle, German, CECS, Film and Media Studies: Chair, Director, DGS

Aaron Henderson, Studio Arts, Associate Professor

Christina Hoenig, Classics, DGS and Associate Professor

Lina Insana, French and Italian, Chair and Professor; Humanities Council, Chair

Dan Kubis, PhD English, Alumnus; Humanities Center, Assistant Director Alison Langmead, History of Art, Associate Professor; Principal Contact, Digital Humanities Research at Pitt

Barbara McCloskey, History of Art and Architecture, Chair and Professor

Brent Malin, Communications, DGS and Associate Professor

Ruth Mostern, World History Center, Director and Associate Professor; DH; public-facing Humanities

Vladimir Padunov, Slavic Languages and Literatures, DGS and Associate Professor; Film and Media Studies

Andrea Paolini, PhD student, English; formerly Senior Development Officer, Government of Canada

Lara Putnam, History, Chair and Professor; AHA Career Diversity Faculty Institute, member.

Deane Root, Music, Chair and Professor; Editor in Chief, Grove Music

Kirk Savage, History of Art and Architecture, William S. II Dietrich Chair (former Chair and DGS)

Nicole Scalissi, PhD student, History of Art, former Mellon Fellow in Curation and Education

Kylie Seltzer, PhD student, History of Art, and Project GSA

Alex Taylor, History of Art and Architecture, Assistant Professor and Academic Curator

Nathan Urban, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Strategic Initiatives

Michelle Yingling, Career Consultant, University Career Services

Bethany Wade, PhD student, History

Darlene Zellers, Associate VC, Director, Center for Doctoral and Postdoctoral Career Development

Consultative Committee

Rebecca Bagley, Vice Chancellor for Economic Partnerships

Marc Bermann, Anthropology, Professor and DGS

Susie Chen, Psychology, PhD student, former co-chair, Professional Development Committee

Daniele Coen-Pirani, Economics, Professor and Placement officer

Lina D. Dostilio, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Community Engagement Centers

Tom Golightly, Senior Executive Director of Development, Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences

Joe Horne, Director, Center for Mentoring, University Center for Teaching and Learning

Anna Marsland, Psychology, Professor and Co-Chair, Professional Development Committee

Carol Mullen, Director of Communication, Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences

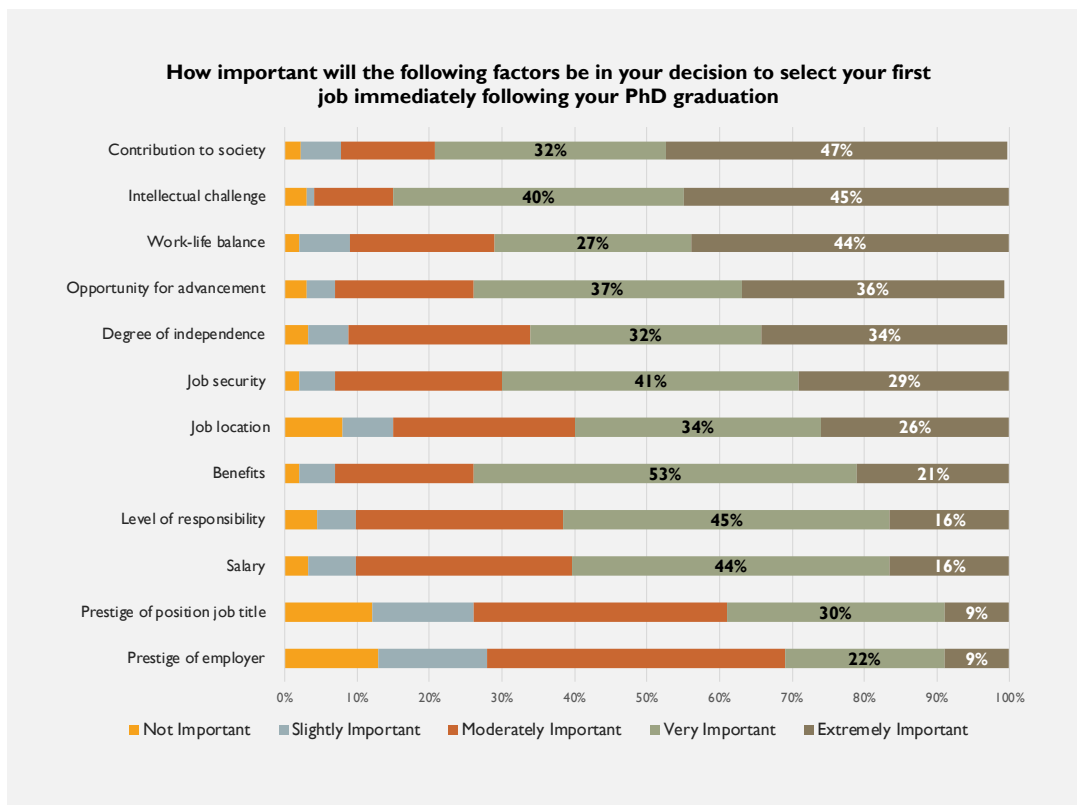
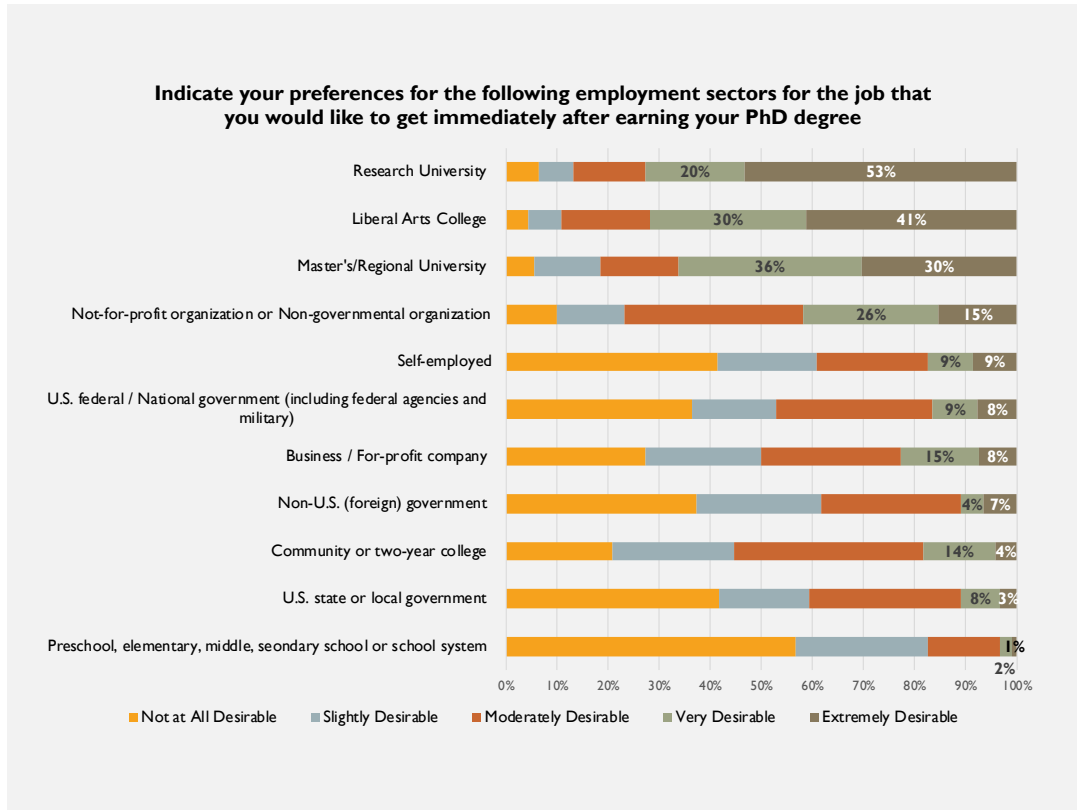
Jessica Pickett, Director of Research and Global Programs, Global Studies Center

