SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION INSTITUTE

August 2013

Abby Smith Rumsey
Director, Scholarly Communication Institute

Reports on Rethinking Humanities Graduate Education

Following the completion in July 2011 of our last planned summer session, SCI entered a new phase of work (1 January 2012 to 31 August 2013) focusing on the following program areas:

- Scholarly Production
- Graduate Education
- The Value of the Humanities in the Digital Age

SCI undertook concentrated work in these three areas, with continued generous support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Our goals for this period included fostering further development of **new-model scholarly authoring and production processes**; rethinking and redesigning the **methodological training of humanities scholars and scholarly communication professionals** for the digital age; and **building support for the humanities** by articulating their value in and for the digital age.

These program areas evolved from conversation at recent SCI institutes. Participants' attention reflected a growing sense of urgency felt by scholars and their scholarly societies, by presses and academic publishers, and by research libraries. The urgency is not only to understand the rapidly evolving landscape of scholarly communication, but to shape it by enacting a clear vision for scholarly communication in and for the digital age, a vision that carries forward centuries-long traditions of humanities scholarship.

SCI undertook three related strands of activity to explore and test new programs for the education of scholars and scholarly communication professionals. These are designed to survey needs and opportunities, develop and articulate new models, and foster the growth of collaborative networks among organizations, institutions, and sectors of the academy with a stake in graduate and professional methodological training in the humanities.

First, SCI has administered a broad survey of humanities-trained respondents who self-identify as working in alternative academic careers—as well as their employers—to illuminate perceived gaps in graduate-level preparation. The data and a full report are available for public use and continued analysis.

Concurrently, working with the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI) and centerNet, an international consortium of digital humanities labs and centers, we are hosting a number of meetings to facilitate conversation on curricular change at the graduate level and the roles of scholarly societies, libraries, centers, and professional schools in driving that change.

Finally, SCI developed the Praxis Network, a partnership of allied but differently-inflected initiatives that are all engaged in rethinking pedagogy and campus partnerships in relation to the digital.

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SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION INSTITUTE

Rethinking Humanities Graduate Education

Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities, College Park, MD
October 22-23, 2012

Abby Smith Rumsey, Director
Scholarly Communication Institute

Background

Following the completion in July 2011 of our last planned summer session, SCI entered a new phase of work focusing on three program areas: graduate education, scholarly production, and support for the humanities. These emphases evolved from conversation at recent SCI institutes, where participants' attention reflected a growing sense of urgency to engage actively in the rapidly evolving landscape of scholarly communication on the part of scholars and their disciplinary societies, by presses and academic publishers, and by research libraries.

Developing a shared vision for reforming the humanities ecosystem is difficult given the scale of uncertainty about even near-term conditions—economic, political, technical, and social. But SCI participants and leaders have long agreed that the way to shape the future is to participate purposefully in building it, and that is the aim of SCI's current activities. SCI's goals in the graduate education work stream are to survey needs and opportunities, develop and articulate new models, and foster the growth of collaborative networks among organizations, institutions, and sectors of the academy with a stake in graduate and professional training in the humanities.

For several years, SCI has explored the role of humanities centers as sites of experimentation, innovation, and interdisciplinary reach that can foster new modes of working as well as investigate new territories for research. Following SCI 6, we have partnered with leadership from two international consortia of humanities centers, the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI) and centerNet (a network of digital humanities centers), on several fronts. This meeting was the first in our partnership to focus specifically on curricular change at the graduate level. It is our aim to identify actions that can be undertaken jointly by CHCI and centerNet to effect desired changes in graduate humanities preparation, including equipping graduates for multiple career choices. We convened scholars following both tenure-track and non-tenure-track paths at various stages of their career, together with academic administrators, to assess the landscape and scope areas ripe for intervention.

Needs & Opportunities in Humanities Graduate Education

Rethinking Graduate Education for the Twenty-first Century

Higher education, and the humanities in particular, have been significantly affected by innovations in information technology, digital research methods, new models of pedagogy, and expansion of the public humanities. They are also deeply affected by a shrinking demand for tenure-track faculty coupled with growing opportunities for intellectually rewarding careers in non-professorial roles. But graduate education has been slower to adapt to and take advantage of these changes than professional and undergraduate schools. Some participants expressed concern that, while faculty have been nimble in creating innovative curricula for undergraduates, graduate education has been remained remarkably the same over time, which means it has grown conservative. At the same time, the variety of innovative options for learning outside the formal curriculum, from campus humanities laboratories and libraries that house scholarly commons, to internships, fellowships, and summer institutes, has grown rapidly; these forms of learning may provide important lessons for our consideration. However one assesses the current and past states of graduate education, a broad consensus emerged that future graduate education will benefit from still greater innovation, flexibility, and attention to the multiple audiences that humanities can and should engage.

