

Duke University

NEH Next Generation PhD  
Implementation Grant

2017-2018 Report (Year 2)

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In the second year of the NEH-funded “[Versatile Humanists at Duke](#)” (VH@Duke) program, we have continued to expand the opportunities available to Duke humanities PhD students through supplemental advising, funding for participation in collaborative research projects, pedagogical pilot programs, and engagement with Duke PhD alumni. The program has become a key element in the humanities landscape at Duke, amplifying the quality of doctoral training and facilitating professional development for students interested in both academic and non-academic careers. It has also received increasing attention from faculty, university administrators, and disciplinary societies beyond Durham.

Most importantly, students have been quick to make use of VH@Duke resources, and to articulate how they add value to their doctoral training. About PhD student advising, for example, one advisee states, “Having a resource outside of departmental and other dissertation advisors is critical. It is incredibly beneficial to have the advice, wisdom, perspective, and guidance of someone ‘external’ to the politics and common practices of a specific department, in that [the PhD Advisor] assists students in considering important facets of their education and future employment that may be missing from individual programs.”

We established each piece of VH@Duke in Year 1 (2016-2017). The following section documents additional progress and/or significant changes we made in Year 2 (2016-2017).

## Snapshots of Year 1 & Year 2 Activities

### VH@Duke Internship Program

Year 1:

- Received 14 applications for VH@Duke internships and funded a first cohort of eight interns—four hosted by VH@Duke partner organizations and four with self-created internships at organizations relevant to their research interests.

Year 2:

- Received 12 competitive internship applications and funded nine for Summer 2018—four with VH@Duke partner organizations and five through self-arranged internships with other hosts.

### Advising support and related activities

Year 1:

- Offered supplemental PhD advising, including **65 opt-in, one-on-one advising consultations** in first nine months of program (Nov. 2017-July 2018).
- Provided regular group advising opportunities: no-agenda lunches and job-search prep conversations.
- Established two other advising channels: weekly newsletter and [VH@Duke blog](#).
- Held first [VH@Duke Summer Writing Kickoff](#), in collaboration with Thompson Writing Program.

Year 2:

- Provided **98 opt-in, one-on-one advising consultations** between August 2017 and April 2018 (nine months).

- Conducted targeted outreach to PhD program cohorts and incoming students to increase number of students in years 1-3 who take advantage of supplemental advising.
- Initiated VH@Duke welcome dinner for first-year PhD students in Fall 2018, as well as a Spring 2018 check-in lunch.
- Hosted second VH@Duke Summer Writing Kickoff.
- Grew VH@Duke newsletter subscriber list to nearly 500 (413 Duke humanities PhD students, 32 Duke ThD students, 1 Duke SJD student, 11 Duke faculty, 20 Duke staff, and 5 recent alumni).
- Published more than 30 new posts on VH@Duke blog.

### PhD Innovation Grants

#### Year 1 (funded projects)

- Received five proposals from PhD programs and [funded four](#):
  - Computational Media, Arts & Cultures: Development of portfolio as a replacement for the comprehensive examination and also a structure to support hybrid dissertations;
  - History: Embedding updated pedagogical training into PhD curriculum;
  - Philosophy: Seminar in scholarly digital publishing, with *Project Vox* (a digital humanities project focused on women philosophers in early modern Europe); and
  - Literature: PhD student-led initiative to provide programming in support of writing for both academic and nonacademic audiences.

#### Year 2 (funded projects)

- Funded three targeted projects:
  - A new interdisciplinary Public Humanities doctoral seminar, taught by Laurent DuBois;
  - Archival Expeditions, an opportunity for graduate students to partner with faculty in creating archival-based research modules for undergraduate courses (in partnership with Duke's Rubenstein Special Collections Library); and
  - A forthcoming Ed Tech Graduate Fellows Program, offered by Duke's Center for Learning Innovation.
- A fourth project, an archival-based collaborative research seminar for doctoral students linked to collections in Rubenstein Library, remains under consideration for funding.

### Promoting Mentorship/Leadership Opportunities on Collaborative Research Teams

Duke has four primary opportunities for doctoral students in the humanities to mentor undergraduates undertaking collaborative research:

- Year-long [Bass Connections](#) interdisciplinary research teams;
- Year-long [Humanities Labs](#), whether based at the Franklin Humanities Institute or in departments
- [Story+](#) (part of Bass Connections), an intensive summer program in which small teams of undergraduate students, working with a doctoral mentor, tackle projects in applied humanities; and
- [Data+](#) (part of Bass Connections), a summer program similar to Story+, but focused on applied data analytics projects.

Year 1:

- Funded six Story+ grad mentors.
- VH@Duke PhD Advisor played active role in mentoring/supporting Story+ grad mentors and engaged in outreach to doctoral students about Bass Connections and Humanities Labs.

