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Dear Dean Ortega:

The fellows of the 2006 *Institute on the Public Humanities for Doctoral Students* would like to thank you for contributing to the Institute's roundtable on public scholarship and to share with you our very positive experiences with this Graduate School and Simpson Center-sponsored initiative.

The week-long Institute included participants from seven departments in the College of Arts & Sciences, along with doctoral students from the School of Social Work and College of Education. What brought this institutionally diverse group together was our common interest in exploring arts and culture pathways for research- and teaching-based campus-community collaborations. This letter follows through on one of the original objectives of the Institute when it was framed as a Re-envisioning the PhD initiative in 2003: to have doctoral students develop and present recommendations for the formal integration of public scholarship into their graduate education.

Over the course of the week, we engaged with readings that familiarized us with key policy debates and regional initiatives in the public humanities. We visited two Seattle sites to explore various practical aspects of public cultural and intellectual work. We interacted with ongoing public scholarship projects at the University of Washington, and discussed in some depth questions about the role of such projects in graduate education and the institutional and structural support that is required to pursue them. Most importantly, we began to understand ourselves as a cross-campus cohort linked through our common commitment to the integration of our teaching, research, and service through project-based work. Many of us plan to continue these conversations and collaborations over three workshops and two graduate seminars planned for Autumn, Winter, and Spring quarters (appendix A).

Drawing from our experiences and conversations during the Institute, we have compiled an initial list of suggestions for how the Graduate School might encourage, recognize, and reward public scholarship that fosters campus-community partnerships. These suggestions focus on increased support, via programming and funding, for graduate students who wish to pilot, develop, and document public scholarship projects. Such projects will give students important leadership experience, increase the university's partnerships with various local communities, and encourage further community-based cultural work. All these benefits will bolster the University of Washington's reputation for producing socially engaged scholars, enhance its ability to recruit diverse students, faculty, and staff, and make University of Washington graduate students more employable in the highly competitive academic and nonacademic job markets.

Specifically, we would like to continue the work we began during the Institute through the efforts described below. We hope that the Graduate School will work with us on the following proposals, several of which are already in various stages of development.

### *I. Continue to Support and Extend the Inquiries of the Institute*

- 1) This Institute is the starting point for many graduate students across the university who want to develop arts- and culture-based collaborations within and beyond the university and to make their teaching and scholarship relevant to the broader community. We hope that the Graduate School and the Simpson Center will continue to fund the Institute, including the follow-up workshops and other related initiatives.
- 2) Beyond supporting the Institute itself, we would like to ask the Graduate School to help link this kind of innovative programming to similar initiatives across the University of Washington as a whole. Our specific focus on arts- and culture-based forms of public scholarship would benefit greatly from integrative interactions with graduate students working on similar initiatives in other areas such as medicine, public policy, education, social work, and environmental science. Existing structures in the Graduate School such as GO-MAP and the Network of Interdisciplinary Initiatives could help facilitate these connections.

### *II. Institutional Recognition of the Value of Public Scholarship*

- 3) We urge the Graduate School to develop and publicize an institutional position on public scholarship and graduate education that draws on existing and emerging local, regional, and national models of the integration of teaching, research, and service in higher education. We also hope that in developing such a position the Graduate School will consult with doctoral students engaged in innovative campus-community initiatives, including the fellows of the Institute.
- 4) We encourage the Graduate School to develop alternative forms of evaluating and documenting excellence in public scholarship for faculty, staff, and students, drawing on models developed through the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU), the Imagining America Tenure Team Initiative, National Campus Compact, the Carnegie Foundation, and Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, among other organizations.
- 5) We urge the Graduate School to provide funding for public scholarship that would encourage doctoral students to integrate research, teaching, and service. Funding could range from seed money for pilot projects to “community assistantships” or “CA” positions housed in various units (along the lines of RAs and TAs). These positions would promote, foster, and reward cross-disciplinary public scholarship and involve a combination of curriculum development, teaching, and community work.

