Student journalists see positive opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration between the sciences and the humanities.

Rather than presenting the humanities and the sciences as antagonists, many students writing in campus newspapers are largely positive about how the two can be linked. In a topic model of Collection 14 (21,182 articles containing the words “humanities” or “liberal arts”), science-themed topics highlight student coverage of collaborative events, infrastructural change, curriculum building, and constructive opportunities for interdisciplinary engagement.

The Medical Humanities are a focus in Topic 75 (Medical Education), for example. Articles associated with this topic describe Med School programs for humanities students, report on campus events that emphasize the value of narrative, metaphor, and storytelling in healthcare, and suggest the need to reform medical education by incorporating arts and humanities as sources of creativity, empathy, and multicultural understanding. (Example articles: A, B) Similarly, in Topic 78 (Medical and Life Sciences Research) some articles describe collaborative events hosted by humanities centers and medical schools (C), or suggest that the humanities can help students to “find new and unique ways of viewing a scientific problem” (D).

Interdisciplinary connections, both among scientific fields and between STEM and the humanities, are a key focus of articles strongly associated with Topic 93 (STEM Fields). Such articles situate science as a “human activity” within a cultural and historical context (E), describe the use of data science by humanities scholars (F), invite humanities students to take part in scientific groups (G), and convey the advice of a prize-winning scientist to “embrace courses unrelated to your major: for chemistry and chemical engineering, it would be the humanities” (H). In Topic 64 (Engineering and Computer Science), articles emphasize the humanities and liberal arts as a vital part of Mechanical Engineering (I), Artificial Intelligence (J), and the Silicon Valley tech industry (K). Topic 54 (Digital Technology) includes articles about the interdisciplinary field of Digital Humanities (L, M). Several articles in this topic associate technology with accessibility, though some consider risks (N) as well as rewards (O).

However, the conversation around interdisciplinary connections is unevenly distributed, suggesting a need for much greater inclusion. Articles from doctoral universities account for 90%, 88.9% and 87.5% of the significant documents associated with Topics 64, 93, and 75, respectively. In addition, 87.5% and 170% of the top articles in Topics 75 and 64 come from private institutions. Only about 11% of the top articles in both Topics 54 and 78 come from Hispanic-serving Institutions; and only one article from a Historically Black University appears in any of the top documents for these five topics (in Topic 78).

Resources Collection 14: Description, Start Page; Model (100 topics): Description, dfrBrowser; TopicBubbles: Documentation: Tag Data, Interpretation

1 Metrics of metadata tag frequency calculated by Helen Foley. At the suggestion of Francesca Battista, we here define significant documents as those which contribute at least 25% of their tokens to a given topic. This means document counts of 97, 18, 20, 16, and 52, respectively, for Topics 54, 93, 64, 75, and 78.

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