Year 2:

- Funded eight Story+ grad mentors and two Data+ grad mentors (Appendix A).
- PhD Advisor expanded role in mentoring and supporting Story+ grad mentors, including weekly check-ins.
- Implemented reflective writing as a requirement for all grad student mentors.
- PhD Advisor continued to promote interdisciplinary research opportunities in both one-on-one advising sessions and VH@Duke newsletter.

### Promoting Mentoring and Networking with Duke Alumni

Year 1:

- Conducted planning meetings and focus groups (along with Graduate Student Affairs and Duke Alumni Association) to develop strategy.

Year 2:

- PhD Advisor compiled information on 60+ Duke humanities PhD alumni working beyond academia.
- PhD Advisor conducted phone interviews with approximately 20 PhD alumni.
- [VH@Duke Humanities PhD Alumni Directory](#) live launch in June 2018 with profiles of 11 alumni (and one more on the way), all of whom work outside academia.
- VH@Duke coordinated [humanities alumni lunch](#) for annual Graduate Student Appreciation Week in April 2018, featuring PhD alumni in English, History, and Cultural Anthropology (two working beyond academia).

## **Year 2: Successes**

Our most significant accomplishments of the past year were:

- 1) Establishing [VH@Duke advising](#) as a known, trusted, and valued resource among a significant number of humanities PhD students, and increasingly, PhD programs and faculty; and
- 2) Successfully recruiting and supporting [a second cohort of VH@Duke interns](#) with impressive and academically relevant work positions (Note: A ninth internship, with El Sistema USA, was awarded to a music PhD student after the 2018 cohort was announced).
- 3) Helping to consolidate collaborative inquiry as a key dimension of humanities education and research at Duke.

In addition, we have made headway with curricular innovation and deepened engagement with Duke PhD alumni. We are also pleased to see the significant attention our efforts have received beyond Duke this year (see the “VH@Duke beyond Duke” section below for examples).

## Advising

As more students and faculty have become aware of the role played by the Director of Academic Advising and Engagement, requests for one-on-one, opt-in advising appointments have continued to increase, with a growing number of advising requests from students in years 1-3. Our efforts this year to engage with first-year PhD students were very well-received, by both students and faculty. We invited all 64 incoming humanities PhD students to a welcome dinner in September. Twenty students attended, along with 10 humanities faculty, administrators, and staff. We followed up with the students at a spring check-in lunch in March (attended by eight students and three faculty). The PhD Advisor also found willing partners with departments as she scheduled early fall semester visits with most humanities PhD program cohorts, orienting them to extra-departmental opportunities across Duke.

Once again this year, we collected feedback from PhD students who scheduled at least one session with the PhD Advisor. The consolidated report for 2017-18 (Appendix A) demonstrates that humanities PhD student respondents overwhelmingly regard the new role of supplemental PhD advisor as vital to their ongoing professional development. The survey, sent to 89 advisees with a 43% response rate, indicates that:

- 97.5% of respondents took “or planned to take” action as a result of their advising session;
- 100% would recommend the advisor to other grad students;
- 97.5% deemed the role “important” or “very important” (85%); and
- 50% shared insights from the conversation with their faculty advisor.

## Newsletter and Blog

We established a weekly newsletter and a regular VH@Duke blog with ambitious goals:

- To publicize the program and encourage more students to sign up for advising sessions;
- To expand awareness of curricular and co-curricular opportunities across campus and beyond Duke; and
- To foster dialogue about the key elements of humanities doctoral training.

The [newsletter](#) and the [blog](#) have found an enthusiastic reception; we now see them as complementary forms of advising (especially for those students who may still be reluctant to reach out directly for consultation). The weekly newsletter highlights new VH blogposts, announces weekly advising hours, and (most critically) provides a curated listing of valuable resources/opportunities (across and beyond campus) relevant to Duke humanities PhD students.

The newsletter has a 50% open rate most weeks, and we have accumulated significant anecdotal evidence suggesting that students have pursued opportunities (e.g., Bass Connections, Story+, the [National Humanities Center’s annual graduate student pedagogy program](#)) that they learned about from the newsletter. For instance, one of our recent religion PhD graduates, Scott Muir, now works as a Social Science Research Fellow at the [National Humanities Alliance](#)—a position he learned about from the newsletter.

The [VH@Duke blogposts](#) are written by the PhD Advisor, Faculty PI, graduate students, faculty, and staff. Topics include student and faculty reflections on [collaborative research experiences](#); [reflections by VH@Duke interns](#); original content on topics relevant to success in graduate school, such as [finding](#)

[academic and professional mentors](#), [time management](#), [imposter syndrome](#), and [writing strategies](#); and, of course, advice for navigating both [academic](#) and [non-academic](#) job markets.

By Spring 2018, blogposts averaged about 200 views a month, all shared on social media and visible beyond Duke. On Twitter, links to VH@Duke blogposts have been viewed and retweeted by staff of the American Historical Association, the Modern Language Association, the Council for Graduate Schools, and the graduate schools or other units at Vanderbilt, Ohio State University, and Stanford. Other Twitter followers (over 150) include the ACLS, a senior program officer at the Mellon Foundation, as well as graduate students and faculty at U Connecticut, UNC-Chapel Hill, NCSU, NYU, U Michigan, Harvard, U Calgary, CUNY, U Arizona, U Louisiana, UC Santa Barbara, UT Austin, and more.

