

*Report of the Humanities Doctoral Education
Advisory Working Group*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks to define the terms by which faculty and students participate in the work of humanities graduate education at Yale. It argues for an inclusive collaboration between faculty members, students, and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS), offering specific recommendations for reform that faculty members can undertake, new options for student progress and development, and the metrics by which the GSAS will evaluate program success.

The working group recommends that doctoral education in the humanities focus on pushing the frontiers of knowledge and fostering intellectual and pedagogical innovation. The three principles of innovation, inclusion, and interdependence underpin the report's recommendations. Enacting these principles, designed to enhance the historical excellence of Yale's graduate programs in the Humanities division, requires faculty cooperation, student intellectual autonomy, and transparent metrics for program evaluation.

Humanities doctoral education operates in relation to a specific market for academic employment. Fewer than half of the humanities doctoral students who matriculate at Yale obtain tenure-track jobs. Yale has an important role to play in the training of humanists and hiring of junior faculty. The Dean of Humanities of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) commits to the recruitment of a large number of assistant professors in the humanities over the next several years. The GSAS commits to support doctoral education in humanities.

The working group recommends that the GSAS evaluate doctoral programs, existing and emergent, in relation to three major elements: the innovation and inclusion in each doctoral program, the amount of late attrition in a program, and the employment outcomes of a program's students.

This report recommends:

- The creation of a pool for interdisciplinary and extra-departmental admissions into areas not currently represented in doctoral recruitment;
- Offering more student autonomy in curricular design and professional development;
- The removal of the GRE as a required or optional admissions component;
- An expansion of the genre of acceptable dissertations;
- Replacing the proprietary model of advising with more collaborative structures;
- Finding new ways students can pursue pedagogical training;
- The metrics by which the GSAS should evaluate program success;

- Shifting total program size in response to program metrics related to student attrition, employment outcomes, and departmental climate and culture;
- The creation of specific incentives for faculty and students engaged in reform.

INTRODUCTION

Doctoral education in the humanities aims to equip scholar-citizens with highly developed research and teaching skills and the habits of mind to both engage in the life of the university and extend the broader public good. Graduate education in the humanities is essential to the future of the liberal arts and to the advancement of scholarship, creativity, and critical thinking. It teaches practices of interpretation, encourages wide-ranging curiosity, and keeps alive the historical consciousness and argumentative rigor requisite for leaders of a democratic society. Perhaps most importantly, graduate education in the humanities encourages active and critical learning and unlearning necessary for meaningful engagement in the world.

This report details the working group's recommendations derived from the principles of inclusion, innovation, and interdependence established through this semester of thinking together and alongside the extraordinary faculty and students who comprise humanities doctoral education at Yale. Every doctoral program at Yale has a different history, culture, and set of outcomes, and each program will apply these recommendations differently. The working group submits this report to faculty for their coordinated work of reflection and revision; to students for their individual and collective engagement; and to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS) for its work with humanities departments and programs at Yale.

Doctoral education at Yale is a cooperation between the administrative officers of the GSAS and the faculty who lead the work of education. The GSAS delegates to departments and programs the governance of their admissions and curriculum. As the working group listened and learned, it began to recognize how centralized reform – that is, reforms dictated by GSAS or a central committee – must be aligned with the longstanding Yale precept of departmental and programmatic faculty governance. At the same time, we recognize that key work in the Humanities division happens across and between departments, and that the university and the GSAS should encourage and foster those collaborations. The Humanities division at Yale is a gathering of many doctoral programs. Yale has also a broad intellectual and institutional commitment to the humanities that unites and supports these programs in contingent interests.

The working group underlines the common responsibility to forge an inclusive community. Innovation itself thrives on diversity along multiple dimensions. We cannot innovate until we establish and continuously remake a community that is open to the world, one that is accessible and inquisitive. Being a diverse community and practicing inclusion as a community, however, are not the same, and whatever progress Yale makes on the former requires a redoubling of effort in the latter.

In the conversations held by the working group, we heard testimonies of excellent mentorship. We also heard stories of mistreatment. Some faculty have failed to uphold standards of good mentorship; this failure contributes negatively to broader departmental cultures. Such misconduct results in a broken trust between faculty and students. To restore this trust, these failures need to be condemned and, where necessary, remedied by appropriate university procedures.

In addition to prioritizing innovation and inclusion, this working group recognizes and is committed to the interconnection of the Humanities division at Yale. Its twenty doctoral degree-granting units interconnect with one another, with faculty research, with Yale College programs and students, and with research libraries and collections on campus and beyond. The working group also affirms that what we do at Yale connects to other universities and colleges, private and public, two-year and four-year, national and international. Therefore, we must find ways to speak in common and to collaborate more easily across programs at Yale and beyond. At the local level, this goal includes fostering engagement with the Macmillan Center; Yale Center for the Study of Race, Indigeneity, and Transnational Migration; or the Whitney Humanities Center; as well as with the sciences, social sciences, and the professional schools.

More broadly, this interconnectedness encourages us to understand how actions by a Yale program or departmental subfield draw from and reverberate within the humanities at a regional and global scale. Each local action affects the whole. Yale must acknowledge its role in the job market and lead the way in reform. The working group believes Yale can be a leader on this issue, reject the casualization of the academy, and resist a move toward creating a greater number of adjunct positions. The recommendations made here support the leadership of Yale's Humanities division in a particular moment in which our students' work could not be more important.

Innovation, inclusion, and interconnectedness – in view of these three principles, the working group makes its recommendations for change in graduate education in the humanities at Yale in the following areas:

Admissions. To support new areas of inquiry, this report identifies mechanisms for recruiting new graduate students in disciplinary and interdisciplinary research areas not currently represented by existing departmental structures.

Curriculum. To ensure departments continue to train the most innovative students, recommendations in this report encourage curricular adjustments that include reducing course requirements, expediting progress to degree, streamlining procedures to attain candidacy, and expanding the professional skills graduate students acquire at Yale.

Dissertation. To expand the skills the dissertation can demonstrate, this report encourages expanding the genre of acceptable alternatives to the traditional proto-monograph model.

Advising. To reimagine advising as the collective effort of several faculty members from one or more departments – an effort in which a student’s home unit shares the responsibility of supporting each student’s success and well-being – the report recommends decentering the singular adviser-advisee apprenticeship model as a primary mode of mentoring.

Teaching. To better prepare students for a variety of careers and to fulfill an important need for labor at the university, the report advises the integration of pedagogical training and other professional experiences throughout a student’s time at Yale.

Program outcomes. To evaluate the success of doctoral programs in the Humanities division, this report encourages GSAS to consider program employment outcomes, the amount of late attrition in a program, and the innovation and inclusion a given doctoral program fosters, bearing in mind the still unforeseen consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. This report offers specific guidelines for measurement and interpretation in this multimodal assessment.

In our deliberations, the working group also considered questions of budget allocation and specific financial support. Our charge was to pursue changes that were budget neutral. Faculty do not need additional financial resources to strengthen curriculum and governance of their doctoral programs, but student autonomy does require additional material support. The working group recommends the university allocate the requisite resources to expand mental health and counseling services and provide students with vision and dental insurance as part of their financial aid package. These concerns, of course, are not unique to graduate students in the Humanities division. We take the occasion of this report to emphasize that healthy bodies and healthy minds lead to more expansive thinking, rejuvenate practices of learning and unlearning, and facilitate healthier and more diverse scholarly communities. We request the divisions of the GSAS unite to fund fully vision and dental insurance for all graduate students.

