

University of North Florida Digital Humanities Initiative
Minutes of Advisory Committee Meeting
October 23, 2015, 3:00–4:30
Thomas G. Carpenter Library Special Collections Reading Room

Attendees: James Beasley (English), Sherif Elfayoumy (School of Computing), Patricia Geesey (Languages, Literatures and Cultures), Mitch Haney (Philosophy), Aisha Johnson (Thomas G. Carpenter Library), John Kantner (ORSP), Phil Kaplan (History), Clayton McCarl (Languages, Literatures and Cultures), Courtenay McLeland (Thomas G. Carpenter Library), Deb Miller (CIRT), Anne Pfister (Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work), Gordon Rakita (Anthopology and ITS), Dan Richard (OFE), Andy Rush (CIRT), Karthik Umapathy (School of Computing), Stephanie Weiss (Thomas G. Carpenter Library).

Advance comments submitted by Josh Gellers (Political Science and Public Administration)

1. Clayton McCarl called the meeting to order at 3:00.

2. **Discussion of draft description of the DHI** (agenda packet, p. 2). The following suggestions were made:

- We should consider adding a definition of DH, possibly working with language from the NEH, but also noting that it’s an evolving field that “seeks to build bridges and doesn’t have clear boundaries” (Gordon).
- We should add language explaining ways that the work coming out of the initiative will be disseminated in a high-profile way.
- In the final paragraph, we should add language about the potential for future degree programs. In doing so we should emphasize ways that this endeavor enhances courses and creates unique opportunities for teaching/learning and student research.
- We might mention how the DHI seeks to make more accessible activities that are already happening on campus.

3. **Discussion of draft letter of interest for 2015–2016 Foundation Board Initiatives** (agenda packet, pp. 3–4). The following suggestions were offered:

- We perhaps should change the term “symposium” to something else. Perhaps simply “event.”
- We might consider adding language about how the projects will be displayed at this event, emphasizing that this will be an interactive exhibit (for more on this, see below).
- We should mention how this effort (the model projects and spring 2017 event) will result in additional funding.

4. **Discussion of proposed events for Spring 2016** (agenda packet, pp. 5–6). There was consensus that we should go forward with these events.
5. **Discussion of draft idea for proposed Spring 2017 Symposium** (agenda packet, pp. 7–8).

The following suggestions were made:

- We should think of the faculty research showcase as an interactive exhibit. To this point, it was suggested also that we might invite the participants to think creatively about how to present their projects. It was also noted that this event should be a chance to share ideas about methodologies, not just present research results.
- Dan Richard mentioned a project which could serve as a model for having people participate online. In this project, professors and students tagged presentations/projects, and this served to create a record of the DH at that institution.
- One way the spring 2017 event could result in additional funding is through the potential for community members to discover projects they would like to support.
- The question was posed as to whether this event could serve as a regional DH conference.
- We could invite the public to participate in the symposium following a model something like that of OneSpark.

A question was asked regarding what would happen if the Foundation Board did not fund our proposal related to this event. These seemed to be consensus that the event and model projects could go forward, drawing upon resources available on campus. Funding through the Foundation Board is therefore not critical, but would provide a significant amount of momentum and visibility to our project.

6. **Discussion of proposed leadership structure for the DHI** (agenda packet, p. 9).

The following suggestions were made:

- We should make some of the language less specific. For instance, “work with CIRT to maintain web presence” could be “maintain web presence.”
- There should be a mechanism for people to rotate on and off the committee if they so desire.
- If we start to disperse money, we may need to tighten up the organizational structure, but until then we may not need to be very formal about governance. At that point, in fact, we might need to become a center, because otherwise there would be no place to put the money.

- At this point, it's a good idea to keep the advisory committee broad with representatives from many different departments/entities on campus.
- There was consensus that the advisory committee should vote to choose the director and assistant director. This may be done electronically. Clayton will solicit nominations over the next few weeks.

A question was asked about how the current advisory committee was selected. Clayton explained that he assembled the list by asking individuals to serve. This process driven by a desire to involve people who shared an interest in this endeavor and could represent diverse areas of the university.

A question was posed regarding what we are looking for in external advisory committee members. Clayton responded that his idea initially was to engage leaders at local cultural institutions who could collaborate with UNF faculty and students. A suggestion was made that we should also consider inviting the participation of community leaders who could help in the process of raising funds. Names of a few specific individuals were mentioned, and Clayton will follow up on these suggestions.

7. Discussion of electronic textual editing course (agenda packet, pp. 10–12). The group expressed its support of this proposal.

There was discussion of the viability of creating DH courses with a prefix such as DIG that wouldn't belong to a specific department. It was suggested we investigate how the IDH (Honors) courses get credited to departments.

A concern was expressed about how advising would handle such courses. Will they be merely general electives, or would they figure into a program of study somewhere?

It was suggested that such courses (with DIG or another prefix) would form the core courses of a DH minor.

The question arose as to whether courses with a DH component could receive a special designation (perhaps DH), like distance learning and hybrid courses. This could help students and advisors identify courses that would fulfill requirements for a possible future DH minor or track.

8. Meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

The following comments were submitted via e-mail after the meeting:

- The momentum we have achieved so far is positive, but to ensure a future for the initiative, we need to secure ongoing support from the upper administration. To this end, we should consider ways to articulate the importance of the DH initiative in relation to STEM, given the high priority placed on the latter.
- We might consider creating a list of courses that already involve DH components, as is done with Service Learning courses. There is likely a great deal of DH work already going on of which we are not aware, and which we should publicize.
- The TRACE project at UF (<http://trace.english.ufl.edu>) is one possible model for our initiative to follow, in terms of how it serves as a clearinghouse for information about projects on campus.

Respectfully submitted by Stephanie Weiss and Clayton McCarl.