Further, evidence from a survey that SCI recently conducted on perceptions of career preparation in humanities graduate programs underscores a widespread sense that graduate students are too often preparing for a shrinking job market in tenure-track positions, and often receive little or no preparation for alternative paths. Can introducing our humanities graduate students to multiple careers have the dual benefit of better preparing them for the reality of twenty-first-century job markets and expanding the public footprint of humanities scholarship?

The goal of our discussion was twofold:
1. To identify opportunities to better prepare emerging scholars for a variety of professional trajectories while they achieve disciplinary expertise; and
2. To determine key points of intervention where actions undertaken by humanities centers will promote those opportunities.

Key Questions

In scoping the range of desired changes, we endeavored to answer the following questions:

1. What skills and literacies crucial for the digital age need to added to the complement of long-standing practices addressed in graduate education?
     Scholarly communication: how to collect data, analyze data, provide access to data, and preserve data (often referred to collectively as stewardship); how to make an argument and present that argument to multiple audiences

New media and data types: their uses in research, analysis, and presentation of arguments

Legal and administrative practices: basic grounding in intellectual property and privacy regulations; fundamental understanding of how higher education functions internally and in society at large.

While there is nothing new in this list—understanding how to use and curate evidence, review and circulate scholarship, adhere to best practices for attribution and privacy, and contribute to the organizational culture of higher education have forever been core to humanities education—these areas demand renewed attention as the landscape evolves under the influence of new information technologies.

2. In addition to traditional forms such as the lecture and seminar, what are the best modes for learning these literacies, matching the mode of pedagogy to learning outcomes?

    Collaborative projects that introduce students to research and/or teaching in a team, such as in the Praxis Program; this could occur in the classroom, but also in a laboratory setting, in the field, and so forth. Determining how to apportion and signal credit among collaborators is a key point of learning here, and requires special attention.

    Rotations, internships, and mentoring possibilities in professional settings such as libraries and archives, museums, university presses, and public radio stations

    Summer institutes that inculcate methodological training and technical skills, such as Digital Humanities Summer Institute, fieldschool models such as Michigan State University's Cultural Heritage Informatics fieldschool, or conceptual summer residential schools such as the School of Criticism and Theory or the Institute of French Cultural Studies at Dartmouth

    Joint projects with professional schools—law, architecture, art and design, education, public health, business, medicine, information, and theology—that expose students to other professional methodologies, modes of research and teaching, and ways of interacting with their publics

3. How do we balance acquisition of disciplinary depth and new skill development without lengthening time to degree?

    Give credit for non-classroom learning and non-traditional projects.

    Begin preparation for dissertation or other appropriate capstone project early in the curriculum, so that some work undertaken before oral or comprehensive exams would be foundational to the qualifying capstone project.

    Valorize non tenure-track career paths.

4. How do we reimagine the dissertation or other capstone project that demonstrates professional proficiency within the broader context of evolving scholarly communication practices and infrastructure?

     Expose students to publishing and peer review early.

     Consider new audiences, learning not only how to make an argument, but also how to present an argument.

5. How do we train students to address multiple audiences, using a spectrum of disciplinary expertise to engage various publics?

     Some fields, such as history and archaeology, have well-defined modes of engaging the public and public policy; they both integrate that into core disciplinary training and in some schools offer different tracks or minors to pursue them. Examples include the history departments at George Mason University and the University of California, Santa Barbara.

     Centers and research institutes could offer certificates or fellowships in various aspects of public or civic humanities (while recognizing that there is considerable divergence in the use of such terms among disciplines). Two examples are the Certificate in Public Scholarship at the University of Washington and the Public Humanities Fellows Program jointly sponsored by the New York Council for the Humanities and New York CHCI members.