The recommendations below follow the chronological arc of doctoral student experience at Yale: admissions, curriculum, dissertation, then features of this experience and its afterlife in the form of advising, training in teaching, and employment outcomes.

ADMISSIONS

The working group understands admissions in three ways, all of them connected and yet distinct. In the simplest sense, admissions is a set of departmental practices that govern how faculty select candidates for admission and the institutional infrastructure that supports that decision-making. Admissions is also shorthand for the institutional process that determines each program's total size and therefore annual admissions targets. Lastly, admissions decisions determine how the GSAS distributes funding resources across the division.

The working group's recommendations regarding these aspects of admissions focus on prospective changes that enable intellectual innovation in ways that the current processes do not.

Departmental practices

For the past ten years, approximately 105 students have matriculated in humanities programs in GSAS every year. GSAS regulates the receipt of applications and the number of offers extended; otherwise, GSAS does not intervene in admissions processes. Faculty determine what constitute the important features of an application, and how they select the candidates they will admit. Selection processes vary widely from program to program. In some programs, the evaluation involves fewer than four faculty members; in others, the evaluation includes over thirty faculty members. In some programs, the faculty organize their admissions by groups of faculty in subfields; in other programs, the entire department assesses the whole pool of applicants. The work of admissions varies in some cases because the number of applicants itself varies so widely. Applicant pools range from ten applicants to over 400 applicants. The average admit rate is 8.9%, and the Humanities division is the most selective division in GSAS.

The GSAS commits to maintaining the current resources allocated to the division. It also maintains its prerogative to move resources within the division to support innovation both intellectual and pedagogical. The working group particularly recommends increased flexibility internal to the division for admissions opportunities in fields not currently represented. The working group notes many advantages to admissions procedures that involve the entire faculty collectively at some stage of the process. By decoupling admissions resources from individual faculty members and subfields, the program ensures consensus about the features of an application that most matter. Programs that run admissions collectively are able to direct resources toward the best applicants and toward intellectually strategic areas. These programs do not focus on historical entitlements, and their entire faculty share a responsibility for every student admitted.

In terms of admissions practices more generally, the working group recommends that each program:

- Remove the GRE as a required or optional element of the application to every humanities program. Research demonstrates that the GRE is a costly, unhelpful instrument. Transcripts and writing samples convey the relevant information through more substantive means.
- Ask whether the admissions process facilitates recruiting the most innovative students from the widest range of backgrounds. If there are prerequisites for admissions, ask what educational need each prerequisite positively serves, and which students it may unreasonably exclude.
- Evaluate how individual candidates for admission might participate in and contribute to humanities conversations at Yale that extend beyond their home department.
- Consider developing a master's program in its units through the exchange of doctoral admissions slots for fully funded master's slots. This is especially appropriate when faculty consistently find that the applicant pool is untrained in the foundational skills of the discipline (e.g., certain languages). This will make Yale a place that does not just expect such skills but trains students in them.
- Interview every semifinalist considered for admission prior to extending an offer.
- Engage thoroughly with the application form and consider whether it offers the information faculty need to assess their candidates.¹ GSAS is currently evaluating its application to see whether it helps faculty find the students most likely to become the highly skilled leaders, scholars, researchers, and teachers of tomorrow.

Total program size

The working group supports admissions processes that are selective and collective. The working group also supports the work of the Graduate Program Review (GPR) process by which GSAS assesses program sizes. Of greatest importance is a commitment by Yale faculty and the GSAS to work together to build a sustainable future for humanities doctoral education.

Program size modeling by GSAS links the number of students a program may admit in a given year to that department's success in mentoring students to the completion of their degrees. The more successful a department is in mentoring its students

¹ The application might appear a self-evident document populated with information about the applicant's background and achievements. Yet neutral headings around "experience" may well favor prospective students who can afford to take nonpaying internships or whose familial connections provide significant advantages relative to their professionalization.

to full-time, fulfilling jobs, the more GSAS might reward that department with the authorization to admit graduate students. Correlatively, the more attrition – especially late attrition – there is among graduate students in the department or the less successful the department is in guiding its students to completion, the more its future admissions might be limited. The working group agrees that program size and therefore annual admissions targets should be tied to fluctuating metrics rather than to historical entitlements.

Such statistical modeling, however, is limited in its ability to judge the success of a program, and we appreciate the ways in which the GPR process takes into account engaged and productive mentoring by the faculty, the culture of the department, and the outcomes of the students who complete their degrees. The working group supports the effort by GSAS to increase doctoral program size in humanities programs when the program culture clearly works to help students thrive along multiple dimensions. Sometimes, however, the quality and statistical measure of a unit decline, at which point the working group supports the GSAS in reducing program size temporarily. Programs that have reduced admissions may increase their admissions by improving their culture, curriculum, rate of late attrition, and employment outcomes.

The working group stresses that such redistribution of resources should occur only within the division and requests a commitment to this principle from GSAS. The success of the GPR rests on the understanding that the resources available to the Humanities division remain constant over time.

Distribution of admissions resources

The number of departments and programs in the humanities offers a powerful record of the diverse organization of knowledge in the division. The large number of jointly appointed faculty – more numerous than at our peer institutions – exemplifies disciplinary expertise while underscoring the interrelatedness of the humanities as a whole. Yale endorses the interdependence of humanistic fields by continuing to make joint appointments. In recent years, faculty clustered in areas not represented by existing departmental programs have requested the opportunity to recruit doctoral students.

The working group seeks to sustain successful departmental cultures of doctoral education and support emerging areas and joint programs through the partial decoupling of admissions resources from departmental structures. Decoupling some admissions from departmental structures promotes innovation and curricular change and gives students more autonomy in defining the scope of their graduate education. With a commitment from the GSAS to sustain the overall numbers of doctoral

admission in the humanities, the working group seeks to find ways to encourage innovative areas of inquiry and incentivize existing doctoral programs to improve.

There are two flexibly imagined and future-oriented processes for doctoral education that the working group recommends. In the first, faculty would design new combined-degree-granting programs, and students already admitted to existing Ph.D. programs might join these programs during the first year in their home program. The second relies on interdisciplinary, non-departmental faculty clusters that would propose new programs with limited time horizons to which GSAS would admit small cohorts. In this model, the GSAS invites faculty to propose thematic programs that might admit, for example, three cohorts of students, who would work on a specified set of questions and issues. Faculty should consider how the research interests of currently enrolled and incoming students might help shape these program proposals. At the end of ten years, the program would end. Students in these independent programs might or might not affiliate with a department after a year of course work. The working group sees strong advantages to both processes. Neither conflicts with department-based admissions; instead, they offer routes for parallel innovation.

The purpose of both proposed processes is to create more cross-departmental and cross-divisional student cohorts around particular kinds of intellectual questions during admissions while maintaining robust faculty support for these doctoral students. Such cohort building already exists. During the regular admissions process, for example, graduate programs identify applicants with interests aligned with those of the Yale Center for the Study of Race, Indigeneity, and Transnational Migration (RITM). RITM offers students a financial top-up to their stipend, inclusive programming for the cohort on arrival, and intellectual community organized around shared questions. Faculty interested in developing intellectual questions as focal points for student admissions can propose cohort ideas to the Deans of the Graduate School and the Humanities division. Such cohort admissions may be short-term (e.g., one generation of applicants) or long-term; they may or may not be tied to existing programs (e.g., Theater and Performance Studies, Environmental Humanities, or the Franke Program in Science and the Humanities). The working group views the further development of such programs as an immediate possibility and encourages them.

