

NOUS

A Newsletter for Faculty
Development in the UNC
Asheville Humanities Program

Introduction

This is the first issue of an occasional newsletter that I would like to use to share information on the Humanities faculty development activities sponsored or supported through the office of the NEH Distinguished Professor, and with the associated budget. Below are some of the plans and projects I would like to see undertaken.

From 1995 to 1998 I published an occasional newsletter from the Faculty Development Center, also called *Nous*. Since no one continued it, or put the name to any other use, I have decided to revive it, particularly because of its suggestive links to Humanities 124.

I plan to publish the newsletter at least once a semester to share news about the Humanities program and its faculty, ideas about teaching, reviews of relevant books, etc. Likewise I would like to expand the NEH section of the Humanities home page to include some of the same material as well as other material of general interest. Arrangements for adding this to the Humanities website are underway.

Below are some of the ideas I'd like to implement, or see others implement. I am keen to use the NEH budget in ways that support Humanities even if I haven't invented them, so encourage faculty to suggest other important faculty development activities.

Faculty mentoring. All new (or even fairly new) faculty in Humanities--including those new to the Humanities course they are teaching even if not to the program, full or part time, will be invited to benefit from mentoring by a veteran instructor in the same Humanities course. This will be modeled somewhat on the university-wide faculty mentoring program. It will include both meetings and conversations between mentor and mentee and class visitations in both directions, and more widespread joint meetings, including some social gatherings. Modest stipends for mentor and mentee.

Reading Groups I'd like to have at least one book group for each of the Humanities courses each year, possibly more, open to anyone whether teaching that course then, or not. Leaders will be compensated and members supported from NEH funds.

Visiting speakers, lecturers, consultants.
Please suggest people you think could make a difference to our program.

Group Travel Organized trips, probably within the United States, to deepen understanding of Humanities materials.



Workshops A character in a Kingsley Amis novel says, "If there's one word that sums up everything that's gone wrong since the War, it's Workshop." And I know how he feels. But there are a number of ways in which we can improve what we do in Humanities, and to that end I hope to organize workshops (or conversations, or colloquia) on such topics as

- effective lecturing
- special uses of Moodle for Humanities
- successful class discussions
- teaching unfamiliar/nonwestern texts
- interdisciplinarity
- service-learning

Paying Forward This means that faculty who have enjoyed NEH funding for something that ought to be of interest to all faculty will give a presentation on their results. The first one will take place in fall, 2009, and will involve the Humanities faculty who traveled to Ghana. I would expect to arrange something like this, routinely, when NEH funds subsidize faculty travel.

But we can provide a venue for faculty sharing other experiences and ideas for faculty, whether NEH had anything to do with them or not. For instance, former recipients of **Fulbright** teaching and research appointments can share advice and encouragement on how to take advantage of this opportunity,

particularly in a climate of scanty scholarly leaves.

Individual travel The first priority will be to subsidize travel that is (a) under-taken by committed Humanities faculty members; (b) related to the Humanities program; (c) likely to raise the perception of UNCA Humanities. I want to help UNC Asheville Humanities faculty to attend conferences like AGLS, ACTC, possibly AAC&U, chiefly for presentations; at a lower priority, possibly without making a presentation. Likewise Humanities faculty who attend disciplinary conferences in their own disciplines or other such events are eligible but again, at a lower priority.

Undergraduate research I want to encourage more Humanities undergraduate research, particularly if closely related to Humanities classes--e.g. interdisciplinary work or some research that has grown out of a Humanities class. One way to do this is to provide a "scholarship" for attendance at NCUR for one student whose research project qualifies and for her or his advisor (seeking to encourage more Humanities faculty to mentor qualifying undergraduate research and see the results in presentation).

As a follow-up to Gordon's **Conversation on the Liberal Arts** in Fall, 2008, I would like to schedule another broad conversation, perhaps

involving both UNCA faculty and community members. One of the first topics I'd like to get at would be the role of the Humanities in the liberal learning project of helping to create good citizens, and I think this could probably be usefully related to the UNC Tomorrow report.

In addition to the natural interaction with and support of the Humanities program, cooperation with other stakeholders in our common liberal learning enterprise--for instance, the MLA Program and COPLAC (now directed by Bill Spellman).

Please give me your response to any of these ideas or other ideas that can help maximize the success of our program.



Merritt Moseley
NEH Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Humanities
KH 239, CPO # 2130
251-6583
moseley@unca.edu

Humanities Program
212 New Hall, CPO # 2840
251-6808