Elevating Arts and Humanities at CU Boulder

The role of the Arts and Humanities on campus arose early in Academic Futures town hall discussions. At a university with such strong science and engineering programs, there is the sense among some that Arts and Humanities (AHUM) are less valued, both by leaders and by the community. And yet, without a strong AHUM foundation, there is no university – and AHUM is critical to developing our students.

The Ideal Campus. When asked what an ideal campus would look like in 10 years, if we demonstrably elevated the Arts and Humanities, faculty painted a clear picture. "We could be an institution that supports and celebrates connection, innovation, and collaboration between Arts and Sciences, between campus and community, between campus and industry, between innovators (arts, scientists, entrepreneurs in business, tech) and faculty and students, and as citizens and participants in a global community." "We could be a fully integrated university in which all of the parts know and understand how they work together… In an ideal future, departments will provide disciplinary training, as rigorous as it is currently, but will consistently emphasize partnership as a way to integrating that disciplinary knowledge with other activities." "In essence, the overall messaging for the university is that we would be a place that teaches knowledge but also teaches partnership, as 90% of all work is based in a mix of skill sets working together. This also means that the value of liberal arts will be truly held - not only referred to."

Where are we now? There is a general sense that there are great things happening across campus, but many feel siloed and isolated. There is a lack of collaboration, both within AHUM, and between AHUM and other parts of campus. There is the perception that AHUM is not valued, but it is not clear if that is really true. Some of this originates from a campus narrative that is seen as STEM heavy. Challenges identified include:

- **Communication.** AHUM struggles to communicate their goals, relevance and benefits to students and parents, as well as to the campus community.
- **The AHUM Community** sees themselves as often on the defensive. They identify trust issues in regard to campus leadership, which results in AHUM clinging to the status quo, so as to not risk budget cuts. Participants also recognized that the heightened anxiety is, in part, the result of the strategic efforts underway in the College of Arts and Sciences.

But there are some positives identified:

- <u>There are new models of work emerging.</u> The consortium PhD is seen as an example of what AHUM could do together, as is the Center for the Study of Origins and ongoing work in digital humanities.
- <u>Hope that the new A&S core</u> might make it more attractive for students to add a minor in AHUM.

White Papers submitted to Academic Futures in this area

- *The Idea of Our University (Braider)*

- *What the Humanities Do, and How They Could Do It Better (Braider)*

- *CU Boulder Institute for the Arts (Amerika et al)*

- *On making the humanities productive (in the undergraduate curriculum and beyond) (Hoecker)*

- *Public work at the University of Colorado (Kirschner)*

- *Global Ambassadors (Kamminga-Peck et al.)*

- *An Academic Future for Writing Across the Curriculum (Ackerman)*

- *The Idea of Our University II: Making it Real (Braider)*

- *Learning how to learn (Kassoy)*

- *Making a Campus Core (Braider)*

- *Is it an art? A case study of teaching at the CU Art Museum (Brunecky and Saska)*

- *Informal learning at CU Boulder's museums and the impact on student experience: Now and for the future (Brunecky and Tinianow)*

- *The International Affairs Program: Values-driven Interdisciplinary Teaching and Organization (Chester)*

- *On the inherent conservatism of humanities departments (Müller-Sievers)*

- *Student support programming and coursework (Baron)*

- *Mediterranean studies: Diversity , interdisciplinarity and the study of the West (Catlos)*

- *English Department white paper: Gathering information to facilitate change in undergraduate education (CU English Dept)*

- *The media archaeology lab as platform for undoing and reimagining humanities scholarship (Emerson)*

- *CU Art Museum as a Hub of intellectual and creative pursuits (Firmin and McDonald)*