Impressions from the Director
Vivian M. May, Ph.D.

As the year began, we joined colleagues across campus in hoping for some return to fond traditions, even as COVID-19 and its variants stayed in the news and on our minds.

We adhered to strategies that served us well in pandemic times, to flexibly and nimbly support humanities research, build community, and showcase how the humanities are vital for addressing social issues and inequities. As such, the Humanities Center presented another robust slate of largely virtual activities in our Syracuse Symposium series. We coordinated talks and workshops with the Jeannette K. Watson Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Humanities. We hosted faculty and student Fellows’ project discussions. And, following two years on pandemic pause, we planned cautiously for an in-person Books in the Humanities celebration, recognizing three years’ worth of nearly 150 faculty and student authors in our spring showcase, to make up for lost time.

Similarly, Working Groups across the CNY Humanities Corridor (administratively housed at the Humanities Center) capitalized on lessons learned during COVID, forging fruitful collaborations via remote exchanges across the region, the country, and globally. The following pages offer a glimpse at all of these initiatives and their impact on our work as scholars, stewards, and educators. Thank you for spending time with us! We welcome questions and feedback at humcenter@syr.edu.
Nurturing Ideas
Making a splash, drop by drop

Through co-sponsorships and spearheaded initiatives, the Humanities Center connected University and community audiences to more than 100 humanities-enriched activities via...

- **Syracuse Symposium** public events;
- **Jeannette K. Watson Distinguished Visiting Professor** activities;
- **Kameshwar C. Wali** Lecture in the Sciences & Humanities - a partnership with Physics, this year featuring conservation scientist **Krithi Karanth**.

Housed within the College of Arts & Sciences, which itself lies at the physical and figurative heart of campus, the Humanities Center is uniquely positioned to foster interdisciplinary synergies and silo-breaking connections across campus, as we recently did with...

- The **Newhouse School** on the **Syracuse University Human Rights Film Festival**; with its **Goldring Arts Journalism Program** hosting author **Isaac Butler** on campus; and discussion on how the **Kilroys List** is addressing gender bias in the theater industry;
- The **School of Education** hosting poet and author of children’s literature, **Bao Phi**;
- **Visual and Performing Arts** activities with composer **Erin O'Hara**;
- **CMAC** galleries: **Point of Contact** (Kelvin Burzon) **SUArt Museum** (Per(Sister)), **Light Work** (Pixy Liao), and **Urban Video Project** (Suzanne Kite);
- The **School of Architecture** and the **Maxwell School / South Asia Center** on **Bangkok Utopia**, and the **Genealogies of Anti-Asian/Asia Violences** consortium;
- Lender Center’s **creative colloquium** ... and many others you can **explore online**.

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Nurturing Ideas
(continued)

Building pipelines of support and opportunity for all humanists, particularly scholars from historically marginalized groups in the academy (BIPOC, First-Gen, LGBTQ+, and women), is a priority on ‘both sides of the house.’ As such, we leveraged CNY Humanities Corridor resources to regularize a pilot program into an annual Corridor writing retreat at Syracuse University’s Minnowbrook Conference Center. Consistently fielding more applications than can be accommodated, some October 2021 participants called it “a game changer,” akin to “winning the lottery.”

The Graduate School capitalized on its HC and Corridor support to present Building a Better Graduate Education: Overcoming Resistance and Finding Allies. An outgrowth from an NEH grant (2018), the Grad School and HC teamed up for Next-Generation Dissertations: New Projects for an Engaged Academy and Next-Generation Dissertations: New Approaches to Humanities Scholarship.

The Corridor, College of Arts & Sciences and Office of Research arranged an NCFDD workshop on Writing, Procrastination, and Resistance: How to Identify your Writing Blocks and Move Through Them, attracting 283 registrants in December. In Spring, two in-depth writing workshops led by Michelle Thompson of Resistant Vision drew dozens of scholars interested in "Imposter Syndrome” and “Finding Your Purpose” strategies.

