

Statement on Humanities Future

How do you know that you prepare students to create the future?

Our focus on the communication arts allows us to prepare students for the future in both national and international contexts. Further, our strengths in technical, scientific and professional communication prepares students for developing strong communication skills and knowledge for the workplace and the greater community. Finally, the liberal arts richness of the department helps to educate the “whole person” inside and outside of the department.

What do you know about the future of your fields & disciplines? Where do we have to make strategic investments?

The future of the humanities nationally is to serve as an *accompanying* counterpoint to the sciences, engineering, and business interests of the academy. To use a musical analogy, the humanities takes part in a concerto that works to test the harmonies and dissonances of interdisciplinary work. We are, as some of the sciences refer to themselves, an *interdiscipline*; we sit in the space between the sciences, engineering and the world outside the academy to balance and, hopefully, inform the direction of humanity as we work in this ever-increasingly global society.

Give a paragraph (keywords) about what you see as important developments in the next 10 years in your field/discipline in which your department must participate if you want to educate students to create the future? Which partner discipline/department should be involved?

In her book *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*, University of Chicago Professor Martha Nussbaum states that,

“We do not respect the humanity of our fellow citizens — or cultivate our own — if we do not wish to learn about them, to understand their history, to appreciate the differences between their lives and ours. We must therefore construct a liberal education that is not only Socratic, emphasizing critical thought and respectful argument, but also pluralistic, imparting an understanding of the histories and contributions of groups with whom we interact, both within our nation and in the increasingly international sphere of business and politics.”

In a nutshell, Nussbaum presents some of the greatest challenges the disciplines of the humanities face in the coming years. Our role in the MTU Department of Humanities is to create learning and scholarly opportunities for students and faculty to embrace these challenges and meet them head-on by paying attention to the changing national and global social, political, and technological contexts. Our partners will be any disciplines that are willing to enter with us into this fray.