The New PhD: A Renaissance of Public Engagement
Graduate Center, City University of New York
A proposal for the Next Generation Humanities PhD Planning Grant

Abstract

Humanities PhDs have emerged as leaders across a range of fields; at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, our humanities alumni lead for-profit and non-profit organizations, manage cultural institutions, direct initiatives, guide learning, and conduct groundbreaking research in universities, both on the tenure-track and off. This is no surprise, given that PhD training in the humanities has always attracted a serious, focused group of individuals who seek to make a deep dive into historical and cultural questions and then share this knowledge with others. A humanities PhD endows its holder with a strong set of ethics, a strong sense of the cultural and historical context of political and social issues, deep cultural sensitivity, and extraordinary focus.

What we must add to our humanities PhD programs is training in how to lead, improve, remake, or create new systems. Training humanities students to assume responsible leadership and administrative and management jobs when they leave graduate school is about empowering them to build, not just to think critically about what other people do. As we work to transform the humanities PhD, we will need to borrow tools from professional education, while making the ways of thinking learned in a humanities PhD program—understanding issues of social justice, historical contexts, and ethics—central. PhD students join our Graduate Center humanities doctoral programs because they have big ideas they want to explore. But, they often need to work on how to share their highly specialized knowledge with both specialists and non-specialists. Our goal is to provide them with the tools to use their ideas and training to make a positive impact in our global society. This proposal convenes two groups—both a smaller, core group and a larger planning group—of faculty members, alumni, current students and administrators to discuss three pivotal issues at the Graduate Center, our humanities doctoral curricula, how we track our humanities PhD career outcomes, and how we partner and network with alumni and employers, in order to provide our students with a firm foundation for pursuing a range of careers. In doing so, we will lay the groundwork for transforming the training given to humanities PhDs at the Graduate Center.

Overview

Despite the exemplary set of skills many humanities PhDs develop along the way, many struggle to find a good fit beyond the tenure track, and those who do often find such career paths by happenstance, without systematic morale and programmatic support from their institutions. At the Graduate Center, we are uniquely poised to change this. As an institution focused entirely on graduate students, the bulk of our resources are directed to doctoral education. Our Office of Career Planning and Professional Development (OCPPD) concentrates its efforts on providing doctoral students with workshops, career advising, and programming that support a range of careers. This summer, it will launch a program that compensates doctoral students for summer internships in a range of fields. Our nationally known Graduate Center Digital Initiatives (GCDI) provides training to doctoral students in the areas of digital humanities, data mining, spatial humanities network analysis, and digital archives, among others, thus providing our students with technical, project management, budgeting, leadership, and grant writing skills translatable to positions in museums and archives, data science, and technology firms. The Futures Initiatives (FI) has expertise deploying pedagogical techniques that are essential to curricular change, in

particular using the tools of professional schools (such as design thinking) to change how students approach questions. We have a history of alumni pursuing compelling careers outside the traditional tenure-track path. Finally, the New York City area offers a broad array of employers in which humanities PhDs could find their fit and drive change — cultural organizations, corporations, nonprofits, and government. Some of these same organizations, for example IBM or the New York Public Library, will make strong partners in the discussion of the necessary transformations of the humanities PhD.

Our challenge at the Graduate Center has been to develop a wrap-around model of professional development, one that is rooted in the curriculum rather than added on as extra work for students, and one that can reach all of our students in the humanities, rather than just select (or self-selected) groups of them. Our focus will be on three areas: curriculum, data, and partnerships. The budget for the project will include:

- stipends for alumni and students participating in the planning committees;
- meeting expenses for all of the planning committee meetings and a Town Hall Meeting on Careers for Humanists for one hundred attendees;
- travel to Washington D.C. for the project manager;
- travel for three Core Working Group members to the Graduate Career Consortium conference;
- development of a web presence on the CUNY Academic Commons and print publicity materials for the initiative.