More ambitiously, the working group encourages GSAS to launch the programs detailed above by establishing a formal, publicized mechanism by which faculty might propose programs based on these non-departmentally organized models. This mechanism would stipulate the number of faculty participants required, the number of dedicated courses to replace the student's home requirements, and perhaps a request that admitting departments be willing to waive some number of courses

so that programs do not overburden students with further course work. Several of our combined programs already have procedures for interdepartmental cooperation around student requirements.

These programs represent possible steps toward a future horizon of more faculty collaboration to develop admissions connected to, but not solely dependent on, departmental admissions. These models require no further admissions resources, but rather a reimagining of where resources for the Humanities division might go if they aligned with the intellectual horizons of faculty collaboratively working together across departmental structures.

Moving toward more flexible admissions structures will be a slow process. As an inaugural step, the working group recommends the reinstatement of the admissions pool first established by GSAS five years ago and then suspended last year. Starting in spring 2022, we encourage GSAS to carve out between five and eight slots, for which departments may propose applicants with particularly innovative intellectual projects and goals. Further, we recommend that this pool be redistributed immediately following 2022 admissions to establish one or both of the models detailed above. The GSAS will actively work with faculty now to encourage the development of such models.

Building an inclusive graduate student future

Reimagining graduate admissions in the humanities means rethinking how different constituencies are prepared and enabled to apply to institutions like Yale. This, then, is an appeal to building and strengthening the academic pipeline to educational spheres underrepresented in the humanities graduate population long in advance of the actual admissions process. Investing in some target master's programs may be one route for specific doctoral programs to pursue. The working group also supports the emerging effort by Humanities division chairs and directors of graduate studies to engage Dean Michelle Nearon's established routes for Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships (SURF) and Post-baccalaureate Research Education Programs (PREP), which provide experience at Yale before prospective students begin the doctoral admissions process.

Faculty and GSAS must consider that students enter graduate school from a variety of socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. The move in Yale College toward identifying first-generation, low-income (FGLI) students as a demographic that requires additional financial, social, and academic support, and that contributes in meaningful and specific ways to campus life, has resulted in improved outcomes both for these students and for the university as a whole. The GSAS should begin collecting information that would allow students to identify as FGLI as part of the application process, and the university should design new material and academic support mechanisms for those who matriculate.

CURRICULUM

Doctoral education in the United States began at Yale. In 1846, the minimum requirements were two years of resident graduate study, a comprehensive examination, and a dissertation showing original scholarship.

The minimalism of these nineteenth-century expectations strikes the working group as important to reclaim in spirit, though not in letter. It is common knowledge that the time taken to complete a doctoral degree in the United States has grown, one reason for which is the degree requirements themselves. Most of these requirements are determined not by GSAS but by the individual programs. The GSAS provides up to six years of funding (which students may opt to decline); six semesters of this funding are connected to teaching. Within the six-year timeframe, GSAS stipulates only the following:

1. A doctoral degree includes course work of an indeterminate amount in which the student must earn two grades of “H” (Honors). Implicitly, this could mean that two courses are the minimum course requirement.
2. A doctoral degree includes some kind of qualifying exam without stipulation of format or extent.
3. Each degree candidate must have an approved dissertation committee by the start of the fourth year of study.
4. A doctoral degree includes an approved prospectus, without stipulation regarding the format of or approval processes for that prospectus.
5. A doctoral degree includes an approved dissertation, with stipulations regarding its format but no stipulations regarding its content or length.

Every other requirement – the number and type of courses taken within or beyond the department, second language acquisition, the nature and expectations of required graduate courses and the qualifying exam, the exact format and length of the prospectus and dissertation – is determined at the level of the individual department.

The openness of possibility here is tremendous. Doctoral programs could reduce their requirements significantly and still fulfill GSAS requirements. As the working group visited with departments and programs, we heard reasoned intellectual justifications for every specific requirement a particular program had. We were privy to debates about instituting new requirements. We learned that faculty developed requirements in large part to make students legible when they are on the academic job market. When we heard student voices, they asked whether traditional ideas of field legibility are relevant to contemporary academic markets, much less the shifting horizons of humanist interpretation.

The working group seeks to encourage a relationship of collaboration and support between students and faculty members, and to facilitate the likelihood that students can ask and answer new questions. To these principled ends, these are the recommendations the working group makes as it encourages all doctoral programs to review their course requirements, exam structure, prospectus, dissertation, and length of time to degree. The dissertation is taken up in the following section of the report.

Course work

- Departments should consider whether fewer and more flexible course requirements would be desirable. How can students take the right set of courses inside and outside of their home unit? Can they advance to candidacy earlier? By the end of the second year? Some doctoral programs require in excess of twelve courses. Faculty should review course requirements to ensure candidacy is achievable as soon as possible.
- Students who arrive at Yale with a master's degree may not need two additional years of course work. The GSAS is encouraged to permit a full year of course waivers for such students. Course work should focus on specified skill development and be construed as an opportunity to engage with a variety of faculty members. After a doctoral student's first semester at Yale, faculty and student should confer to determine what course work is required for advancement to candidacy.
- If—against the recommendation of this working group—programs retain 12–16 course requirements, they should allow students to propose flexible course releases for professionalization. Unit registrars will assign an advanced course number to such professional development opportunities.
- Students should be able to propose commensurate substitutions to program requirements. For example, a student may propose to use coding languages in fulfillment of a language requirement. In general, the working group urges definition of languages in the broadest sense, namely as methods of communication. Students should be encouraged to select languages that would be most relevant to their future research and scholarly conversations.
- Every graduate course should contribute to the development of a student's reading, research, or writing skills. Many students feel that their time in course work does not always result in the adequate development of writing and professional skills necessary for both academic and nonacademic work, including the completion of a dissertation project. Faculty should collectively discuss how their graduate pedagogy facilitates student growth as specialists and generalists. This may include thinking about how courses hone students' abilities with popular writing, technical languages, translation, or grant writing. Course work should prepare students for their exams, and course work and exams should cut a clear path to completion of the degree.

- Graduate course instructors should increase flexibility of final projects. In lieu of final papers for non-research seminars, graduate faculty should offer a range of alternative assignments (e.g., annotated bibliographies, etc.) designed to help students prepare for various program milestones (such as the comprehensive exams or the prospectus) or to attain proficiency in professional skills. In consultation with the course instructor and their adviser, students will choose the final course project most appropriate for skill development.
- Programs should consider expanding certain teaching assignments so that they may fulfill course requirements. Students who serve as teaching fellows in a large survey course their second year could author a syllabus for such a course, or a review essay on pedagogy or the course content, and thus achieve teaching experience and authorship that develop pedagogical skills. Mentoring such pedagogical work by students is additional work for faculty members.
- Programs should normalize taking courses throughout all stages of the doctoral degree program. Students in years four to six can benefit from taking (or auditing) additional classes as they pursue their doctoral research. They can share their experiences with younger students at the same time that they broaden their own skill sets and acquire new types of expertise.

M.Phil. and qualifying procedures

- Faculty should reenvision the qualifying process (i.e., examinations and prospectus) – optimally at the end of the second year or as soon thereafter as possible – as an integral moment in a student’s scholarly career. The end of required course work, no later than the end of the second year, should serve as a moment of reflection. At this stage, students could choose one of several paths; here we identify three options not exhaustive of the possibilities. (1) They could design a project that would allow them to graduate with an M.Phil. (2) They could design a set of qualifying exam exercises that lead toward a traditional dissertation project. (3) They could design a set of qualifying exam exercises that lead toward public-facing humanities work. Collaborative mentoring and support by faculty during this time are critical. Whichever path students choose, they should complete the qualifying process by the end of the third year, or earlier when possible.
- All doctoral programs should audit their qualifying process to clarify the ways in which students may pursue one of these three options. As part of this process, faculty would articulate the desired outcomes and purpose of qualifying procedures and reconsider if and how the format and structure of qualifying examinations align with those outcomes. Throughout this process, faculty should also consider how the qualifying exams may or may not prepare students for alternative academic (alt-ac) or nonacademic careers.

