



Final Report to the National Endowment for the Humanities

**NEXT GENERATION PHD IMPLEMENTATION GRANT, 2016-19**  
**“DOCTORAL TRAINING FOR THE VERSATILE HUMANIST”**



Duke University, September 2019  
Edward Balleisen and Maria LaMonaca Wisdom

## I. Summary

The overarching ambitions of “Doctoral Training for the Versatile Humanist” respond directly to decades-long, national conversations about best practices on doctoral training, as well as our informed analysis of trends (related to both process and career outcomes for students) across roughly a dozen humanities PhD programs at Duke. Our primary goal has been to infuse doctoral education in the humanities with experiences that extend beyond core disciplinary training, with the goal of better preparing students for careers within and beyond the academy.

We focused on increasing exposure to collaborative research, often in interdisciplinary projects, and communication to multiple audiences. In some cases, this approach meant creating new opportunities. But the most important focus was improving awareness of opportunities already available beyond departments, and complementing existing avenues for advising. “Doctoral Training for the Versatile Humanist” had an expansive scope, addressing six focal areas related to doctoral training in humanities and humanistic social sciences at Duke. Although this report documents measurable successes for all six areas, we see especially significant impact in three domains:

- establishing a director of graduate student advising and engagement (DGSAE) who developed multiple modes of student outreach and support;
- creating an off-campus internship program for humanities PhD students; and
- supporting the launch of an innovative, team-based summer research program for undergraduates, which depended on high-quality mentorship from humanities doctoral students.

Work on the remaining focal areas (pedagogical innovations, conversations about professional development, alumni networking) had positive but less dramatic impact, either because these areas turned out to be best suited for delivery by units elsewhere on campus (individual PhD programs, The Graduate School, Career Services), or because they required greater start-up investment than the amounts on offer through the grant.

## II. Overview of Key Activities in Our Six Focal Areas

The strategic direction of Versatile Humanists at Duke (VH@Duke) was spearheaded by the faculty PI in close collaboration with the DGSAE. The DGSAE administered all facets of the grant, with staff support from The Graduate School and the Office of the Vice Provost for Interdisciplinary Studies.

Our work was also guided by an Advisory Board (see appendix A) whose membership represented the pan-university collaboration we hope to sustain at Duke beyond the NEH grant period. The board included senior leaders from The Graduate School, the Provost’s Office, Trinity College of Arts & Sciences, Alumni Relations, and Career Services, along faculty directors of graduate studies, current graduate students, graduate student alumni, and community partners.

### 1. Individualized advising support and dissemination of key information for doctoral students

After coming on board in Fall 2016, the DGSAE started offering [1:1 advising appointments](#) in January 2017. She promoted this resource to students directly, through in-person visits to individual PhD

program cohorts, and (most crucially) through a regular Versatile Humanists at Duke newsletter. As the months progressed, an increasing number of students also reported coming in for advising because of referrals by peers, and sometimes, by their directors of graduate studies.

The DGSAE's engagement strategy has been simple: build relationships with students in as organic and informal a way as possible (much as they would with PhD program faculty). There are no online registration or intake forms; students email the DGSAE directly (who typically responds within one to two days), to get on her calendar (ideally within two weeks). In the preliminary email, students usually share their objective for their conversation, and the DGSAE requests a CV or resume.

In keeping with the informality of the advising structure, the DGSAE holds nearly all her advising sessions "where the students live"—mostly the main library complex on West Campus (which includes a popular coffee shop), and another well-frequented coffee shop on East Campus. Other students prefer meeting at the DGSAE's office, especially when sensitive topics are on the agenda.

Advising sessions vary greatly, with pace and direction determined almost entirely by a given student's objectives and communication style. The key objective of initial meetings is to establish rapport and cultivate a safe, nonevaluative space in which students can talk freely. These conversations cannot be rushed; most sessions (including follow-ups) run a full hour.

Good advising often requires as much (or more) listening than talking. Our experience suggests that the most significant contribution a complementary advisor can make is to provide a larger framework or perspective for students to reflect upon whatever issue they bring, and to support students in developing strategy or action plans. This approach is particularly appropriate for student issues that have no black-or-white solution, such as a new PhD student's interest in establishing an interdisciplinary network at Duke, or a later-stage PhD student weighing the relative merits of a faculty career as opposed to one beyond the academy. Many students also voice the need for informal instruction of some kind (for example, what is informational interviewing and how do you do it?), but that function can be accomplished in multiple ways (such as providing links to online resources) and may not always be the best use of advising time.

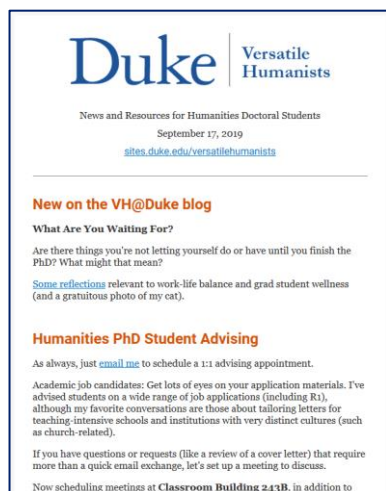
In the first months of complementary advising, many interested individuals were in the late stages of PhD work (or even a year or two post-PhD), and manifested considerable anxiety. Most of these students had spent six to seven years preparing exclusively for faculty jobs that had not materialized. For these students, advising provided critical support for taking first steps toward other professional outcomes. These conversations were, by necessity, highly tactical.

By Fall 2018, two developments brought a more heterogeneous group of doctoral students into the advising fold: 1) the DGSAE made concerted efforts to reach out to brand-new PhD students and others still in coursework, to emphasize the role complementary advising could play in helping them navigate academic and professional opportunities beyond individual PhD programs; and 2) word got out that the DGSAE could also help students apply for academic jobs, especially teaching-focused positions not always well understood by Duke research faculty.

### *Newsletter*

Virtual communication for VH@Duke turned out to be a key feature of our efforts. The DGSAE's outreach includes a biweekly newsletter with a subscription list of nearly 600 (including most of the 400+ humanities doctoral students). Subscribers also include a growing number of faculty members, as well as

university staff from The Graduate School, Provost's Office, Career Services, Duke Libraries, and other campus units. A few subscribers work as faculty or administrators at other universities and educational organizations.



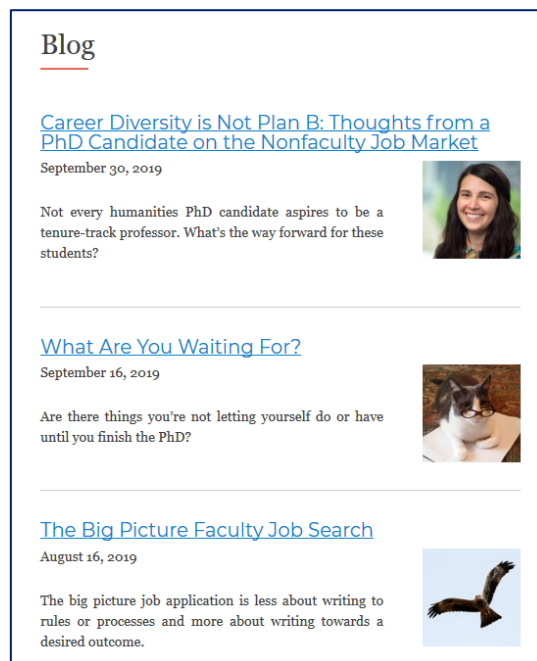
The typical Duke graduate student is bombarded by informational emails each week, many of which contain only some information salient to any given student. The VH@Duke newsletter offers a relatively concise, engaging overview of the most relevant content for humanities doctoral students. A [typical issue](#) leads with a link to the latest VH@Duke blog post. There is usually a section of announcements and opportunities specific to VH@Duke, a section for relevant announcements from The Graduate School, Provost's Office, Career Services, and other campus units, always a section with internal (and often external) funding opportunities, and a "Food for Thought" section containing a roundup of the most interesting and constructive articles that showed up in the DGSAE's Twitter feed in a given week.

