

National Humanities Conference 2017

Boston, Massachusetts

Thursday, November 2, 2017 through Sunday November 5, 2017

Call for Proposals

THE FEDERATION OF STATE HUMANITIES COUNCILS AND THE NATIONAL HUMANITIES ALLIANCE are pleased to announce the 2017 National Humanities Conference. The National Humanities Conference brings the humanities community together as a whole to explore how we can achieve broader public impact and advance the role the humanities play in addressing both local and global challenges.

The 2017 conference asks how humanities practitioners and scholars can deepen, expand, and even re-envision the public role of the humanities. Increasingly, humanists are working to ensure that scholarship, pedagogy, public programs, and preservation play a key role in addressing complex issues of public concern. Cutting-edge scholarship has engendered productive public conversation on divisive issues. Public humanities programs have addressed challenges ranging from climate change to closing the achievement gap. Preservation projects have created the foundations to explore community identity and placemaking. New trends in pedagogy—both at the K-12 and college levels—challenge students to integrate the humanities and STEM in order to think about social and scientific problems holistically and develop novel solutions. These projects take on a multitude of shapes, but they are all impact-driven and all have the humanities at their core.

Together, we will explore these practices and identify ways that a wide-range of collaborations might be drawn on to think even more expansively about the humanities and public life. Building on the 2016 conference's outcomes, we will explore how collaborative approaches can expand the ways that scholars work in a public context; showcase the importance of the humanities in addressing local and global challenges; redefine and expand audiences; and enable new approaches to case-making that draw on quantitative and qualitative data to tell the story of the humanities. We will also examine how collaborations that extend beyond the humanities community—to civic and community organizations, government agencies, STEM fields, and the private sector—create new areas of impact.

Deadline for submitting proposals: Wednesday, March 15, 2017



FEDERATION OF
STATE HUMANITIES
COUNCILS



National Humanities Alliance

FOCUS AREAS

The Program Committee invites proposals focusing on a wide range of public and academic humanities work. We especially encourage proposals that address one (or both) of the following broad questions:

WHAT ROLE CAN AND DO THE HUMANITIES PLAY in re-envisioning public life? In addressing this question, proposals might consider established and possible roles the humanities play in:

- Offering new insights to public conversation on a wide range of issues
- Engendering civic dialogue, discussion, and convening in the context of social conflict and division
- Contributing to large-scale efforts, such as placemaking and urban change, environmental sustainability, public health, and infrastructure planning
- Reorienting K-16 education and workforce development

HOW CAN COLLABORATIONS WITHIN AND BEYOND THE HUMANITIES COMMUNITY magnify the public role of the humanities? More specifically, proposals might consider how collaborations:

- Engender new approaches to addressing local and global challenges in sustainable ways
- Redefine and expand audiences
- Enable the development of digital humanities technology and tools that can serve as catalysts for social change
- Enhance both pedagogy and research and deepen the public impact of both
- Establish new approaches to case-making for the broad relevance of the humanities
- Expand the array of funders open to supporting humanities work both locally and nationally
- Engage partners across public sectors, including civic and community organizations, government agencies, STEM fields, and the private sector to deepen the impact of the humanities

FORMATS

THE NATIONAL HUMANITIES CONFERENCE strives for lively, thoughtful, and ultimately generative, action-oriented discussion. To this end, we strongly encourage presenters to deliver ideas without reading directly from papers. We also ask all presenters to be mindful of time and ensure that audience members have the opportunity to ask questions and participate in the conversation. Sessions should not simply present public humanities projects, but should examine methodology and contain takeaways that others can apply to their own practice. Many conferences are experimenting with new session formats. We invite proposals that engage the formats described below and encourage other innovative formats that promote audience engagement and collegial exchange. All sessions should be highly participatory, encouraging active discussion and potential next steps.

SESSION FORMATS

PANEL DISCUSSION: Panel discussions consist of a group of experts discussing a topic in front of an audience, rather than each presenting discrete remarks. A moderator leads the discussion and poses questions, but all participants speak equally about the topic. These sessions typically include a moderator and three to five participants.

TRADITIONAL PANEL PRESENTATION: This traditional format includes a chair and three or four presenters. A commentator may be included or additional time may be left for audience discussion.

DEBATE: A debate is a discussion of an issue or topic with two or more individuals representing contrasting opinions. Usually an individual is tasked with moderating their discussion.

INTERVIEW: These sessions feature free-form dialogues between a humanities professional and an interviewer.

EXPERIENTIAL HUMANITIES PROGRAM: These sessions engage conference attendees in actual humanities programming, modeled on successful programs carried out throughout the year. Sessions that draw on the city or surrounding area and/or convey a sense of place are especially encouraged. Examples from the 2016 program can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

WORKSHOP: A hands-on session that teaches a particular skill set associated with program development, communications, assessment, digital engagement, grant-writing, cultivating new audiences, or any aspect of humanities programming.

WORKING GROUP: These sessions are seminar-like conversations of at least eight people that explore, in-depth, a subject of shared interest. Working groups will be accepted even if they do not yet have eight participants but additional participants will need to be recruited after the session is accepted. Working groups have a purpose they are working toward, a problem they are actively trying to solve. The working group convenes for a session at the conference, but also enters into conversation before the conference and develops a product after. The session coordinator will be responsible for organizing the pre- and post-conference exchanges and facilitating the conversation at the conference itself. More detailed guidelines for working groups can be found [here](#).

INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS

For those interested in submitting an individual presentation, we welcome proposals for lightning talks—2-3 minute presentations with up to 3 slides. The planning committee will group accepted proposals into thematic sessions.

TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL

Please submit a proposal via the online form [here](#). The deadline for proposal submission is Wednesday, March 15, 2017. If you have questions regarding the online submission form, please contact:

Shannon Loburk, FSHC Meetings and Events Manager, sloburk@statehumanities.org.

THE FEDERATION OF STATE HUMANITIES COUNCILS, founded in 1977, is the membership association of 56 state and territorial councils. Through its conferences, collaborative projects, information services, and communications to members, legislators and others on issues of public interest, the Federation supports the state humanities councils and creates greater awareness of the humanities in public and private life.

State humanities councils are independent, nonprofit organizations that support grassroots humanities programs and community-based activities in each state and US territory. Created by Congress in the early 1970s, councils receive an annual Congressional appropriation through the National Endowment for the Humanities, which for most councils is supplemented by state and private funding. Councils are run by small staffs and governed by volunteer boards drawn from academia and the public.

THE NATIONAL HUMANITIES ALLIANCE (NHA), founded in 1981, is an advocacy coalition dedicated to the advancement of humanities education, research, preservation, and public programs. NHA is supported by more than 170 national, state, and local member organizations and institutions, including scholarly and professional associations; higher education associations; organizations of museums, libraries, historical societies and state humanities councils; university-based and independent humanities research centers; and colleges and universities. It is the only organization that brings together the US humanities community as a whole.

NHA cultivates support for humanities funding in the executive and legislative branches of the federal government; advocates for policies that advance humanities research, programming, preservation, and teaching; convenes its members, government officials, and policy experts to develop policy initiatives; and promotes engagement with and appreciation for the humanities among the general public.