National evidence underscores the timeliness and importance of these issues. Employment trends for PhDs across all fields highlight the fact that, proportionally, the number of full-time tenure-track opportunities is decreasing, even as doctoral enrollments grow. With fewer tenure-track opportunities available, it is increasingly important to equip students for a wider range of career paths where they can apply their doctoral training outside of the academy or in non-faculty roles within the university. Major disciplinary associations (such as the Modern Language Association and the American Historical Association) and major funding organizations (such as the National Institutes of Health) have reported on this phenomenon, and concluded that, as the NIH 2012 Biomedical Research Working Group Report states: "graduate programs must accommodate a greater range of anticipated careers for students. Graduate programs should reflect that range, and offer opportunities for students to explore a variety of options while in graduate school without adding to the length of training" (http://acd.od.nih.gov/biomedical_research_wgreport.pdf, p. 8). The proposed initiatives would allow the Graduate Center to develop a substantial, integrated program of professional development for humanities doctoral students that could be eventually implemented across the Graduate Center's humanities doctoral programs and that could serve as a national model for transformation in doctoral humanities education.

Planning Committee

As part of our project, we will convene two committees. The Core Working Group will meet monthly and will be composed of one alumnus, two students, faculty members, and key administrators. In addition to discussing our three areas of focus (curriculum, data, and partnerships), the Core Working Group will be responsible for building faculty support for the project and stimulating collaboration between different departments. A second group, the Project Steering Committee, will be much a larger team of internal and external stakeholders that will meet four times over the course of the grant period. This will be

composed of additional students, alumni, partners from a range of academic and non-academic settings, and prospective employers. This Project Steering Committee will be kept apprised of the core working team's activities and provide input and give final approval on all planning documents and the project's white paper. Both committees will meet together once each semester during the planning period.

The goal of having two working groups will be to have the flexibility of frequent, regular meetings, which are easier to sustain with a smaller group, while also creating the opportunity for conversations with a wider range of stakeholders. In addition, the work of the Core Working Group and the Project Steering Committee will reinforce each other. The Core Working Group will be able to conceptualize changes and make recommendations while benefitting from the oversight of the larger group that includes external parties, and will be able to use this group to test how realistic and useful core group ideas are for the nonprofits, corporations, and government agencies that might employ students. The Project Steering Committee can propose new ideas which the Core Working Group would refine for implementation within the academic environment. Both groups will be overseen by David Olan, Interim Associate Provost and Dean for Academic Affairs; the project manager, Jennifer Furlong, Director, Office of Career Planning and Professional Development, will be an active member of both groups.

This Core Working Group will be responsible for attending regular strategy meetings, drafting, and completing all grant-related documents, in particular the white paper, and will commit to advancing discussions of the three planning themes. Members of the group will be:

Faculty	Key Administrators
Duncan Faherty, Director of the Early Research Initiative and Associate Professor of English	Lisa Rhody, Deputy Director, Graduate Center Digital Initiatives
José de Valle, Professor and Executive Officer, PhD Program in Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literatures and Languages	Polly Thistlethwaite, Chief Librarian
Students	**Alumnus**
Jared Keel, PhD Student, English	Peter Taback, Chief Communication Officer, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, and PhD alumnus in English
Khaled Al Hilli, PhD Student, Comparative Literature	

In its work, the Core Working Group will be sensitive to the question of faculty engagement, particularly in the context of the Graduate Center's unique structure and position within the twenty-four campus CUNY system. Some Graduate Center faculty hold appointments only at the Graduate Center. Other members of the doctoral faculty have appointments at both the Graduate Center and another campus. Still other faculty are only campus based; these faculty members are often junior faculty members. Students engage with and are advised, formally and informally, by faculty who fit into all of these categories. The group would work to devise strategies for building connections among these three groups of faculty, both through face-to-face engagement and through the use of the Academic

Commons, an online, academic social network available to all CUNY faculty, staff, and graduate students.

