

Recommendations for Enhancing Humanities Funding at MU

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Introduction

This report recommends seven objectives and fifteen action steps toward increasing the amount of humanities funding, and hence, the volume of humanities research, activities, and professional outcomes, at the University of Missouri-Columbia. This plan is a follow-up to a document titled “Report on the State of Research in the Humanities,” prepared in November 1999 by Martin Camargo during his tenure as Office of Research Faculty Fellow. Based on interviews with a wide cross-section of humanities faculty, Dr. Camargo identified five broad areas of concern: the uniqueness of the humanities relative to other grant-seeking sectors, dissemination of information on available grants and application procedures, absence of a “grant culture,” ability to replace faculty on leave, and University institutional or structural issues outside the control of the Office of Research.

The conclusions and recommendations in the Camargo report served as a baseline for the present document. In building upon that earlier work, this report drops some of the original recommendations, alters or combines others into single recommendations, and adds new action items. A draft of the conclusions and recommendations contained in these pages was used to initiate additional discussions with faculty and administrators, including some of the same individuals consulted by Dr. Camargo. The final plan incorporates seven key objectives which are then fleshed out by delineating action steps, responsible party(ies), target dates, and performance indicators. The seven key objectives include the following, in no particular order of priority:

- Improve sensitivity of internal research processes to the needs of humanities faculty
- Raise the quality of external funding proposals
- Increase awareness of external funding opportunities among humanities faculty
- Encourage external funding proposals
- Enhance the presence and visibility of the humanities in the University infrastructure
- Encourage service on national panels
- Promote increased external funding for humanities centers

The actions proposed on the following pages are specifically geared towards increasing external funding support for the humanities, with particular focus on activities relating to the work and programs of the Office of Research. There are a variety of other major potential humanities initiatives at MU that we would endorse but which are beyond the scope of this report. These efforts would include increasing the number of humanities faculty, enhancing promising humanities activities, establishing interdisciplinary humanities centers, supporting predoctoral and postdoctoral humanities fellowships, strengthening the humanities in MU strategic planning efforts, and assessing the status and future of humanities departments on campus.

Summary of Objectives and Action Steps

Action Step	Responsible Party(ies)	Target Dates	Performance Indicators
Objective 1: Improve the sensitivity of internal research processes to the needs of humanities faculty			
1.1. Review internal forms and procedures to make them more "user-friendly" to humanities applicants and their hardware/software preferences	Office of Research, Research Council, Research Board	Implemented and ongoing	Declining number of complaints from applicants Electronic forms appropriate to both PC and MAC users
1.2. Revise descriptions of internal programs to clarify their relevance to the humanities and performing arts	Office of Research, Research Council	Implemented and ongoing	Few or no complaints about internal programs excluding or being irrelevant to humanists
Objective 2: Raise the quality of external funding proposals			
2.1. Employ a grant writer in the humanities	College of Arts & Science, Schools of Law and Journalism, Office of Research	2001-2002	Grant writer hired to assist faculty in seeking and applying for humanities grants
2.2 Build files of successful/model proposals (internal & external)	Office of Grant Writing	Implemented and ongoing	Examples of successful humanities proposals to key public and private funders
2.3 Recognize and support "grant mentors" by (1) identifying departmental mentors, and (2) providing them with periodic training	Department chairs, Office of Research, Provost's Office	Ongoing	Increasing sessions on grants and grant-writing in chair training sessions and University/College mentoring programs
Objective 3: Increase awareness of external funding opportunities among humanities faculty			
3.1 Attain full faculty participation in Community of Science (COS)	Office of Grant Writing	2001-02	Enroll at least 90 percent of humanities faculty in COS
3.2. Advise and assist faculty in refining their COS profiles	Office of Grant Writing	Implemented and ongoing	Few or no complaints that COS Funding Alert messages are irrelevant
3.3. Maintain an archive of relevant funding announcements	Office of Grant Writing (eventually, humanities grant writers)	Ongoing	Established and advertised location of files and a completed plan for their maintenance
3.4. Establish electronic distribution list for dissemination of humanities funding opportunities	Office of Grant Writing (eventually, humanities grant writers)	2000-2001	Electronic distribution list established by February, 2001 and updated every 6 months

