The Case for Bringing Experiential Learning into the Humanities

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Drawing on innovative programs at the University of Michigan and Duke University, this essay explores an important trend in humanistic education: the provision of opportunities for experiential learning, whether for undergraduates or graduate students. Avenues for applied humanistic research, such as research-based internships and courses structured around collaborative, client-inflected research projects, provide numerous benefits. In addition to cultivating teamwork, leadership, and communications skills, such experiences build intellectual confidence, expand horizons, and foster motivation to pursue additional research challenges. Although humanistic experiments with experiential learning now abound across higher education, pedagogical conservatism among faculty has slowed the pace of change, with pilots often occurring outside the frameworks of standard curricular structures. We call on departments in the humanities and interpretive social sciences to embrace the promise of engaged, public-facing scholarly endeavor, and to make collaborative research a core feature of curricular expectations for students at all levels.

As several essays in this issue of *Dædalus* emphasize, recent discussions about the humanities tend to begin with an understandably mournful nod to the terrible academic job market. The statistics are not pretty. In our discipline of history, the annual number of PhDs granted remained slightly under one thousand in 2019, reflecting a gradual decline from a high of almost 1,100 in 2014. But academic job advertisements, which reached a peak of over one thousand in 2008, have now stabilized at around five hundred tenure-track positions a year.[1] The financial stringency associated with the COVID-19 pandemic has only further reduced academic hiring. For many scholars at research-intensive universities, such parlous statistics represent an existential threat to humanistic inquiry.

This focus on a shrinking academic jobs market, however, distracts from two broader trends that deserve sustained attention. First, students and parents share an increasing expectation that higher education will directly prepare undergraduates for the world of employment. This perspective, along with growing skepticism about the relevance of humanistic study for nonacademic career prepara-

tion, helps to explain the declining numbers of undergraduates who major in humanistic disciplines.[2]

Second, many humanists based in universities have embraced an inward turn that emphasizes knowledge for knowledge's sake, rather than seeing knowledge as a tool for change in the broader world. Those same scholars have shied away from making the case for the importance of higher-order thinking, research, and analysis – all fostered by humanistic engagement – in leadership roles, whatever the industry or sector, or for meaningful civic participation.[3] The inward turn has reinforced isolating modes of communication. As academic humanists have embraced high cultural theory, they have sometimes made abstruse prose a badge of sophistication, limiting their capacity to reach wider publics outside the academy, or connect effectively with nonhumanist colleagues in their own colleges and universities.[4]

The ideal of a life devoted purely to ideas, research, and scholarship, moreover, does not accurately convey the lived realities of most academic careers. Most obviously, effective teaching depends on the ability to make complexity accessible to nonexperts. A significant fraction of faculty time also involves collaboration on committee work, faculty searches, and program reviews, alongside, eventually, stints in administrative roles. Discussions about the state of the humanities often presuppose that faculty are free agents who only teach, research, and write, but they play much more varied roles within complex educational institutions.

Yet training in the humanities at all levels continues to emphasize the cultivation of intellectual expertise far more than other capacities that matter greatly in the twenty-first-century world of work, such as leadership, collaboration with diverse colleagues, and versatility in communication. These latter "soft skills" facilitate effectiveness across economic sectors and types of organizations, including those in higher education, and they rank highly among the qualities that employers say they look for in job applicants.[5] To call for much more intentional engagement with the fostering of such capacities in humanities education, then, is not so much an embrace of "alt-ac" or some kind of Plan B, but rather being honest about the kinds of skills needed to forge fulfilling careers, whether within or outside academia. This approach, we contend, can invigorate humanistic inquiry, broadening its engagement with pressing societal issues, making humanities courses and majors more attractive to undergraduates, and building closer connections between more traditional aspects of humanistic thinking and crucial elements of effectiveness in diverse, collaborative workplaces.

Although there is much work to be done, we can point to important pedagogical experiments that can guide reform efforts. Focusing on recent undertakings that involve forms of experiential and project-based learning at our respective universities, but also taking account of instructive efforts elsewhere, this essay lays out key elements of curricular reform that incorporate a wider range of skills and teach them in a self-conscious way.