### Internships

This year, we moved the deadline for internship applications up from early spring semester to fall, to sync this competition with other on-campus fellowship and funding opportunities. There was synergy between advising and the internship program, as three of the funded interns had scheduled pre-application conversations with the PhD Advisor to plan self-created internships. Three other students consulted her on the same topic, but decided not to apply in this cycle. We received 12 competitive applications for internships and offered funding to nine.

Although we were pleased with the quality of the 12 applications we received, this number was not commensurate with the level of interest expressed by the students. Next year, we plan to return the deadline to the spring semester, allowing students more time in the academic year to think through summer plans, consult with faculty mentors, and consider the internships against other funding offers they may have received. At the time of this writing, nine VH@Duke interns are all midway through summer internships. Preliminary check-ins indicate that the interns feel positive about their roles and that they are making valuable contributions to their host organizations.

It is too early to collect evaluation data for 2018, but data from 2017 (available only after our first NEH report) indicates that five of the seven interns reporting were “extremely satisfied” with their experience (of the other two, one was “satisfied” and the other was “neither satisfied or dissatisfied”). The top three benefits to the students, based on the evaluation, were working in teams (this was also listed as one of the top challenges for the students), broadening professional networks, and connecting their academic research interests to broader issues.

English PhD student Nora Nunn, who interned with the National Humanities Center, reflected in a [blogpost](#) that “The environment inside university walls—especially in fields such as English—does not always encourage collaboration or teamwork.... It felt like a breath of fresh air to work alongside others toward a common goal, a sentiment only amplified by the warmth and collegiality of the NHC staff.” History PhD student Will Goldsmith [reported](#) that his internship with RTI International, a large nonprofit consulting firm, “has given me fresh eyes to understand my archival [dissertation] material in the context of a broader international effort to map and enhance ... innovation. I got an inside look at one of the largest local employers of Ph.D.s, and I may get a publication out of it.”

### VH@Duke beyond Duke

Although we hoped that Duke’s Next Generation PhD project would serve as a national model for doctoral education, the attention we’ve received in Year 2 has exceeded our expectations. Below is a

summary of presentations, publications, and invited participation in workshops that have brought attention to our work beyond Duke.

- PhD Advisor invited to William & Mary to consult on their NEH Implementation Grant proposal (included conversations with Provost, Arts & Sciences Dean, and Graduate Dean), August 2017.
- Faculty PI presented on VH@Duke, along with other Duke interdisciplinary efforts, at Texas Christian University, September 2017.
- PhD Advisor invited to present on graduate professional development, NC Council of Graduate Schools Conference at UNC-CH, October 2017.
- Faculty PI invited to participate in a Department Chairs workshop sponsored by the American Historical Association (Career Diversity for Historians), October 2017.
- PhD Advisor invited to present on VH@Duke on a national webinar sponsored by the Council for Graduate Schools, November 2017.
- PhD Advisor invited to participate in session at National Humanities Conference in Boston on VH@Duke internship program. PhD Advisor and Faculty PI also coordinated panel on “Forming the Public-Facing PhD Student” (including one of our History PhD students), November 2017.
- VH@Duke internship program profiled in Fall issue of *Duke Magazine*: [“Ph.Ds are defining success in a new way”](#).
- Faculty PI invited to present on VH@Duke at the University of Pennsylvania, December 2017.
- Faculty PI organized session on “Bringing Collaborative Research into Doctoral Education: Field Dispatches from the NEH Next Generation Program and the AHA/Mellon Grant” for the Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, January 2018.
- PhD Advisor invited to sit on the review committee for final round of NEH Next Generation PhD Planning Grants, January 2018.
- PhD Advisor invited to serve as an on-site counselor in the Job Information Center at the Annual Convention of the Modern Language Association, January 2018.
- Duke’s efforts profiled in Colleen Flaherty’s [“The History Ph.D: Beyond ‘Alt-Ac.’ ”](#) *Inside Higher Education*, Jan. 8, 2018.
- VH@Duke internship program profiled in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, [“Rebranding the Ph.D.”](#) March 2018.
- VH@Duke named a “Career Diversity Affiliate” by the American Historical Association (Career Diversity for Historians Initiative), April 2018.
- Faculty PI and PhD Advisor presented on “Revising Graduate Education for the 21st Century” at the National Humanities Center, April 2018.
- PhD Advisor invited to present on best practices in advising and mentoring at the Modern Language Association/Association of Departments of English Summer Seminar (professional development for English department chairs) in Atlanta, June 2018.
- Faculty PI discussed VH@Duke as invited participant at Dumbarton Oaks workshop on Facilitating Skills Development by Early Career Humanists, June 2018.
- Two VH@Duke-coordinated panels accepted for the 2019 annual meetings of the Modern Language Association and the American Historical Association, respectively, each meeting in Chicago in January 2019. PhD Advisor coordinated panel on “How Do We Fix the Advising Model for PhD Students” (including Leonard Cassuto, author of *The Graduate School Mess*), and Faculty PI coordinated “Catalyzing Change in PhD Program Revisioning” (including former NEH head, Bro Adams).