Action Step	Responsible Party(ies)	Target Dates	Performance Indicators
3.5 Link funding sources to Office of Research and departmental Web pages	Office of Grant Writing (eventually, humanities grant writers), humanities Web masters	Ongoing	Current links on the Office of Research Web site, percentage of departmental Web pages with links either to relevant Office of Research pages or directly to funding sources
Objective 4: Encourage external funding proposals			
4.1. Give due credit to all grant applications (including unsuccessful proposals)	Deans and department chairs	2001-2002 academic year	All proposals included in annual reports and factored into salary increases and other performance measures
4.2 Track and publicize the application success rate in humanities disciplines	OSPA, deans and department chairs	2001-2002	Annual reports on success rates by discipline
Objective 5: Enhance the presence and visibility of the humanities in the University infrastructure			
5.1. Continue position of half-time Faculty Fellow with expertise in humanities	Office of Research	Ongoing	Continuing presence of an individual with humanities experience in the Faculty Fellow position
5.2. Feature humanities stories in University publications	Office of Research, News Bureau, Publications & Alumni Communication	Implemented and ongoing	Establish a baseline from which the number of stories on humanities scholars and research in University publications can be tracked
5.3. Communicate humanities aspects of the <i>Master Plan</i> to humanities faculty	Office of Research	Ongoing	Presentations to the Arts and Science chairs, Journalism faculty, Law faculty, and individual department meetings
Objective 6: Encourage service on national panels			
6.1. Recommend and reward faculty for panel service	Deans and department chairs	Ongoing	Increasing numbers of faculty serving as reviewers and on national panels
Objective 7: Promote increased external funding for humanities centers			
7.1. Link humanities centers with foundation, corporate, and other sources of funding	Deans, Office of Research, Office of Development and Alumni Relations	Ongoing	Increased level of extramural support for centers
7.2. Encourage and strengthen fundraising for the humanities by the MU Development Office	Office of Development and Alumni Relations, Office of Research	2001-02	Placement of humanities projects on development priority lists, increased inauguration of humanities fundraising efforts

Objective 1: Improve the sensitivity of internal research processes to the needs of humanities faculty

Action Step 1.1. Review internal forms and procedures to make them more “user-friendly” to humanities applicants and their hardware/software preferences.

There are a variety of internal grant opportunities for the support of humanities research. Across all of MU’s primary internal research grant programs—Research Council, Faculty International Travel, Research Leave, and Summer Research Fellowships—humanities faculty receive more than 60 percent of the total awards made. However, continuous vigilance must be exercised to make sure that program descriptions and guidelines continue to stress their appropriateness to the humanities. Humanities representatives on Research Council and Research Board should be especially encouraged to review the guidelines and public materials. Necessary changes should be implemented each summer during the preparation of the following academic year’s guidelines.

Action Step 1.2. Revise descriptions of internal programs to clarify their relevance to the humanities and performing arts.

The grant application forms themselves must be understandable and user-friendly across the University’s disciplines. Research Council does not seem to have any general problems. Research Board applications, though, require more use of electronic submission forms. These forms are currently more difficult to access from Mac computers—the preferred hardware in the College of Arts and Science and among some other faculty as well. Efforts must be made to resolve any problems that appear to deny equal access to programs by members of specific departments and colleges.

Objective 2: Raise the quality of external funding proposals

Action Step 2.1. Employ a grant writer in the humanities.

A full-time individual with responsibility to assist applicants pursuing humanities funding would likely increase the extramural proposal submission and success rates. The Office of Research will provide 50 percent cost-share for the first year of such a position and will maintain a nominal cost-share thereafter. The College of Arts and Science and the Schools of Law and Journalism are appropriate places to begin with a shared position. Eventually, we should seek to place grant writers in each of these divisions.