### VH@Duke blog

The DGSAE also oversees [a blog on the VH@Duke website](#). Each blog post focuses on a different topic relevant to the intellectual and/or professional development of Duke humanities doctoral students. The DGSAE, who has authored approximately half of the posts, often draws upon her ongoing conversations with doctoral students (while preserving confidentiality) as inspiration for material. She has written on a wide range of topics, from building professional networks, to preparing for both academic and nonacademic job markets, to issues of work/life integration and vocational discernment. Graduate students have written about their experiences with internships, collaborative research, and other less traditional modes of doctoral training. Faculty have chimed in with perspectives on writing dissertations, integrating service work into professional training, and overseeing collaborative research projects.

## 2. External internship opportunities

By July 2019, VH@Duke had funded 28 off-campus internships (mostly summer, at 15 weeks each) for Duke humanities doctoral students. Roughly half of the internships resulted from collaborations between Duke and various nonprofit and cultural organizations; the rest were opportunities that the students sought out and created themselves. PhD students across multiple disciplines took advantage of this program.





Versatile Humanists at Duke Internships by the Numbers				
28 internships funded, 2017-19 (all outside Duke)				
<b>13</b> were placed with preexisting hosts	<b>15</b> were self-arranged	<b>14</b> were locally-based	<b>8</b> were based elsewhere in US	<b>6</b> were based outside US
Participating students represented 10 academic departments				
English (6)	Literature (6)	History (5)	Romance Studies (5)	Music (2)
Art, Art History & Visual Studies (1)	Computational Media, Arts & Culture (1)	Cultural Anthropology (1)	Philosophy (1)	Religion (1)

We worked with nine partners to offer prearranged opportunities for internships, and placed 13 students with six of these host organizations.

Versatile Humanists at Duke Interns Placed with Preexisting Partnerships
National Humanities Center, Research Triangle Park, NC (5 students)
North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, Raleigh, NC (3 students)
Modern Language Association, New York, NY (2 students)
El Sistema USA, Durham, NC (1 student)
Museum of Durham History, Durham, NC (1 student)
RTI International, Research Triangle Park, NC (1 student)

Approximately half of students' self-created internships took place in the United States; the rest involved work with cultural organizations outside the US.

Versatile Humanists at Duke Internship Hosts: Individually Arranged
In the US
The Cupboard Pamphlet, Littleton, CO
Elite Sports Management, West Chester, PA
EqualityNC, Raleigh, NC
Harvestworks, New York, NY
LGBTQ Center of Durham, Durham, NC
Mono No Aware, New York, NY
Squeaky Wheel Film and Media Arts Center, Buffalo, NY
University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC
Outside the US
Alenjo Carpentier Foundation, Havana, Cuba
Artsworks, Athens, Greece
Association Il Chiostro dei Celestini, Bologna, Italy
Failed Architecture, Amsterdam, Netherlands
Respiriamo Arte, Naples, Italy
International Society for Medieval Culture, Florence, Italy

Prior to VH@Duke, doctoral students could apply for on-campus internship opportunities at The Graduate School and Duke University Press, or arrange their own external internships. Until the VH@Duke internship program, however, students lacked formal guidance in how to think about or

develop off-campus internship experiences, and had no way to receive graduate funding for such experiences.

As we conceptualized this program, designed information meetings, and carried out selection processes, a key priority has been to ensure that internship opportunities connect to the intellectual agendas of applicants. Our hope throughout has been not simply to foster the sort of soft skills that come with navigating project deadlines and work cultures, but to do so in contexts that align closely with research trajectories.

During the internship period (summer, in most cases) the DGSAE has held a sequence of three to four monthly remote check-ins (via Zoom) with the current intern cohort, which provides a vehicle for students to reflect on and exchange impressions about what they are taking away from these experiences. An interesting potential challenge for facilitating these conversations is that any given cohort consists of some students have never worked outside the academy and others who have extensive nonacademic work experience. The very different experiences and perceptions that students bring to cohort conversations nonetheless create rich opportunities for peer mentoring. The program has concluded at the end of each summer with an on-campus lunch at which interns share key takeaways.

### 3. Project management roles on interdisciplinary research teams (Story+)

Through Summer 2019, VH@Duke has funded 23 doctoral students across humanities and humanistic social science disciplines to assume project manager roles on collaborative research teams. The majority of these students participated in Story+, a program designed and run by staff at Duke's Franklin Humanities Institute, which launched in Summer 2017.



[Story+](#) is a six-week paid summer research experience for Duke undergraduates interested in exploring humanities research approaches (archival research, oral histories, narrative analysis, visual analysis, and more). The program combines research with an emphasis on storytelling for different public audiences. Groups of three undergraduates join small project teams, mentored by a doctoral student. Each team

participates in a flexible mini “curriculum” on research methods and storytelling strategies, pursues an intensive, applied research project, and generates some sort of narrative output. Team projects may be conceptualized and directed by Duke faculty, Duke librarians, or nonprofit organizations. A searchable listing of all 25 Story+ project teams since Summer 2017 can be [accessed here](#).

Story+ has become a particularly popular option for doctoral students after their first year at Duke. Students report seeking out project management skills and mentoring experience, and the summer stipend supplement (which may be taken in the form of a research reimbursement) provides additional incentive. Not mentioned on the final surveys, but also a factor to consider, is that humanities doctoral students do not always get clear directives from PhD programs about how to use their time in the summer (a fact that often surfaces in advising meetings between early-stage doctoral students and the DGS&E). Story+ offers students valuable, paid experience that sometimes relates to existing academic interests (as students report), and almost always get students engaged in wider intellectual currents and networks.

#### 4. Fostering pedagogical innovations in graduate training

Our PhD Innovation fund, to support curricular improvements in doctoral training, accepted seven proposals and ultimately funded five, at approximately \$7,500 each. (One especially successful project, Archival Expeditions, received a renewal grant, making a total of six VH@Duke PhD Innovation awards.)

PhD Innovation Grants
Exploration of a portfolio-based comprehensive exam and hybrid theory/practice dissertation for the new PhD program in Computational Media, Arts & Cultures (Victoria Szabo)
An initiative in the History PhD program to reimagine how students are trained to teach, with emphases on public engagement, interdisciplinary pedagogy, and transferable skills for nonacademic arenas (Kristen Neuschel and Phil Stern)
A year-long program to support student writers in the Literature PhD program, with an emphasis on helping students communicate to audiences beyond academia (Mark Hansen)
A new interdisciplinary seminar, based in the Philosophy PhD program, to provide students with team-based, hands-on instruction in scholarly digital publishing (Andrew Janiak and Liz Milewicz)
A new course in the History program, Practicing Public Scholarship, to teach graduate students to develop and put into practice public scholarship projects of their own (Laurent DuBois)
Archival Expeditions, a new program based at Rubenstein Library, for humanities PhD students and faculty to collaborate in developing archives-based undergraduate course modules

Across all PhD Innovation projects, faculty leads report encountering more challenges than they anticipated, including curricular limitations and institutional bureaucracy. Three of the six projects requested extensions into a second (and in one case, third) year. Nonetheless, most of the PhD Innovation project leaders, as of this writing, report achieving the goals originally laid out in their proposals.