- Faculty and students should revitalize the M.Phil. as a celebrated terminal degree, at which point a student has completed significant work and can depart with a sense of accomplishment.² The M.Phil. is not a degree to which students would apply. Rather, it represents a moment when students could opt to conclude their graduate work. The minimum general requirements for this degree are that a student shall have completed all requirements for the Ph.D. except required teaching, the prospectus, and dissertation. Prior to the receipt of an M.Phil., a student should have a conversation with advisers – the M.Phil. meeting – to discuss and collectively determine what the best course of action going forward might be: that is, which of the three options outlined above (M.Phil. as terminus, qualifying exams that lead to a monograph dissertation, qualifying exams that lead to public-facing work) the student will pursue. This conversation should begin with an opportunity for the student to communicate openly and frankly their priorities and ambitions. Mentoring such a discernment by students is additional work for faculty members.
- Any assessment of qualifying procedures should include reflection on how qualifying procedures can incorporate work from course work, and how qualifying procedures might include a variety of exercises and outputs that better prepare students for different academic and nonacademic pathways. Possible exercises include the development of a course syllabus with a statement of pedagogical philosophy; the revision of a previously written paper for publication; the drafting and presentation of a conference paper; the preparation of a “pre-prospectus” research report or literature review; a piece of nonacademic writing or public-facing scholarship; a translation; an exercise in mastering a specific genre of academic writing (book review, essay, state of the field, historiographical overview, textual analysis or close reading).
- Every program should have a prospectus workshop that brings together students for preparing that document in regularly scheduled meetings. If program cohorts are too small, they should organize with other small doctoral programs to make cohort conversations possible at this critical moment.
- Programs should consider a process by which student prospectuses are engaged by a broader group of faculty members within the department than merely the student’s dissertation committee.

² The working group underlines that the encouragement of the M.Phil. as a terminal degree in no way undercuts the assumption of a six-year funded doctoral degree for all students admitted to graduate programs at Yale. Although students and faculty in the working group agreed that instituting the M.Phil. as a terminal degree is important, there is concern that it could lead to pressure by faculty to encourage students to take this option. Worries about this indicate the challenge of moving ahead within communities without improved advisory relations and inclusive governance.

Faculty and student support

- A program audit and course revision require faculty time. Department and program chairs may request course releases for faculty focusing on collaborative, unit-wide transformations in specific semesters of self-assessment and syllabi revision.
- Developing research and professional skills often requires experiences for students beyond those acquired in the classroom and library. While some funding for conference travel exists, students in the humanities would benefit from access to better support resources for a wider variety of intellectual activities. Faculty should collaborate with the GSAS to identify and dedicate flexible financial support within the departments and GSAS for student research expenses. Programs could then provide an annual research allocation for the purposes of research and professional development. If possible, this allocation should not take the form of a reimbursement process.

Renovating the required curriculum for graduate education in the humanities is the major labor ahead of us. Such an effort requires making explicit structures that have been implicit. This will include significant faculty labor to surface the hidden curriculum of graduate studies.

Here we find the final feature of curricular reform. Students experience variable access to professionalization and may have variable familiarity with academic culture, fields of inquiry, and their conventions. While most students require some support as they come to know the hidden curriculum, students from traditionally underrepresented groups are especially vulnerable in this regard. Robust field-specific professionalization support for all students will increase equity in the division; and, as a matter of equity, diversity, and inclusion, all departments and programs must reconsider the professionalization support they provide and shall institute measures to ensure all students, regardless of previous training or background, have access to adequate professional training.

DISSERTATION

The required dissertation understood as a proto-monograph has become the norm of humanities graduate degree programs, though the practice is neither inevitable nor particularly old. Still, by 1903 William James was already complaining of “the Ph.D. Octopus,” acknowledging the unreliable connection of the dissertation to the intellectual qualities that graduate schools designed the requirement to develop and assess.³ The traditional dissertation remains the standard authenticating product for a career in the academy. Yale has a role to play in imagining the future norms of the academy that may not reflect today’s status quo.

As academic publishing changes, and since many students we train do not end up in tenure-track positions, the working group recommends that the graduate faculty reflect on how to make the dissertation project more malleable for students with different professional aspirations. The dissertation project can remain of use for those interested in developing the larval monograph while also being a frame to demonstrate other skills in other forms and addressing different audiences. The dissertation project could emerge in different media or even be imagined as a collaborative rather than an individual project. Dissertation projects articulate and offer new knowledge. We seek to support dissertation research and dissertation projects that explore new genres and new conveyances for the knowledge discovered through this careful work.

The working group reminds everyone that short dissertations have been the norm in the past and they may become so in the future. The only question is whether Yale will be leading or following this transfiguration. Faculty in several departments already allow creatively imagined dissertations. If departments are willing to consider alternatives to the long-form dissertation, they might consider some of the following possibilities.

- **Report on research.** As departments come to imagine different modules of graduate education, a dissertation could be a report on research that is provisional. This may be useful in cases where the ambitious research demands of certain topics require more time than six-year funding allows and might serve to establish the promise of a project that could be finished as a book manuscript with the help of competitive postdoctoral funding.
- **Portfolio of essays.** Rather than propose a single monographic question, students might submit a portfolio of three or four long essays. (This is already a common practice in many Philosophy departments, including Yale’s.) Portfolios might be essays organized around a single topic, or even less obviously organized: for example, related

³ William James, “The Ph.D. Octopus,” *The Harvard Monthly* 36, no. 1 (March 1903), 1–9.

by methodological exploration, or directed at different audiences and hence written in different “voices.”

- **Critical edition.** Departments focused on literature or nonliterary texts, as well as on music, could restore a once common option of the critical edition of a text, musical composition, or movie, or the reconstruction of a theatrical performance or repertory.
- **Multi-genre portfolio.** Dissertations might be thought of as *ensembles* of engagements with a topic—that is, multi-genre projects, some of which might not necessarily be in a written form. The collection might include creative work in different modes and seeking different audiences, including film and photography, as in the so-called film essay, a critical analysis through moving images. There are multiple modalities of presentation that could be recognized as fully appropriate to serious intellectual engagement in an academic field; each student would propose the genre and the targeted intellectual audience for their proposal. The GSAS might collaborate with colleagues at the Yale University Library to develop a stable system by which multi-genre dissertations can be archived in perpetuity.
- **Collaborative project.** Most radical would be the production of a dissertation that was not merely multidisciplinary but actually substantively collaborative. This is a widespread practice in some academic disciplines. Such a proposal would require thinking about how to evaluate participants for the individual receipt of degrees. The technical difficulties of such a dissertation from an evaluative perspective should not outweigh the possibility that collaborative projects could conceivably pursue larger research questions, and counter some of the intellectual, social, and psychological limitations of conceiving of research in the humanities as necessarily individual and of humanist researchers as invariably solitary.

