

To: Fine Arts, Humanities, Social Science Chairs' Forum Participants
From: Joseph Auner, Associate Provost and Professor of Music
Re: Notes on the December 10 Chairs' Forum
Date: December 22, 2004

Thank you all again for participating in the special Chairs' Forum concerning the Fine Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences at Stony Brook.

Many excellent ideas emerged during the event. There seems to be a consensus for starting with the initiatives listed under Item 1 for Spring 2005. Item 2 provides more detail on these in the context of a summary of the reports by the six discussion groups and the more detailed written reports I have received. Please feel free to distribute this to faculty who might be interested.

1. Spring 2005 Plans
 - A. Form a faculty-led Fine Arts, Humanities, Social Science Steering Committee. This group will be tasked with implementing the following recommendations and determining further actions.
 - B. Start a series of faculty lunches, growing out of working groups, targeted at junior faculty, but bringing in all levels.
 - C. Collect Information on Working Groups and Interest Areas already operating and that could be formed
 - D. Develop Communications Mechanism (listserv, blackboard, webpage) in consultation with CELT, HISB, EMEDIA, DoIT)
 - E. Deciding on our acronym. It was pointed out that a two syllable pronunciation of the acronym "HFASS" could be misinterpreted to suggest an endeavor not fully carried out. One proposal: FAHSS, which should be pronounced "Force," as if James Bond were saying it-- (but should not sound like "Farce").

2. Summary

I have attempted to include all the ideas, suggestions, and comments that were raised at the forum and in the reports. This was obviously a preliminary discussion and the notes here do not reflect a consensus.

- A. **Institute Humanities, Fine Arts, Social Science Steering Group**
 - i. This should be an energetic and connected group of faculty to consider strategic planning, community building, oversee lunches, and other ideas listed below:
 - ii. Helping define the role of FAHSS at Stony Brook
 - iii. Determine further actions growing out of retreat

- iv. Coordinate and lead efforts in grant writing
- v. Possible target to apply for an NEH Grant, with administrative matching
- vi. Investigate other sources of outside funding open to interdisciplinary initiatives: embassies, corporations
- vii. Participate in AAU Report Response
- viii. Develop and manage funds for minigrants, lecture series (possibly decentralizing from existing lectures series)
- ix. Explore ways to encourage new interdisciplinary structures and initiatives
 - a. without establishing new layers of administration.
 - b. that would link to existing structures: CELT, Reinvention Center
 - c. that would be sensitive to work load issues
 - d. that would be sensitive to issues of maintaining level of discourse while speaking across disciplines
- x. Engage with University Senate in encouraging and supporting interdisciplinary initiatives.
- xi. Expand Campus Lifetime to allow more time for interdisciplinary events.
- xii. Keeping FAHSS on the agenda for Gyrodyne development and Southhampton
- xiii. Special Collaborative Projects (events, mini-conference), projects on themes integrating with other divisions.
- xiv. Work toward more academic content to campus-wide Theme of the Year. Consider, for example, topics such as “Ideas of the Self” that could engage many disciplines.

B. Faculty Issues

- i. Investigate non-academic impediments to interdisciplinary work, support staff, library issues
- ii. Special Challenge of Tech Support Person for arts faculty
- iii. Encourage departments to reward faculty who participate in interdisciplinary initiatives.
- iv. Reinstate HISB Internal Fellow's Program (which involved undergraduate research component)

- v. More support for junior faculty. Publication subsidies for young faculty, summer research grants, travel grants.
- vi. Target portion of Faculty Staff and Capital Campaign to junior faculty development.
- vii. Workshops on Grant-Writing
- viii. Hiring and Retention: Coordinating new positions with other areas of strength; search committees including faculty from other departments; considering interdisciplinary impact of faculty losses
- ix. Create special interdisciplinary appointments, conceived across departments
- x. Work out better ways to split lines
- xi. A Special FAHSS endowed professorship (term of 1-3 years) selected from SBU faculty to provide leadership, encourage and lead interdisciplinary initiatives,
- xii. Advise PTC, improve functionality, better understanding of FAHSS
- xiii. Responding to crisis in publishing with discussions of modifying standards for promotion and tenure in book fields; advising on evaluation of new types of publication and dissemination of research

