

Create innovative dialogues on the humanities that bridge between unexpected stakeholders.

Audience for this recommendation:

University humanities centers

While the sciences appear in the media in many contexts, the humanities typically appear to be siloed in the academy--for example, surrounded by a cluster of words like *professor, harvard, university, research, studies, humanities, academic, department, faculty, and teaching*. (See our [KF-5-2](#) and [KF-5-7](#) findings.) Only history as a humanities area has a much broader footprint in public discussion (see [KF-5-10](#)).

How can the humanities become part of a broader conversation about issues and values that matter to society?

What if we bring together stakeholders from scholarly and professional fields who rarely interact--both those with stakes in the humanities and those from other domains--to talk about what they do and reflect on what they have in common?

Try this:

Humanities centers can create an innovative event series with a title like "Surprising Affinities: Conversations on the Humanities by Experts in Completely Different Fields."

Key Recommendations:

- Each event in the series would feature three participants interested in the humanities who, because of their fields or professions, are rarely in the same room together. For example, one trio might be: a humanities dean, a trade press editor, and a newspaper editor. Another surprising trio: a literature professor, a scientist (among the many

interested in the humanities), and an archivist or librarian. Yet another interesting trio: a humanities dean, a film director, and a local politician.

- Provide the participants (and the audience) with a small sample of topics in public discussion of the humanities from the WE1S topic models of media collections. Or provide a small sample of quotations from articles associated with such topics. ([See example set of quotations.](#))
- Ask the participants in each event to discuss, with the specific agenda of reaching a consensus statement of one-sentence length on the value of the humanities.

The goal is to build bridges between the humanities and other areas important to society. There are many stakeholders in the humanities, but they rarely get a chance to interact.

Conversation Starters & Activities:



Resources

Research backing up this recommendation: [KF-5-2](#), [KF 5-3](#), [KF-5-10](#).

Related materials: WE1S Bibliography on [Public Humanities](#)