Moving to Action

Centers should work in concert with humanities departments to develop pilots of innovative research and pedagogy modes, for it is departments that set standards and requirements for disciplinary training. Few centers have the power to make faculty appointments and none to grant degrees. They should also work closely with deans of graduate education and provosts, who can provide incentives for faculty and students to try new research agendas and modes of working. In formulating pilot projects to model and test innovations in graduate education, centers are ideally positioned to incubate new ideas. But they need to be thinking of the path after incubation to acceptance and normalization within their home institutions and among disciplinary societies. To move ahead, we identified several strategies to focus on as we seek answers to the following questions:

1. How can humanities centers leverage their resources both to work with campus partners and to achieve scale across institutions?

     Forge early partnerships with academic departments and other extracurricular units, such as libraries, university presses, and IT departments.

     Strengthen ties between CHCI and centerNet centers.

2. What help and incentives should be in place for faculty and departments to incorporate new research and teaching modes and valorize outcomes that lead to non-tenure track paths?

     Deans, provosts, and centers could offer development funds to departments and/or faculty to encourage participation.

External funders could provide seed funding for incubating ideas and support travel of participants to ensure geographical diversity.

Models to Look At

Duke's PhD Lab in Digital Knowledge
UVa's Praxis Program, and forthcoming Praxis Network
HASTAC
Public Humanities Fellows Program jointly sponsored by the New York Council for the Humanities and New York CHCI members
School of Criticism and Theory
Certificate in Public Scholarship at the University of Washington
MLA's guidelines for evaluating work in digital media
Michigan State University's Cultural Heritage Informatics Graduate Fellowship Program
Digital Humanities Summer Institute
#Alt-Academy

Other Considerations

In assessing the current landscape of graduate education, we are hampered by a chronic lack of information about students after graduation, especially those who have not found (or even sought) tenure-track placements in prestigious schools. How can we offer mentoring opportunities with successful graduates in non-teaching positions when few departments collect data about them? It may be easier for the university rather than departments to keep track of graduates, but by ignoring that pool of expertise, experience, and good will, we are losing one of the greatest opportunities to offer our students models to emulate.

We also do not wish to over-estimate the need for change when we see many students happy in their disciplines, pursuing single-authored research and writing. But we should not limit our students' imagination about what their knowledge is good for and how they can carry the ongoing work of the humanities into the world after graduation.

Next Steps

- Two more meetings in 2013 to identify actions and actors for pilot projects
- Joint reports from SCI, CHCI, and centerNet to inform and stimulate discussion
- Formation of a Praxis Network to share models of successful graduate training initiatives
- Analysis and report on SCI's study on career preparation (preliminary report here)

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SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION INSTITUTE

In partnership with the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI) and centerNet

Rethinking Humanities Graduate Education

Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities
University of Washington, Seattle, WA
March 11-12, 2013

MEETING REPORT

Background

In partnership with the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI) and centerNet (the international consortium of digital humanities labs and centers), the Scholarly Communication Institute (SCI) convened a meeting at the Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities. The focus of the meeting was to develop pilot projects modeling new modes of humanities graduate and professional education in the digital age. The goal of the collaboration between SCI and the two consortia is to prepare students for working in new interdisciplinarities, with new research agendas and tools, under new pedagogical models for knowledge production, and toward new career paths in a radically changing scholarly communication ecology. Pilot projects stemming from the collaboration will demonstrate how and where humanities centers can make strategic interventions in graduate education, promoting the skills and knowledge needed in the digital age and sponsoring new pedagogies to develop them.

Specific needs of humanities doctoral students were identified at a previous meeting; the results are summarized in an SCI report. Such needs fall into categories of skills and professional development that transcend specific disciplinary and departmental purviews. They include:
- Collaborative modes of knowledge production and sharing
- Fundamental literacy across a spectrum of media and data types
- Knowledge of the changing landscape of scholarly communication and higher education
- Cultivation of humanities scholars as public and professional personae, able to communicate across disciplinary and professional domains with experts and non-specialists alike

WHERE CENTERS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

At this meeting, we narrowed the field to specific projects that would have the potential for a larger impact on graduate programs. These should invite analysis and assessment of the following outcomes during and after their progress:

1. To design and implement collaborative projects that pioneer cross-campus partnerships between traditional humanities centers in CHCI and the digital centers and labs of centerNet; these projects would bring the unique assets of both types of centers together to create a whole greater than the sum of its parts.
2. To impart specific skills and literacies crucial to humanists in the twenty-first century and position them as potential leaders, whether they pursue academic careers or alternative careers in aligned humanities professions.
3. To explore new modes of research and pedagogy, blending both in-person and virtual participation, thus showcasing potentially transformative modes of blended learning and research; skills and literacies would be imparted within a context that is integrated into, not additive to, the core requirements for their dissertation or other capstone. These modes would address directly, rather than elide, the challenges of online learning and would broaden access to intellectual and technological assets not found on every campus.