Some thought should be given to how the role of this grant writer might differ from the roles of those in other disciplines. For example, a relatively higher proportion of humanities funding comes from private sector sources. A much closer relationship with Development Office personnel might therefore be appropriate for this grant writer than for those associated with other areas. Further, individuals in these positions should expect to interact with groups of faculty involved in new collaborative humanities efforts (e.g., Center for Literary Arts). As humanities “centers” are established, help will be needed in identifying funding sources as well as budgetary

assistance for faculty who typically have little experience in this area (in part because many humanities grants are fellowships and require little or no budget expertise).

Action Step 2.2. Build files of successful/model proposals (internal & external).

The Office of Grant Writing and Publications has assigned a student worker to maintain and update model proposal files. All successful applicants to internal grant programs are contacted and asked permission to include their proposals. The internal grants file is thus an ongoing effort. The model proposal file of externally funded grants is more difficult to maintain in the humanities, as applicants for some of the major fellowships are not always known to the Office of Research. Since many of these awards are made directly to the faculty member rather than through MU, there is no certain way to identify these applicants, although working through the Research Administrators and department chairs may yield sufficiently comprehensive results. As the University moves toward Web-based annual performance reports, such tracking needs may be considerably lessened.

Action Step 2.3. Recognize and support “grant mentors” by (1) identifying departmental mentors, and (2) providing them with periodic training

Extramural funding is difficult to obtain, yet the practice of writing successful grant applications is not normally taught in humanities graduate programs. Ironically, researchers in the humanities, where funding rates tend to be especially low, are less likely than researchers in any other sector to have participated in grant proposal writing activities as graduate students. New humanities faculty are also less likely to engage in collaborative efforts with other faculty, denying them any “apprenticeship” system. While some individuals learn the craft and achieve success, others are either intimidated by the process (or prospect) or fail repeatedly in their attempts to secure funding.

On balance, the use of faculty “mentors” for new faculty is increasingly common. In many cases, however, mentors may have the required expertise in teaching and research but not in the process of securing extramural funding. Department chairs should recognize the need to provide guidance for new faculty and unsuccessful applicants. Within each department, one or two amenable faculty with proven expertise can be identified as “grant mentors” and this designation made known to those who could benefit from it. Further, departmental chairs and college deans should recognize this assistance as a service provided by experienced faculty. Mentors would occupy a role complementary to professional grant writers. Mentor relationships would focus to a greater degree on disciplinary issues related to successful funding applications and provide an informal and flexible process for discussion and review of proposal ideas and drafts.

An alternative plan would be the designation of a group of four to six volunteer faculty (either within one college or across colleges) as a Humanities Proposal Review Group. A system could then be developed for this Group to review grant proposals in their draft stages. Applicants would submit drafts in advance of program deadlines in order to receive comments in time to revise their proposals.

Objective 3: Increase awareness of external funding opportunities among humanities faculty

Action Steps 3.1 Attain full faculty participation in COS, and 3.2. Advise and assist faculty in refining COS their profiles.

The Office of Grant Writing and Publications has been working diligently to enroll as many faculty as possible into the Community of Science (COS), which allows faculty to receive messages about funding opportunities tailored to their research interests. Full participation by humanities faculty in this program is a relevant goal.

It is important to offer continuous support for faculty who need assistance in updating their COS profiles. To ensure that faculty are aware of this service, the OGWP can provide a tag about this service on normal messages. In order to focus attention to the possibility of revising profiles, it may also prove useful to send a message sent every six months to all COS participants. Further, we should continue to offer special sessions on COS at workshops and others events focusing on research funding.

Actions Steps 3.3 Maintain an archive of relevant funding announcements, 3.4 Establish an electronic distribution list for dissemination of humanities funding opportunities, and 3.5 Link funding sources to Office of Research and departmental Web pages.

Humanities funding sources include “regular,” known agency programs (e.g., NEH, ACLS), programs with shifting emphasis areas (e.g., Howard Foundation), and sources that are relatively unknown (e.g., Asian-American Center). In order to facilitate faculty knowledge about funding sources, a few related steps should be taken.

The first step is to establish and maintain hard copy files with up-to-date information, guidelines, and announcements on the most important funders. The existence of such files should be periodically broadcast to humanities faculty.

