**A&S Strategic Research Planning Initiative - Town Hall for Arts & Humanities (Feb 29, 2024)**

**Facilitated by:** Laura Galloway

Introduction + Slideshow Presentation

I. Overview of Strategic Research Planning initiative:
   a. "The initiative will assess our strengths, benchmark our performance, and articulate a vision for what research excellence looks like in A&S, and will recommend specific actions to achieve it and measure progress over the next 5-7 years." "Expand the impact and size of our research footprint."
II. Introduction of the steering committee, divisional representatives, and research cores. Stated focus of the Strategic Research Planning Initiative
   a. Identify focal areas of strategic investment
   b. Identify constraints: changes in practice and resources to enable success in research, scholarship and creative practices
   c. $25 million set aside in upcoming budget to support outcome of this initiative
III. The process is faculty driven – ideas collected from faculty across divisions, then shaped by steering committee to form a plan to present to the dean. Process to date:
IV. Faculty focus groups to gather thoughts on constraints and on areas of research strength (one per division)
V. Survey to
   i. a) determine areas of strength and opportunity
   ii. b) assess constraints
VI. Town halls to discuss survey responses in areas of opportunity
VII. Survey Results:
   a. 619 A&S faculty invited to take survey – anyone with research in their job description
   b. 51.2% response rate
   c. 52.8% response from Arts & Humanities
   d. Shown to be representative across the ranks
   e. $25 million set aside in upcoming budget to support outcome of this initiative
   f. **A&H faculty ranked the biggest constraints to their research in 4 categories. These findings will be used by the Dean to identify where to invest this spring.**

        **i. Resources: Summer Funding**

       **ii. Infrastructure: Pre-award staff support**

     **iii. Collaboration/Communication: Cohort, mentorship, or residency**

     **iv. Equipment/Training: Spaces for research**

VIII. Focal Areas for Strategic Investment: open-ended questions grouped by 5 themes that emerged in the survey analysis. These themes emerged from the Arts & Humanities faculty responses.

    a. Looking for participation today to build out focal areas of strategic investment

    b. Building out ideas grouped by AI processing and survey analysis – do these themes resonate? Are they exciting?

    c. Areas already invested in ongoing initiatives not included for today although they are important

    d. What latent areas of study that with some investment UVA can become known for?

IX. 5 Themes for Arts & Humanities

    a. *Digital Humanities and Technology Integration* (data sciences, digital analysis, tech advances in humanities research)

    b. *Interdisciplinary Arts and Humanities* (blending arts with humanities scholarship)

    c. *Global Spanish Studies* (study of global Spanish arts, literatures, cultures)

    d. *Publicly Engaged Scholarship* (contemporary societal issues ex: )

    e. *Disability Studies* (bringing together more disciplines, media studies, literature studies etc.)

Open Comment Period

I. *Digital Humanities and Technology Integration*

    a. We have a DH center, not to compete with IHGC but collaborating with them. DH center is evolving with the Library – looking for short-term small grants

    b. A series of workshops could be helpful

    c. What about technology integration with DH? It's already about technology.

    d. There are obstacles to making research more visible. It may not be obvious to people, but there needs to be more emphasis on born-digital arts. This is not what we're known for, but we could be.

    e. Monolingualism in DH is a real problem; we could integrate this more. Public Scholarship will be served by the rest of the points.

II. *Interdisciplinary Arts and Humanities*

a. Interdisciplinary Arts and Humanities; these are interdivision but what about within the division?

b. Opportunity for design in digital humanities – we don't have a design school, but we have talented people, and we could be known for design.

c. Arts integration is a big opportunity for creative thinking

d. We are good at humanities – first rate! We shouldn't be MI, we shouldn't be TX, we should be UVA!

e. Performance arts can use investments so that we can bring them up to speed with the high level of everything else.

III. *Global Spanish Studies*

    a. Many faculty already doing work in global Spanish, but siloed in different departments, concrete work would be hugely beneficial

    b. Conversations ongoing with people in different departments about global SPAN studies (5 minute presentation that is available for anyone who wants it) arts aesthetics contact with practice and research (RELI, ENGL, SPAN, HIST, SOCI) who are already doing field defining work – just pulling them all together

IV. *Publicly Engaged Scholarship*

    a. Colleagues doing humanistic research because it is connected to various forms of performance and it is embedded in the community

    b. Intertwined with Digital Humanities

    c. Public Humanities – research that is grounded in community and creates community is the future

    d. Aesthetic theory and practice related to publicly engaged scholarship. We need both to perform, create, and interpret the meaning for a larger public.

V. *Disability Studies*

VI. Additional Comments

    a. Notably these themes don't include AI

    b. They all seem interdisciplinary which is encouraging; recognizing and rewarding

    c. There is an environmental humanities working group that is already interdisciplinary but needs funding.

    d. Conversation has been around organization and teaching, but the question is really about research investment – how to make research more visible – accelerating and enhancing current scholarship, not necessarily creating new initiatives

    e. Settling into opposition between structure and content; structure is not more staff; what are the ways that we can put ideas into practice; how can they be

visualized and presented. How do you put an idea into the world and how can you materialize in radically different ways together?

    f. Investment might look like bringing together clusters to see what comes out of bringing people together; structures to bring this about; instead of restructuring pie, think of new ways to serve it.

VII. Procedural comments

    a. Infrastructure

        i. Our most consistent challenge is time to do interdisciplinary work; if this is the future, we want to make sure there are course buyouts and time off.

        ii. Infrastructure and administrative bits can't be pulled out; we know that tasks are harder because of the way that the structure is set up; how can we decide?

        iii. Time management creates a lot of difficulties, especially if you run grants - the administration creates problems that you have to solve. One possible structure for this is an ongoing workshop culture; if every year there's rounds for applications to run multiple year workshops. This will create space for those who want to do interdisciplinary work

        iv. It's harder to work with other schools outside of A&S; how can we make that happen?

        v. Graduate students are struggling with need for better structure for interdisciplinary research

    b. Breadth of themes:

        i. The first 2 themes are too broad and vague. What sort of interdisciplinary? How will we make it work? The other three are guidance to programmatic initiatives but top two are too broad

        ii. First two points are too vague - they could be anything. The A&H especially at UVA are both siloed and integrated at the same time

        iii. Need some sort of anchor for these themes

    c. Language:

        i. Suggestion for another session to fine tune terms of the themes

        ii. Can we think of these themes as actions with verbs? Alternative to "investing in x".

    d. Shiny new ideas vs existing strengths:

        i. Not sure what to say outside of my own department. Not prepared to speak about leveraging A&S as a whole.

ii. Deans need big ideas to hang their hat on; Deans needs big ideas for donors. We all love all our previous deans, but they had ideas of their own that they pushed through. This dean to her credit has asked the faculty for ideas. Exciting to have a dean who cares about the arts & humanities and has asked how to do that.

iii. Shiny new idea and building up strength for what we already have. Shiny new ideas are hard to come up with.

iv. Often conflict allocating funds between new shiny ideas and bolstering existing strengths