These goals may be ambitious, but centers bring unique strengths to bear on humanities higher education. They expand discourse among disciplines, by acting as hubs for interdisciplinary work and as points of intersection with the extramural world. On campuses with a humanities center but no centralized digital presence, a center can act a natural gathering place for graduate students from different departments. The Simpson Center, for example, is where HASTAC graduate scholars gravitate. As such, centers are ideal sites for imparting cross-disciplinary knowledge, including technical skills (various digital and collaborative methodologies), academic professionalization (learning about the university, library, and publishing), and gaining exposure to nonacademic or "alternative academic" humanities careers.

Consortial projects would amplify these unique advantages. But to succeed in contributing important components to graduate education, they would need to fall within certain parameters. Meeting participants determined that two types of intervention—*consortial courses* and *mentoring*—could satisfy the vital criteria. They would:
- Instantiate across campuses
- Enable the development of partnerships with campus departments to ensure a path of acceptance into disciplinary curricula
- Not add time to degree
- Ensure that skills-building is embedded within a context of research and teaching, not abstracted from domain knowledge

- Begin before students commence work on their dissertations and lead into them
- Help develop intergenerational collaborations to ensure mutual transmission of knowledge between senior and junior scholars
- Focus on emerging problems and seize opportunities to demonstrate value both to a subject domain and to the larger humanities community, thus stimulating interest and imitation

Consortial Courses

Centers could organize and host courses that leverage existing intellectual and technical expertise available on a limited numbers of campuses. The process of course development would be collaborative, and include the following steps:

1. Survey the landscape to eliminate what is readily available and identify opportunities for addressing unmet needs.
2. Bring partners together to design the course, and include graduate students as well as faculty, instructional technologists, and librarians or other cultural heritage professionals in design.
3. Include a boot camp for participants to provide background and skills that individuals may be lacking.
4. Engage centers as points of connection on campus and as nodes to other campuses, particularly for asynchronous elements of coursework.
5. Develop online components and in-person teaching and mentoring.
6. Ensure the course is creditable and furthers students' preparation for their capstone/dissertation project.

Possible obstacles to the success of this approach are evident and would in fact be targets of the design phase. Working across the diverse administrations of universities, with different learning systems, different administrative practices, even differences between those that run on semester and quarter systems— these are all foreseeable obstacles that recommend pilot projects focus on partnerships among institutions in which these matters can be dealt with relatively easily. That said, in many ways designing such a course would resemble designing a multi-institutional research project. Students should be able to learn about research design in the context of developing outcomes that will help them in their dissertation work. Faculty involved will also be acquiring knowledge about skills and digital methodologies that may be unfamiliar. Bringing directors of graduate teaching and instructional technologists into the process could be a vital element of a course's success, because both have strong connections with disciplinary faculty across departments.

Centers could become constructive and rational voices in the ongoing anxious conversations about MOOCs and online education. This is an opportunity for centers to implement something that can be embraced by faculty and administration as a possible solution to recognized issues, rather than something tacked on to existing requirements—new, unrelated, aspirational, and ultimately fungible.

Mentoring

The second track of consortial activity suggested by conversations at the meeting would be mentoring opportunities, most designed to expose graduate students to non-professorial role models at various stages in their graduate career. The results of SCI's survey of graduate careers indicate a significant and unmet graduate student demand for such experience. Meeting participants agreed that internships demand serious commitment of time and resources both on the part of the graduate student and on the institution that offers the internship, and thus may not be right for a pilot project. But opportunities to learn about different careers by shadowing center-facilitated mentors are within scope. Components of such mentoring would include:

- Mentoring and shadowing at cultural institutions on campus and in the community, at other educational institutions such as two-year colleges, and in nonprofit and commercial organizations
- Exchange programs among graduate students (see the example of the Praxis Network, a developing partnership of programs that are rethinking digital humanities pedagogy and community and campus partnerships)
- Collaboration among centers on a series of conversations (both in person and online) about the twenty-first century university, twenty-first century publishing, and the twenty-first century library
- Match-making by centers, which could also serve as the locus of follow-up gatherings for a cohort to re-assemble and reflect
- Reaching out to the Federation of State Humanities Councils and similar organizations for potential mentoring opportunities

Although not requiring a consortium to effect, centers could leverage numerous mentoring opportunities on campus, such as by sponsoring a network of non-faculty PhDs working within the institution, to mentor graduate students.