- Co-written article by Faculty PI and PhD Advisor, “Rethinking Graduate Education in the Humanities,” accepted for publication in Fall 2018 issue of *Change: The Magazine of Higher Education*.

## Year 2: Challenges

Challenges that have either emerged in Year 2, or persisted beyond Year 1, include: gaining more faculty engagement and buy-in; shifting more of the advising activity towards holistic academic advising for students still in coursework; and engaging more PhD students in cohort-based advising and programming outside the one-on-one structure. Although we have made modest strides in tracking the career outcomes of alumni who work beyond academia and making those trajectories more visible, we now better understand that PhD programs themselves need to take the lead on alumni engagement.

### Faculty Engagement

This issue is by no means unique to Duke. At the January 2017 workshop for NEH project directors, obstacles to faculty engagement surfaced as a key problem for over two dozen doctoral-granting institutions of different types. This issue also remains an enduring topic in national conversations in PhD program reform more generally.

Given the pervasiveness of this challenge, we have been pleased with the measurable progress we have made among faculty and PhD programs in Year 2. At the same time, we recognize that more work needs to be done. Some of the measures of increased faculty engagement with VH@Duke include the following:

- In Fall 2017, the PhD Advisor worked with Directors of Graduate Studies (DGSs) from 10 humanities PhD programs to make on-site visits with either first-year PhD student cohorts or blended cohort groups. A ThD student took the lead in arranging for the PhD Advisor to visit with a few students from her program.
- PhD Advisor received invitations from PhD program faculty to participate in the following:
  - Academic job search workshop in history
  - Academic job search workshop in English
  - Prospective PhD student lunch in history
  - Program review (meeting with an external team) for classics
  - Wabash grant-funded lunch series program with religion and theology faculty
- Nearly 20 faculty accepted personal invitations to small-group information lunches sponsored by VH@Duke. Four lunches were held over the academic year, with three to five humanities faculty guests attending each.
- VH@Duke worked with the Humanities Dean to host two meetings for humanities DGSs in Spring 2018. The DGSs who attended were highly engaged and noted that these sessions provided a needed forum to share questions, engage in problem solving, and learn about best practices.
- Two faculty (other than Faculty PI) wrote blogposts for VH@Duke.
- Six faculty (other than Faculty PI) participated in the [VH@Duke Summer Writing Kickoff](#).

The clearest sign of our ongoing need to engage faculty is the fact (as revealed during the small-group lunches) that many faculty who work with humanities PhD students had limited awareness of the

program's activities. While the PhD Advisor and Faculty PI have had regular engagement with PhD program chairs and DGSs (including a monthly VH@Duke email update during the academic year), news about our program and its resources does not always reach individual faculty who advise doctoral students.

We also have some anecdotal evidence that skepticism about the value or appropriateness of VH@Duke still exists among some faculty and within some PhD programs. This sentiment is typically coupled with a misperception that the program exists only to serve PhD students who do not get tenure-track academic jobs. Some faculty members have expressed the view that since Duke's humanities Ph.D recipients continue to land tenure track positions at rates consistent with leading departments elsewhere, there is little reason to reconsider basic approaches to doctoral training.

Another compelling indication of the need to engage and educate more faculty is what the PhD Advisor hears regularly from PhD students, both anecdotally and on advising evaluations: many students remain uncomfortable broaching certain topics with their faculty supervisors—not just job searches or career aspirations, but also curricular and co-curricular opportunities beyond their programs. As students themselves attest, faculty often do not know or appreciate the range of academic and professional development resources that exist beyond their own departments, and sometimes characterize extra-departmental opportunities as “a waste of time.”

### Shifting Advising toward Earlier and More Holistic Interventions

At the end of Year 1, we noted that conversations with late-stage doctoral students about nonacademic job searches constituted the majority of advising sessions (Appendix B). Course correction in summer and early Fall 2017 resulted in a measurable increase in first-year students who sought out advising sessions, primarily for conversations about leveraging the many academic and professional development resources at Duke (Appendix C). After 18 months of advising activity, there remains a discernible tilt toward nonacademic job counseling, particularly with students nearing completion or those who have very recently graduated (Appendix D). Continued outreach to PhD students still in coursework may shift this distribution of advising motivations. As more students begin to check in with the PhD Advisor early and periodically, we anticipate more conversations about academic and professional development, and fewer discussions shaped by “I need a job” crisis management.

