

## **4Humanities Newsletter (July 11, 2012)**

Dear 4Humanities Collective:

My apologies for the fact that it has been a while since I sent out news and briefings about 4Humanities. (I've just stepped down from chairing and finally have more time.) I thought I'd catch up by reporting on some of the main 4Humanities developments and current projects.

--Alan Liu

### **4HUMANITIES LEADERSHIP**

Geoffrey Rockwell, Melissa Terras, and I are delighted to report that Stéfan Sinclair has joined us as a co-leader of 4Humanities.

### **4HUMANITIES FUNDING**

The ALLC has generously awarded us a modest amount of support for a second year in a row. Together with research funds provided individually by Alan and Geoffrey, 4Humanities will have funds for Lindsay Thomas at UC Santa Barbara to continue as the 4Humanities research assistant; for another research assistant at U. Alberta [TBD] to help write posts about digital-humanities resources and tools for advocacy; and for us to continue our "international correspondents" program. Additionally, some of our 4Humanities local chapters (below) have local campus funding.

### **4HUMANITIES LOCAL CHAPTERS**

Currently we have three local chapters, with a fourth about to start at University College London:

- California State University, Northridge (CSUN)—sponsored by the CSUN Center of Digital Humanities, <http://humanistica.ualberta.ca/category/for-the-public/4humanities-at-csun/>
- McGill U., <http://www.mcgill.ca/digital-humanities/4humanities>
- UC Santa Barbara (UCSB), <http://humanistica.ualberta.ca/category/for-the-public/4humanities-at-ucsb/>

The UCSB local chapter (led by faculty members Linda Adler-Kassner, Claudio Fogu, and Alan Liu, with Lindsay Thomas as graduate-student coordinator) met regularly during academic year 2011-12, sometimes in conjunction through Skype with the CSUN local chapter (led by graduate student Kristin Cornelius). Both the UCSB and CSUN chapters have advocacy projects underway (below); and members of both groups participated in a 4Humanities "unconference" session titled "DH Humanities Advocacy and Geekery" at DHSI 2012 on June 8th. The McGill chapter ran a digital-humanities course as part of the McGill Institute for the Public Life of Arts and Ideas.

### **4HUMANITIES WEB SITE (<http://humanistica.ualberta.ca/>) and TWITTER HANDLE (@4Hum)**

We revised the 4Humanities Web site in two stages last year, first to adopt a WordPress theme with a somewhat more "magazine-like" look and feel; and then to clarify the organization of

categories on the site. In the latter regard, the new side bar is designed to clarify that the main mission of the site is humanities advocacy and the subordinate mission "DH support for the Humanities" (including the subcategories of "Digital Tools for Humanities Advocacy," "Digital Humanities to Advance the Humanities," etc.). (That is, this is not a site that addresses DH as an autonomous topic, since there are many others that serve that purpose.)

Lindsay Thomas keeps our [@4Hum](#) Twitter account, which currently has been used out to send out 256 Tweets. There are at present 610 followers.

## 4HUMANITIES PROJECTS

When it began, 4Humanities concentrated mainly on posting information about humanities advocacy or reposting advocacy statements and news. But we are now underway with a number of our own advocacy projects, some 4Humanities-wide, others emerging from the local chapters. Eventually, these projects will reinforce each other. For example, Alan has drafted a "Humanities, Plain and Simple" statement (titled "[The Humanities and Tomorrow's Discoveries](#)") that includes placeholders for links to showcase examples and other resources yet to be built. (Alan used this draft statement to frame a general strategy for "Creating a Humanities Advocacy Media Plan" [see his Prezi at <http://prezi.com/gpd6ygbijwvi/creating-a-humanities-advocacy-media-plan/>]).

Specific 4Humanities projects underway include:

- **Humanities, Plain and Simple** (<http://humanistica.ualberta.ca/category/humanities-plain-and-simple/>) -- Directed by Christine Henseler, The Humanities, Plain & project is a comprehensive and targeted campaign that calls out to individuals and groups inside and outside of academia to write statements in "plain language" as to why the Humanities matter.
- **Humanities Showcase** (project of UCSB local chapter, leader: Alan Liu) (planning notes: <http://4humanitiesucsb.pbworks.com/w/page/53094614/Humanities%20Showcase%20Project>) -- This project will gather examples of humanities research and teaching that can provide a public argument for the value of the humanities. Currently, the project is collecting ideas for examples (with blurbs and images) and creating an Omeka exhibit. After a pilot set of examples has been created, we will conduct a polling or ranking exercise among 4Humanities members and also public focus groups to see what works and what doesn't.
- **Humanities Infographics Project** (project of UCSB local chapter, leader: Lindsay Thomas) (planning notes: <http://4humanitiesucsb.pbworks.com/w/page/53339668/Humanities%20Infographics%20Project>) -- This project will gather and present statistics on the impact of the humanities - economic or otherwise - in the form of infographics. The project is inspired by Melissa Terras's recent digital humanities infographics.
- **Undergraduate Digital Showcase/ First-Year Feature Project** (project of CSUN local chapter, leader Kristin Cornelius) -- The CSUN College of Humanities offers several