While some faculty prefer to view hard copies of program announcements, other faculty rely on program announcements received through electronic services and databases (e.g. Community of Science). Regretfully, no service is entirely comprehensive when it comes to humanities funding opportunities. Two steps are recommended to meet this gap: an electronic distribution list for humanities faculty and up-to-date links to humanities funders on relevant campus Web sites.

An electronic distribution list for MU humanities faculty can be compiled by IATS at a reasonable cost and then maintained by the Office of Grant Writing and Publications. At appropriate times during the year, Office of Research staff will send messages to list members with news of important agency deadlines, links to funding agencies with upcoming deadlines, news about internal research grant programs, and other relevant information. Care should be taken not to overuse the list, nor should it be employed as a discussion arena. Messages will generally be delivered quarterly, with special notices used for unique and important events (e.g., humanities funding workshop).

The Web sites of the Office of Research and humanities departments should be evaluated periodically to verify the existence of appropriate internal and external funder links. As needed, computer personnel in the Office of Research will work with departmental Web masters to add necessary linkages. Links should be established with primary humanities funding agencies (e.g., NEH, ACLS, Guggenheim), with other web sites that specialize in accumulating information on humanities funding in general (e.g., H-Net, Humanities HUB), and possibly with other University Web pages (e.g. University of California-Berkeley and University of Iowa) with good listings of funding sources.

At this point, a MU-generated guide to humanities funding is not recommended. The Office of Research subscribes to a number of commercially-available guides, in both hard copy and electronic formats, which address this purpose. Given the shifting sands of humanities research and sponsoring agencies, the Web links recommended above would be a more effective approach.

Objective 4: Encourage external funding proposals

Action Step 4.1. Give due credit to all grant applications (including unsuccessful proposals).

At present, this practice is not common in humanities departments. There are two main costs to the present pattern. First, humanities faculty receive no credit and therefore have little or no incentive to pursue external funding, especially given the fact that many of the appropriate sources are extremely competitive and that proposal preparation requires a major investment of energy. A second cost of current practice is that department chairs, deans, senior mentors, and others cannot identify faculty with histories of unsuccessful efforts. These efforts demonstrate interest but also the need for mentoring or other assistance. As programs for assisting faculty are established and grow, it is critical to be able to pinpoint needs.

At this point, some faculty report no unsuccessful applications. In a few departments, non-funded external proposals appear to be included on annual reports, but typically do not report unfunded proposals to internal programs. Failure to include non-funded proposals on annual reports likely also acts as a disincentive for proposal preparation, as efforts to attract research funding that fail are viewed as total costs and serve no positive utility for faculty. As long as there remains a stigma of “failure” in tandem with possible real costs (e.g., in the form of lower salary increases) for having applications rejected, faculty are less likely to submit proposals or to want anyone else to know they are applicants. This culture also inhibits other dimensions of the grant writing process, from the hiring of humanities grant writers to their use by faculty who want to remain anonymous (until they find success).

Action Step 4.2. Track and publicize the application success rate in humanities disciplines.

Humanities faculty are often discouraged from ever applying for grants by reports of extremely low success rates. In truth, rates vary across funding programs, academic disciplines, and campuses. Although it is difficult to track humanities grant applications because not all proposals pass through OSPA, we will attempt to track these as much as possible. We may discover, and then publicize and highlight, that some proposals are funded and that success rates are no less than those for the top journals in a given field.

We should try to be as comprehensive as possible in tracking individual proposals and fellowship applications. There appears to be more humanities funding on campus than is generally known and publicized. These gaps in reporting result in underestimates of humanities funding and less momentum to attract the attention and involvement of other faculty in seeking external funding. The implementation of Web-based annual performance reports may help mitigate this problem as long as the necessary resources, data and personnel exist to mine this information. Another possibility for closing this reporting gap is the creation and implementation of an “Individual Proposal Grant Data Form” for faculty who are not required to use the regular Grant Data Form and do not route their proposals through OSPA.