The Project Steering Committee will provide the Core Working Group with a greater range of perspectives as we work to build consensus around curricular changes and build plans for data collection and the development of partnerships. The discussions and outcomes of each of the meetings of the Core Working Group would be shared with this group for commentary. The five student representatives to this committee will be chosen in collaboration with the Doctoral Student Council, the active and engaged policy-making body representing students in doctoral and master's programs at the Graduate Center. We will work with them to ensure that they are engaged in this process. Preliminary conversations with a range of humanities doctoral alumni have already begun. We are optimistic that five alumni working in the corporate sector (Deloitte and IBM), major media (Salon), and a range of cultural organizations and nonprofits will be able to join us. Katina Rogers, deputy director of the Futures Initiative, will join as a key administrator. Faculty members have been particularly receptive to the project and interested in joining the Project Steering Committee. Letters of commitment from the following faculty members can be found in the supplementary materials:

- Claire Bishop, Professor of Art History, Graduate Center

- Joshua Brumberg, Interim Dean of the Sciences and Professor of Psychology and Biology, Queens College and the Graduate Center

- Norman Carey, Professor and Acting Executive Officer, PhD/DMA Programs in Music, Graduate Center

- Mario DiGangi, Professor and Executive Officer PhD Program in English, Graduate Center

- Joshua Freeman, Distinguished Professor of History, Graduate Center

- Matt Gold, Executive Officer, M.A. Program in Liberal Studies, Associate Professor of English & Digital Humanities, and Advisor to the Provost for Digital Initiatives, Graduate Center

- Bettina Lerner, Assistant Professor of French and Comparative Literature, City College and the Graduate Center

Our work would begin in August 2016 with the first meeting of the Core Working Group. There, we would set a meeting schedule for the year. Though we plan to discuss our three planning themes (curriculum, data, and partnerships) sequentially, committee members will have the freedom to revisit them as necessary through the year. We will begin by examining possible curricular changes that could be made to our doctoral programs. Topics of conversation will be: using the qualifying exams to develop real world skills, such as grant writing and presentation skills; embedding elements of the GCDI Praxis course into the early stages of doctoral coursework; changes to the form and structure of the dissertation; and the possibility of receiving academic credit for internships, externships, and job shadowing experiences that expose students to a wider range of work settings. This conversation would continue in September 2016 at the first meeting of the Project Steering Committee. Our work in the October 2016 meeting would center on the issue of building support for these changes among faculty and developing a timeline for implementation, focusing on both short-term changes that could be in place by fall 2017 and long-term changes.

The November 2016 meeting will launch our discussion of data collection as related to alumni career outcomes. We'll discuss both departmental methods of keeping track of and reporting on alumni data, ways through which alumni data could be shared across departments (both administrative and academic), and best practices for developing an alumni networking database that would be useful to students in their career exploration and job search. These discussions would continue at the December 2016 full meeting of both committees, where we will have additional alumni present to share their voices and perspectives. There, we would also reexamine the recommended curricular changes from earlier in the semester.

The December 2016 meeting would also mark the beginning of our planning of the Town Hall Meeting on Careers for Humanists to be held in April 2017 at the Graduate Center. This event will host approximately 100 faculty members, students, and alumni in a discussion of possible career paths for humanities PhDs. On December 4, 2015, the Office of Career Planning and Professional Development hosted a pilot version of this event, called "Post Grad (Center): Putting Your Graduate Skills and Training to Work" with twenty alumni from across the humanities and social sciences. Approximately sixty students attended. The event gave students the chance to meet, learn from, and network with Graduate Center alumni from a range of professional backgrounds and helped the institution reconnect with alumni, some of whom are interested in hosting students for summer internships in 2016. The experience of planning this event will facilitate the planning of the larger Town Hall in 2017. The activities associated with the Town Hall will lead to the beginnings of a humanities workforce tool kit that provides resources for students, staff, and faculty around supporting graduate students' pursuit of careers off the tenure track. This toolkit will be documented in the final white paper and made available online for reference by peer institutions.

Our January and February 2017 meetings would be centered on the completion of recommendations for data collection and an alumni mentoring database. We would then turn to the issue of building partnerships with employers to increase the number of job and internship opportunities available to Graduate Center students. Symplicity, a career services management platform developed in partnership with National Association of Colleges and Employers and used in career services offices nationally, would be shown to both the Core Working Group and the Project Steering Committee as a database for job and internship postings. The March meeting would be dedicated to final planning for our April Town Hall. Our final meetings in May, June, and July 2017 would allow members of both the Core Working Group and the Project Steering Committee to finalize the white paper and evaluation plan for the project. In addition, the project manager and two Core Working Group committee members would travel in June 2017 to the Graduate Career Consortium conference. Founded in 1987, the Graduate Career Consortium is professional network of staff and administrators who provide professional and career development for PhDs and postdoctoral scholars at their universities and institutions. During our July 2017 meeting, we would finalize the implementation of recommendations for the 2017-2018 academic year.