courses that facilitate the creation of digital projects by students, including the different levels of freshman writing that comprise the new Stretch curriculum. In order to provide public recognition for the exemplary work being done by CSUN students, the Center for the Digital Humanities is creating an “Undergraduate Digital Showcase” for the best digital projects by undergraduate students. The program is being undertaken as part of the Humanities Undergraduate Outreach Project of the 4Humanities initiative, a multi-institution consortium that advocates for the Humanities.

The Undergraduate Digital Showcase will display five of the best student projects on the Center for the Digital Humanities web site, and the showcase may also be duplicated on the 4Humanities site. A “First-Year Feature” subcategory will highlight the most outstanding digital project by a first-year student on a subject in the Humanities or a closely related field. All formats are accepted, and projects can either be individually or collaboratively authored. Projects must be nominated by a faculty member.

- **"Disseminating the Humanities" Video Project** (project of CSUN local chapter, leader Kristin Cornelius) -- This project, currently near completion, produces video interviews with notable persons in the digital humanities in order to understand how the act of promoting, disseminating, and maintaining humanities scholarship can be aided by digital media. Foregrounded by an effort to define the sometimes elusive content of humanistic inquiry, and framed by the mission of a new Center for the Digital Humanities at California State University, Northridge, this project seeks out strategies to proliferate practices of digital humanities scholarship as a way of reaching outside the humanities community, thus adding value to its products for a larger general population.
- **CSUN Mini-Documentary Backpack Project** (project of CSUN local chapter, leader Kristin Cornelius) -- This project facilitates the making of short, mini-documentaries that promote humanities scholarship by giving a narrative voice to the research process. These mini-films will depict the process of doing humanities research through interviews with students and scholars as they work on their scholarly activities. In addition to interviews, the films will show methods, and may include debate and dialogue with other students and/or scholars. Each film will cover one research project. In essence, these documentaries would bring the “human” back to humanities work by showing real people engaging in scholarly activities. These short films could be posted on the 4Humanities website, CSUN’s Center for the Digital Humanities website, and elsewhere.

Basic Guidelines:

- The film must be about 5 minutes long (no more than 7 minutes).\*
- The film must explore the process of scholarly “discovery” or “invention.”
- The film must show the research process.
- If the project is placed within the public sphere (through a conference, publication, reading, presentation, etc) within the time-frame of the documentary, the film will also depict this process.

The idea is to produce short, easy-to-watch films that are accessible to students and the larger public, and that can thus promote the value inherent in humanities research activities to as large an audience as possible. Making these activities more visible and

less mysterious will both encourage students to engage in the same scholarly activities as depicted in the films, and promote to the public the value of these activities for society in general. At CSUN (or whatever future schools also implement this project), these documentary films will have a further benefit of showcasing the quality research taking place at a non-research-intensive university and helping to justify this work to administrators and the general public.

- **Outreach 4Humanities Project** (project of UCSB local chapter, leader, Adrianna Simone) (planning notes: <http://4humanitiesucsb.pbworks.com/w/page/52850067/Outreach%204Humanities%20Project>) -- The mission of this project is to recruit humanities advocacy recordings and other statements from non-academics and non-humanists. We have begun with making recorded interviews with distinguished visiting artists, speakers, and others at UCSB based on the following set of questions: "What do you value in the humanities?" "How did the humanities help you to become the success you are today?" "If you were to encourage your own child to study the humanities, what reason would you give?"
- **Imagine a World Without Humanities Project** (project of UCSB local chapter, leader Kevin Kearney) -- This project will create a series of effective visual posters/ads designed to contrast visions of what the world gains from the humanities and loses without the humanities (though we are currently discussing the right balance between positive and negative messages).

