A&S Strategic Research Planning Initiative – Continued Divisional Research Discussion for Arts & Humanities (March 29, 2024)

Introducing Charge

Strategic Research Steering Committee reaching out to faculty to discuss areas of opportunity and growth for research to present to Dean Acampora

What we are trying to do is to put meat on the bones of what support should look like in meaningful and structural ways – what to bring to the Dean's attention. This meeting will be more content driven – looking for areas Dean is not already aware of.

Faculty are doing amazing things – how can we expand those possibilities so everyone can prosper in our research? Dream and brainstorm of ways faculty can be more supported.

Investing in faculty we have here now. Thinking broadly about what you all want.

Introductions around the room

- Administrative support for grants – win-win if we pay attention how programs can train graduate students to be humanities research assistants
- Humanities research needs support
- The library is the laboratory for the humanities
- Digital humanities is a good idea – not for everyone, but advanced research using digital tools
- More frequent research leave – 6 months - would make a big difference
- What is the vision coming out of A&S? Why is it hard to find a shared intellectual vision for everyone? Only shared grievances – especially administratively
- Basic structural problem – not many ways to come together outside of departments – IHGC has done a lot – but it doesn't touch the whole life of the college at this time
- Need to create a space/culture that fosters intellectual interaction across A&S – IHGC writ large.
- Each faculty comes with particular perspectives that together can produce synergies that cannot be predicted
- How do we scale up? Small dinner / lab interactions work – how do we make that bigger?
- Suggestion for regular lunches – facilitating small interactions
- No faculty cafeteria anymore – No effective faculty club space
- Grounds for Arts and performance so far away from humanities
- Lunch club to meet people sounds nice
- Pavilion VII not adequate

- Spaces of congregation have become fewer at UVA unfortunately
- Would be wonderful to have inviting space like IHGC for people to congregate
- Center for Humanities? - maybe if Old Cabell becomes available?
- Idea of vision – space and capital is one thing – how to make time to attend? That is crucial too – faculty value unstructured time to produce ideas.
- State insistence that classrooms be occupied all day has been remarkably destructive
- Friday is now the day for meetings and group work – no time during the rest of the week.
- Faculty don't really get to know their neighbors. Walking through NCH seeing the posters on the doors etc. Thinking "I wish I could meet these people"
- Idea: Friday brown bag lunch presentations – informal opportunity for community and growth
- Showing prospective grad students around – IHGC – only one room, but so much intellectual activity going on there.
- Idea: rotating talks in Old Cabell every Friday?
- Not just about research faculty – all faculty doing great work, and should all be included in space to meet and get to know each other – small groups?
- Coordinating with all of the events going on at UVA is challenging – trying not to overlap
- Creating a central calendar of divisional events would be great!
- Research time – expectation for tenure track faculty to spend 40% on research. This often feels like stealing from other duties to undergrads, grad students, etc.
- Would it be possible to have accountability for faculty to use that time for themselves? How to make scheduling meetings less intensive
- Tracking all service and commitments can be administratively awful for faculty
- Spanish remade their graduate program – modeled on UChicago – one comprehensive exam includes someone from outside of the department – great for graduate students creating relationships outside of dept – also helpful for faculty
- Thinking about ways that graduate programs can interlock
- Broad similarities between humanities and social sciences – depends mostly on time
- Many graduate programs already have a large exam apparatus
- Work in progress events – inviting more people in
- Book in progress events for junior faculty – invite 2 or 3 people to read manuscript – not just in the department
- Desire to make more mentoring available for faculty

- Idea of "society of fellows" – can be very exclusive and elite – how can we create something that is not closed off, but more accessible and rotating?
- Would need to use name other than "society of fellows"
- 15 person cohort every semester = 150 people in 5 years
- "Chairapy" Chair peer support meetings facilitated by former chair, no deans present whereas current Chair leadership series at A&S facilitated by associate deans
- Would a "society of fellows" be only within A&H or across the college? Room is thinking just A&H.
- Transparency has historically been an issue with similar societies
- Shannon fellows – started by the Provost – originally created to bring top talent to strengthen departments. https://provost.virginia.edu/subsite/shannon-center
- Desire for more small grant opportunities
- Incentives for small grants to work with undergraduates – mentoring over the summer for example.
- IHGC does have grant calls twice a year, 2 fellowships, 1 lab – very small, could be scaled up
- Request for IHGC website to show grant opportunities etc.
- Arts – not many grants apply
- Collaboration between arts and humanities in research
- Foundation support structure at UVA not optimal – demotivating – the Dean is aware and plans to change that
- Coming up with outline of what a "society of fellows" would look like in Arts & Humanities – working from the IHGC to scale up
- Faculty book event coming up soon
- What is the Institute for Advanced Studies and Culture? https://iasculture.org/
- Faculty hesitate to create something new
- Support for IHGC scaled up – central location like Old Cabell, place to meet
- Support for Global Spanish research expansion

Similar models mentioned for "society of fellows" or lunch club structure

- University of Connecticut – more robust humanities
- UCA system, not just for ivy league universities
- UNC IAH fellowship program,
- UNC IAH – fellows write thank you letters to sponsoring families
- UNC IAH – cohorts of faculty building relationships and mentoring – opportunities to talk to folks outside of departments

- UChicago
- Chicago Divinity school Wednesday Lunch schedule cleared
- Carleton college assembly
- Cornell college assembly, opening time for shared activities by having a designated clear spot on everyone's calendar
- UWashington
- Yale (spot of congregation)