I n the University of Michigan history department, faculty leaders began thinking about the so-called crisis in the humanities in the mid-2010s. Their efforts to respond to this predicament emerged from two different starting points: a commitment to public history that evolved into a broader vision of publicly engaged scholarship, and a desire to take seriously the national conversations on "career diversity" for doctoral students spearheaded by the American Historical Association (AHA).

Initially, faculty tackled these issues separately, motivated by different commitments and pressures. The department's public history cluster focused primarily on undergraduates. This group explored how historical study might allow college students to engage with societally relevant issues, provide them with hands-on research experience, and help them create tangible deliverables that could be shared with parents, friends, and prospective employers. The career diversity cluster sought to integrate the AHA's key transferable skills – collaboration, communication, basic quantitative capacity, digital literacy, and intellectual self-confidence – into the graduate curriculum to prepare PhD students to compete successfully in multiple careers, including those in the professoriate.[6]

Over time, the department came to see public engagement and career diversity as closely linked, since learning how to produce publicly engaged scholarship prepares students for a broad range of careers. For students to succeed in any career in the twenty-first century, whether inside or outside the academy, they need to communicate effectively with a wide variety of audiences.

An especially successful outcome of this public engagement and career diversity work has been "HistoryLabs," a new kind of team-based, project-driven course, offered at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Two principles inform the HistoryLabs model. First, most students do not "intuit" the fundamentals of humanities research simply by reading scholarship. Rather, they need to be guided through the process of defining a research question, finding archival and other sources, and assessing and interpreting evidence. Second, the best way to teach these core skills is through collaborative projects. This approach requires pedagogical choices that disrupt the long-standing disciplinary practices of solitary reading, research, and writing. It similarly requires dispensing with the assumption that the only graduate courses worth taking deepen intellectual field expertise.

HistoryLabs organize students into teams that work together on common research projects. One of the first undergraduate lab courses, on police brutality in Detroit, produced digitized maps of police-civilian encounters from 1957 – 1973. In some of the most exciting versions, projects are framed by an organizational "client" that needs historical research to accomplish its broader goals. Another early undergraduate lab worked with the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center to engage students in developing the contextual background material for lawyers representing refugees seeking asylum in the United States.[7] The inaugural grad-

uate HistoryLab partnered with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to curate primary-source collections on designated themes for its digital teaching tool, *Experiencing History*.[8]

In every case, faculty lead the courses, using class time to model how to conduct research with databases or in archives, assess and interpret different types of sources, detect patterns over time and space, and develop overarching arguments. Students also meet as teams outside of class, both to undertake research and assemble their findings into products for nonacademic audiences. Those outputs take many forms, including collectively authored reports, document write-ups, databases, digital maps, and exhibitions. Faculty and students provide iterative feedback on each team's research and writing. If a project has a client, students engage directly with the organizational partner. Instead of writing a capstone paper read by a single faculty member, students create tangible products to convey their research results to clients, who often put that analysis to immediate use through policy guidance, legal casebooks, teaching modules, or public exhibits.

As the history department was developing these pedagogical innovations, Michigan's Rackham Graduate School started to promote new priorities for graduate training in relation to the changing landscape of higher education across all fields. Rackham's vision for twenty-first-century graduate education has emphasized a student-centered approach rather than faculty needs or preferences, which translates into a focus on broadening students' career horizons and embedding professional development into graduate training.

The most important innovation reflecting this new vision has been provision of financial support to doctoral candidates while they undertake a part-time, semester-length internship.[9] This Doctoral Internship Program enables students to apply their academic expertise and skills to real-world problems and exposes them to nonacademic work environments (in the nonprofit, government, start-up, or corporate sectors). It expands the traditional model of summer PhD internships, which Rackham has offered for some time, to the academic year, providing maximal flexibility with options for fully paid positions. Rackham treats these internships as a learning opportunity that complements the more conventional types of doctoral student preparation – teaching assistantships and research assistantships – and funds them at the same rate.