### Engaging Students in Cohort-based Advising and Other Programming

Community and cohort-building has always been an important part of VH@Duke's vision for doctoral education reform, especially given the solitary nature of most PhD study in the humanities and growing recognition of [a crisis in mental health for doctoral students across disciplines](#). Small-group advising conversations in cohorts of PhD students can help build community and promote an empowering culture of peer mentoring and networking.

We shifted our approach to collective mentoring this year, partly due to decreased demand for “no agenda” lunches. Our new priority is on integration with existing programs that engage doctoral students. As mentioned above, the PhD Advisor has met regularly with VH@Duke interns. She also convened groups of Duke doctoral students participating in Story+, a pedagogical project at the National Humanities Center, and a group interested in learning more about the Public Fellows postdoc run by the American Council of Learned Societies.

Our experiences this past year confirm the value of channeling students toward established professional development events and opportunities (rather than creating many new ones), and to collaborate wherever possible with cognate units and undertakings on campus.

### PhD Innovation Grants

The initial challenge we confronted was to solicit applications to the PhD Innovation fund from a limited number of eligible PhD Programs. Although we promoted this opportunity and engaged with individual PhD program chairs and DGSs, our efforts in Spring 2017 yielded only five applications (four of which we viewed as highly deserving of funding). A few chairs and DGSs who did not submit proposals expressed interest, but remarked that they and their colleagues had limited time to develop project proposals.

Of the [four 2017 projects](#), “Writing Futures,” spearheaded and designed by PhD students in the literature program, has had the most impact. As PhD student Laura Jaramillo details in [a blogpost](#), this yearlong series of workshops has helped nearly twenty students develop as writers for both academic and nonacademic audiences. It remains unclear, however, whether any of the program elements will continue beyond the one-year cycle of the grant.

The other three projects report a slower-than-expected pace in achieving curricular goals, all for different reasons. This quote from the evaluations perhaps sums it up best: “We have been reminded of the many constituencies to be considered when implementing changes in the graduate program, and have newly appreciated the many interlocking parts of the program which much be considered if change is to be successful.”

In other words, curricular revision tends to involve more often a long, slow haul rather than a neatly plotted and scheduled transformation. Despite the bumps, all of three of the project leaders express commitment to moving forward on their original projects as planned, and all have received a one-year extension to continue work.

Because of the low response to the open call for proposals in 2016-17, this year we chose to curate/incubate a small number of projects that build on innovation at other units around campus. Professor Laurent Dubois’s Public Scholarship course and the [Archival Expeditions](#) pilot will receive funding for launch in Fall 2018. The latter will support four doctoral students working on archival research modules for courses on The History of the Book, the History of Innovation, and Muslim Life in America. We also expect to provide funding to the Ed Tech Digital Fellows program this year. A fourth project—the development of a collaborative research seminar focused on archival holdings in Duke’s Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library—still depends on recruitment of a lead faculty member.

### **VH@Duke: What We’ve Learned So Far**

- At the present time, Duke Humanities PhD students **benefit from access to supplemental, extra-departmental advising** that is personalized, accessible, and attuned to both academic and professional trajectories.
- Despite ongoing efforts to encourage doctoral students to be proactive in professional development from their first year, we still see a tendency for **students to respond most readily to opportunities for “just in time” advising**, at their own convenience.

- **Online communications** (the weekly newsletter and blog) have proved to be valued means of less personal engagement, outreach, and information.
- Despite evidence of ongoing cultural change among both faculty and PhD students, there remains **significant skepticism in some quarters**, whether about programs that expose doctoral students to interdisciplinary collaborative inquiry, or to provision of resources that better prepare students for diverse (non-faculty) career outcomes.
- The best strategy for overcoming faculty skepticism is to demonstrate how the **priorities of VH@Duke align with faculty values and priorities**—namely, enriching (rather than “watering down”) humanities PhD programs, amplifying research expertise and effective communication, creating mechanisms that invite undergraduates to explore humanistic thinking/research, and helping to form a “versatile” cohort of future faculty better equipped to navigate both the academic job market and a rapidly changing higher education landscape.
- More work needs to be done to **educate faculty on job market/professionalization issues**, and DGSs specifically need more training for all aspects of their jobs (not limited to career diversity issues).
- A significant fraction of Duke humanities PhD students (and many of their DGSs/faculty) welcome opportunities for doctoral students to gain **meaningful, compensated work experiences off campus**, both for academic enrichment and career exploration.
- Although national conversations about PhD student internships typically hone in on nonacademic career trajectories, the **greatest benefit of an internship** for early-stage PhD students may be, and should be, its effects on **refining and focusing research agendas** and furnishing new perspectives on modes of scholarly communication.
- While prearranged internships with VH@Duke host organizations (NHC, RTI, NC Science Museum, etc.) have been beneficial for our students, **internships that students arrange themselves may provide the most value**, both academically and professionally.
- It takes concerted effort to promote collaborative research experiences and their value to humanities PhD students, but the payoff is worth it. We have anecdotal reports of these experiences **greatly enriching students’ capacity to conceptualize and carry out sophisticated, compelling research agendas**. We are also beginning to see more examples of PhD students who successfully leverage experiences with Bass Connections, Story+, and Data+ for success on both academic and nonacademic job markets.
- The best way to facilitate curricular reform in individual PhD programs likely involves **engagement with departments who initiate reform discussions on their own**, as well as the creation of channels for PhD programs to share best practices.
- Although VH@Duke can provide support, resources, and visibility for humanities PhD alumni networking, **PhD alumni outreach is best done by and within PhD programs themselves**.