ADVISING

In general, the working group considers the recent Guide to Advising Processes for Faculty and Students prepared by GSAS to be a necessary resource for every student and faculty member.⁴ Departments and programs in the humanities should develop unit-level advising guidelines and specify in their graduate handbooks how they enact these general principles. Units should also consistently circulate appropriate university procedures for the handling of misconduct.⁵

Successful doctoral programs develop systems that prioritize engaged, responsive, creative, and ongoing advising of students from their moment of matriculation through many years beyond their receipt of degree. Such systems require significant faculty time from directors of graduate studies (DGS), placement officers, graduate course instructors, and dissertation readers. They demand that department officers meet frequently with graduate faculty and current students to refine existing practices. They recognize that graduate teaching is a privilege, not a right. The working group affirms that doctoral student success is a product of both student autonomy and collaborative advising. Only individual faculty with strong mentoring records should advise incoming doctoral students. The GSAS can offer support and guidance to programs and individuals concerned about mentoring, but each program should work to establish externalized norms for advising and remediation for faculty struggling in that work.

Advising is a social act. All members should contribute to the community's health and well-being. Units may wish to convene conversations about the ways in which social and collegial ties can be strengthened among members as a step toward reimagining mentoring relationships. Advising is not a one-directional relationship from faculty to student; it is a symbiotic relationship in which each participant grows through the perceptions and abilities of the other. Clarity, collaboration, and consistent engagement should guide doctoral advising.

- Departments should focus on ensuring flexibility, collaboration, and accountability in graduate student advising. Department registrars should assign entering students to temporary rather than permanent advisers. Our recommendation to the registrar is to

⁴ See https://gsas.yale.edu/sites/default/files/page-files/gsas_advising_processes_guide_o.pdf.

⁵ The standards of faculty conduct appear as section II.B of the Faculty Handbook (see http://provost.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Faculty%20Handbook_11-1-16.pdf); the review procedures for complaints about violations of the faculty standards of conduct appear as section II.N of the Faculty Handbook. Title IX at Yale is explained at <https://provost.yale.edu/title-ix>.

make the DGS every student's transcript adviser for years one and two.⁶ This will allow the student to use the first years to identify an array of faculty mentors as the student's interests develop.

- Departments should allow and encourage less hierarchical, co- and team-based advising. Units should urge students to develop multiple mentoring relationships. Departments should support co-advising while emphasizing clarity about the responsibilities for the adviser(s) and the dissertation readers. The GSAS should collaborate with doctoral programs to develop and publicize bureaucratically minimal mechanisms for changing advisers as appropriate for a student's needs.
- Doctoral programs should ensure that advising systems are transparent. Applicants to a department should be able to understand its advising system, and departmental admissions committees should select new students with a plan for how the department can advise individual students from the time they have accepted admission to the program. Faculty members in each doctoral program should understand the roles and responsibilities of the DGS, the doctoral examiners, the dissertation readers, and adviser(s).
- Doctoral programs should encourage systems that allow doctoral students to advise and support one another within programs and across doctoral programs. This should include, for example, a student crowdsourced graduate handbook offering advice and guidance that is authored and updated frequently by a program's doctoral students. This does not replace the need for department-specific advising and program guidelines that are developed by faculty and students in concert and approved by the department.
- Units should schedule mandatory advising meetings at key moments in each student's graduate career. These might include annual meetings with the DGS, at least one meeting involving both the DGS and a student's adviser(s) in years two and three, and regular, scheduled consultations with dissertation readers throughout the research and writing process. Increasingly, programs have instituted end-of-year meetings for students with teachers of their choice; students and faculty report the positive intellectual and strategic use of these mentoring meetings.

The working group found that the doctoral students with the strongest sense of intellectual purpose and agency were those who had the ballast of strong advising conversations and networks of engagement both within and beyond their home department(s). Departments organize faculty but are not inherent to the structuring

⁶ This may be impractical for some programs given the number of students. For these programs, the working group encourages reflection on how to evade the establishment of proprietary relations between any specific subfield faculty and their admitted students.

of knowledge itself. Faculty advisers should encourage students to join collaborative working groups and interdisciplinary colloquia across campus. These groups can introduce students to broader academic debates, communities beyond their own department, new networks of students and researchers, additional mentors, and opportunities to present their own work to other audiences. Where possible, faculty should model this intellectual engagement by forming these relationships in their own work.

Strong doctoral advising must attend to both the aspirations of students and the opportunities available to them while recognizing that both can change over time. If departments included the Office of Career Strategy in their orientations, they would invite a partner to the tough work of thinking through multiple professional outcomes from the outset of the student's education. Placement officers (see p. 31) can support the delivery of regular, substantive professional guidance through mentoring programs with alumni, colloquia with invited speakers, or other programs, and individual advisers should organize, attend, and contribute to those efforts. A commitment to more energetic advising of this sort will require both faculty dedication and recognition of the faculty labor needed to support the production of these resources. Departments could consider allowing late-stage graduate students to serve as formal peer advisers to early-year counterparts, perhaps by allowing advanced doctoral candidates to fulfill a teaching requirement by providing mentorship to five or more early-year students.

One final feature of advising is its inclusion in program governance. The working group encourages every doctoral program to establish a graduate student advisory committee that can serve as a consultative body for the DGS and chair, and to consider how the work of this committee and the work of faculty-led governance might inform one another. Student participation in unit governance is essential to healthy communities. It helps faculty to understand the needs of the doctoral program, and it offers students opportunities to learn university leadership. Several doctoral programs in the humanities already include students in faculty meetings, search processes, and professional development planning.⁷ Every program that has taken these steps of inclusion has found the input and leadership of students quickly indispensable.

⁷ Service by students on such committees requires increased care about delimiting access to certain documents. Such limits lead sometimes to more staff work to produce files without letters of reference.

TEACHING

Teaching is fundamental to graduate student professionalization and satisfies a significant need for labor at the university. For at least four (and as many as six) semesters of their time at Yale, students will teach in Yale College in some form or other: as a section leader for a large lecture course; as a teaching fellow (TF) in a seminar; as a co-instructor through the Associates in Teaching (AT) program; or as a language instructor, a part-time acting instructor (PTAI), or instructor of record. Most students in the Humanities division at Yale begin to teach in the fall semester of the third year.

Evidence of pedagogical excellence is imperative on the modern job market, and teaching develops skills necessary for success in various industries and fields. In town halls and surveys, students repeatedly requested a more meaningful integration of teaching with their graduate training. The working group acknowledges that teaching and research are co-constitutive sites of intellectual exploration and production. The group also promotes increased clarity around faculty/student expectations and increased accountability. To these ends, we propose the following reforms.

Doctoral programs should prioritize pedagogical training as a learning outcome and support the development of graduate students as teachers by:

- Facilitating structured mentoring of TFs by faculty supervisors, through (at a minimum) weekly meetings and one observation per semester, and by inviting some student input on course development. We encourage the registrar's office to solicit from faculty time slots for weekly meetings between TFs and faculty in the same form they solicit section times.
- Providing substantive feedback on a student's pedagogical development and treating it just as they would feedback on student research. The DGS should follow up with faculty to confirm they have provided this feedback. Departments and programs should prioritize TF support for faculty who provide sustained and supportive mentoring for graduate student teachers and are within their right to withhold TF support from faculty who repeatedly abdicate this responsibility.
- Thinking creatively about how students can co-teach with faculty beyond the AT program. The working group recognizes that co-teaching requires increased labor for both faculty and graduate students, so we concomitantly recommend course equivalents for both as appropriate.
- Designating graduate seminars that incorporate pedagogy into their curriculum as "pedagogical preparation" courses following the model of the "writing intensive courses" in Yale College. "Pedagogical preparation" courses should include modalities and assignments that train graduate students to teach as part of their regular curriculum.