Several PhD Innovation projects involve collaborations between multiple PhD programs and units at Duke, and are likely to be sustained beyond the initial grant period. One such innovation is a course in [“Practicing Public Scholarship,”](#) cross-listed in History and Romance Studies, and based at Duke’s Forum for Scholars and Publics. Through readings, viewings, and visiting speakers/artists, this course introduces students to the concept of public scholarship. It also supports them in writing pieces suitable for

publication in nonacademic venues and requires a final public scholarship project (which, in Fall 2018, ranged from podcasts to long-form pieces to digital projects and project planning).

[Archival Expeditions](#) is overseen by the David S. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, and open to humanities doctoral students from multiple disciplines. This program introduces Duke graduate students to intensive teaching with archival sources, whether physical or digital. Each student partners with a Duke faculty sponsor to design a module for an existing undergraduate course that incorporates a research exercise based on archival sources. Students have the option of drawing on the physical special collections of the library or primary source databases and digital collections available at Duke or elsewhere. Three projects were funded for 2018-19, and three more were accepted for 2019-20.

Archival Expeditions Fellows				
Year	Recipient(s)	Faculty Sponsor	Course	Module
2018	Michael Freeman, Classical Studies	Clare Woods	History of the Book	Introduction to Papyrology
2018	Ashton Merck and Helen Shears, History	David Robinson	n/a	Historical Contexts of Innovation and Entrepreneurship
2018	Alyssa Miller, Cultural Anthropology	Ellen McLarney	Black Muslims	Recovering Black Muslim Experiences
2019	Kimberley Dimitriadis, English	Charlotte Sussman	Doctor's Stories	In progress
2019	Jonathan Homrighausen, Religion	Marc Brettler	The Old Testament/ Hebrew Bible	In progress
2019	Joseph Mulligan, Romance Studies	Jose María Rodríguez García	Introduction to Spanish Literature II	In progress

## Kimberley Dimitriadis, English

A third-year graduate student, her research interests include Victorian literature and culture, the history of science and mathematics, and novel theory. She is working with Dr. Charlotte Sussman on "Doctors' Stories," an undergraduate course that investigates fiction and theory written about doctors and the discipline of medicine from the 18th century to the present day. She plans to use historical objects, manuscripts, and advertisements to help students understand how the fictions they've encountered in the classroom are supported by the physical instruments and documentation in circulation prior to or at the time of writing.





## 5. Ongoing conversations about professional development for PhD students

A core goal for VH@Duke has been to help PhD students develop awareness and affiliations beyond their individual programs—as members of a 400+ community of humanities doctoral students, rather than just members of small disciplinary doctoral cohorts. To this end, VH@Duke has hosted a variety of conversations on academic and professional development. These conversations have included: two welcome dinners for first-year humanities PhD students; two multi-day pre-summer workshops for dissertators (VH@Duke Summer Writing Kickoff); information sessions on VH@Duke internship opportunities, structured conversations with special guests, such as [humanities PhD program alumni](#) and grad students working on collaborative research projects; and ad hoc lunches for small groups of interested doctoral students, hosted by the DGSAE.

## 6. Alumni networking

Outcomes on this area of the grant consist of a database of 60+ humanities PhD alumni (compiled by the DGSAE) who are working completely beyond the academy (thus not including alumni in higher education administration jobs). The database has facilitated the capacity of the DGSAE to connect students with alumni for informational interviews and, more visibly, has led to the creation a small directory of PhD program alumni (including bios and links for students to connect) that currently lives on the VH@Duke website.

Duke Alumni Affairs maintains a comprehensive database (accessible to all students, faculty, and staff) of doctoral program alumni, and The Graduate School systematically collects detailed information on all PhD alumni as well (information shared on a [publicly searchable database](#)). The much more modest [VH@Duke Alumni Directory](#) is the first attempt to identify and illustrate a range of career outcomes specifically for Duke humanities PhD alumni across several disciplines. Even this limited compilation of data (from 12 PhD program alumni) demonstrated that many PhD program alumni have achieved considerable success in fields that aren't normally considered humanities careers, including two vice-presidents in marketing (one at a major bank), another vice-president in global human resources benefits, the founder of several tech start-ups, and a now-retired entertainment executive.

### [Micah Gilmer](#)

Ph.D.'og Cultural Anthropology  
Senior Partner, Frontline Solutions

Frontline Solutions is a Black-owned consulting firm that serves the philanthropic and nonprofit sectors. It builds tools, models, and ventures that create far-reaching impact. Micah is a researcher and writer who helps Frontline understand how the social technologies of racism and patriarchy create inequitable American systems. He works with clients to design research processes, build strong organizational cultures, and evaluate impact. Micah led the development of Frontline's seminal report "[Why We Can't Wait](#)" and contributed to "[Gender Norms: A Key to Improving Outcomes Among Young Latinas](#)." His work has positioned Frontline as a national thought leader on issues of race and gender.

Micah's research is featured in the forthcoming book *The Big Black Man Rules: Race, Manhood, and the Education of Black Boys*. He also examined the connections between Zulu hip-hop, politics, and opportunity in Soweto, South Africa. He graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2004.



#### Talk with Micah about

- Impact of racism and patriarchy in America
- Leadership development
- Social justice efforts
- Durham, NC

### III. Impact Summary (Specific to Six Focus Areas)

We discuss impact for each of the six key areas of the grant below, including a seventh category to consider the tangible (but significant) cultural intervention of “VH@Duke” as a whole—both locally and nationally.

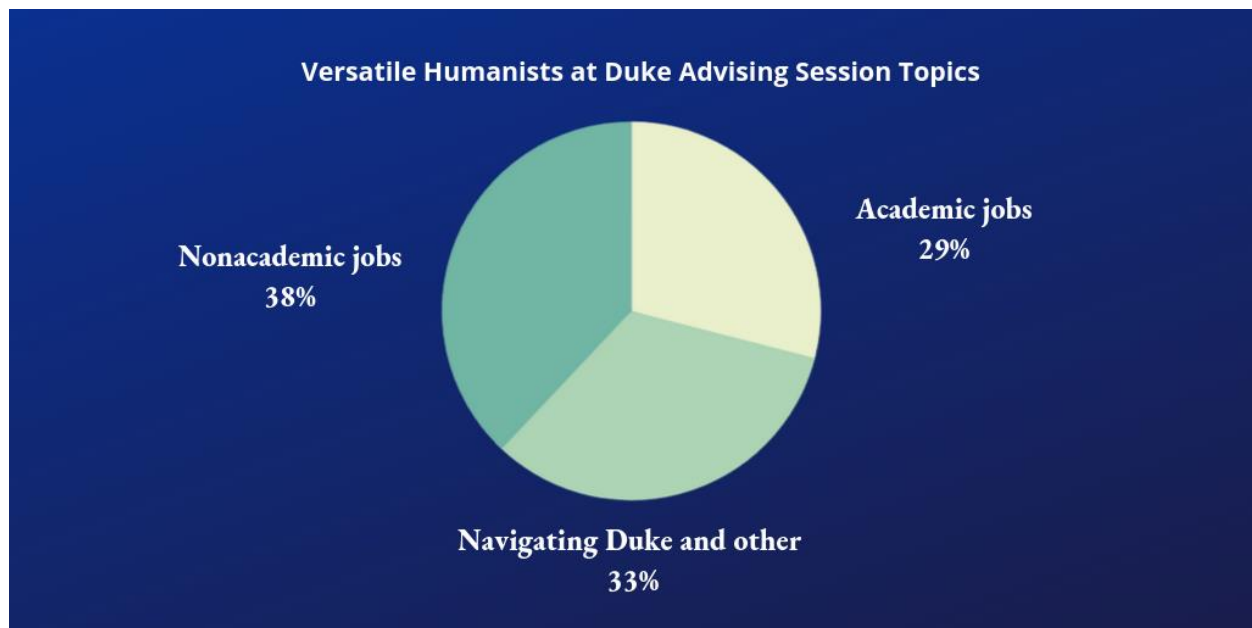
#### 1. Advising

Members of our Advisory Board and our students have expressed the view that our introduction of complementary PhD advising (and related communications/outreach) has had the most visible and widest impact at Duke.