C. Communication and Community

- i. Establish channels of communications between departments, encouraging faculty interaction and building an intellectual community (i.e. announcements of new hires, faculty lunches, departmental open houses)
- ii. Need to build a sense of community, starting with greater transparency in decision making, more open dialogue, consistency in honoring commitments, more consultation from the administration.
- iii. FAHSS Listserve for Events and Courses--To enable advance planning and better coordination of courses, lectures, events (I.e. plan tie-in to opera; this year "Turn of the Screw"--psych, Engl, etc. could read novel. There is a need for more targeted communications
- iv. Develop active means of communication: i.e. personal communications help enormously; a designated representative from each department, program, or working group could much more effectively communicate happenings to the appropriate persons.
- v. Working Groups/Interest Areas

Collect and Disseminate Information on Working Groups to allow us to build on contacts and initiatives already in place (I don't include here interdisciplinary academic programs already in existence)

- Science and Art Workshop (HISB)
- Transmission of Cultures (HISB, Bellagio Project)
- Feminist Colloquium (WNS)
- Grad Colloquium (CLT)
- Digital Culture (From CDAC proposal)
- Ethnography
- Middle Eastern Studies
- Civic Performance
- Early Modern Group
- Frankfurt School

Need to identify more working groups in Social Sciences. Determine if it is possible to use faculty addenda to identify working groups.

vi. HISB currently offers space, AV, receptions, possible co-sponsorships. New Associate Director could play a role in helping coordinate new initiatives.

vii. Faculty lunches: based on their interests as given in the annual addenda, faculty should be invited to round table luncheons to welcome new faculty. In the process we would all get to know each other better.

viii. Need for a faculty club, for entertaining visitors, departmental functions, ideally with faculty lounge.

D. Teaching General

i. Work to identify and remove administrative obstacles to team teaching. Cross - departmental teaching (ranging from bringing guest lecturers from other departments for individual classes to team-taught and cross-listed courses). Encourage better funded departments to develop team-teaching initiatives with less well funded departments.

ii. Publicize Major events (concerts, conferences, special speakers, etc.) well enough in advance to allow curricular tie-ins. Example, this year's opera production of Britten's "A Turn of the Screw," a novella with relevance for many disciplines.

iii. Plan speakers and events in connection with curricular initiatives.

iv. Upgrade high-tech infrastructure in Staller: Smart classrooms, more AV

v. HISB instituting small grants for interdisciplinary projects (reading group, newsletter, speakers)

vi. Consider further integrating Wang Center into academic program, as with classroom space.

E. Teaching: Undergraduate

i. CAS should sponsor each year a high-level interdisciplinary course, with new topics annually (for example this year it could be the 2004 Presidential Election). Invited lectures each week on the model of the Harvard Social Studies courses (Harvard All-Stars).

ii. Argue for importance of small classes in FAHSS

iii. Ways to promote undergraduate research in FAHSS. Integrate with major initiatives already underway through Reinvention Center; Katkin will speak to group next semester.

iv. Work on ways to maximize interdisciplinary potential with DEC courses

v. Build interdisciplinary approaches into undergraduate education from the beginning stages. Critical thinking across the disciplines for undergraduates, for example summer reading list, relevant to college topics, that would then be integrated into course work and discussions through the year. A "hot books" seminar (funded by publishers)

vi. Link interdisciplinary curricular initiatives to Undergraduate Colleges (this would also serve to help with the articulation between Freshman colleges and second and third years.

vii. Address challenge of bringing transfer students into the conversations by identifying successful senior transfer students as mentors.

viii. New interdisciplinary Programs modeled on Cinema and Cultural Studies such as Interdisciplinary Program in Globalization (tie in with Faculty/Grad Seminar--HISB Bellagio Project, "Transmission of Cultures)

ix. Interdisciplinary supplements to Existing Majors (Globalization, or gender, for example)

F. Teaching: Graduate

i. Mechanisms to facilitate Graduate Students taking courses in other departments (comparable to Graduate Certificate in Cultural Studies list) or to join in working groups. How do we let graduate students know about other students writing on related topics

ii. Distribute list of courses under consideration to departments well enough in advance to head off duplications. Distribute Final List of Courses to all Departments

iii. Distribute information on dissertations now underway to faculty and students

iv. New Graduate Certificate Programs on the Model of the Cultural Studies Certificate