Ideally, before graduating, each student should be able to show evidence of the ability to teach a seminar or lecture course. Units might consider whether advanced graduate students could teach or co-teach introductory courses, perhaps even in a small group under the supervision of a faculty member. Moreover, advanced graduate students may be able to offer courses that respond to undergraduate interests that the faculty do not represent. In cases where teaching opportunities are limited, units should consider alternative teaching experiences, such as preparing a portfolio containing the elements of a student-designed course as a qualifying examination or facilitating co-teaching with a faculty member or another graduate student.

Doctoral programs should clarify and publicize the procedures by which they select those who serve as PTAIs. PTAI opportunities are limited in some units, and more transparency on these assignments builds a more equitable and inclusive community. When a unit does not appoint a student as a PTAI, administrators should provide clear feedback to student applicants.

Administrators should provide course releases for faculty who innovate in curricular development and extracurricular programming (e.g., workshops, practicums, etc.) in service to these new pedagogical imperatives and incorporate significant pedagogical exercises into their courses (e.g., producing syllabi, lecture outlines, teaching philosophies, etc.). The working group also recommends that faculty receive course equivalents when they teach a large lecture course to help them train and mentor a larger group of teaching fellows.

Recognizing that not all units have the faculty expertise in developing pedagogically oriented seminars and training workshops, the working group urges departments and programs to draw on the resources of the Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning. Departments should consider developing cross-departmental and/or cross-disciplinary pedagogy courses for graduate students in partnership with the Poorvu Center, a move that could express cross-departmental collaborations originating in admissions. This could include development workshops to train faculty in effective techniques to mentor and provide appropriate feedback to graduate student mentors and to expand their existing courses to build in a “pedagogical preparation” component.

Coordinating with the New Haven Public Schools and community leaders, GSAS can also develop more opportunities to teach within the New Haven community in partnership with the Pathways to Arts & Humanities and Pathways to Science programs, local schools, and other local institutions of higher education. GSAS – or faculty and students who propose these initiatives – should ensure that they are co-constructed with community partners and do not replicate dynamics in which Yale positions itself as the sole expert.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Historically, most Ph.D. programs in the humanities at Yale (with the exception of the History of Art) have aimed predominantly at a single outcome: tenure-track faculty positions. This purpose accords both with what faculty know how to do, and with the reasons for which most students attend graduate school. Faculty are uniquely equipped to train graduate students in research and in teaching. Very few of them claim they train students to do otherwise. The faculty's ability aligns with student aspiration. According to our survey of students, the majority identify securing a full-time tenure-track faculty position as their primary reason for starting a Ph.D.⁸ Yet employment outcome data provided by the graduate programs themselves suggest that the majority of Yale doctoral students do not land on the tenure track.

We shaped our statistical modeling cognizant of the fact that many graduates take temporary (and/or part-time) jobs in their first few years after graduation. For this reason, we focused our inquiry on cohorts that entered the Humanities division between 2005 through 2010, most of whom would graduate between 2012 and 2017. In these cohorts, 55% of the students who graduated with doctoral degrees are now in tenure-track jobs. But of the students who matriculated, only 81% completed the degree, reducing the average number in tenure-track positions to 44% of those who matriculated. An additional 10% of the graduates are still in non-tenure-track positions, with another 5% still in postdoctoral positions.⁹ In short, fewer than half of the students Yale admits end up in tenure-track jobs. See Appendix 2, Table 1.

One of the challenges of assessing this data is that it varies widely across the doctoral programs in the Humanities division. Looking at those same cohorts of graduates, the rate of the program with the highest tenure-track placement is 74% of all matriculants and 88% of all graduates. The program with the lowest tenure-track placement places 14% of its matriculants in tenure-track positions and 15% of its graduates in tenure-track positions.

Although tenure-track placements still represent the single largest category of outcome, fewer than half of the students who enter a humanities Ph.D. program at Yale find

8 One point of conflict in our research is that students also report that the training they receive privileges an academic employment horizon at a research university like Yale. The revisions to curriculum and teaching proposed in this document support students pursuing training appropriate to academic positions in which teaching predominates.

9 Our data measures two dimensions of student experience in order to capture the full range of outcomes. To measure placement, we looked at students graduating between 2012 and 2017, allowing three years during which students might find a permanent position. Attrition, however, is best measured by year of matriculation, so we measured the entering cohorts in years 2005–2010, for which there is an 89% overlap with those graduating in 2012–2017.

themselves in that category three years after graduation. The percentages might be adjusted slightly up or down, depending on the student's year of graduation, but the working group underscores the fact that faculty should think carefully about the lived experience these statistics represent. After a degree that takes on average six to seven years to complete (for those who do complete), every additional year on the job market represents an enormous opportunity cost to the student. During the working group's consultative work, both students and faculty urged us to dispel the fiction that most of our graduating students ultimately occupy tenure-track positions. In recent years, most do not.

Yale has a long and successful history of educating curators, translators, archivists, editors, museum educators, and librarians. This is rightly a point of pride for our community. These graduates use the skills in teaching and research developed during doctoral training to the fullest, and they take the humanities out into the world for its benefit. The working group fully supports the idea that such positions indicate programmatic success in training students, and it urges the GSAS to provide resources to programs whose graduates obtain professional positions that require the skills they developed in doctoral study. The group does not have data specific to each of these positions, but the percentage of entering doctoral students across the humanities who end up in such positions is quite low.

Beyond those positions with direct relation to the skills developed during the student's degree, the working group encourages the graduate faculty and GSAS to assess carefully the individual program outcomes. The working group suggests recording and assessing student outcomes beginning at three years out from their doctorate in four categories: (1) those who place in non-tenure-track academic positions, whether as adjuncts, lecturers, or visiting assistant professors; (2) those who work in positions related to and enhanced by the skills in research and teaching developed by doctoral training; (3) those who work in positions with no clear relationship to doctoral training; and (4) those who leave Yale without completing the doctoral degree. In considering this final group, programs should pay particular attention to students who leave their programs without degrees after devoting more than four years to the effort.

These categories and employment outcomes deserve serious, ongoing discussion by graduate faculty, doctoral students, and GSAS professionals. Differentiating between positions in categories (2) or (3), for example, can be challenging and often depends on a nuanced understanding of the position in question. These differentiations do need to be made honestly. An outcome that bears no relation to a student's degree represents an opportunity cost to the student, a pedagogical and strategic failure of the program that trained them, and an unwise use of university resources. When program outcomes

consistently lean away from what Yale prepares students to do, both the faculty and GSAS should ask how admissions resources might be put to better use in the training of humanities doctoral students.

Nonetheless, the working group wants here to focus specifically on the first and the fourth categories, that is, on students who remain in non-tenure-track temporary (and/or part-time) positions for more than three years, and students who leave Yale without earning the doctoral degree, since that outcome is one over which GSAS and faculty have greatest control.

Ten percent of graduates in the cohorts considered above remain in non-tenure-track positions three years after graduation. Such positions infrequently result in tenure-track placements and represent a high opportunity cost to the student. Not only are such positions difficult for graduates, but they also mark Yale's contribution to the casualization of the American professoriate to a degree that we must avoid. Several of our humanities programs have proven that continued mentoring after students have graduated can reduce the number of such outcomes, but such mentoring cannot of course continue forever. For all of these reasons, the working group recommends that GSAS consider carefully, when deciding a program's size, the percentage of such outcomes more than three years out.