We constructed VH@Duke with the intent to provide resources across the full breadth of the humanities and interpretive social sciences. One clear success concerns the wide footprint of our efforts at complementary advising and targeted information provision. By the end of September 2019, 40% of eligible doctoral students have made use of 1:1 VH@Duke advising at least once. The total of requested 1:1 advising sessions with the DGSAE has grown to 327, as requested by 174 unique students (40% of average humanities PhD enrollment).

Versatile Humanists at Duke Advising by PhD Program (through September 2019)							
PhD Program	Average Cohort	VH Advisees	VH Advising Sessions	Academic Jobs	Nonacademic Jobs	Navigating Duke	Other
Art, Art History & Visual Studies	29	10	18	4	3	5	6
Classics	15	8	14	0	11	1	1
Computational Media, Arts & Culture	6	1	1	0	0	0	1
Cultural Anthropology	29	8	13	4	4	4	1
English	58	27	63	23	24	8	8
German	26	12	14	0	11	2	1
History	53	22	49	7	17	9	16
Literature	44	16	19	1	10	5	3
Music	32	9	15	2	7	2	4
Philosophy	25	9	22	2	15	3	2
Religion	57	22	41	20	11	5	5
Romance Studies	35	20	34	15	8	10	1
Theology (ThD)	26	10	24	17	2	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>53</b>

Although nonacademic job searches remain the most common topic students bring to advising (123 sessions), more students appear to be thinking about this issue much earlier in their PhD programs. The second largest category (108 sessions) does not relate directly to job searches, but to a combination of “navigating Duke” questions, and other issues related to doctoral study in general (relationships with advisors, time management, etc.). Academic job searches remain a common advising topic (95 sessions) as well.



The DGSAE also has engaged with scores of additional students, through visits to PhD program cohorts, attending VH@Duke-sponsored events, administering VH@Duke-funded opportunities (like internships or Story+ positions) and (perhaps most critically) maintaining consistent contact through VH@Duke newsletters and posts on the VH@Duke blog.

Taking all these “touches” into account, we estimate that the program has had a direct impact on around three-fifths of enrolled humanities doctoral students. That impact, of course, has occurred on a continuum, from profound ways (such as students who worked very closely with the DGSAE as part of an internship experience or to land nonacademic positions beyond graduation) to much more casual ones (such as students who occasionally write to say how much they enjoyed the most recent VH@Duke blog post).

“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.”

Sample advisee comment, 2017, anonymously submitted for semester-end evaluations

We can say quite a bit about the impact of 1:1 advising on students, as we have solicited consistent and detailed feedback from advisees at the end of each semester. The results have been more than

encouraging. As our summary of evaluation reports demonstrates (see appendix B), **close to 100%** of survey respondents (between 40-50% of those receiving surveys), deem the position of the DGSAE as “filling a critical gap” or “very important.” **Close to 100%** would recommend DGSAE to other graduate students (and they routinely do). **Over 90%** report “taking or planning to take” action on key items as a follow-up to advising conversations.

Student comments further emphasized the value of having access to advising that occupies a space somewhere between the academic core of PhD programs and the essential—but too often marginalized—support services provided by nonacademic units across campus.

We have regarded digital outreach, particularly the weekly/biweekly VH@Duke newsletter, as a logical extension of in-person advising. Since even students who come in for advising may only do so once per semester (or less), the newsletter also helps remind students of the existence of a larger humanities community at Duke beyond their individual PhD programs. Additionally, some students who never reach out to the DGSAE (for a variety of reasons) still benefit instead from resources we provide through more public channels.

Toward that end, the VH@Duke newsletter has redressed a communications gap on campus, since directors of graduate studies and faculty often have a spotty awareness of the opportunities available for PhD students (including opportunities for collaborative research) beyond individual academic departments. The Graduate School does have a robust communications program, but no resources customized for specific divisions of knowledge. Duke’s Franklin Humanities Institute also sends out a regular and highly informative newsletter of events and opportunities, but not through a channel specific to doctoral students.

VH@Duke, by contrast, targets that constituency. By Fall 2019, **the open rate for each newsletter has been consistently at or above 60%**. At least some PhD alumni also continue to subscribe and read it regularly. Students regularly describe the newsletter as helpful and engaging, with several crediting it for alerting them to what have turned out to be critical professional development opportunities.

The blog posts have a small but regular following. To date, we have published around 90 blog posts, with an average of 200 reads a month. When The Graduate School shares posts (as they frequently have) in its general monthly newsletter (reaching 2,400 doctoral students across all programs), VH@Duke blog posts can receive 500+ reads at a time. On occasion, VH@Duke blog posts are shared on Twitter by staff of the Modern Language Association, the American Historical Association, the Mellon Foundation, and humanities and/or career centers at other universities.

## 2. Internships

Through Summer 2019, 27 doctoral students have completed VH@Duke internships and one has begun a fall internship (through December 2019). The internship program has been extremely well received both on and off-campus campus, by faculty and administrators as well as doctoral students and their host organizations. Like the DGSAE and the VH@Duke communications, the VH@Duke internship program has addressed another need in doctoral student training and support.



## William Goldsmith, History

"My summer at RTI International as a Versatile Humanists at Duke Intern was a rewarding experience that confirmed a hunch: academics and policymakers mutually benefit from collaborative efforts to address our world's biggest challenges. [...] In my dissertation research, I document the policy contributions of academics across the last five decades—scholars who offered their expertise to help guide state policy or formulate projects at nonprofits. RTI showed me an example of how that engagement continues today."



Of 25 former interns who have replied thus far to final evaluations, 18 reported being "extremely satisfied" with their experience, 4 "somewhat satisfied," 2 "neutral," and 1 "slightly dissatisfied." All 25, however, would "recommend that other PhD students complete an external internship."

"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."

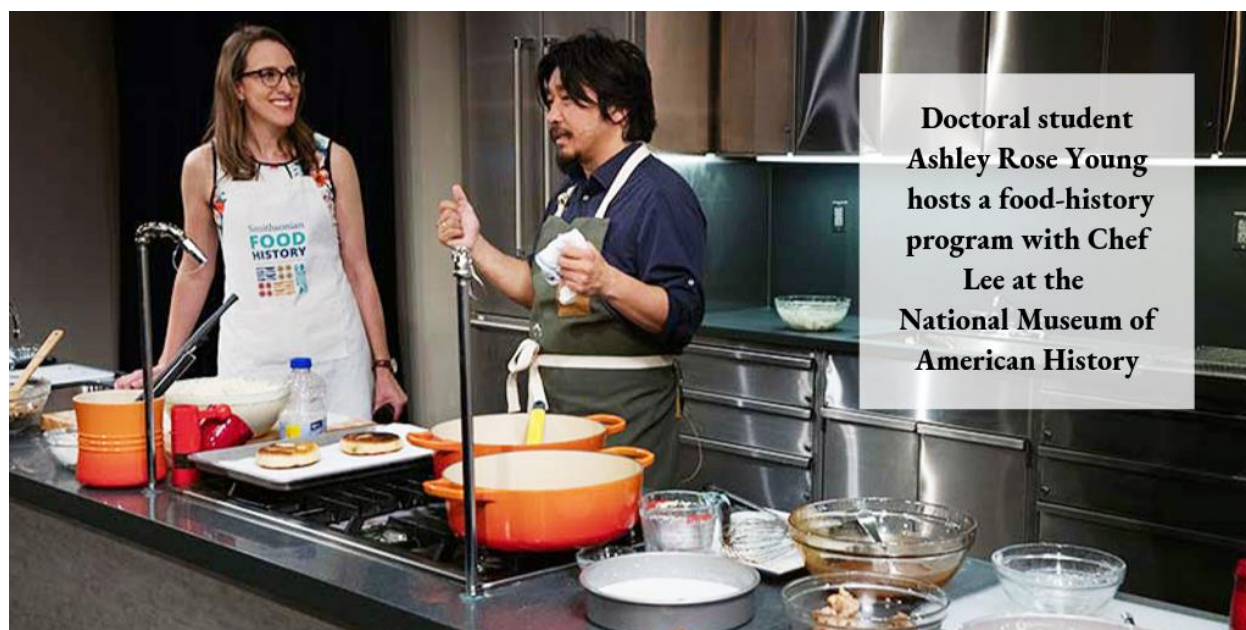
Sample response from VH@Duke intern surveys, 2017-2019