Read more about the Corridor’s impressive impact on its own page of this report.
Rooted in Research

Fellowships allow scholars to branch out

The Humanities Center’s four Faculty Fellows and two Dissertation Fellows created brief video presentations (posted at the Humanities Center channel on Kaltura) in advance of virtual “Meet the Scholars Coffee Hours” to further explore their research, and the inspirations that drew each fellow to their work.

Humanities Center Faculty Fellows

**Dorri Beam** Associate Professor, English - Arts & Sciences / “Symposium” Faculty Fellow
*Social Form and Literary Experiment in the American Age of Fourier*

**Gareth Fisher** Associate Professor, Religion - Arts & Sciences Faculty Fellow
*Temples and Teahouses: Buddhism and Secularism in Contemporary China*

**Jeanette Jouili** Associate Professor, Religion - Arts & Sciences Faculty Fellow
*Islam on Stage: Muslim Culture in the Age of Counter-Terrorism*

**Robert Wilson** Associate Professor, Geography - Maxwell Faculty Fellow
*Inundated and Incinerated: Retheorizing Landscape Studies for the Anthropocene*

Humanities Center Dissertation Fellows

**Deyasini Dasgupta** - Ph.D. Student, English: *(Re)-Negotiating Monstrous Bodies: Reading Embodiment through Race, Affect, and Disability in Early Modern England*

**Stephanie Jones** - Ph.D. Student, Writing Studies, Rhetoric, and Composition: *Afrofuturist Feminism as Theory and Praxis: A Rhetorical History of the Black Radical Imagination*

Learn more at the Fellowships page of our website.
Syracuse Symposium
Conventions

Our annual public events series featured 26 virtual and/or in-person activities focused on the theme, “Conventions.” We collaborated with partners from 4 Schools and Colleges, 12 university departments, units, or programs, and 3 community organizations to present film screenings, artist talks, archival explorations, discussions and workshops on housing insecurity, gender stereotypes, cultural and religious traditions, and many other issues examined through humanities lenses. Browse the complete line-up at the Syracuse Symposium page of our website.
Books in the Humanities

Output stacks up

Shelved for the prior two years due to COVID, we made up for lost time by celebrating three copyright years’ worth of humanities scholarship in person at our 7th annual spring celebration. Mingling under the protective cover of the Huntington Beard Crouse breezeway, our outdoor reception on May 2nd was a welcome return to sharing a snack and a smile (though sometimes masked!) with campus community members.

The collective digital showcase from ©2019, ©2020, and ©2021 displayed 141 titles by Syracuse University authors and editors, with 58 of those books coming from 54 of our colleagues this past year alone. Celebrated works—which range from exhibit catalogs and monographs to fiction, poetry, edited collections and more—are archived online at a special series of Research Guides assembled by our partners at the Syracuse University Libraries. The Syracuse University Office of Research and College of Arts and Sciences provide additional support for this growing tradition.

Any Syracuse University student, faculty, or staff member releasing a humanities-related book is encouraged to tell us about it via the book survey posted year-round on the FORMS page of our website.
Jeannette K. Watson Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Humanities

P. Gabrielle Foreman

#DigBlk: The Art of Recovering Black History

- Co-Director, Center for Black Digital Research; Professor of English, African American Studies and History; Paterno Family Chair of Liberal Arts at Pennsylvania State University
- Founding Director, The Colored Conventions Project
- Senior Library Fellow and Affiliate Faculty, The University of Delaware

P. Gabrielle Foreman is the founding faculty director of the award-winning Colored Conventions Project, which brings seven decades of nineteenth-century Black organizing to digital life at ColoredConventions.org. Her split mini-residency at Syracuse University began with activities in Spring 2021 and concluded in Fall 2021.