In relation to students who do not complete the degree, we suggest that the following facts should guide discussions of program outcomes:

- The percent of attrition from humanities doctoral programs for students who arrived at Yale between 2005 and 2010 is variable but worrisome. Across the Humanities division, the average attrition had a rate of 19%, or about 22 students per cohort. The rate of the program with the highest attrition was 33%; the rate of the program with the lowest attrition was 5%. See Appendix 2, Table 2.
- Programs should take steps to address both early and late attrition. GSAS distinguishes between early attrition (occurring in years one, two, or three) and late attrition (occurring in year four or after). Over the past five years, early attrition on average accounts for 36% of students who have left their programs without a Ph.D. Late attrition accounts for 64%. Some programs have only early attrition, others, only late.

We heard conflicting opinions about attrition, both early and late. Some faculty argued that GSAS should interpret attrition as a given and not a negative measure. The faculty who felt this way understand departure as a choice that indicates a good understanding of how few people attain academic positions. We also heard from other faculty concerned that attrition indicated either a failure of discriminating choices during admissions or a failure of mentoring. Students told us that attrition may cause

them unspoken shame and frustration with their degree programs. In addition to the complexity of the human questions raised by attrition, we must acknowledge that late attrition in particular comes at significant cost to the university.

Mentoring students through to a successful Ph.D. requires significant effort. The more diverse the student body, the more differential and detailed the advising support needs to become. Many excellent students doubt themselves throughout their degree programs and need encouragement to stay the course. Sometimes students need help seeing that the challenges they face will not improve with time or effort, and they should be encouraged to leave their programs. Thriving in graduate school is as much an exercise in perseverance as it is one of intellectual development. We need to be open about the psychological challenges of sustained academic study. We have to support student decision-making as students wrestle with the difficult decision to continue their studies or not, and we have to help students decide when it makes sense for students to leave their programs in order to maintain their health and pursue other professional futures.

We recommend that GSAS understand attrition as a potential student outcome for which faculty have some responsibility. Attrition that occurs in the first three years of graduate study exacts a lower human price than attrition that occurs in year four and later. The working group recommends that GSAS understand an overall attrition rate of above 15% to represent an undesirable program outcome. No more than 25% of the attrition itself should be late. In other words, of the 19% of matriculants who leave without a degree, we recommend that any percentage of late attrition that exceeds 25% be considered problematic, indicating that significant programmatic and advising changes need to be made. We acknowledge overall attrition as a potential outcome in doctoral education but emphasize that strong mentoring can make a large difference for students in years four and beyond.

GSAS should increase its existing outreach to students who leave their programs – whether from graduate school altogether or when students in either joint- or combined-degree programs leave one program but stay in the other – and track information related to these departures in order to identify trends at the individual, advisory, and department or program levels. The goal is to learn more about the conditions that led to their attrition and to identify ameliorative policies that can better support these students. Not all early attritions occur under good conditions (early attrition may in fact be the outcome for students who are particularly underserved by their programs) and not all late attritions reflect program failure. The working group would like to recognize that departments that recruit from more diverse applicant pools may initially experience higher rates of attrition as departments learn from their

needs and redouble their efforts to foster diversity and inclusion. Mental health is also a significant factor in late attrition. A purely numerical input related to attrition may obscure particular circumstances that will only become visible if GSAS invites the departing student to participate in a confidential interview and attempts to identify trends emerging from these exchanges.

Department placement officers

With program outcomes taking a significant role in the estimation of a program's health, this report recommends that every doctoral program identify a faculty placement officer. The placement officer has three jobs: to develop professional development programming designed specifically for students in each of years one through six; to help students in years four through six with their job searches; and to check with recent alumni to confirm where they are employed and provide ongoing mentoring. Small departments may have to fold the job of placement officer into that of the DGS; occupants of such a role can apply through their chair for a course release.

The placement officer will coordinate programming with the Office of Career Strategy (OCS) so that all incoming students learn about what OCS offers and to keep students in touch with OCS throughout their six-year career at Yale. The placement officer will work with OCS, as well as the Yale alumni network, to advise students who become interested in nonacademic outcomes during their course of study. Placement officers may also coordinate with the DGS to ensure that every program has a seminar at which students could present work in progress or coordinates such a seminar with other programs. Additional topics for placement officer events might include a paper-to-publication pathway within the program; a digital humanities workshop; annual events for the presentation of prospectuses to all graduate faculty in a program; and grant writing or course design events. Unlike the DGS, who monitors student academic progress at each stage of the program, the placement officer focuses on future professional horizons and advises students how best to meet those goals. These will be time-consuming leadership positions in most units. Chairs can request a course release schedule for placement officers.¹⁰

¹⁰ Course releases will be negotiated between the particular faculty member, their unit chairs, and the FAS Dean of Humanities. Course releases may not be used in an academic year when a faculty member is taking a triennial leave, and a course release may not be applied such that a faculty member's teaching is reduced to zero in any non-leave semester (or in addition to the cumulative senior essay course credit if in History).

CONCLUSION

Improving doctoral programs requires collaboration between faculty and students; it also requires time. As the report indicates, changes will take time to implement, but it is crucial that programs begin immediately the work of planning reform. The completion of this work will require faculty and graduate student efforts. By the end of May 2021, the FAS Dean's Office and GSAS request the chair and DGS of every doctoral program to submit a plan outlining specific areas from the report on which the unit will focus and a timeline for planning and implementation of proposed changes. Programs should also submit a list of the students and faculty who will be designated by the program to lead these efforts. The working group expects the faculty and students in these groups will work together to establish particular goals for their programs, targeting specific elements from the report that they can apply over a three-year period, 2021–2024. In the shorter term, the working group expects that the first set of changes will be sufficiently far along by the fall GPR meetings for an update at that time, with plans for full implementation of substantial change by December 1. At the GPR meetings, the programs should also plan to report on anticipated progress toward remaining initiatives. Each spring, the chair and DGS will make requests about service by faculty and students in this effort for the following academic year.

The assumption is that for some units the DGS can do this work in collaboration with faculty and students. For larger programs, the chair and DGS might appoint a committee, for which the faculty chair may receive a course release to lead the curricular reforms. Similarly, student participants on that committee may receive remuneration as research assistants or, depending on the level of effort, an exchange of a standard teaching fellowship for a professional development opportunity.

This working group formally began its efforts in the middle of a pandemic, but its inception long predated COVID-19, as did the crisis literature that comprised the group's reading list. The last months saw many universities deciding to freeze hiring and graduate admissions. This working group supports the planned work of the FAS to focus over the next decade on the recruitment of junior faculty in the Humanities division rather than the horizontal hiring of tenured faculty. Of the many things Yale can do to continue to support humanities doctoral education, the most important is to continue to run searches for tenure-track positions in the humanities. In addition, many of the recommendations above focus our mentoring efforts on how to prepare current upper-year doctoral students for a fluctuating job marketplace.

Enactment of any reform cannot be accomplished in a single semester but will occur across the next several years. The working group encourages GSAS and doctoral programs to avoid allowing these discussions to devolve into an accounting debate

about slots. Students are not numbers; they are the future of knowledge. The education of graduate students is a responsibility, not a proprietary right, and our decisions in the coming years significantly impact human beings pursuing these areas of study, as well as set a course for a more inclusive and innovating humanistic endeavor. As faculty continue to think about how to fulfill the privilege of their work as doctoral instructors, they should return these conversations to intellectual principles.

The humanities are liberal arts, the arts of free people. The cultivation of these arts requires intensive study and specialization unavailable outside of doctoral education. Support of the humanities is our most important weapon in the battle against anti-intellectualism and misinformation. The humanities teach us the rhetorical and critical skills to together make worlds that seek greater justice and beauty. The university, one of the greatest inventions of the past millennium, is the best vehicle for the cultivation of citizens and leaders who will build a world equal to our highest aspirations and abilities. The changes recommended in this report focus on building a strong future where Yale leads in an ongoing national and international commitment to humanities doctoral education.