By supporting internships with academic-year funding, Rackham's internship program represents a significant shift in how doctoral students prepare for careers. It integrates this professional development opportunity as a fundamental aspect of doctoral training. To be sure, the costs of this major initiative are massive, as it covers tuition, fees, health insurance, and stipend, effectively providing an extra term of funding for doctoral students who participate. Rackham has estimated that endowing such a program to make internships accessible to students in all fields will run upwards of $50 million.

For the last quarter-century, Duke University has prioritized investments in interdisciplinary, collaborative, research-inflected education, embracing an updated version of the early-twentieth-century Wisconsin Idea, the philosophy that universities should direct their resources toward addressing the most salient societal challenges. President Richard Brodhead, a renowned scholar of American literature, conceptualized this ethos in 2007 as "knowledge in the service of society." Through a series of university strategic plans and fundraising campaigns, Duke has encouraged deans, heads of interdisciplinary units, and faculty members to develop programs that animate this vision.

One key initiative came out of the humanities a decade ago, spearheaded by the then dean of humanities, Srinivas Aravamudan, and director of the John Hope Franklin Humanities Institute, Ian Baucom. Aravamudan and Baucom put together a major Mellon Foundation grant, Humanities Writ Large, that emphasized pathways for interdisciplinary research, including collaborative projects that incorporated students and sought to bring humanistic expertise to bear on major societal problems. In 2016, Duke also secured a National Endowment for the Humanities Next Generation Implementation Grant to support innovations in humanities graduate education, including external internships and the hiring of a complementary advisor to offer guidance about resources and opportunities beyond their departments.[10] Other pivotal undertakings, such as the decision to establish the Duke Global Health Institute, or the creation of the Bass Connections program (more on that below), were university-wide efforts that sought to engage faculty from every school and division of knowledge. As a result of these university-wide priorities, the turn to collaborative inquiry has received major philanthropic and external grant support, which now sustains annual budgets that exceed $3 million a year.

Duke students in the humanities can now pursue several avenues that involve team-based projects, many in partnership with an external organization, and often involving public-facing outputs. Humanities Labs were a key feature of Humanities Writ Large, and they have been extended in a second Mellon grant, Humanities Unbounded. These labs bring together several lead faculty with PhD students and undergraduates around a broad theme, such as artistic depictions of slavery and freedom, cultural representations of migration, microhistory as method and practice, or Black music as a window on American culture. Modes of organization and intellectual goals vary greatly, but every lab incorporates team-based research and seeks to reach broader audiences.[11]

Duke also supports many year-long interdisciplinary research teams through Bass Connections, intensive summer projects through the Story+ and Data+ programs, and a growing number of semester-long courses designed around team-based research. In Bass Connections, sixty to seventy project teams operate annually, with faculty-led research endeavors that collectively span the sciences and social sciences as well as the humanities, and that often cross the divisions of

knowledge. Averaging twelve to thirteen participants, these teams incorporate at least two faculty leads, a small number of graduate and professional students, and a larger number of undergraduates. In many cases, teams also include staff members, a postdoc, and representatives from external partners, such as cultural institutions, government agencies, nonprofits, or businesses. Faculty leads frequently devise a subteam structure, with smaller groups, often led by PhD students, tackling specific dimensions of the larger undertaking.[12]

In Story+, run by the Franklin Humanities Institute, smaller teams of three or four undergraduates receive stipends for summer work on a public-facing humanities project grounded in interpretive methods. Each team has a graduate student mentor and a sponsor, sometimes a faculty member, sometimes the Duke Libraries or another Duke unit, sometimes an external partner such as the National Humanities Center or Durham's Geer Street Cemetery.[13] This structure was modeled on an earlier summer research program, Data+, that emphasizes quantitative data science techniques, but always includes several projects that use methods like text mining and topic modeling to grapple with humanistic issues. An expanding number of semester-long courses designed around group projects further extends options to engage with collaborative research and writing. Finally, humanities PhD students continue to be able to undertake summer internships with cultural organizations and NGOs.