Planning Themes

Curriculum

Intersects with the following planning themes: ways to integrate multiple career outcomes from the very beginning of students' experience in graduate school; ideas for developing new courses and

curricula; and altered formats or requirements for the PhD dissertation (so that a student could receive a doctorate without producing a research monograph).

At the Graduate Center, all of the departments are currently involved in a process of reassessing and redefining their exams, goals, and learning outcomes for their students. This activity is part and parcel of the Graduate Center's ongoing Learning Outcomes Assessment and its strategic planning process for 2017-2021. With an NEH Next Generation Humanities PhD Planning Grant, our faculty members would have the opportunity to engage with alumni and other partners as they conceptualize changes to the curriculum. For example, the English department is currently considering a reshaping of the first ("comprehensive") doctoral exam, making it portfolio based and including three tasks: a book review; a syllabus; and a conference paper. While these tasks may seem academically focused, there is room for discussion of how modules like this could be transformed to include more professionally oriented skills such as grant writing, crafting a book review for a general audience, or giving a public presentation based on your own research.

In addition, all of our first-year doctoral students have service requirements as a part of their funding package. Beginning in 2016-2017, we are planning to redirect some of these hours towards professional development, thus giving students an opportunity to hone skills sets and knowledge bases without adding additional requirements to the curriculum. The pilot year of putting this professional development plan into place would provide us with further material for our conversations on curricular transformation. Of high import in our discussions would be helping students to fill gaps in skills that have direct applications to leadership roles post graduation: learning to manage and collaborate; understanding budgets and financial decision making; writing and presenting for a range of audiences; building user-centered, culturally grounded technologies; and advocating for the centrality of the humanities in our world. Conversations between faculty, alumni, administrators, and current students around these issues would allow us to develop an implementation plan that is both realistic for departments, engages faculty members, and serves to help students build "real world" skills.

This transformational work—which would take place through the work of the core working group and the Project Steering Committee—would be complemented by the work of both the Futures Initiative and the Graduate Center Digital Initiatives. The Futures Initiative will bring a depth of expertise in remaking curriculum to The New PhD: A Renaissance of Public Engagement. With the expertise of its staff, we could examine the ecology of a graduate student's life and conceptualize how we could include or emphasize training for skills in collaboration, project management, problem solving, peer-to-peer feedback, and other vital "real-world" skills. These considerations would go hand in hand with our current discussion of replacing qualifying exams with portfolios of essays, projects, and case studies based on internships and experiential learning developed as part of students' graduate education. Finally, the FI and its partner organization Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory (HASTAC) are leaders in the conversation about alternatives to the monographic dissertation, including online multimedia components, collaborative components, digital elements, and some requirements for publication online in a public forum.

The GCDI manages several programs that would be crucial to our efforts to remake the humanities curriculum. The Digital Fellows, PhD students funded through the Provost's office, are core contributors to the initiative, lead workshops and programs that help to train their fellow students in the integration of new technologies, data-driven inquiry, and digital humanities tools into their own scholarship and teaching. In addition, the GCDI offers a year-long Digital Praxis seminar. In fall semester of this course,

students study the scholarship and practice of Digital Humanities (DH) and the semester culminates in the development of a grant narrative proposing a potential DH project. In the spring, students split into teams to develop and launch several of the projects proposed in the fall. Coursework addresses project management, user interface and user experience design, technical programming, publicity and outreach in combination with humanities-based questions for public audiences. Students who complete the class gain hands-on experience in the collaborative planning, production, and dissemination of a digital humanities project, and learn technical, project management, and rhetorical skills along the way. The Next Generation Humanities project would provide the space for conversation about the integration of the Praxis course (or elements thereof) into a wider compliment of doctoral humanities programs, providing time to consider how we might expand the capacity to teach more discipline-specific Praxis courses within a variety of humanities programs. To do so would provide a core-curricular opportunity for students rethink both the modes and audiences for humanities scholarship. Including faculty members and staff from both the GCDI and the FI strengthens our commitment to transforming the humanities curriculum at the Graduate Center.

