

H & A in Action, College of Humanities and the Arts Report for 2021-2022

2021-2022 saw the College of Humanities and Arts kick off our new multidisciplinary initiative, “H & A in Action” complemented by a robust digital footprint available to students, faculty, staff, community organizers, and the public in a sustainable and accessible format (see [here](#)). Our Artistic Excellence Programming Grants, future Digital Humanities Center, and our Deep Humanities & Arts programming, soon to be organized into a Research Institute, are all organized under H & A in Action with multiple programming and outreach opportunities. The main goals of H & A in Action include: integrating programming and our College’s classroom curriculum; establishing curriculum communities organized around themes the College has been exploring; expanding our public programming into the City of San Jose and the larger South Bay region; allowing our students and our larger community to be joint producers of knowledge; and promoting the humanities and the arts more generally. The first year has been very successful, including receiving grants from both California Humanities Council and the City of San Jose’s Abierto program. Under the direction of our Director of Public Programming, Katherine D. Harris, H & A in Action sponsored approximately 500 different events, including highly successful community-engaged events such as the Beethoven Nature Walk, the Mother Language Day, extensive tabling events at various events, including VivaCalleSJ, and the [Public Art as Resistance Art Walk](#). Other initiatives led by Professor Harris include our Quick Bites, which included two live-streamed conversations by interdisciplinary faculty on The Facebook Papers and the innovations surrounding the James Webb Telescope. By developing our [definition](#) of “public engagement” and deploying the ideas behind Public Humanities and Public Art, these events and programming have led to sustainable, collaborative relationships with community organizations, such as Chopsticks Alley Art Association, History San Jose, Japanese American Museum, San Jose Museum of Art, MACLA, and San Jose Public Library. The “[Geography of the Arts](#)” initiative has grown out of these community engagement public programming opportunities in the form of, for example, the ArtBoxSJ collaboration with the South University Neighborhood Board (see [more](#)). These events have become our most public-facing examples of our engagement with the larger San Jose and South Bay community, and we continue to expand this work.

Our [Artistic Excellence Programming Grants initiative](#) has continued to expand the intersection between our college’s programming and curriculum with faculty-created lectures, workshops, art exhibits, theater and dance performances.¹ Starting in Fall 2017, the College of Humanities and the Arts was awarded \$150,000 in base IRA funding to use for Artistic Excellence Programming Grants (AEPG) across all of the arts, including culinary arts and the humanities or letters. This money is intended to provide robust educational enhancement and support for students’ classroom and educational experiences. These funds are meant to support events including, but not limited to: master classes; lectures engaging the letters; professional residencies; art exhibits; literary readings; theatrical and

¹ For a full history of the AEPG initiative, see our [Reports](#) on the H&A in Action website.

musical performances; and film productions. Each year preceding the programming season for the next year, the College has issued a call for proposals, and members from the AEPG Awards Committee have evaluated proposals and awarded funds based on criteria that have stressed impact for students, numbers of students involved or connected to the event, curricular linkage or support, and educational value of the event. Over the last three years, a proposal could also receive an additional point in the review process if it connected to two College of Humanities and Arts programming themes.

Our current College themes, which we have had in place since 2019, are “The Inclusion Initiative,” which explores social justice and racial equity, and “Sustainable Futures.” We continue to work to integrate programming into specific classes and have established a library of assignments for faculty to use in their courses (see [Teaching Resources](#)). We have partnered with institutes, organizations, and offices on campus to create a multidisciplinary curricular experience with student products and outcomes preserved in multiple venues, including SJSU King Library Scholarworks (e.g., see [Pandemic Pandemonium](#)), the College’s re-vamped [YouTube Channel](#), and the [Stories of Engagement](#) section of the website. This is an area where we continue to look for foundational support to build out our vision of programming and curricular innovation.

Our other initiatives, such as Deep Humanities and Arts, continued with the well-attended conversation between Professor Étienne Brown and Timnit Gebru, held at the Hammer Theatre. And our planning and fundraising continues to support both the curriculum in Digital Humanities and create the Digital Humanities Center in the library.

While we needed to negotiate COVID surges over the course of the year, 2021-2022 allowed us to return to largely in-person performances, while also often expanding audiences through live-streaming. This is allowing us to build on the initiative of the Hammer Theatre during the COVID lockdown in 2020-2021. And the number of events remains impressive, with 60 separate events sponsored under the AEPG umbrella this year, 55 of them part of our Innovation Initiative and the themes. In total, AEPG events touched more than 5,000 participants, audience members, and attendees, not including those viewers of the archived digital content.

Another component of our H & A in Action activities is our “[Curricular Communities](#),” which highlights exemplary student work that culminates in a showcase and awards for best student submission. This year, we had two communities, one around Sustainable Futures sponsored by the Office of Sustainability, and the second sponsored by the College. Eight professors from Music, Radio-Television-Film, English, Linguistics, American Studies, and Creative Arts took the challenge to design assignments that address inclusion and inclusivity and they engaged 184 students in their classes. They selected and submitted 30 individual and group projects to be showcased. Our Inclusion Initiative extended last year’s success of the Pandemic Pandemonium, including an in-person event to celebrate the student winners for their best work.

Our first year, in large part has been successful because of the hard work and innovation of our new Director of Public Programming, has been a great success. The College looks

forward to extending these initiatives through philanthropy and grants to continue to extend our vision of Community Connections and integrated curriculum and programming. We look forward to another extraordinary year of H & A in Action.