Collectively, these curricular and cocurricular offerings reach several thousand Duke students a year, with a significant fraction providing exposure to humanistic problems, research methods, and modes of communication. The latter range from more traditional scholarly outputs like coauthored journal articles and book chapters to more creative endeavors, including works of art, oral history archives, curated primary source repositories, policy reports, interactive digital maps and data visualizations, public exhibits, documentaries, and podcasts. These different approaches represent variations on a central theme: empower students to work together on open-ended humanities research, bounded by the expectation of concrete products that envisage actual audiences.

In the digital version of this essay, we offer appendices that convey the extraordinarily diverse topics and outputs that have emerged from Duke's (and Michigan's) investments in humanistic experiential learning, including examples that brought humanistic expertise into explicit dialogue with the sciences and/or social sciences. All of these undertakings confront similar challenges, such as how to:

- balance a more didactic presentation of key content and context with space for exploration, inquiry, and the completion of concrete deliverables;

- furnish sufficient scaffolding to give students initial direction, while leaving enough scope for collaborative decision-making so that students feel

invested in the project and experience the inevitable course corrections of truly open-ended research;

- build team cohesion, especially when team members come from different backgrounds and draw on diverse styles of thinking and epistemological foundations;

- overcome the free-rider problem in group projects; and

- navigate and incorporate the priorities and feedback of institutional sponsors/clients (where applicable).

The educational ecosystem that has emerged at Duke provides several mechanisms to address these challenges. There are a growing number of faculty members and doctoral students whose experience in leading collaborative projects enable them to serve as touchstones of advice. Programs like Story+ and Data+ create cross-team community among students that generates peer mentoring. The Bass Connections program provides extensive resources for team leads and offers short courses in project management for PhD students.

In addition, the many avenues for collaborative inquiry at Duke facilitate longer-term project evolution. A humanities lab may generate an idea for a year-long project team, or lay groundwork for semester-long course offerings. (Indeed, with Humanities Unbounded, we have encouraged departments to construct labs around a set of thematically related courses.) A year-long project team may conceptualize a summer mini-project as a way to launch their research or explore additional questions through a second or even third year.

Michigan and Duke are hardly the only places that have engaged in pedagogical innovation that blends collaborative research with educational experience, and often experimentation with public-facing outputs. The range of activity runs a wide gamut. At Davidson College, historian John Wertheimer has been teaching a highly successful collaborative undergraduate research seminar for two decades. Until recently, students generated a publishable article-length analysis of some historical problem related to law and race in the Carolinas. Since 2019, the seminar has focused on producing a documentary, in partnership with Wake Forest MFA students.[14] The Engaged Cornell program facilitates dozens of community-focused courses like the American Studies Seminar "Underground Railroad," which asks undergraduates to undertake research projects in partnership with upstate New York historic sites that served as waystations for African Americans escaping from slavery.[15]

Over the last decade, PhD internship programs and humanities labs have proliferated across higher education, often facilitated by grant funding from the Mellon Foundation or the National Endowment for the Humanities. At the Univer-

sity of Iowa, a Mellon-funded "Humanities for the Public Good" program places PhD students in summer internships with NGOs and community organizations.[16] Through the Arizona State Humanities Lab, undergraduates explore rotating themes through collaborative project courses, such as "Indigenizing Food Systems," "Decolonizing 'Madness,'" and "Language Emergency," the last involving a partnership with Arizona Indigenous communities to work on sustaining "linguistic and cultural heritages."[17] Similar opportunities have emerged at the University of Washington, the City University of New York Graduate Center, and many campuses in between.

Some especially ambitious research projects have blended research experiences for students with expansive public engagement. The Colored Conventions Project (CCP) stands out in this regard. Founded by Gabrielle Foreman at the University of Delaware, and now based at Penn State since Foreman moved there, the CCP is a massive undertaking to identify and document the myriad political and social conventions held by African Americans in the nineteenth century. Involving painstaking research in libraries and archives, careful digitization of primary sources, and the creation of digital exhibits and teaching resources, this NEH-funded project has attracted dozens of student researchers. Its leaders also have organized hundreds of nonacademics to join in the work of transcribing convention proceedings.[18]

Indeed, several essays in this issue of *Dædalus* describe similar projects and initiatives. At the University of California, Santa Barbara, an evolving WE1S team brings together faculty, postdocs, graduate students, and undergrads around data analysis of public discourse about the humanities. At New Urban Arts in Providence, high schoolers explore "creative practice" framed around artistic engagement with pressing community issues. In Baltimore, community members have joined with faculty and students at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, to cocreate an expansive set of oral histories and photographs that engage with the origins, course, and consequences of the 2015 Baltimore Uprising. In Los Angeles, a team of University of Southern California Latino/a graduate and undergraduate students constructed a powerful exhibit on the history of the Boyle Heights neighborhood. Experimentation with humanistic experiential learning beckons in every section of the country, at multiple educational levels, and in partnership with an impressive array of cultural institutions and community organizations.

