



Broadly touching nearly all of Carleton's academic disciplines, the Humanities Center has long supported faculty engaged with research that addresses the human condition—and in the past decade, its Student Research Partnership program has emerged as a key component in the college's strategic plan to better prepare students for life and career.

THE RELEVANCE OF RESEARCH

The SRP program pairs students with faculty members to assist with research. Together they delve into primary sources, grapple with ethical questions, interpret complicated histories, learn about diverse cultures, and imagine past worlds for the sake of present understanding.

"These skills and insights are crucial for distinguished success in graduate school and for careers in fields such as healthcare, law, education, public policy, nonprofit community service, and corporate leadership," says Lori

Pearson, director of the Humanities Center. "The research experience enriches both paths—to grad school or directly to the workforce—after graduation."

Student research assistants engage in both quantitative and qualitative research, which can involve close reading, translation, interviewing, filmmaking, and critical analysis. They often gain experience with innovative technology as well, such as GIS mapping software and various videogame platforms. "Asking big questions and participating in research are good for students intellectually and also give students experiences creating products that help others learn and serve society," Pearson says.

SUPPORT PAYS OFF

Research positions are in high demand at Carleton, and while the Humanities Center is able to fund just a portion of the applications they receive, it has funded some 200

students since its inception.

In the 2017-2018 academic year, for example, biology major Jackie Cullota '19 worked with history professor Thabiti Willis to digitally map movement of slaves in the Gulf Region between 1926 and 1938, and cinema and media studies major Fernando Saldivia Yanez '20 worked with CAMS professor Cecilia Cornejo on a documentary examining marginalization and belonging from the perspective of Mexican immigrants living in Northfield.

"By working with a practicing filmmaker, I was able to gain a greater understanding of documentary creation and production," Yanez says. "And I learned about technical, organizational, ethical, and artistic dimensions of the project."

For more information on the Humanities Center and the many projects it funds, visit go.carleton.edu/humanities.

Support for Humanities Center's SRP program is a central part of the Every Carl for Carleton campaign goal to raise funds for faculty-student mentored research.



SPOTLIGHT ON HUMANITIES RESEARCH



A student researcher visits the former Gressenhall Workhouse, now a museum.

Professor of History Susannah Ottaway '89: Bringing Olde England to (Virtual) Life

From 1834 through the early 1900s, England's poor endured brutal, punitive conditions in public workhouses. Prior to 1834, however, many of the facilities were actually set up to provide comfort and resources to those in need.

Over the past five years, social welfare scholar and history professor Susannah Ottaway '89 and several of her students have been researching this pivotal period to better understand how society takes care of its most vulnerable citizens.

The process began when Ottaway asked student digital humanities associate Graham Earley '17 to do some 3D computer modeling of an old English workhouse. Soon studio art major Florence Wong '16 asked to be involved. Then, when the Carleton hired history professor Austin Mason, assistant director of the Humanities Center for the Digital Humanities, the project expanded. After driving around the countryside, visiting various relevant sites, Ottaway, Earley, and Wong decided to expand their focus and recreate the Gressenhall

Workhouse, which is now a museum of social welfare.

"Florence and Jeremy were both incredibly attentive to details that I simply hadn't considered before," Ottaway says. "The more they asked questions—How much light came into the room? How much dirt would have been on this table?—the more their questions drove me back through archival material, making me pay attention to rules about how clean the workhouse needed to be kept and how much soap the workhouse master purchased."

Together, the foursome realized that workhouses were originally designed much like monasteries, not prisons, with windows and open courtyards. Eventually, however, the poor were cast as freeloaders and government policy changed. The windows were boarded over and the open-air atriums were walled off.

About a dozen students have since assisted Ottaway with her research and continued work on the virtual workhouse, archived primary

materials, and created digital maps that help visualize hard data. Students in the class Ottaway co-teaches with Mason have also contributed in various ways, such as building interactive games that the Gressenhall Museum now uses.

"The digital humanities are about engaging traditional archival material and new techniques," Ottaway says. "They give us space to experiment with the past and still utilize our traditional research methods."

To see more about Ottaway's digital workhouse project, visit the Digital Humanities @ Carleton page, go.carleton.edu/digital.

"Students from across disciplines are contributing to my broader research in authentic ways."

—Susannah Ottaway, social welfare scholar and history professor