APPENDIX 1: ORIGIN OF REPORT

Although deans of the GSAS have instituted reforms throughout the school's long history, the Humanities division has rarely reflected specifically on its own practices. In spring 2018, then-Provost Ben Polak charged a University Humanities Strategy Committee chaired by then-Dean Amy Hungerford to develop priorities for the Humanities division.¹¹ Over fourteen months, and in consultation with FAS Dean Tamar Szabó Gendler, this committee researched and discussed Yale's strengths, opportunities, and challenges in graduate and undergraduate education, research areas, and public impact. The committee conducted ten intensive, two-hour public sessions with departments and programs in the FAS, and Dean Hungerford led a series of one-on-one consultations with the deans of the professional schools at Yale. The work of this committee made apparent that doctoral education was an area of significant concern and limited consensus. The University Humanities Strategy Committee concluded its work in spring 2019 with the recommendation that a working group be formed on doctoral education in the humanities at Yale.

In May 2020, Deans Lynn Cooley and Kathryn Lofton announced the formation of such a working group, co-chaired by Deans Lofton and Pamela Schirmeister. In August 2020, Lofton and Schirmeister appointed a joint student group, co-chaired by Maria del Mar Galindo and Carl Rice. The twenty members of the Humanities Doctoral Education Advisory Working Group (ten graduate students and ten faculty members) met tirelessly throughout Fall 2020. The working group read widely in contemporary and historical literature on the humanities and doctoral education; reviewed the Graduate Program Review (GPR) reports on each of the humanities doctoral programs; debated among themselves and with colleagues at town halls, at group meetings with the twenty doctoral programs, and at a meeting of the departmental registrars; and assessed nearly 350 survey responses from faculty and graduate students.

¹¹ University Humanities Strategy Committee membership: Francesco Casetti, Jacqueline Goldsby, Verity Harte, Jennifer Herdt, Amy Hungerford (*Chair*), Alice Kaplan, Christina Kraus, Kathryn Lofton, Mary Miller, Samuel Moyn, Ana Ramos-Zayas, Gary Tomlinson, Shawkat Toorawa, Jing Tsu, Michael Warner.

APPENDIX 2: DATA

Table 1 displays the employment outcomes by program of Yale humanities students who completed Ph.D.s between 2012 and 2017. Column B shows the total number of graduates, per program, within that timeframe. Columns C through I divide these numbers into the categories of employment outcome. The categories include tenure-track positions (column C); non-tenure-track positions such as visiting assistant professors and adjuncts (column D); postdoctoral positions (column E); positions in academia that are neither tenure-track nor non-tenure-track, such as curators, librarians, and administrators (column F); positions outside of higher education altogether (column G); students, such as a Ph.D. graduate who then matriculates in another graduate program (column H); and those graduates not employed (column I). The foregoing outcomes are tabulated by year of graduation, between 2012 and 2017. Eighty-five percent of these students matriculated at Yale between 2005 and 2010. The remaining 15% of the graduates left either before 2012 or after 2017. We narrowed the dataset to these years so that the most recent graduates (2017) would have had at least three years to report the 2020 outcome and the earliest ones (2012) no more than eight years. Restricting our sample to this timeframe gives a more accurate picture of employment trajectories than including the earliest and the most recent graduates. The individual programs updated their outcome information in November 2020.

Column J displays the percentage of attrition for students matriculating between 2005 and 2010, or, in other words, the same group of matriculants represented by the outcome data for students graduating between 2012 and 2017.

Table 2 displays attrition from humanities Ph.D. programs over the past five years by number and percentage of students per program. In this report, and for the GSAS, “early attrition” refers to those students who leave their programs prior to the start of their fourth year. “Late attrition” refers to those who leave after the start of their fourth year. The late attrition numbers include students no longer eligible to register without having completed a degree. The actual late attrition numbers may be somewhat lower than represented here because students who attrite at the end of their registration eligibility (typically year seven of study) may still submit dissertations.

Table 1
Humanities Ph.D. Placement Data from 2005 to 2010 Matriculants
Who Graduated in 2012–2017, Adjusted by Overall Attrition

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Department	# Students Graduated in 2012–2017	% Tenure-Track Faculty	% Non-Tenure-Track Faculty	% Postdoc	% Academic Not Fac or Postdoc	% Non-Academic	% Student	% Not Employed	% Attrition
American Studies	39	47%	18%	4%	9%	9%	0%	0%	13%
Classics	18	46%	18%	0%	9%	9%	0%	0%	18%
Comparative Literature	22	34%	17%	7%	7%	7%	3%	0%	26%
East Asian Languages & Literatures	17	74%	0%	0%	5%	5%	0%	0%	16%
English Language & Literature	47	41%	3%	5%	16%	9%	0%	0%	26%
Film & Media Studies	18	49%	5%	10%	5%	15%	0%	5%	12%
French	19	61%	4%	0%	0%	9%	0%	9%	17%
Germanic Languages & Literatures	15	35%	35%	0%	0%	12%	0%	6%	14%
History	110	42%	9%	5%	7%	14%	0%	3%	19%
History of Art	48	41%	10%	3%	3%	14%	2%	3%	23%
History of Science & Medicine	21	33%	4%	11%	7%	22%	0%	0%	22%
Italian Studies	17	22%	11%	0%	39%	22%	0%	0%	5%
Medieval Studies	4	25%	25%	25%	0%	25%	0%	0%	0%
Music	32	47%	10%	0%	7%	12%	0%	2%	21%
Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations	13	51%	7%	7%	7%	22%	0%	0%	6%
Philosophy	22	61%	12%	4%	0%	8%	0%	0%	16%
Religious Studies	44	45%	11%	4%	8%	11%	2%	2%	17%
Renaissance Studies	13	14%	14%	7%	41%	14%	0%	0%	12%
Slavic Languages & Literatures	13	51%	5%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	33%
Spanish & Portuguese	16	55%	10%	0%	15%	0%	0%	0%	20%

Table 2
Humanities Ph.D. Early and Late Attrition for the Years 2015–2020

Department	Early Attrition		Late Attrition		Total Attrition
	#	%	#	%	#
American Studies	3	25.0%	9	75.0%	12
Classics	3	37.5%	5	62.5%	8
Comparative Literature	1	10.0%	9	90.0%	10
East Asian Languages & Literatures	1	33.3%	2	66.7%	3
English Language & Literature	7	53.8%	6	46.2%	13
Film & Media Studies	0	0%	2	100.0%	2
French	2	66.7%	1	33.3%	3
Germanic Languages & Literatures	0	0%	4	100.0%	4
History	9	32.1%	19	67.9%	28
History of Art	8	50.0%	8	50.0%	16
History of Science & Medicine	2	40.0%	3	60.0%	5
Italian Studies	1	100.0%	0	0%	1
Medieval Studies	0	0%	0	0%	0
Music	2	40.0%	3	60.0%	5
Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations	2	50.0%	2	50.0%	4
Philosophy	2	33.3%	4	66.7%	6
Religious Studies	1	8.3%	11	91.7%	12
Renaissance Studies	1	100.0%	0	0%	1
Slavic Languages & Literatures	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	2
Spanish & Portuguese	4	57.1%	3	42.9%	7

APPENDIX 3: BIBLIOGRAPHY

The working group membership consulted a great number of books and articles as they launched their conversations. A partial list of what was consulted is provided here to credit the thinking that helped the group and to supply suggestions for program-level reform discussions.

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