



June 26, 2020

Cindy Cox, Chair, Department of Music (co-chair)
Kathleen Donegan, Associate Professor, English Department; Associate Dean of Arts and Humanities (co-chair)
Oliver Arnold, Associate Professor, Department of English
David Bates, Professor, Department of Rhetoric
Eric Falci, Associate Dean, Graduate Division
Niko Kolodny, Chair, Philosophy Department
Ignacio Navarrete, Professor, Department of Spanish and Portuguese
Harsha Ram, Associate Professor, Departments of Slavic Languages and Literatures and Comparative Literature
Sugata Ray, Associate Professor, History of Art Department
Stephanie Syjuco, Associate Professor, Department of Art Practice
Lisa Wymore, Chair, Department of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies

Re: “Arts and Humanities for the Future” Task Force Charge

Dear Colleagues,

Education and research in the humanities and the arts are core to Berkeley’s mission and its excellence. There are many indicators of this, including that the Division of Arts and Humanities (“A&H”) is the second largest decanal unit on campus in terms of ladder faculty. We are proud that rankings consistently show our A&H departments among the top programs in the nation and the world. We succeed in recruiting and retaining the best A&H faculty because of the vibrant intellectual atmosphere on the campus, within and beyond the Division. Moreover, the forms of inquiry, intelligence, imagination, and creativity that the disciplines of the arts and humanities cultivate are crucial to the formation of an educated citizenry and are vital to the creation of new knowledge.

At institutions across the country, public and private alike, the humanities and the arts have been challenged to find ways to maintain their position within the changing landscape of higher education. The factors contributing to this situation are many, and vary somewhat across institutions. Students are majoring less in the arts and humanities than they once did—perhaps driven by a belief that arts and humanities degrees do not lead to prosperous careers; in higher education, there may be some uncertainty about the role of historical knowledge and interpretation in education and research; and, English increasingly dominates as the global language. Whether and to what extent these factors are at work at Berkeley, we do know that arts and humanities enrollments have dropped overall, in a period when overall undergraduate enrollment has grown, and that the number of students choosing to major in these disciplines is down overall as well. We are convinced that our students would be better served if more of them took more courses in A&H. Success in achieving this goal would have the welcome effect of

avoiding the drop in resources provided to the Division that would otherwise begin in July of 2023.

We thank you for agreeing to serve on a task force whose charge is to make specific recommendations about how best to secure the strongest future for the arts and humanities at Berkeley. We make no assumptions about what the answers may be, and so have agreed to take a comprehensive look at what we do and how we do it. We do not assume that the continuation of existing practices is necessarily a bad thing, nor do we assume that innovative approaches are suspect. The issues must be approached in a spirit of open inquiry. Through a collective and collaborative approach, we need to understand what our priorities are now and what they should be for the future. This is an opportunity to design a sustainable future together so that Berkeley can lead in finding solutions where other institutions have only seen problems.

We request that the task force serve as a coordinating group and report its recommendations to us by November 2020. The task force identified the following four workstreams, based on the lifecycle of students in the division, and which of its members will participate in each subgroup: Admissions (Ignacio and Niko), Lower Division (Kathleen, Ignacio, David, and Harsha), Majors/Upper Division (Lisa, Eric, David, and Sugata), and Professional Masters/Graduate Programs (CIndy, Eric, and Lisa). In the interest of engaging relevant stakeholders, gaining perspective and envisioning goals that the entire A&H community can embrace, additional faculty and staff will be invited to join subgroups based on their interest(s) and expertise.

In its initial conversations, the task force pointed to an untapped potential in performance/creative work and technology, highlighting an opportunity for A&H to offer new majors based on faculty interest and removing barriers for students to pair A&H with their studies in STEM. In particular, there was a strong interest in exploring professional masters at the intersection of the arts and technology. Additionally, support was shown for exploring ideas pertaining to admissions practices, early-engagement with students, new/expanded undergraduate programs, and graduate/professional masters education while securing financial sustainability. In its deliberation, the scope of the task force could include consideration of ideas as diverse as building on the Compass Courses to creating a new common core of A&H introductory courses taught by ladder faculty; collaborative teaching partnerships with non-A&H programs, including the new Division of Computation, Data Science, and Society and the professional schools (e.g., Public Policy, Law), as well as the concept of half-majors suggested in the strategic plan; the structured use of internships, study abroad opportunities, and design projects as parts of a major; and new ways to make use of other partnerships (e.g., with BAMPPFA and Cal Performances, University Extension, Summer Sessions, or possibly Mills College).

Similarly, we seek your best recommendations for the Division's structure and activities. Examples of relevant topics here could include, but are not limited to: principles of governance for best and fairest use of the "allocable pool"; the construction and distribution of decanal TAS funding (including all contributing funds and considering current and future ways of handling R&C and commonly-taught foreign languages); ladder-faculty teaching expectations and the course levels at which they teach (lower division, upper division, graduate); ideal class

enrollments; best use of GSIs, readers, and Lecturers in larger courses; prevalence and needs in different modes of instruction (lectures, seminars, studios, R&C, foreign languages); the appropriate use of GSIs and Lecturers as primary instructors; the balance between courses aimed at majors and those designed for all students; and the advisability of providing some advantage in admissions to strong applicants who express interest in A&H fields. At its discretion entirely, if the task force decides that it can be productive to do so, then it may engage on questions such as the structure of the division, its departments, and its majors.

The work of the task force will be supported by the Academic Finance Reform Initiative project team including Andy Kraus, Katrina Koski, Chris Stanich, and Andrea Lambert and Assistant Dean for Finance and Administration in the Division of Arts & Humanities, Anna Weidman. This task force will also be supported by the Office of Planning and Analysis, and a dedicated staff member with experience in campus data, including budgeting and finance reform planning, can be made available.

Thank you in advance for your time, effort, and contributions to this important work. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the Arts and Humanities has a strong and sustainable future.

Sincerely,



Anthony J. Cascardi
Dean of Arts and Humanities



A. Paul Alivisatos
Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

cc: Andrea Lambert, Chief of Staff to the Provost
Anna Weidman, Assistant Dean for Finance and Administration
Chris Stanich, Associate Vice Chancellor, Financial Planning and Analysis
Katrina Koski, Academic Finance Reform Initiative Project Manager
Andy Kraus, Academic Finance Reform Initiative Project Manager