The “Living Humanities PhD” for the 21st Century

Eva Badowska, Ph.D., Dean
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At a Glance

10 Ph.D. programs (of which 5 in the humanities)
21 M.A. and M.S. programs
Fall 2017: 369 Ph.D. students/ 332 Master’s students
Majority of Ph.D.’s fully funded for 3-6 years
Fordham/GSAS Context

• Humanities disciplines are traditional strengths of Jesuit universities in the US
• Majority of graduates find careers outside of academia
• Most stay local
• Fordham’s mission as a Jesuit, Catholic university is to foster knowledge that makes a difference in the world: an apt context for a reform of doctoral education
New Initiatives, 2014-

- **GSAS Futures**: Preparation for Compatible Careers
- **GSAS/GSA Interdisciplinary Lab**
- **GSAS Fellowships in Higher Education Leadership**
- **GSAS PFF** (Preparing Future Faculty)

“Go and set the world on fire.”

-- Joseph M. McShane, S.J., President, Fordham University
Ongoing Fordham/GSAS Initiatives

THE CHRONICLE of HIGHER EDUCATION

Give Us a Voice in Our Own Future
How academe can open up debate about the future of doctoral education to graduate students.

GSAS Futures
for graduate students, by graduate students

FORDHAM
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Celebrating 100 Years
THE PROBLEM
Steep Declines in Full Time Faculty Jobs in the Humanities

• Steep decline in academic job postings in the 6 major humanities disciplines from a peak in 2007-08: 30% down in most humanities disciplines, except in Classics, where the drop was 14% (Humanities Indicators)
THE PROBLEM
PhD Programs Prepare Students for Jobs That Don’t Exist

• “[T]housands of professors are currently in the business of preparing thousands of graduate students for jobs that don’t exist.” (Leonard Cassuto, The Graduate School Mess: What Caused and How We Can Fix It [2015])
THE SOLUTION
Recognize that Times are “Good Enough”

Sidonie Smith, *Manifesto for the Humanities: Transforming Doctoral Education in Good Enough Times*

- “hold the vision of inclusive excellence in sight”
- “muster data for evidence-based counternarratives”
- “recognize the larger community of activists throughout the academy and the resources they mobilize for making change happen”
- “remember all the humanists and allies out there; and act to make doctoral education forward-looking for future humanists”
The “Living Humanities PhD” for the 21st Century Planning Themes

1. Revitalize and Rethink Learning Outcomes
2. Inhabit the New Learning Ecosystem
3. Mentor the Whole Person: Career-wise Counsel, Promising Partnerships
4. Incorporate Service and Community Engagement
5. Ensure Access and Inclusion
6. Cultivate and Curate a “Living Humanities” PhD Model

fordham.edu/nextgenphd
Creating a Community of Change-Makers

Core Planning Group
- Two co-PI’s (Dean and Department Chair)
- Faculty from across humanities disciplines
- Current doctoral candidates
- Recent humanities alumni working outside of academia

Constituent Advisory Group
- Representatives from MLA & AHA
- University Press director
- Director of International Initiatives
- Museum and Historical Society Curators
- Non-Profit Leaders in various areas
- Charter School Principal
- University Assessment Officer
- Director of Development
- Director of Service Learning
- CEO of a major health organization
Living Humanities at Fordham GSAS
“What We Talk About When We Talk About Mentoring” (example of in-process outcome)

- Steve D’Augustino, Director of Online Learning, summed up one of the strands of our November discussion in a blog post on a potential list of mentoring components and associated outcomes:
  - Academic
  - Disciplinary
  - Social
  - Professional
  - Ethical
  - Cultural
Tensions & Issues to Address

• Janus-faced PhD model: In/Out, Academic/Non-Academic
• Student-focused/faculty-focused
• Academic rigor/expanding career focus
• Shorter time to degree/revitalized SLO’s
• Incremental change/total overhaul
• Right Now/”Not Until” (... Elite schools lead the way, promotion criteria change, etc.)
Report from the Trenches: “LIVING” OUTCOMES

• Model of incremental, diffuse, across-spectrum change
  Movement across the spectrum simultaneously
  ➢ Admission criteria and search committees
  ➢ Coursework, comp exams, dissertations
  ➢ Job ads and questions to job candidates
  ➢ Criteria for evaluation, tenure, and promotion
  ➢ Public advocacy and connecting with the “humanists out there”

• Model of a broad community of change-making partners
Thank you!

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