Any decision to develop, implement, and support an educational ecosystem that fosters engaged, collaborative, public-facing inquiry in the humanities will require significant expenditure of time, money, and effort. But the payoffs are also tremendous. These experiences have generated an array of positive outcomes, measured through student surveys, focus groups, and faculty reflections.

For undergraduates, project-based courses and summer programs offer a rich introduction to the research process, including question identification, the setting and carrying out of a research agenda, adjustment in the face of unexpected challenges or problems, and translation of research findings into defined outputs for specific audiences. Students in the Michigan HistoryLabs experienced hands-on archival work in multiple registers. While some admitted that "it could be tedious," they also expressed excitement at the final outcomes: "we were doing something real with history and making an impact." These opportunities allow undergraduates to work closely with faculty and graduate students and hone skills in collaboration and communication. Participants in Duke's Bass Connections affirmed that the experience helped them "develop insight" into the "skills and interests that will be crucial in guiding future choices." Those who stick with ongoing teams beyond a single year often get the chance to take on leadership roles. Bass Connections, raved one student, "provided me with a bridge between the classroom and the real world. It was also the most rewarding leadership opportunity I've had." A remarkably high fraction of Story+ undergraduates, moreover, go on to write honors theses.

Doctoral students report similar gains from being introduced to the research process through collaborative, project-based courses. In the discipline of history, students have long wished that faculty would show them how to conduct archival research. As we note above, PhD students in HistoryLab courses learn the nuts and bolts of historical research in addition to transferable skills such as collaboration, project management, and communication. In reflecting on the experience, one student explained, "I had no idea how the most fundamental aspects of research, such as defining a research question or establishing a justification for material we had gathered, could be complicated by working with other people." Another valued the opportunity for teaching her how "to work outside my immediate field of interest" and "with strict deadlines." Still another student reflected on how "professors and fellow graduate students are both your colleagues and mentors – helping you navigate issues that commonly emerge with the process of research. This course and experience gave me more confidence than any course I have taken." Many agreed that the experience was "the most formative course in my graduate student career."

Doctoral students who participate in analogous endeavors at Duke encounter the challenges and payoffs of larger scale intellectual projects. "In fields where collaboration is rare," explained one student, "project teams provide opportunities to work with others towards a common goal, develop transferable skills and make connections with people outside your department." Indeed, there are many downstream payoffs: "The skills and experiences I gained from these projects," another student reflected, "will not only help me better navigate postgraduate life, but will positively affect my upcoming dissertation research and writing." Still

another emphasized how a Bass Connections project "constituted a deeply forma-tive teaching experience." This comment points to the way that leadership roles on teams expose PhD students to the many facets of project management: sensi-ble delegation, coordination among team members, and, ideally, the cultivation of an inclusive mode of decision-making. Occupying intermediary roles between faculty and undergraduate team members, they further learn how to mentor un-dergraduates and constructively engage faculty.

Graduate internships allow PhD students to expand their career horizons by employing their scholarly expertise and research skills in nonacademic profes-sional contexts. At the same time, students provide business, industry, nonprofit, and government sectors with expertise, gaining intellectual self-confidence and demonstrating the value of doctoral-level knowledge to employers in a wide range of fields. Like applied research projects undertaken within the university, intern-ships typically require students to be part of collaborative teams and to commu-nicate their ideas in multiple modes to nonexpert audiences. Either type of ex-periential learning thus cultivates "soft skills" crucial to career success. At both Michigan and Duke, students can avail themselves of wrap-around support be-fore, during, and after they undertake their internships: staff offer workshops on resume writing, the interview process, and networking, and convene learning communities to facilitate reflection and career discernment.