Respondents reported being most likely to seek out the internships for a combination of professional development ("to expand my work experience") and financial reasons. (The financial benefit is difficult to overlook since Duke doctoral students do not, as yet, have guaranteed summer funding.) Doctoral interns identified a consistent set of additional benefits—new intellectual connections, improvements in their ability to work in teams, and greater appreciation for how to connect their academic experience to broader societal issues. A significant number also reported "moderate improvement" in their presentation skills. As growing numbers of early-stage PhD students take advantage of external internships, we also see a slight increase in those who report that the experience had "a great impact" (three respondents, in Summer 2019) on the direction of their dissertation research.

"[My internship] 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 PhDs, and I may get a publication out of it."

Sample response from VH@Duke intern surveys, 2017-2019

Both types of internship opportunities have been tremendously valuable for our students. (See blog post reflections by [Meggan Cashwell](#), [Achille Castaldo](#), [William Goldsmith](#), [Nora Nunn](#), and [Ashley Young](#).) As early as the first year of the internship, however, we noted that students gained some unique advantages from creating their own internship opportunities.



Many of the students who sought to create internships were initially unsure of how to go about it, and the DGSAE was able to work closely with potential applicants as they either identified an appropriate organization aligned with their research interests, or leveraged existing relationships with professional contacts. Students who went through this process developed enhanced confidence in networking and developed new insights into how their academic interests could dovetail with outreach to community organizations from within the academy or work beyond it.

Twenty-two internship hosts also filled out final evaluations, with 100% reporting that interns “met” or (in most cases) “exceeded” expectations, and that they provided either “sufficient” or (in most cases) “significant” value to the organization. We were also pleased to note that PhD program faculty and dissertation advisors have been generally supportive of their students pursuing internships.

**"I made wonderful connections. Furthermore, the work I was doing both supplemented the research goals for my Ph.D. and I learned about a profession that I would be interested in entering into post-Ph.D."**

**Sample response from VH@Duke intern surveys, 2017-2019**

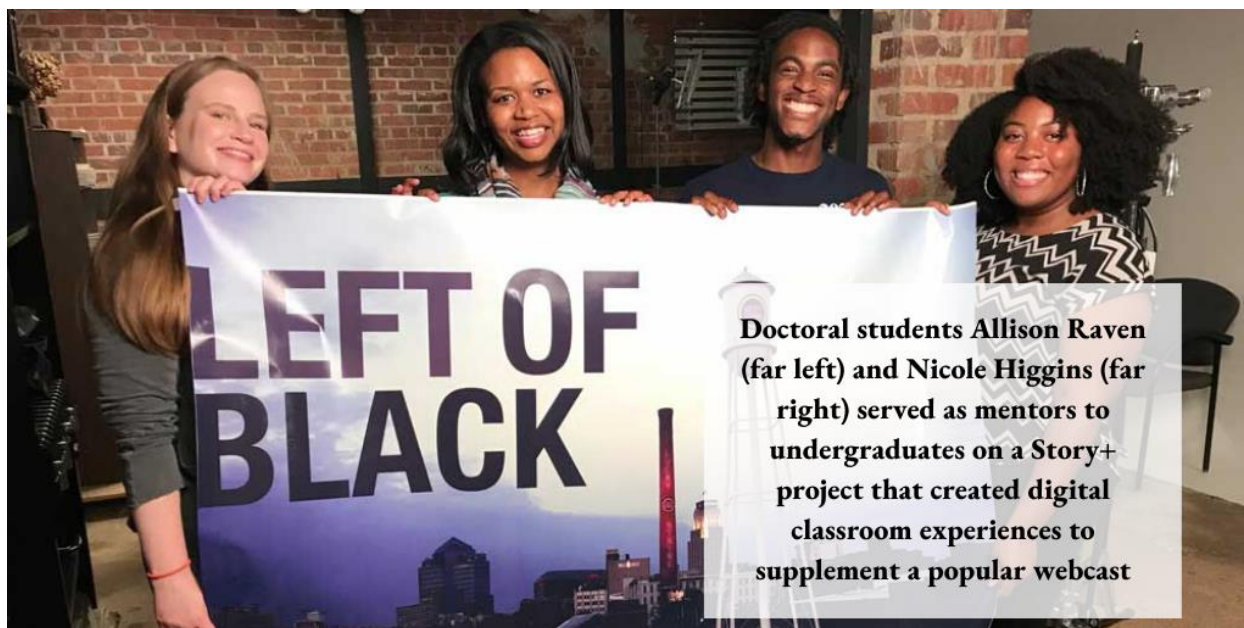
As of this writing, some former VH@Duke interns who have completed their PhDs have already transitioned to excellent jobs both within and beyond academia, including a few who have been retained by their host organizations on a full-time basis.

Current Positions (as Known) of VH@Duke Interns, Post-PhD		
Name and PhD Program	Host Organization	Current Position
Laura Banella, Romance Studies	International Society for the Study of Medieval Culture	Postdoctoral Associate, Università degli Studi di Padova, Italy
Meggan Farish Cashwell, History	Museum of Durham History	Postdoctoral Research Associate, University of Virginia School of Law
William Goldsmith, History	RTI International	Teaching Assistant Professor, Department of Public Policy, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
Jacqueline Kellish, English	National Humanities Center	Curator, Humanities Moments Project, National Humanities Center
Benjamin Richardson, English	North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences	Exhibit Developer, North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences
John Stadler, Literature	The Cupboard Pamphlet	Associate in Research, Duke Faculty Write Program
Ashley Rose Young, History	Smithsonian National Museum of American History	Historian, American History Food Project, Smithsonian National Museum of American History
Rafael Ventura, Philosophy	North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences	Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Bilkent University, Turkey

### 3. Interdisciplinary collaborative research opportunities (Story+)

Doctoral students have identified several benefits from their team mentorship experiences within Story+, including enhanced capacity to work in teams, development of leadership and project management skills, mentoring experience, and the development of credentials for academic and professional resumes. Across a wide range of outcomes, the majority of students report being satisfied with their participation in the Story+ program, and would be inclined to recommend the experience to other doctoral students. See reflection by graduate student mentors [Nicole Higgins and Allison Raven](#), and a profile of [Adela Deanova and Meghan O'Neil](#).