Objective 5: Enhance the presence and visibility of the humanities in the University infrastructure

Action Step 5.1. Continue position of half-time Faculty Fellow with expertise in humanities

Since the Summer of 1999, the Office of Research has employed a Faculty Fellow (Martin Camargo from August-December 1999, and Sandy Rikoon since February 2000) with expertise in the humanities. This individual works with the Research Council, other committees, and special projects to support humanities research. Over the past fifteen months, the value of this position has been frequently demonstrated, and a number of faculty and administrators have given positive feedback to the Office of Research. New interdisciplinary initiatives with strong humanities dimensions, including the Missouri River Institute and activities related to the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial celebration, are indicative of the types of special projects that can be pursued through investment in the Faculty Fellow’s position.

Action Step 5.2. Feature humanities stories in University publications.

Humanities-related stories are appearing with more frequency in *Illumination* (published by the Office of Research) and other campus publications. Additional efforts to communicate story ideas to editors and writers in other offices may enhance the frequency of humanities-related pieces in journals produced by the Office of Publications and Alumni Communications, News Bureau, and other outlets. For example, the College of Arts and Science has its own publication—*Mosaics*—and no doubt other units on campus produce annual reports and documents appropriate for highlighting humanities research accomplishments. Additionally, increased public exposure of University efforts in the humanities would result from efforts to make print media stories available through appropriate missouri.edu Web sites.

Action Step 5.3. Communicate humanities aspects of the Master Plan to humanities faculty.

The humanities are mentioned in several places in the *Master Plan for Research and Technology Development*, but Office of Research activities in this area are more diverse than is evident in the brief summaries of activities provided in that document. Attention to the humanities is implicit in many action steps which are stated in more general terms. Presentations to department chairs, colleges, and relevant departments should explain the applicability of the *Master Plan* to the humanities.

Objective Six: Encourage service on national panels

Action Step 6.1. Recommend and reward faculty for panel service.

The benefits from panel service range from providing service to your discipline to the ability to more successfully prepare one's own research grant proposals. Panel service also may involve opportunities to influence program policies and establish connections leading to useful future collaborations. It is unknown if panel service is at all actively discouraged at MU, but clearly more efforts need to be made to both encourage service and to recognize the contributions that such service brings to the participants, their departments, and the institution as a whole. Department chairs and deans are the best internal conduits to advocate panel service and ensure that such service receives appropriate recognition in annual reviews of salary and academic progress. On their part, faculty should be encouraged to submit their names as prospective reviewers to appropriate agencies and programs. They should also seek out conversations at meetings with agency staff to discover opportunities to participate in the review process.

Objective Seven: Promote increased external funding for humanities centers

Action Step 7.1. Link humanities centers with foundation, corporate, and other sources of funding.

While faculty at MU do reasonably well in terms of individual fellowship proposals, they have rarely received major grants or larger levels of multi-year support for collaborative interdisciplinary efforts. With the formation of new centers at MU (e.g., Center for Literary Arts, Missouri River Institute), it will be increasingly possible and opportune to seek institutional and program support from a wider array of foundations, corporations, and agencies. The Faculty Fellow and the Office of Grant Writing in the Office of Research can enhance the likelihood of new and increased funding proposals through many of the action steps (e.g., humanities distribution list for grant information) described already. In addition, the Office of Research should convene a meeting of humanities center directors with the major objective of identifying extramural funding challenges and potential solutions.

Action Step 7.2. Encourage and strengthen fundraising for the humanities by the MU Development Office

The responsibility for securing external funding for humanities projects and programs should not rest solely on the shoulders of humanities faculty. Institutional support is also necessary to identify and access potential sources of funding, including alumni, corporations, and foundations. The MU Office of Development is an appropriate place to seek funding for infrastructure, human resources, and programs. Up to this point, University efforts through this office have focused on other academic sectors and priorities. Work should be undertaken to evaluate the inclusion of humanities-related needs in present campaigns. Further, sufficient needs related to the arts and humanities suggest the appropriateness of hiring a Development Officer specifically to work on fundraising activities in these areas, with a special focus on foundation and alumni sponsors.