



Simpson Center for the Humanities  
University of Washington

*“The Institute provides practical ways of imagining oneself as a public humanities scholar—something many graduate students talk about wanting to do but are unsure how to make happen.”*



September 2006

The first of its kind in the nation, *The Institute on the Public*

*Humanities for Doctoral Students* provides twenty University of Washington doctoral students an intensive, week-long immersion in the questions, scholarship, and practices of the public humanities. By cultivating new skills and orientations, the Institute seeks to educate graduate students across the university to do better “culture work” at a range of community sites.

Fellows of the Institute explore multiple forms of on- and off-campus collaboration through site visits, workshops, readings, presentations, and discussions. They find new interdisciplinary networks of support, gain familiarity with contemporary policy debates shaping the humanities, and assess models of academic scholarship that engage diverse publics and community groups. Working alongside faculty and community leaders, fellows hone their ability to imagine community-based projects of differing scales as they learn how projects continue to develop, evolve, and encounter challenges. Through participation in and exposure to university-community partnerships, fellows see how collaborative engagements might reshape their own professional scholarly ambitions within and beyond institutions of higher education.

The Institute is sponsored by the Simpson Center for the Humanities and The Graduate School at the University of Washington. The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation recognized the Institute as promising practice in its recent report, *The Responsive Ph.D.: Innovations in U.S. Doctoral Education* (September 2005).

*“Yes! Yes! Yes! This was a great opportunity for me to rethink my research and teaching directions and values. It has also really helped me to consider and think about the challenges and opportunities of working within the university environment.”*



In 2005 and 2006, Miriam Bartha (Assistant Director, Simpson Center) and Bruce Burgett (Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences, UW Bothell) co-directed the Institute. This year former Institute fellows Dipika Nath (Women Studies) and Lisa Thornhill (English) joined the co-directors in planning and facilitating the 2006 Institute. Each student took lead responsibility for preparing and running a full-day community site visit.

Collaborative work is central to the Institute, which encourages fellows to think about collective resources for project-based forms of inquiry. Visits to regional cultural, educational, and service institutions engage fellows in site-specific practices and provide hands-on experience with how knowledge is collaboratively made in non-university contexts. This year fellows participated in workshops held at 826 Seattle, a youth-based writing center in north Seattle, the university’s Q Center, and the LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender) Community Center in Seattle’s Capitol Hill neighborhood. As students gain practice and confidence in their abilities to generate and contribute to university-community partnerships, the Institute challenges them to consider the institutional changes required to

support and sustain engaged scholarship.

This year three follow-up workshops offer opportunities for Institute fellows to further their professional development with regard to community engagement. These practice-oriented workshops on *Community and Practice-based Course Design*, on *Arts and Community-based Program Development and Assessment*, and on *Arts and Cultural Policy, Advocacy, and Activism* are led by local faculty and staff who have been building regional arts and cultural pathways for community-based research and teaching. The second and third of these workshops also benefit from nationally renowned guest facilitators—Pam Korza, co-director the Animating Democracy project on civic dialogue and creative arts, and Randy Martin, architect of the new M.A. in Arts Politics at New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts.



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