- There are **more Duke humanities PhD alumni working beyond academia** (that is, completely outside of higher education) than most students, faculty, or even administrators would expect. This group includes a small but significant number of alumni who at one point held tenure-track positions but chose to change careers for a variety of reasons.
- Many of these Duke humanities PhD alumni have established themselves in **what are not normally considered “humanities careers”** (education, publishing, nonprofits, etc.). They have flourished in banking, innovation and entrepreneurship, finance, technology, law, and more.
- Although these alumni matriculated at a time when no structural support existed to help them explore nonacademic careers, they have landed well. There are, however, also many Duke humanities PhDs whom we have not been able to track down. **What are their stories?**

## VH@Duke: Year 3 and Beyond

At the spring meeting of the VH@Duke advisory board, the discussion centered around sustainability: what activities have been most valuable for humanities PhD students? There was unanimous agreement: both the **supplemental PhD advising** and the **internship program** have addressed key needs of our students. As we enter the third and final year of the grant cycle, we will sustain these activities while working with VH@Duke collaborators and stakeholders to develop an implementation plan for both. In particular, we look forward to working with The Graduate School, the Provost’s Office, and Duke’s [Reimagining Doctoral Education Committee](#), to envision a larger, sustainable model for supplemental PhD advising across all disciplines at Duke.

We also regard the funds for **collaborative research activities** as a highly successful part of our grant, and note that the university has expanded mechanisms for humanities PhD students to take advantage of programs such as Bass Connections, Story+, Data+, and [Duke Support for Interdisciplinary Graduate Networks \(D-SIGN grants\)](#).

In Year 3, VH@Duke will continue to offer **PhD Innovation Grants** to PhD programs and other units that engage with doctoral training, but perhaps our most significant contribution will be to open spaces for conversation and collaboration among humanities PhD programs and individual DGSs. Part of these conversations will be to encourage DGSs and faculty to engage more with **humanities PhD alumni** who have pursued a wide range of interesting careers.

Finally, the new Mellon grant received by Duke, [“Humanities Unbounded,”](#) holds potential for multiple collaborations with VH@Duke, especially in regard to graduate student participation in new humanities labs and a new community college partnership with Durham Tech (which the PhD Advisor will oversee). This is another promising channel for VH@Duke to facilitate amplification of doctoral training in Year 3.

## **Appendix A: Story+ and Data+ 2018 humanities PhD Student Mentors**

### Story+

- Ellen Song (English), The Allen Building Takeover @ 50 Exhibit
- Max Symuleski (AAHVS), An Illustrated Memoir of the Global HIV/AIDS Pandemic: The Maria de Bruyn Papers Speak
- Allison Raven (History) and Nicole Higgins (English), Left of Black Weekly Webcast Project
- Peace Lee (Divinity), Preaching and Protest: Sermons from Duke Chapel During the Civil Rights Era
- Ayanna Legros (History), Remapping the Caribbean: Archives of Haitian & Cuban Migration, Detention, and Legal Activism
- Eladio Bobadilla (History), Student Action with Farmworkers Documentaries
- Hannah Ontiveros (History), Stone by Stone: Who Built the Duke Chapel?

### Data +

- Michelle Sroka (English), Women's Spaces
- Nora Nunn (English), Poverty in Writing and Images

## Appendix B: VH@Duke 1:1 Advising Evaluation Data Summary

Source: Consolidated Qualtrics report, Fall 2017 and Spring 2018

Distributed to: 89 graduate students who met with PhD Advisor at least once in 2017-18

Response rate: 48% (43 students)

### Evaluation highlights (qualitative):

**97.5%** of respondents “took action” (80%) or “plan to” take action (17.5%) on academic/career plan following session

**100%** of respondents would recommend advisor to other graduate students

**50%** of respondents shared insights from the conversation with departmental advisor

**97.5%** of respondents deemed the new role of the PhD Advisor “very important/critical” (85%) or “important” (12.5%)

### Evaluation highlights (qualitative)

Q14—Why do you think this role is important? What unique graduate student needs does this role address?