A faculty team of organizers—Dorri Beam (English), Joan Bryant (African American Studies), Petrina Jackson (Special Collections Research Center) and Patricia Roylance (English)—collaborated with Foreman to offer a vibrant slate of talks and workshops, culminating in the virtual webinar: Sankofa Imperatives, Black Women, and the Archival Turn. Read more about Foreman and prior visiting scholars at the Distinguished Visiting Professors page of our website.
Co-Sponsorships
The Humanities Center supported a variety of panels, lectures, and workshops on a range of topics—from art and architecture to languages, literature, and more. We also increased our support for professional development offerings for humanities faculty and graduate students on topics such as seeking and applying for grants, improving writing focus, navigating the changing landscape of academic publishing, and others.

Sponsorship requests came from nearly a dozen academic units housed within five Schools and Colleges... plus central campus and community entities such as the Office of Research, Faculty Affairs, the Graduate School, Lender Center for Social Justice, Burton Blatt Institute, SU Art Museum, SU Press, WiSE, La Casita, and the Downtown Writers Center at the Syracuse YMCA.

Featured images: Artemisia Gentileschi, Judith and Holofernes, ca. 1612 from “Painting Dangerously” lecture; cover image from book talk with author Nimmi Gowrinathan; Amy Elkins’ “Mother and Young Children,” from “Per(Sister)” exhibit
Central New York Humanities Corridor
New website clicks with regional collaborators

The launch of the Corridor’s vibrant new website in Summer 2021 began an exciting era for the 15-year-old research consortium linking 11 universities and colleges across the region. A central calendar satisfies a longtime request from Corridor members looking to post and participate in activities. User-friendly access to Working Group pages, funding forms and resources, and simplified reporting structures increases transparency and awareness about the Corridor’s vast range of support for collaborative humanities research across the state and beyond. A new logo features an open circle framed by 11 distinct symbols, evoking the Corridor’s research community and collaborative ethos.

As the administrative home for the Corridor, we are pleased to highlight:

- **$165,370** was awarded to **43** active Working Groups (**8** of them new) to support more than **100** activities, including **4** groups hosting “Signature Events.”
- **4,500** participants from more than **360** colleges / universities / non-profits / government offices (**56** from across New York state) in **33** countries, **42** states, and more than a dozen Indigenous nations engaged with Corridor activities.
Public Humanities
Students weave projects into community spaces

Humanities New York began supporting graduate student projects across the state through its nascent Public Humanities Grant program, in partnership with the HC and Corridor. The selected proposals from Syracuse University were:

Jacob Gedetsis (MFA, English / Creative Writing) “First Taste: A Community Narrative Around Food,” a youth-focused writing project designed to generate intergenerational community narratives centered on New American foodways. The project combined history, art and writing workshops, culminating in a public reading and display of student works at the Salt City Market in downtown Syracuse.


Additionally, the HC and Corridor routinely partner with SU’s Engaged Humanities Network to publicize and support various public programming, “brown bag” gatherings for graduate student networking, and other practical applications of humanities research that stitch together our communities.
Budget Overview

Humanities research counts

Still affected by the pandemic, many colleagues looked to the HC for innovative ways to enrich their work and to create community in isolating times. In response, we connected humanities practitioners with virtual writing retreats and other career development workshops. We helped coordinate and publicize info-sessions and consultation opportunities on specialized topics for graduate students and faculty. Through fellowship structures and others, we subsidized book purchases and virtual conference registrations. You have seen many of these efforts highlighted throughout this report.

All told, more than half of our program spending showcased faculty and student research engagement. This represents a significant shift over the last seven years. Prioritizing research support builds community and affords greater impact for our scholars.

**HC support** (by percentage) as awarded via Syracuse Symposium, the Watson Visiting Professorship, and Special Programming:

- **Research** (directly subsidized) - 22%
- **Research-related support** (activities, overhead) - 34%
- **Programming** (public talks, exhibits, films, etc.) - 44%
Advisory Board

Zoom sessions serve as hub and haven for humanists

The HC continued to embrace virtual meeting technology for efficiently gathering the nearly 30 members of our advisory board several times through the year for targeted discussion. With broad representation across campus and disciplines, this group is charged with bringing relevant issues, ideas, and opportunities to the table for wider discussion and relaying valuable information back to home units for continued and expanded engagement and advocacy.