For both undergraduates and PhD students, experiential learning has turned out to be a notable "X" factor when they enter job markets or seek other compet-itive postdegree opportunities. The ability to discuss project-based research and the process of creating clear outputs for specific audiences, and often clients, helps our students stand out. In application essays, cover letters, and interviews, they can describe concrete roles and tangible achievements that resonate with admis-sion committees and potential employers, whether inside or outside academia.

Faculty who have taken the plunge into collaborative projects as a way to teach have reaped significant benefits as well. For many, there is considerable intellectu-al excitement at seeing what empowered students can accomplish. Some scholars have developed new skills in imagining, planning, and carrying out larger scale research projects. Others have identified new avenues for research, or developed strong partnerships with organizations outside the university, expanding their ca-pacity to engage with publics at every phase of the research process.

Despite the enthusiasm with which experiential learning opportunities have been embraced by some doctoral students, faculty, and academic leaders, challenges remain. Many students still view "lab" courses, inter-disciplinary research teams, or internships as appropriate for those who know they do not want an academic career. These students remain skeptical that such opportunities enable success within today's academy as well as beyond it, even

though plenty of anecdotal data suggest that they make candidates shine in academic job searches. Another barrier for students is the entrenched practice of choosing courses based on the goal of deepening field expertise. Many Michigan PhD students do not even consider an open-ended collaborative project or a HistoryLab course focused on a topic that does not directly dovetail with their area of specialization.

Enticing faculty to teach collaborative project courses runs into a similar set of preconceptions related to the premium that faculty place on teaching that aligns with their area of expertise and current research interests. For many academic humanists, any other teaching constitutes a waste of time or a service burden. In the context of shrinking doctoral programs, moreover, some faculty in smaller fields have pitted experimental teaching against subfield expertise and doubled down on the necessity of maintaining older models of doctoral training, lest they have no chance to train PhD students. If graduate programs cannot accommodate both kinds of courses because of fierce competition for students, the argument goes, then pedagogical experiments should give way. As advisers, faculty all too often frame opportunities for experiential learning as distracting PhD students from the specialized research necessary to establish scholarly credentials.

We are convinced that humanities doctoral education has reached a crossroads. Rather than clinging to the older apprenticeship model premised on deep subfield expertise, we see a shifting landscape that calls for imagining a new way forward. What this reimagined graduate training looks like, of course, will depend on the precise contours of the discipline, program, and wider university in question. But an embrace of experiential learning promises to invigorate doctoral and undergraduate education alike.

At Michigan and Duke, change has been catalyzed at several different levels: student, faculty, graduate program, graduate school, and provost office. For many students, the desire to make academic work relevant to their world has underpinned demand for courses that result in tangible products with potential social impact. Some faculty, too, have become invested in explicitly engaged research and scholarship that speak to real world challenges and reach audiences beyond the academy. Both student demand and faculty efforts have resulted in a number of experiments at the ground level, from HistoryLabs and the history graduate student–led podcast program *Reverb Effect* at Michigan to Humanities Labs, intensive summer programs, and year-long research teams at Duke.[19]

For departments with graduate programs, the most immediate pressures have been declining undergraduate enrollments (which in many public universities affect the number of teaching assistantships), shrinking doctoral cohorts, and endemic mismatches between open faculty positions and the number of PhD recipients seeking them. Some programs have responded by engaging in the difficult work of interrogating the purpose of the PhD, assessing the fit between faculty

goals and student priorities, and examining whether the current curriculum effectively meets the program's goals.[20] This work has led some programs to encourage teaching experiments and reconsider milestones such as preliminary exams, the dissertation prospectus, and even the shape of the dissertation itself. It has led others to embed career and professional development into multiple phases of doctoral training.[21]

At Michigan, another important driver of change has been Rackham Graduate School, which has systematically sought to promote a rethinking of the graduate enterprise on campus. This process began with the articulation of a strategic vision to make doctoral education student-centered, faculty-led, and Rackham-supported. It continued with a major symposium, which convened national leaders in graduate education to speak with Michigan faculty and graduate students about the larger trends, pressures, and challenges facing doctoral training. That dialogue shaped the Advancing New Directions in Graduate Education initiative, which encourages faculty leadership in rethinking doctoral education within departments.[22] Each year, Rackham partners with three to six select departments and creates support structures to facilitate reform work in two core areas: improving the early doctoral experience (precandidacy) and embedding career and professional development in doctoral training. This work is slow and painstaking, but it has created rewarding crossdisciplinary discussions among faculty about graduate education reform and the common obstacles (that is, student and faculty buy-in) that they face.