*-- Maria acts as an opportunity identifier and an educational and career path planner. Grad students aren't trained (and often aren't encouraged) to look outside their departments for educational or professional development experiences, so often don't understand how to develop, deploy, or apply their knowledge and skills in diverse, enriching ways. Maria is important because she understands the range of opportunities and can help plug grad students into a network of enriching experiences that will help them develop their transferable skills regardless of their path post-PhD*

*-- Having a resource outside of departmental and other dissertation advisors is critical. It is incredibly beneficial to have the advice, wisdom, perspective, and guidance of someone "external" to the politics and common practices of a specific department, in that Maria assists students in considering important facets of their education and future employment that may be missing from individual programs.*

*-- She works with many graduate students across fields, and she has a different and very helpful perspective about the job market and searches than advisors who work with fewer students on the job market (and some advisors have many demands on their time making it harder for them to give as much dedicated time to job market advising)*

A15—Please comment on what you perceive to be the advisor’s strengths, and/or the benefits of the advising experience to you personally:

*-- Maria is exceptionally earnest and welcoming; I would feel comfortable discussing a wide range of personal and professional issues with her. I am also as confident (if not more confident) in her ability to help students navigate the academic job search as much as the non-academic job search. I see her, first and foremost, as being on my side - perhaps as an "ally" more than a mentor.*

*-- Maria is very knowledgeable of the alt-ack and tenure-track job markets, which makes her extremely versatile. She is approachable and always willing to meet. She has helped me expand my network by introducing me to others in my fields of interest both at Duke and in the Triangle broadly. She has also looked at drafts of my resume and provided feedback.*

*-- Dr. Wisdom has a knowledge of an academic field beyond religion but is able to offer knowledgeable advice that remains relevant to my particular field as a student of religion and theology. Moreover, Dr. Wisdom's intentional engagement with Th.D. students provides an uncommon opportunity for Th.D. students to engage with resources from the broader university.*

**Q16-What else might the advisor do to help make the advising session(s) more productive and valuable to you and other PhD students?**

*-- Embedding this figure in the life of the department, letting her work closely with the DGS and the faculty.*

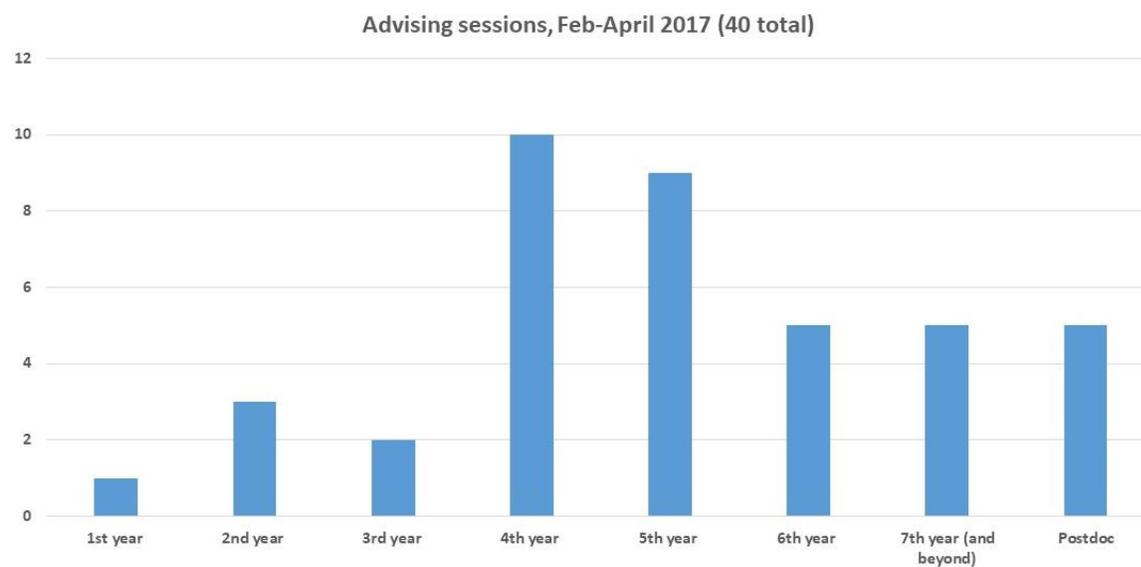
*-- Forge more connections with faculty (like that fantastic writing workshop last spring) so that it's more of a united front informing and connecting students to opportunities at and beyond Duke.*

*-- I catch up with Maria semi-regularly, about twice a semester, and it helps reinforce a sense of a relationship - keeps her updated on what I'm doing so she can provide better recommendations and connect me to relevant opportunities. Feels less like a one-off thing and more like getting "caught up."*