Data

Intersects with the following planning themes: commitment to collecting and publicly disseminating data about retention rates and students' post-doctoral career paths; and development of an evaluation plan for future activities and implementation.

Best practices for the collection of information about doctoral student career outcomes are currently a subject of national conversation. The Council of Graduate Schools has made available *Understanding Career Pathways for Program Improvement*. The National Association of Colleges and Employers has published *Standards and Protocols for the Collection and Dissemination of Graduating Student Initial Career Outcomes for Advanced Degree Candidates*. National scholarly organizations such as the Modern Language Association and the American Historical Association are working to better track career outcomes and make this information public. How then can the Graduate Center incorporate these emerging best practices in telling the stories of its doctoral students, both immediately upon graduation (often called "first destination") and throughout their careers? At present, this responsibility is shared across the academic programs themselves and several administrative offices, such as the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (housed in the Provost's Office) and the Office of Career Planning and Professional Development.

The Graduate Center has already made a commitment to the more rigorous collection of data on doctoral student career paths post degree. In spring 2015, our Institutional Research office completed a cohort study of doctoral students who graduated between 2003 and 2014 from the Graduate Center's thirty-four doctoral programs. This data is still being analyzed, but it provides a solid foundation from which our working groups can start a conversation on best practices in tracking and disseminating information about doctoral student career outcomes. In addition, the Provost's Office has made available funds for spring 2016 to hire a doctoral student who will begin to compile data on career outcomes for humanities doctoral students who graduated from 2014 to the present and to make updates to the current data set. This will be a first step in providing a clear picture of career outcomes for our humanities PhDs and how these outcomes have changed over the twelve-year period for which we will have data. Also on the agenda will be the tracking of career outcomes for those who decide to leave doctoral programs. These former students often move into rewarding professional careers and this data can help us to develop a more complete picture of how those with graduate training in the

humanities build careers. They can also help us to understand why they left their humanities doctoral programs and what they felt was missing from their graduate education as they redefined their career goals.

It would be the task of our Planning Committee to develop best practices for collecting data at our institution, and to streamline communications between the academic departments and administrative offices that currently handle elements of this task. Moreover, we could call on the expertise of the GCDI to assist us with developing visualizations of the data set once it is complete. This would provide both current and prospective students with a much clearer pictures of the career possibilities offered by a humanities degree.

Finally, we would draw on the expertise of our social science departments in developing metrics for assessing the effectiveness of our proposed changes in the curriculum and professional development workshops and programs. We would also develop a means by which alumni working in a range of fields could assess professional development workshops and offer a potential employer's perspective on training humanities students for a wider range of career prospects. These efforts would ensure that our programs are truly serving the needs of our doctoral students.

Partnerships

Intersects with the following planning themes: experiments in providing financial support for graduate students for activities other than teaching; identification of humanities PhD alumni in various fields to advise or mentor graduate students; and initiation of partnerships with non-academic institutions.

Partnerships—particularly those with potential employers—should be at the center of any conversation on career outcomes for humanities doctoral students. And, the strongest partnerships often rely on a connection made through an alumnus/a. The data collection plan outlined in the previous paragraphs will allow us to develop a two-fold strategy for maximizing partnerships that can assist humanities doctoral students. First, our conversations would center on the development and launch of an alumni mentoring database for humanities students. Though our academic departments have connected students with information about alumni in non-academic contexts in the past, this information is usually siloed. Doctoral students considering a broad range of career options need to have cross-disciplinary conversations with alumni. For example, a theatre doctoral student can currently connect with alumni from his/her department; however s/he is likely to be able to get additional beneficial career advice from alumni from other humanities disciplines. One of our biggest challenges at the Graduate Center is the lack of an efficient and effective way of putting students in touch with our broad network of alumni. The Planning Grant would help to spark a conversation of how best to do that.

Following upon developing best practices for building an alumni network would be to develop best practices for connecting with external organizations interested in hiring humanities students. As a next step in our partnership agenda, we will begin to identify additional alumni and employers who would be excited about hosting humanities doctoral students for employer visits, job shadowing, internships, and eventually full-time positions. Our goal would be to eventually develop a network of employers who are posting opportunities via the Office of Career Planning and Professional Development job database. We would draw from the rich range of opportunities available in the New York are to do this.