### *III. Diversify Professional Development Opportunities for Doctoral Students*

- 6) Not all current and prospective graduate students aspire to faculty positions at research-intensive universities. Moreover, alumni of graduate programs who follow alternative career paths, including those associated with the educational and social values and alternative institutional locations to which public scholarship is oriented, often report high levels of professional satisfaction. Many departments, however, focus primarily on professional development oriented to research-intensive faculty positions. We recommend that the Graduate School build on and develop initiatives for doctoral students designed to foster more diverse forms of professional development within and alongside department models. The Institute provides one model due to its focus on both academic and non-academic forms of culture work. Others might include integrated workshop series, practicums, internships, and mentoring structures that cut across departmental structures. We offer our collective wisdom on how these initiatives might best serve the needs of graduate students today.

#### *IV. Foster More Cross-Departmental Opportunities for Collaboration*

- 7) One great benefit of the Institute is that it creates a synergistic network of activity among graduate students housed in otherwise discrete academic units. We recommend that the Graduate School explore and institutionalize more cross-departmental opportunities, including low-credit courses and graduate certificate programs in various practice- and project-based areas.
- 8) We need to know more about the interests and resources of other graduate students on campus. We strongly recommend that the Graduate School establish a resource center and usable database (perhaps in partnership with existing units such as GO-MAP and the Carlson Center) that would disseminate information about community-based work by graduate students, faculty, and staff across the three campuses of the University of Washington. A center would help graduate students develop collaborative networks while also acting as a clearinghouse for information about how best to secure funds for, set up, and maintain future community-based projects.

#### *V. Develop Links between Public Scholarship Initiatives and Diversity/Access Initiatives*

- 9) As national leaders in the field such as George Sanchez have pointed out, too often public scholarship initiatives serve as a *replacement* for efforts to expand access to the university by diversifying undergraduate, graduate, and faculty populations, rather than as a *mechanism* for fulfilling such goals. We urge the Graduate School to explore how public scholarship initiatives can serve as an essential component of its commitment to increase and diversify access to the UW, as well as how this commitment can be placed at the center of public scholarship initiatives at the UW. This might involve forging innovative institutional linkages across administrative units—for example, students and faculty working in community-based tutoring programs (like Broadview University for Teens) might develop partnerships with staff from OMA and the Office of Admissions, or campus-community research collaborations (like the Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project) might develop partnerships with GO-MAP and graduate recruitment efforts within departments. As the insights from your own professional experiences that you shared at the roundtable demonstrate, public scholarship based on community needs can help draw undergraduate and graduate students from underrepresented populations into the university.

Any of the undersigned 2006 Institute fellows would be happy to discuss our individual and collective experiences with the Institute. Among us, Dipika Nath, A. Tyler Perry, Lisa Thornhill, Vince Schleitwiler, and Matthew Walton have volunteered to act as immediate contacts and proxies, should you have any questions. We would welcome the opportunity to talk about our experiences with the Institute and our hopes for further engagement with the Graduate School to develop collaborative, public scholarship as part of our graduate work and programs.

Sincerely,

Deborah Bassett (Communication)  
Tami Blumenfield (Anthropology)  
Calla Chancellor (Women's Studies)  
Emily Clark (English)  
Rose Ernst (Political Science)  
Rachel Goldberg (English/Rhetoric and Language)  
Heyang Julie Kae (English)  
Teresa Mares (Anthropology)  
Kara McKinney (English)

Dipika Nath (Women's Studies)  
A. Tyler Perry (Social Work)  
Kevin Ramsey (Geography)  
Theresa M. Ronquillo (Social Work)  
Vince Schleitwiler (English)  
Amanda Christina Soto (Music)  
Paul Teske (Education)  
Lisa Thornhill (English/American Ethnic Studies)  
Matt Vechinski (English/Textual Studies)  
Matthew Walton (Political Science)

cc:

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Elizabeth Feetham, Associate Dean, Student Affairs, The Graduate School  
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Nikhil Singh, History and Executive Board, Simpson Center for the Humanities  
Sabine Wilke, Germanics and Executive Board, Simpson Center for the Humanities  
Barry Witham, Drama and Executive Board, Simpson Center for the Humanities