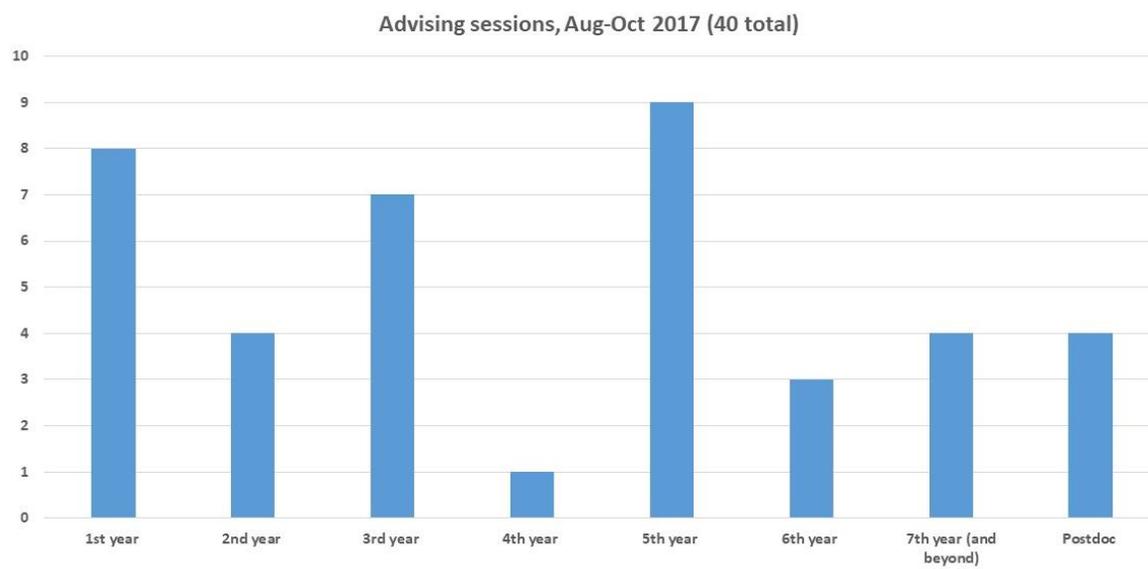
*-- Better publicity about this wonderful service - more people should learn from Dr. Wisdom!*

## Appendix C: 1:1 Advising Session Data

### Spring 2017



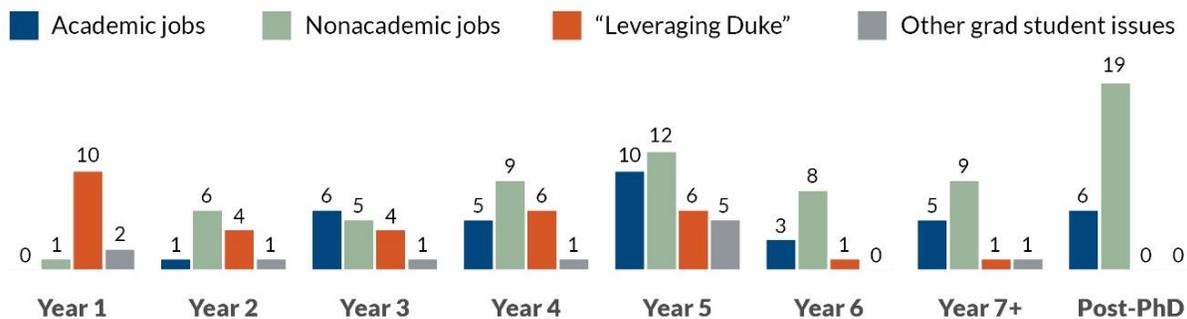
### Fall 2017



## Appendix D: 1:1 Advising Sessions to date (Dec. 2016-May 2018)

### What Students Want to Talk About

Topics from 148 one-on-one advising sessions (Feb. 2017 to May 2018), shown by students' year in graduate school



## **Appendix E: Versatile Humanists at Duke Advisory Board**

### *Duke Senior Leadership*

- Paula D. McClain, Dean of The Graduate School and Vice Provost for Graduate Education
- Jaqueline Looney, Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Programs and Associate Vice Provost for Academic Diversity
- Gennifer Weisenfeld, Dean of the Humanities, Trinity College of Arts & Sciences
- Deborah Jenson, Director, Franklin Humanities Institute (Fall 2017)
- Ranjana Khanna, Director, Franklin Humanities Institute (Spring 2018); and Professor of English, Women's Studies, and the Literature Program

### *Duke Faculty*

- Rey Chow, Chair, Program in Literature
- Kathy Psomiades, Director of Graduate Studies, Department of English
- Philip Stern, Director of Graduate Studies, Department of History
- Clare Woods, Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Classical Studies

### *Duke Staff*

- Melissa Bostrom, Assistant Dean for Graduate Student Professional Development
- Nicole Kempton, Senior Director, Graduate & Professional School Alumni Relations
- Liz Milewicz, Head, Digital Scholarship Services Department, Duke University Libraries
- William Wright-Swadel, Executive Director, Duke Career Center

### *Duke Graduate Students*

- Nora Nunn, doctoral student, English
- Natalie Gasparowicz, doctoral student, History
- Christine Ryan, doctoral student, Law

### *Duke Alumni*

- Aaron Dinin, Co-Founder, Backend Developer at Rocketbolt
- Heidi Giusto, Founder, Career Path Writing Solutions

### *Community Partners*

- Jacqueline Olich, Director, University Collaborations, RTI International
- Andy Mink, Vice President for Education Programs, National Humanities Center