Some of this work has already begun. IBM has recruited on our campus and hired students from a range of fields, including one of our history PhDs. Our Early Research Initiative (ERI) is working to connect

students with opportunities to acquire professional archival skills and has partnered with organizations such as the New-York Historical Society and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture to do so. The ERI and the Office of Career Planning and Professional Development are both working to develop relationships with organizations such as the Global Fund for Women, the Vera Institute of Justice, and Open House New York, to create opportunities for humanities doctoral students to develop a range of professional skills. These conversations on best practices for building and sustaining successful partnerships, along with those concerning curricular changes, would allow us to develop ways to integrate these types of internship experiences into our doctoral curriculum and funding package.

Fundraising

Beginning with the founding of the Office of Career Planning and Professional Development in 2013, the Graduate Center has made sustained investments of funding and staff for professional development for graduate students. As a match to the $25,000 in Planning Grant funds, we can contribute the following:

- Project director's salary at 10%, plus fringe benefits at the rate of 49%;

- Student stipend for data collection and evaluation plan at $20,800 over fall 2016 and spring 2017, plus fringe benefits at the rate of 9.5%;

- A cost share of the Graduate Center's 53% indirect cost rate, charging only 8% of this rate to the grant;

- Funds (donated by a history PhD alumna) for summer internships in nonacademic positions (6 positions at $4,000; expanded for summer 2017);

- Symplicity, a career services management tool that can be used to support both an alumni mentoring database and job and internship postings: $5000. This service will continue beyond the term of the grant and will be sponsored by the Office of Career Planning and Professional Development

Timeline

Date	Events/Tasks	Responsible Individuals
August 2016	Preliminary meeting of the Core Working Group. Goals and purposes: ● Outline priorities and set meeting schedule for the academic year. ● Develop a set of possible curricular changes to share with the Project Steering Committee. Humanities alumni data collection will begin and continue through the academic year.	Core Working Group
September 2016	Inaugural meeting of the Project Steering Committee. Goals and purposes: ● Sharing and discussion of possible curricular changes with the larger group.	Project Steering Committee
October 2016	Core Working Group meeting. Goals and purposes: ● Finalizing curricular change suggestions for sharing with a wider faculty audience in the departments.	Core Working Group
November 2016	Core Working Group meeting. Goals and purposes: ● Inaugural discussion of data collection practices. ● Draft of points and recommendations to be shared with the larger group.	Core Working Group
December 2016	Full meeting of both the Project Steering Committee and the Core Working Group. Goals and purposes: ● Examination of data collection practices. ● Creation of recommendations around data collection. ● Beginning of planning process for the Town Hall Meeting on Careers in the Humanities.	Core Working Group Project Steering Committee
January 2017	Core Working Group meeting. Goals and purposes: ● Finalize recommendations for data collection practices.	Core Working Group

	● Inaugural conversation on better partnerships with alumni and employers. Development of recommendations and strategies around this issue	
February 2017	Third Project Steering Committee meeting. Goals and purposes: ● Sharing of ideas for developing an alumni mentoring database. ● Continued planning for the Town Hall Meeting. ● Presentation of preliminary results of alumni data collection to the full group.	Project Steering Committee
March 2017	Core Working Group meeting. Goals and purposes: ● Continued conversation around partnerships. ● Finalize planning for Town Hall Meeting	Core Working Group
April 2017	Town Hall Meeting on Careers for Humanists: ● Day-long event featuring speaker and workshops geared toward career development of humanities PhDs.	Core Working Group Project Steering Committee (In attendance: additional faculty members, PhD students, and alumni)
May 2017	Core Working Group meeting. Goals and purposes: ● Drafting of white paper.	Core Working Group
June 2017	Second full meeting of both the Project Steering Committee and the Core Working Group: ● Discussion of white paper draft. Travel of three working group members to the Graduate Career Consortium Meeting.	Core Working Group Project Steering Committee
July 2017	Core Working Group meeting. Goals and purposes: ● Revision and approval of final draft of white paper. ● Develop an assessment plan for measures recommended in the white paper.	Core Working Group