

Humanities Launch

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Abstract:

Humanities Launch, a post-baccalaureate fellowship program in the public humanities, will seek to provide a supportive, year-long career launchpad for humanities graduates. This program will help them to gain workplace skills that reflect and extend their major expertise; develop foundational, cultural-sector-specific technical skills; and narrate the utility and adaptability of their liberal arts education to a variety of prospective employers. It will also seek to fill staffing gaps or tackle postponed projects at campus or community organizations, especially those whose work has been interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to mentorship and supervision at their host organizations, Fellows will receive ongoing support from a project team that includes staff of the Writers House and Office of Civic Engagement, faculty in their major disciplines, and Career Services staff through monthly on-campus professional development and advising sessions.

Primary Stakeholders:

- Current humanities B.A. students
- Chairs of humanities departments
- Leaders of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Camden
- Prospective RUC humanities students and families

Key Steps/Activities:

* Listening sessions with leaders of similar programs at other institutions * Exploratory conversations with Rutgers-Camden departments and offices * Exploration of community partner interest * Structure of application, review, and onboarding timeline * Recruitment and promotion to current undergraduates * Application rollout * Fellow selection * Finalize mentorship relationships and on-campus program schedule

Effectiveness Measures:

Short term: 1) survey of graduates involved in the program, assessing their feelings of preparedness for the workforce and usefulness of the program in translating humanities skills. 2) % of fellows who secure related employment following the program.
 Long term: 1) % of prospective RUC students seriously considering majoring in or taking substantive classes in the humanities 2) Humanities faculty and chairs better prepared to offer cohesive career advising to majors who want to stay in the field with or without graduate school options

Communication/Engagement:

Currently, staff are taking steps to reconnect with the project's initial stakeholders and partners to think about how to connect a few programs with related goals across the university.

Proposed Timeline:

In revision following declined funding proposal.

Current Status/Future Directions:

Writers House and Office of Civic Engagement staff proposed this project to the American Council of Learned Societies Sustained Public Engagement Grants for 2022. Although it was not funded, it reached the final round of review. A similar initiative at RU-New Brunswick was funded by the same opportunity. We intend to connect with project leaders and reinvolve initial stakeholders in a conversation about how to sustain a coherent, robust network of public humanities opportunities for current students and graduates.