Sub-committees comprised of Board members help review applications and select the HC’s Dissertation and Faculty Fellows for the coming academic year, as well as reviewing program proposals submitted for Syracuse Symposium consideration. This group is also instrumental in providing collective feedback and suggestions for proposed Jeannette K. Watson Distinguished Visiting Professor candidates and content for their mini-residencies.

Anecdotally, many members cite the HC Advisory Board as their “favorite service commitment.” Together, we seek positive ways to keep issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion at the forefront of campus life, as the humanities are uniquely equipped to do.

Learn more about the board at the People page of our website.
Website | Social Media
Digital outreach remains nimble, cost-effective

We marked our first year on a new website platform (Wagtail). Its pages provide deep dives for humanists looking for activities to attend, supportive resources to comb, and colleagues to meet. The Syracuse University humanities community can keep tabs on upcoming funding and application cycles and the related forms to submit. The News page provides a digest of stories generated at Syracuse and elsewhere, with ties to Humanities Center people, projects, and consortia.

Thousands of campus and community constituents receive This Week at the Humanities Center -- a Monday morning e-blast that connects audiences with public-facing and curriculum-enhancing programming, invitations to workshops, info sessions, and other opportunities to engage with content in the humanities. Focusing time and energy on digital communications (as opposed to the labor and costs involved to design, print, and mail programs, posters, and brochures) remains an efficient way to put accurate, timely information in front of people—particularly as event details have been known to change swiftly through wavering pandemic conditions.

In the moments in between, we kept our brand-compliant social media feeds on Instagram and Facebook filled with event reminders and roundups and linked our followers to various humanities topics and news coverage.
Why We Do What We Do
A sampling of feedback from participating faculty and students

“The Humanities Center Dissertation Fellowship has been a great help to me in finishing my degree here at SU. I was able to publish several articles and go to conferences to present my research. I defend in May, graduate this summer, and have also accepted a tenure-track job... made possible by this fellowship.” - S.J

“The opportunity to create a vibrant intellectual community in Central New York has been invaluable - thank you!” - C.S.

“Thank you for the fellowship that allowed me the time and money to travel and write my article... already getting some attention in the field!” - K.E.

“The Humanities Center has been very good to us, and I know our students benefited from meeting the many artists you have helped us bring to Syracuse University.” - M.H.

“We welcomed over 60 virtual and 100-plus in-person event attendees for an experimental lecture with our visiting artist-scholar, with a dynamic and engaging post-lecture Q&A.” - A.H.

“(HC support helped us) purchase sets of our guest scholar’s books to donate to local libraries, schools, and community agencies serving immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking people.” - B.F.

“The CNY Humanities Corridor has been a lifeline for me in the transition from being a graduate student at a large public institution to joining faculty in a small liberal arts college.” - F.S

“The Editorial Board at Wayne State University Press has unanimously approved my book for publication next year. My HC Fellowship played a key role in getting me here, so I wanted to thank you again for giving me such a great opportunity to spend an entire semester on the manuscript. I feel honored to be in the good company of the HC Fellows.” - W.S.
Acknowledgements

The Humanities Center team for AY22:

Vivian M. May
Director, Humanities Center and CNY Humanities Corridor

Diane C. Drake
Communications & Program Specialist

Shelby Rodger
Office Coordinator (July 2021-May 2022)

Katie E. Walpole
Program Manager, CNY Humanities Corridor (as of Nov. 2021)

Jackie Weinheimer
Budget Associate, Humanities Center and CNY Humanities Corridor (thru Dec. 2021)

Miguel J. Rodriguez
Budget Associate, Humanities Center and CNY Humanities Corridor (as of Jan. 2022)

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• Miscellaneous candids/headshots appear courtesy of HC staff or event partners.
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