At Duke, the provost office has amplified the ongoing work of the Graduate School. One key move was to convene a major ad hoc committee on PhD education.[23] Implementation of that committee's report has ranged from encouraging every school to take ownership of improving their PhD programs and piloting complementary modes of advising and mentoring, to investing in a set of major interdisciplinary research opportunities for both PhD students and undergraduates and expanding access to internships.

Each level of change driver has its challenges. Students come and go. Often their concerns and needs shift over time: while this generation may be committed to public scholarship and societal impact, the next may have a different agenda altogether. Faculty tend to be creatures of habit. Sometimes their mantra seems to be, "If it isn't broke, don't fix it." Only so many faculty have stepped forward to devote large amounts of time and energy to reforming their graduate programs. And those who do invest the time may see their changes overturned as soon as they leave their leadership positions. Graduate schools have minimal authority over how faculty spend their time. They can offer incentives for program reform and provide scaffolding to guide that work, but they lack the power to impose radical changes that involve the curriculum (that is, requiring "lab courses" or internships) or program milestones.

Along all these dimensions, it will be crucial to ground efforts to encourage expansion of experiential learning in relevant data about its impact on students. Our claims about the many benefits of internships, collaborative research, and public-facing research outputs reflect the assessments that we have conducted at Michigan and Duke. As we note above, however, related innovations are underway in dozens of universities, many prompted by grants from the Mellon Foundation or the National Endowment for the Humanities, others resulting from the creativity of individual faculty members or the inventiveness of specific departments or programs. We need aggregated analysis of how experiential learning shapes longer term student outcomes and career paths.

One useful step would be for some umbrella organization (perhaps the American Academy of Arts and Sciences) to synthesize data from institutions that have experimented with these approaches to humanities education, as well as provide guidance to disciplinary societies and departments about best practices in collecting and interpreting such data. A wider effort at program evaluation, especially if it showed analogous benefits elsewhere, would provide a stronger evidentiary foundation for curricular reform.

That reform process will surely take many shapes, reflecting the creativity that remains a hallmark of humanistic inquiry. And we remain confident that it will sustain key dimensions of long-standing humanities practice: the seminar as crucible of questions, arguments, and dialogue, and the capacity of individuals to conceptualize and carry out research projects. But we call on our academic peers to accelerate the process of expanding humanistic toolkits and research outputs, forging new connections to stakeholders beyond the confines of academic conferences and departmental workshops, and embracing the advantages of collaborative research, community engagement, and team-based projects. The resulting methodological and pedagogical pluralism, we predict, will generate important intellectual cross fertilization. It will expand student horizons and interest. It will emphasize anew the crucial place of humanistic thinking in American life.

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ENDNOTES

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19 On Reverb Effect, see "Reverb Effect Podcast," University of Michigan, https://lsa.umich.edu/history/history-at-work/reverbeffect.html.

20 In history, the AHA has been a pivotal catalyst in department-level reform work, using Mellon funding to offer Career Diversity Faculty Institutes from 2017–2021. These meetings engaged faculty from almost fifty history departments to ask hard questions and strategize innovative responses.

21 For overviews of key innovations, see Edward Balleisen and Maria LaMonaca Wisdom, *Reimagining the Humanities PhD: A Guide for PhD Programs and Faculty* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University, 2019, updated 2021), https://sites.duke.edu/interdisciplinary/files/2021/12/reimagining-the-humanities-phd-external.pdf; and Leonard Cassuto and Robert Weisbuch, *The New PhD: How to Build a Better Graduate Education* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021).

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