#### 4. PhD Innovation awards

The number of PhD Innovation awards fell significantly short of the amount we had originally budgeted for (15 total, over three years), and our experiences with this area of the grant threw into relief some key challenges faculty and PhD program leaders face in curricular experimentation. Other mechanisms and funding streams on campus (such as our departmental [Humanities Labs](#) currently being funded by the Mellon Foundation) may prove more sustainable and effective in encouraging PhD program innovation in the long run. As mentioned in the previous section, we expect that multidisciplinary projects extending beyond individual degree programs, such as the “Practicing Public Scholarship” course and Archival Expeditions, will continue to benefit doctoral students, faculty, and undergraduates each year, each now moving to internal funding sources. Informal discussions with some faculty also indicate that the \$7,500 we allocated for course development/curricular innovation may not have been sufficient to catalyze broader efforts.

#### 5. Ongoing conversations about professional development

Due to the informal nature of the small group lunches and dinners for doctoral students that we held in years on and two, we did not conduct formal assessments for this part of the grant. Although students who did attend the small events often provided enthusiastic feedback (verbally or through follow-up emails), we confronted the same challenges nearly every event organizer faces at a campus like Duke, where multiple events saturate the calendar on any given day.

One-off events tend to yield a low rate of return for the significant time, energy and resources necessary to sustain them. Of all the VH@Duke sponsored programming, the best-received and most well-attended were the two VH@Duke Summer Writing Kickoffs in May 2017 and May 2018. These two workshops addressed a significant gap in the graduate landscape at Duke (one increasingly receiving attention from multiple units)—providing consistent and sufficient support to doctoral student writers and dissertators. In this vein, one of the more successful PhD Innovation projects was a [staffed writing retreat and year-long series of workshops](#) for doctoral students in Literature.



## Laura Jaramillo, Literature

"At the end of 'Writing for the Future,' we realized we as peers could help each other beyond just our academic writing projects. We learned the value in tapping each other for networks, skill sharing, and professional resources. Coming up on a year since the first retreat, many of us still meet to write in pairs or larger groups, using the principles that our facilitator instilled in us during that retreat. A number of participants have reported feeling more directed and less anxious in trying to meet our academic and nonacademic goals."



The success of the Summer Writing Kickoff reflected close collaboration between multiple units on campus (The Graduate School, Franklin Humanities Institute, Thompson Writing Program), as well as the enthusiastic participation of several distinguished and senior faculty.

End-of-program evaluations (27 responses across 2017 and 2018 programs) were extremely positive, with a considerable majority of students (22) saying they would attend a future program if offered again. (The remaining students said they would recommend it to others). Students' responses demonstrated the extent to which graduate writers crave concrete tools and resources, and conversation/activities that serve to demystify the writing process.

**"This workshop really changed the way I see writing. It made the writing process less daunting and motivated me to write more often. I cannot thank you enough for organizing this!"**

**Student comment in Summer Writing Kickoff evaluation**

In addition, students commented on how much they benefited from the mentoring and perspectives offered by faculty, especially those who disclosed their own very personal writing struggles, along with successes. See [reflection](#) by English PhD student Nora Nunn.

The first VH@Duke Summer Writing Kickoff drew the participation of nearly 50 doctoral students across humanities disciplines. The following year drew only half that number (around 25), although the feedback remained positive. In light of heightened focus across campus on dissertation writing groups of various sorts, we pulled back from this event in 2019.

## Nora Nunn, English

"For many doctoral students—especially in the humanities—solitude is an occupational hazard. Each passing year increases the physical distance from other people. For those of us who write or study away from campus, random interactions with living, breathing people can feel like a rarity. [...] The Summer Writing Kickoff felt a bit like academic truth or dare—simultaneously exposing yet exhilarating. Lo and behold, the concrete feedback, given in the spirit of generosity, helped. A lot. In fact, the specific suggestions from my peers inspired me to revise my draft the next morning."



By year three, we shifted the focus of the DGSAE to creating group advising and coaching engagements (as opposed to one-off campus events) with clearly-defined takeaways for students, structured space for reflection and learning, and built-in opportunities for peer mentoring. In lieu of a Summer Writing Kickoff, in 2019, we piloted two peer coaching groups for students, run by the DGSAE. In contrast to the Summer Writing Kickoffs, which required a great deal of preparation and cross-campus coordination, the DSGSE was able to run these small coaching groups effectively with a modest amount of pre-work, drawing on insights from a recently-completed professional coaching certification. The objective of each small group was to provide doctoral students a structured space to reflect on their writing challenges, develop strategies, and set achievable goals, with the support of their peers.

Although the pilot groups (seven students across two group) were very small, we're encouraged that all five of those participants submitting evaluations would recommend the experience to other dissertators. These conversations confirmed our intuition that at least some doctoral students lack encouragement or any structured opportunity to reflect on their practices as writers and to develop the practices around writing productivity that work best for them.

"I have a much better sense of how to organize my time and energy. As I'm coming up on my final semesters, I need to be able to efficiently and effectively focus my time and attention, and I think the coaching group over the summer provided the time and feedback I needed to prepare for this 'ramping up' of my work."

Student participant in VH@Duke pilot coaching group

These groups and subsequent feedback also raise questions about how PhD programs can better train and support dissertation students, and uphold mentoring "best practices" among faculty advisors. For

example, more than one student in the coaching groups has reported having to learn on peer networks and other faculty for writing support, because their dissertation directors discouraged them from submitting (or even refused to review) rough drafts of chapters.

## 6. Alumni networking

By the second year of our NEH grant, we made a deliberate decision to play only a supporting role in alumni engagement efforts, since engagement with the practices of other institutions convinced us that alumni engagement was best left to individual PhD programs to initiate, curate, and sustain. Around the same time, Duke Career Services initiated productive collaborations with several of the programs (History, Cultural Anthropology), to foster additional alumni connections with doctoral students. By this point in the grant, however, the DGSAE has cultivated a fairly wide network of humanities PhD program alumni to which she routinely connects graduate students.

## IV. Assessing Overall Impact of VH@Duke (Culture Change, Locally and Beyond)

As the PI for this grant engaged in discussions with Duke's senior leaders and humanities faculty around possible approaches to a grant application, there was clear support for rethinking aspects of our approach to humanities doctoral education. At the same time, those conversations indicated that many faculty at Duke, as is the case elsewhere across the country, retain a strong commitment to disciplinary depth and a resolute focus on preparation for the research career traditionally expected at R1 universities. From the inception of the grant, we have taken steps to engage faculty as well as doctoral students, and especially directors of graduate studies.

Toward that end, the PI maintained close contact with Duke's Dean of the Humanities, Gennifer Weisenfeld, and the Franklin Humanities Institute Director, first Deborah Jenson and then Ranjana Khanna, about grant activities. (These key leaders also served on the Advisory Council.) Each year, Dean Weisenfeld also convened a discussion about the VH@Duke grant at her Humanities Team meeting, which is attended by the chairs of all humanities and interpretive social science departments.

In addition, the DGSAE has had 1:1 lunches with all of the directors of graduate studies in humanities and humanistic social science programs, and worked with them each fall, to arrange visits with new PhD student cohorts. She also maintained an informational listserv for directors of graduate studies, their assistants, and department chairs. In year two, the faculty PI and DGSAE further organized a series of small-group lunches for faculty (assistant through full professor) in relevant departments.

Throughout the past three years, we have occasionally encountered indications of faculty skepticism about our undertakings. Some faculty have expressed doubts about the need for VH@Duke, since their departments have continued to see doctoral students land tenure-track academic jobs at leading universities. The DGSAE has heard second-hand reports from some doctoral students that echo this sentiment ("VH@Duke is not well-liked by my program"). Of greater concern, a small number of directors of graduate studies have chosen not to engage with VH@Duke offerings at all.