Rebecca Roadman, Director of Special Projects & Initiatives, Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences

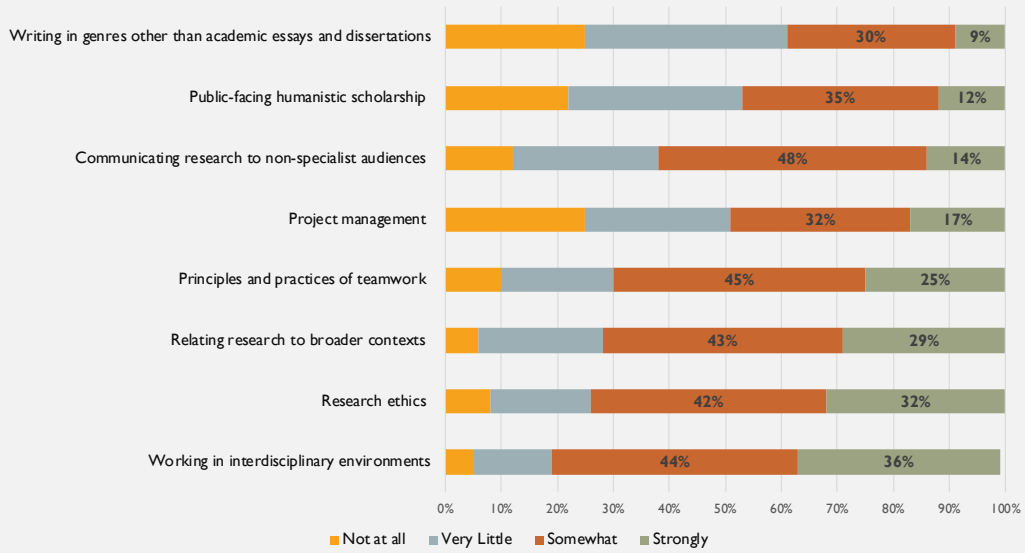
Cynthia Sweet, Associate Vice Chancellor for Economic Partnerships

Kornelia Tancheva, University Library System, Director (PhD, Drama & Theatre)

Appendix B: Pre-Grant Survey of Humanities Ph.D. Student (Summer 2018)



To what extent has your curriculum and training prepared you for the following:



What types of professional development opportunities have you participated in since starting your doctoral program?

