

Humanities Division:  
statement on the proposed 'rubric'

While understanding the need to evaluate fiscal priorities, we, the Humanities Division, find the proposed rubric irreparably flawed for such a task, on many levels, the most important of which is the fact that it was created and handed down without any faculty input. While there are many other serious defects in the rubric, we intend here to address one of the most serious.

In its design, the rubric is biased against smaller departments and programs by evaluating them according to metrics that isolate them from the larger Division, College and University "ecosystem." It treats each of the metrics as isolated variables, as if the measures were equally applicable to each individual department, even though the goal of each individual department is inseparable from other departments in their joint contribution to the larger strategic planning goals and mission statements.

Considering just the Humanities Division, isolating departments from one another via the flawed rubric ignores the fact that departments within the Division are designed to be complementary to one another in working towards a common mission. Communication Studies, Philosophy & Religious Studies, Modern Languages, English Linguistics, Literature & Writing were never intended to be in competition with one another. Each makes its own contribution to the mission statement and goals of the Division.

In their collective concerns with language, thought and belief, artistic expression and communication, together they embody the very definition of the Humanities. Applying evaluation metrics at the Division level, rather than the Department level, enables us to preserve the fact the Humanities Division operates as a collective whole, rather than as a set of isolated individual agents, acting in competition with one another. Moreover, viewing the task from the perspective of the Division as a whole will enable us to take effective steps without damaging the balance of the ecosystem as a whole.

In essence, the flawed rubric asks us to treat program and curriculum prioritization as if it were the classic lifeboat ethics exercise, asking us to decide who to throw to the sharks, when in fact we should be thinking of the task as a public health or environmental ethics exercise, both of which ask us to consider how to effect change while taking the collective good as the priority.

Thus, we, the Humanities Division reject the current rubric, and believe that any effective approach to program and curriculum prioritization must, at the very least, be conducted

- 1) via a methodology derived directly from faculty input;
- 2) by looking at the Division as the essential unit of evaluation, rather than isolating individual departments.