Nonetheless, the great majority of the dozen PhD programs in humanities and humanistic social sciences have recognized the value offered by VH@Duke activities. Several directors of graduate studies (English, History, Religion, Classical Studies), for example, have invited the DGSAE in for additional visits with

students beyond fall orientations for new students. There has been significant faculty support for the internship program (applicants require permission from directors of graduate studies and faculty advisors). Some faculty have expressed greater appreciation for grant activities once we began signaling more effectively that our endeavors target and provide benefits to all doctoral students, including the clear majority who wish to land tenure-track academic positions.

We've also seen and heard about recent initiatives (often student-led) within individual programs to open more spaces for conversation about non-faculty career paths for humanities PhDs. Although VH@Duke has not been directly involved in many department-specific initiatives (recent PhD alumni panels in English, History, and Cultural Anthropology, for example), it's likely that the presence of VH@Duke, the role of the DGSAE, and regular VH@Duke communications has helped foster a climate where students and faculty are more comfortable having such conversations.

The biggest impediment to culture change at Duke remains the communication barriers that bedevil all large research universities. Too many humanities faculty continue to have only a cursory sense of what "Versatile Humanists at Duke" offers or how it can be a resource for them or their doctoral students. We have been more successful in getting the word out to doctoral students, thanks to various outreach efforts, especially the newsletter.

Whether with regard to faculty or graduate students, the best advertising for VH@Duke has been word of mouth. Nonetheless, there are (and perhaps will remain) pockets of doctoral students in various programs who will remain unengaged, either because of a preference for deep focus on disciplinary training, an ability to take advantage of sufficient resources and opportunities other than those provided by VH@Duke, suspicion of initiatives linked to the university's central administration, faculty discouragement, or some other combination of factors.



"Duke University has taken another approach to multiple advisers, creating a grant-funded supplemental adviser position for all 450 humanities and humanistic social sciences graduate students. The idea is that if you don't want to share your nonacademic career goals with your adviser because you think you'll be written off, Maria LaMonaca Wisdom can help. Graduate students often 'need to be seen and heard,' said Wisdom, who was a tenured faculty member in English before taking on her new role at Duke about three years ago."

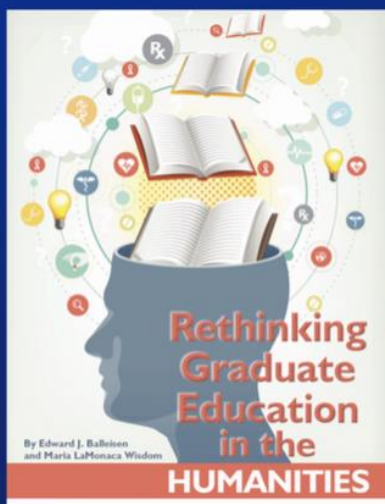
Beyond our own university, VH@Duke has consistently been in the national spotlight. The faculty PI and DGSAE (both together and separately) have been invited to institutions and conferences all over the country to share information about our activities and best practices in humanities doctoral training. These institutions include the University of Pennsylvania, Brown, Rice, the University of Iowa, the



College of William and Mary, Carnegie Mellon, Texas Christian University, Dumbarton Oaks, the National Humanities Center, and Washington University in Saint Louis. They have presented in forums such as the Council of Graduate Schools “Promising Practices” webinar, the National Humanities Conference, at annual meetings of the American Historical Association and the Modern Language Association (see [writeup](#) in *Inside Higher Ed*), and at the National Humanities Center’s 2019 Summer Doctoral Residency Program (attended by 60 doctoral students from over 25 programs). At the National Humanities Conference, the American Historical Association, and the Modern Language Association, doctoral students active in VH@Duke joined in the presentations.

In Fall 2017, the PI attended a two-day American Historical Association workshop on career diversity with 30 History directors of graduate studies from around the country, serving as a consultant to those directors. In Spring 2019, the University of Pittsburgh hosted the PI for a full-day consultation about their plans for reconfiguring doctoral education, which includes the creation of a position modeled on that of the DGSAE. The PI has also had individual meetings with administrators and faculty leaders from Emory, the University of Michigan, Stanford, North Carolina State University, the New School, Arizona State University, and the Mellon Foundation.

In all of these interactions, the PI and DGSAE have encountered great interest in our efforts and experiences, a desire to share outcomes from pilots and emerging best practices, and a deep commitment to improving humanities doctoral education.



"The time is ripe for accelerating reform of doctoral education in the humanities, for realizing the objectives suggested in the expansive foundation reports of the past two decades. Paths of change will vary from university to university, and progress will depend on collaborative efforts at individual campuses and the ready sharing of information across them. But we really have no choice but to reexamine our pedagogical assumptions and rethink our institutional frameworks. Our doctoral students, our academic communities, and our society deserve no less."

In addition, the faculty PI and DGSAE have co-written [an article about VH@Duke](#) that appeared in the November 2018 issue of *Change: The Magazine of Higher Education*. This essay offers provisional lessons from our grant for all the stakeholders in humanities doctoral education. The DGSAE has also submitted an invited essay on humanities graduate student education for publication in the Fall 2019 issue of *Profession*, an online publication of the Modern Language Association.



"Hand in hand with curricular innovation, the greatest transformations occur through opportunities that provide students space to learn, grow, and explore on their own. This is, after all, how adults learn. Transformation may result from series of powerful coaching conversations, but it can also come about through an off-campus internship, a project management role on a collaborative research team, curricular channels that allow students to tackle new and unfamiliar modes of scholarship, or funding structures that permit students to teach beyond the walls of an elite university."

## V. Challenges

As foreshadowed above, the two primary challenges that we have encountered thus far are the overlapping issues of faculty/departmental subcultures, and barriers to effective internal communication. To illustrate this overlap, even faculty deeply committed to doctoral education reform have run up against structural obstacles, as indicated by our experience with the VH@Duke PhD Innovation fund. One project that we have funded—a graduate seminar on digital humanities tied to Project Vox, a web-based scholarly guide to the work and lives of early modern female philosophers—has yet to launch, largely because of obstacles to widely cross-listing the seminar. Some of our other PhD Innovation projects have made progress, but at a slower pace than faculty leads anticipated, often because of logistical issues within departments.

The biggest challenges we face as we plan beyond the grant period are not about financial sustainability, but rather about identifying the administrative and organizational structures that will best support humanities doctoral student advising and the ongoing success of the off-campus internship program. One of several factors we must consider is a structure that would facilitate organic and frequent engagement between the DGSAE and graduate faculty. Although our grant envisioned that the DGSAE position would serve as a resource for both doctoral students and faculty, the number of individual professors who have reached out to the DGSAE remains small.

## VI. Lessons Learned

We provide a brief summary here. For a more extended conversation of the lessons we've taken away from Versatile Humanists at Duke, see the articles in *Change* and *MLA Profession* (forthcoming, Fall 2019) referenced in the previous section.

## 1. Doctoral education reform efforts need to be articulated and promoted with extreme care, and attention to multiple campus stakeholders and subcultures.

Since the majority of our doctoral students still indicate that they would like to pursue careers as scholar-teachers on the tenure track, the program has not focused narrowly (or loudly) on “career diversity,” but rather on a vision of doctoral education that helps students flourish in their intellectual development; grow as teachers, scholars, and leaders; and foster resilience and adaptability for future job searches (both academic and nonacademic).

## 2. There are advantages to designing a program for humanities doctoral students across all relevant PhD programs.

That approach takes advantage of scale economies, whether around advising or internships, and fosters robust intellectual networks across disciplinary divides, including those that link the humanities to the social sciences, sciences, and professional schools.

## 3. Curricular innovation depends on wide buy-in from faculty within specific degree programs.

Without such buy-in, compelling ideas, even if driven by committed faculty champions, are far more likely to face logistical barriers. Here one can see a parallel disadvantage to approaches that do not bubble up from disciplinary communities.