Effecting Change at Different Scales

While not directly germane to the development of consortial pilot projects, meeting participants identified opportunities to further change through strategic alliances and actions.

- Directors of graduate teaching, responsible for graduate students' pedagogical development, are natural allies and a voice that departments listen to.
- Graduate students are also voices to which departmental faculty are attuned; helping students to articulate their needs is a good strategy for developing faculty buy-in.
- Renaming what graduate students already do is an important part of the process of altering expectations; for example, student self-organization is collaboration; student blogging is the development of professional and public personae; writing a dissertation is a form of project management.
- Scholarly societies may also be important allies; for example, the Modern Language Association (MLA) could be a partner through its Task Force on Doctoral Study and Committee on Information Technology.

The group generated many additional ideas about effecting change in graduate education at different scales. We have synthesized them and created [a document](#) for people to share, annotate, add to, and implement.

OUTSTANDING ISSUES

Inevitably, discussions of changing graduate education raise larger issues of the changes in higher education that affect graduate study, but over which centers have no particular power. For example, the issue of educating graduate students for non-academic humanities work exposes serious fault lines between research and applied tracks. The pilot project of CHCI and centerNet centers will focus on the PhD; but participants agreed that revisiting the role of the MA may reveal new ways to address many of these same challenges. Why is the dissertation still the default capstone project? As one participant said, the problem is not that students spend too much time writing their dissertations; is that spend too much time *not* writing their dissertations. We should accelerate the process where possible. But given trends in scholarly communication, we may legitimately question the value of writing a traditional dissertation as either a capstone to graduate education or the beginning of careers.

Is there any way to rethink the first years of graduate education to provide appropriate disciplinary coverage, while at the same time allowing a student to work towards a capstone project? For example, could students matriculate into a general humanities program where they start their basic education and move into a discipline after they have built a defined skill and knowledge base? There are models in biomedical science and engineering, where students are admitted to an umbrella program comprising four departments and then are "tracked out" into specific departments over time. In practical terms, this flies in the face of how funding for humanities is controlled by departments and based on teaching labor. But funding models can and do change. One can even imagine students assembling their own elements for a graduate degree, elements that might include a certificate for teaching in digital environments, service on an interdisciplinary research team, a portfolio of conference presentations and workshops, and so forth, in addition to core requirements.

The current paradigm of humanities graduate preparation contrasts interestingly with professional schools. The former are organized around disciplinary configurations, whereas professional schools (such as law, business, information, or theology) are organized around problems. Is there room for adjustment, to more closely align the professional training of humanities scholar-practitioners along such lines? (This is the model of the practice-based PhD in media studies at USC.)

This provocative question provoked further reflections about how to align the development of individual careers with the development of domains of humanities expertise in the digital age. Would the articulation of the "grand challenges" facing humanities prove a useful heuristic both to advance knowledge and open doors to constituents beyond our narrow disciplines?

Another provocative suggestion of the "20-year dissertation" further elaborated a vision of graduate students working on research activities that are essentially collaborative and contribute to the building-up of a field. Such work might be analogous to a rotation in a library or museum (which are 200-year projects, one might say) or to multigenerational editing projects, such as those remediating core texts for use in digital environments.

Centers recognize that they will not be changing dissertation requirements or rewriting curricula. But they want to take the lead in exploring alternative educational modes that may, in the end, transform humanities education. They are willing and able to take risks that neither departments nor disciplinary organizations can afford, and are thereby able to expand the imaginative possibilities for change. There is significant pent-up demand for change, which a partnership between traditional and digital humanities centers can tap into. By creating pilots that invite the participation of students, faculty, and staff, centers will be further demonstrating their value as fulcrums of change at the campus level, able to develop potential paths for hybrid learning and research for the digital age.

SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION INSTITUTE

In partnership with the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI) and centerNet

Rethinking Graduate Education, Meeting 2

**Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities
University of Washington, Seattle, WA
March 11-12, 2013**

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