## **FUTURE 4HUMANITIES ACTIVITIES**

### **\* "Showing the Arts and Humanities Matter" Symposium, Sept. 18th, 2012, University College London**

Melissa Terras is organizing a one-day symposium at University College London on Sept. 18th in conjunction with 4Humanities, Arts Emergency, and UCL Centre for Digital Humanities. The symposium is entitled "Showing the Arts and Humanities Matter":

"Government and private support for the humanities--for research, teaching, preservation, and creative renewal in such fields as literature, history, languages, philosophy, classics, art history, and cultural studies--is in decline. What can we do to demonstrate that the Arts and Humanities matter? This free, one day symposium, on 18th September 2012 at UCL, will feature leading figures in understanding, demonstrating, and advocating for the Arts and Humanities. The symposium will also mark the launch of the local 4Humanities@UCL chapter." (See <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ah/4humanities/18thSeptember>)

Registration now open: <http://showingtheartsandhumanitiesmatter.eventbrite.com>

Confirmed speakers include:

- Professor Alan Liu, University of California Santa Barbara, and 4Humanities founder
- Dr Rüdiger Klein, European Federation of National Academies of Sciences and Humanities (ALLEA)
- Amy Westwell and Oliver Milne, The Free Hetherington Campaign
- Neil Griffiths, Arts Emergency

- Dr Anna Upchurch, University of Leeds, and Dr Eleonora Belfiore, University of Warwick
- Professor Andrew Prescott, King's College London.

Registration now open: <http://showingtheartsandhumanitiesmatter.eventbrite.com> More information will be posted soon; for further information, contact Dr. Melissa Terras, UCL Centre for Digital Humanities, at [m.terras@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:m.terras@ucl.ac.uk).

**\* "The Crisis and Promise of Higher Education"  
Kean University Faculty and Professional Webinar  
September 2012 – May 2013**

Kean University in New Jersey has asked 4Humanities to be co-sponsor of its webinar series next year on "The Crisis and Promise of Higher Education," one of whose sessions will be on the topic, "The humanities: Are they defensible?" 4Humanities' role as co-sponsor will be only to help recruit participants in the free webinar series. Led by Dennis Klein, a faculty member in History and Jewish Studies at Kean U., the webinar follows in the tradition of a Faculty Seminar series started in 2004 (see <https://sites.google.com/a/kean.edu/faculty-seminar-at-kean-university/>). (If you are interested in being a participant, please let Alan know.)

Prof. Klein provides the following description and schedule for the webinar:

"Recognizing the growing cracks in the conventional structures of higher education, the faculty at Kean University will convene its Faculty Seminar in September to explore the dimensions of the sea change that is transforming the way faculty teach and conduct research. The purpose of this project is to determine where and how change is occurring, its implications for pedagogy and scholarship, and its benefits and liabilities.

Key observers at universities, foundations, and the media as well as education entrepreneurs will constitute invited speakers and participants in this monthly video conference. There has been much discussion matching the considerable concern in and out of the academy; this project will bring together key players and generate the conversation among them in an anticipated international think tank. The "KEANx" series of eight sessions will produce a white paper on new directions in higher education, a volume of presented papers, a Web page of resources, and other social media for further discussion. Among the topics are:

- The crisis defined: Costs, enrollments, and the ascent of alternative models, impact of technology, decline of government support, non-traditional credentialing and certification.
- The knowledge industry: The digital awakening and the democratization of information

- The humanities: Are they defensible? (A look at the status of the humanities in light of the heightened skepticism about their value to society. Against the background of economic uncertainty, what are the arguments for supporting them? How will digital humanities fare, and what are the implications for digital pedagogy and scholarship?)
- The metamorphosis of the venerable professoriate (governance, learning assessments, teaching, mentorship)
- The metamorphosis of scholarship, publications, and knowledge creation
- Traditional education: What survives (education as a social experience)
- The future of higher education: Faculty and administrative perspectives on what may be beyond the immediate horizon."

Faculty and Professional Seminar 12-13 schedule: Mondays, 3:20-4:30 pm:  
 Sept 10, Oct 15, Nov 12, Dec 10, Feb 11, Mar 18, Apr 8, May 13

**\* 4Humanities at DHWI@MITH  
 January 7-11, 2013**

4Humanities is exploring future opportunities for sessions or workshops at digital humanities events. An early precedent is the "unconference" session on "DH Advocacy and Geekery" that Lindsay Thomas and Dana Solomon organized on behalf of 4Humanities on June 8th, 20th, at DHSI 2012 at U. Victoria.

Next up is a still-being-planned session at the new Digital Humanities Winter Institute at the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH), which will hold its inaugural institute event on January 7-11, 2013. Jennifer Guiliano, Assistant Director of MITH, will be designing an agenda that gives attendees an opportunity to create various humanities advocacy products (e.g., podcasts, videos, multimedia publications, code) and/or to contribute to ongoing 4Humanities projects. One idea she has is to ask participants to answer some preselected questions and then stitch together their answers into a short promotional video or series of videos for use by 4Humanities. The general idea, as Jennifer puts it, is "to further ongoing efforts to leverage digital humanities to explain the value of humanities research to the general public."