## 4. Off-campus internships are highly effective at helping humanities doctoral students learn about different career trajectories, expand their professional networks, understand the relevance of their academic interests to broader audiences, and even land full-time nonacademic employment.

In other words, these experiences foster intellectual maturation and relevant skill development relevant to both academic and nonacademic career paths. Although our test group remains small, the evidence we’ve collected is amplified by what we see and hear from similar initiatives around the country (most notably, the Mellon/ACLS Public Fellows Program).

## 5. Off-campus internship programs take a lot of work and planning on the front end, and even a modest one would likely require a significant amount of administrative support throughout the year.

Our longer-term plan at Duke will involve embedding the program for humanities doctoral students into a larger, university-wide structure.

## 6. Academic and professional “versatility” helps students stand out in both academic and nonacademic job searches.

Again, our test group is small, but through interactions with numerous doctoral students we have anecdotal evidence that skills and experiences gained through the various facets of our grant activities carry real weight with hiring committees. We have seen collaborative research experiences lead to both academic and clinical postdocs for humanities PhD students, and recent graduates who transitioned directly to tenure-track jobs have showcased diverse accomplishments: from proficiency in the digital

humanities, to an ability to translate research interests to the broader public, to effective work in an internship, to experience with online pedagogy.

## 7. Complementary PhD student advising holds open a critical space for doctoral students, and serves multiple functions.

Although the first students to email the new DGSAE in 2017 were students seeking nonacademic employment, over time she has logged nearly as many hours working with academic job seekers. To limit the advisor's role to supporting job searches, however, would be to foreclose the rich potential of advising support for doctoral students at all stages of their programs. One-third (33%) of logged 1:1 advising sessions focused on identifying and leveraging research opportunities beyond PhD programs, or addressing a range of issues related to doctoral training in general (applying for conferences and grants, relationships with advisors, help with creating academic/professional networks, etc.).

## 8. The career experience of a complementary advisor, and where the position sits, matters a great deal.

Evaluations from student advisees consistently point out that the DGSAE's career history (including positions as a tenured faculty member in English at a liberal arts college and a senior administrator at an R1 humanities center) has underpinned her credibility as a knowledgeable authority on different professional trajectories. Students also consistently highlight the value of a confidential advising option external to PhD programs. Yet they also discern a critical difference between perspectives that the DGSAE can provide and those perspectives provided by campus career services personnel.

**“[The DGSAE] is the kind of advisor grad students need today: one with experience in both academic and nonacademic roles. This was crucial for helping me compare apples and oranges, as opposed to faculty advisor who only presented apples and career services who focused on oranges so to speak. Career Services also felt more like going to a peer for help, while Dr. Wisdom offered an alternative mentor to my academic advisors.”**

**Student comment in a free-response answer on an advising survey**

## 9. Many graduate students would benefit more from coaching than advising.

Graduate students are inundated with advice from every quarter (including copious internet sources, and independent training/consulting businesses that sometimes adapt predatory tactics). Many doctoral students most need a structured space in which to sort out all the competing pieces of information, so that they feel empowered to make informed and appropriate decisions for themselves. Frequently “talked to,” they need access to someone who knows how to listen. (For more detail on how coaching is different from advising in relation to doctoral students, see [“Enough Advice, Already,”](#) by the DGSAE.)

The DGSAE has recently earned a business and professional coaching certification from an International Coaching Federation-approved program at North Carolina State University, and has already begun



piloting group coaching programs for doctoral students. The goal of these groups will be to support self-reflection, independent problem-solving, accountability, goal-setting, and peer mentoring. Among other benefits, this structure will allow the DGSAE to work with clusters of students in a more sustained way, while fostering peer mentoring. Early results suggest great promise for this approach. This fall, the DGSAE is offering another group coaching pilot, “PhD Transitions,” which brings together humanities students at similar stages of their programs (first and second year, dissertation proposal, dissertators/job-seekers). Although the advertised time commitment for this program was six hours over two months, 20 doctoral students (almost evenly distributed across stages) initially signed up to participate.

## VII. Next Steps

Duke’s current academic strategic plan, “Together Duke,” calls for a pan-university reinvigoration of doctoral education. In 2017, Duke’s Provost, Sally Kornbluth, charged a RiDE (Reimagining Doctoral Education) committee (co-chaired by VH@Duke PI Edward Balleisen) with surveying both the internal and external landscape of doctoral education across the entire university, and making recommendations for sustaining and enhancing excellence in graduate training at Duke. This committee completed its work in December 2018, drawing in part on insights from our experience with VH@Duke. Its [report](#) recommends heightened accountability for faculty and degree programs, greater access to resources and opportunities beyond degree programs, and a program-by-program reappraisal of mission, goals, structure, and outcomes.

Provost Kornbluth has set aside strategic plan funds to support implementation of the RiDE report, which includes ongoing support for the DGSAE and external internships, though with the goal of embedding those for humanities doctoral students in a wider program. A RiDE Implementation Committee, also co-chaired by Balleisen, will be developing an ongoing structure to support the internship program in the 2019-20 academic year, as well as templates for reappraisals by individual PhD programs.

We are hopeful that programmatic reappraisals will generate a quicker tempo of curricular experimentation, since they will involve a bottom-up process of engagement from all the faculty within specific programs. We will be keen to see whether these endeavors produce new seminars predicated on collaborative research or interdisciplinary approaches to public/digital humanities, novel approaches to certification for candidacy, or a broadening of potential forms for the dissertation. As Duke faculty in the humanities and humanistic social sciences continue the process of rethinking graduate training, we also encourage them to remain alert to experiments elsewhere, including the many pilots catalyzed by the NEH’s Next Generation program. To facilitate that process, we call on the NEH to make Next Generation reports readily available on its website.

Robust doctoral education in the humanities depends on both a respect for traditional modes of training and an openness to new methods. Programs must ensure the cultivation of disciplinary expertise and continue to support preparation for faculty careers, whether at research-intensive institutions or those with more of a teaching mission. At the same time, they must accommodate the promise of collaborative interdisciplinary research and public-facing scholarship; recognize fundamental changes in academic labor markets and career avenues beyond the university; and commit to more holistic advising and mentoring. The Next Generation Implementation Grant has allowed Duke to make progress on all these fronts, and we look forward to further building on our grant-supported activities in the years ahead.

## Appendix A: 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

### Duke Faculty

Ranjana Khanna, Director, Franklin Humanities Institute; Professor of English, Literature, and Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies

Rey Chow, Chair, Program in Literature

Deborah Jenson, Director of Graduate Studies, Romance Studies

Kathy Psomiades, Director of Graduate Studies, English

Philip Stern, Director of Graduate Studies, History

Clare Woods, Director of Graduate Studies, 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 and Backend Developer, 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

## Appendix B: Versatile Humanists at Duke 1:1 Advising Evaluation Data Summary

### Source 1: 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 (quantitative)*

**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%)

### Source 2: Consolidated Qualtrics Report, Fall 2018 and Spring 2019

This survey was distributed to a similar number of students (87), with some overlap between this set of respondents and those from 2017-18. Key quantitative indicators were very similar, with **95%** taking or planning to take action as a result of session, **97%** recommending advisor to other graduate students, and **97%** deeming the PhD Advisor role “very important” or “important”

#### *Evaluation highlights, 2017 through 2019 (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).*

- *It provides the kind of advisor grad students need today: one with experience in both academic and nonacademic roles. This was crucial for helping me compare apples and oranges, as opposed to faculty advisor who only presented apples and career services who focused on oranges so to speak. Career services also felt more like going to a peer for help, while Dr. Wisdom offered an alternative mentor to my academic advisors.*

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-ac 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!*