

**Virtual Humanities Center at Great Basin College
(formerly NEH Humanities Grant Ad-Hoc Committee)
Annual Report to Faculty Senate
and Request for Renewal of Ad-Hoc Status
13 May 2016**

Since 2013, the Committee managing the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Humanities Grant has operated under annual ad-hoc status from the GBC Faculty Senate. This year, we have formally adopted the name the Virtual Humanities Center at Great Basin College (VHC). We are currently completing the third year of a 5-year challenge grant. We present this report of our activities for the 2015-2016 academic year and a request for continued status as an ad-hoc committee of the GBC Faculty Senate.

Summary of 2015-2016 Activities

With the completion of the basic digital infrastructure, the VHC has concentrated this year on developing content for the project, particularly content related to the current biennial theme of “Design for the Human Spirit.” This process is in accordance with our Mission Statement:

Great Basin College, through its Virtual Humanities Center, seeks
to collect, curate, and cultivate the humanities for rural Nevada.

With these goals in mind, the activities of the VHC for 2015-2016 were as follows:

Collect (incorporation of materials solicited by VHC to build digital archive database):

- Arrangement with the Elko Euzkaldunak Club (Elko Basque Club) to house the collection of Elko National Basque Festival Programs from the last half century.
- Vince J. Juaristi, a member of the Great Basin College Institutional Advisory Board, has deposited the articles from his current “Intertwined” series in the *Elko Daily Free Press* with VHC. These are now available online, with new articles available as they are published.
- Incorporation of select articles from the Northeastern Nevada Historical Society *Quarterly*. The articles concerned local Basque topics, and were identified by Gretchen Skivington as part of her sabbatical research. Many of these articles were originally produced by Northern Nevada Community College / Great Basin College students.
- New additions made to the Humanities Toolkit include items related to the Discussions faculty in-service workshop and documents for other faculty in-services on distance learning and digital technology by Lisa Frazier and Carrie Meisner. VHC continues to solicit faculty contributions to the Humanities Toolkit.
- Continued incorporation of Great Basin Indian Archive (GBIA) materials into the VHC database. This process has been slower than anticipated due to negotiations with the University of Utah concerning streaming videos (see below).
- Hosting live streaming of the Western Folklife Center/Nevada Humanities speakers at the Cowboy Poetry Gathering, Nicholas Vrooman and Dan Flores, and subsequent incorporation of the streams into the VHC database.

Curate (materials originating outside of VHC which will be managed / presented by VHC):

- Worked with the Great Basin Indian Archives (GBIA) and the University of Utah (U of U) for complete full-time streaming of the Western Shoshone Oral Histories currently housed at the GBC Library. U of U will provide streaming capacity and technical support, while VHC will continue to maintain the searchable database based on the transcripts as well as feeds from U of U. This arrangement will also secure the ability of VHC to host Shoshoni translations of the transcripts as well.
- Incorporation of the local Basque oral histories and other materials collected and cataloged by Dr. Gretchen Skivington during her recent sabbatical research semester.
- The VHC recorded and has made available the interviews with Elko World War II veterans Ted Blohm and Dr. George Winch, Sr. which were conducted as part of GBC's *Black & White Movie Night* organized by Prof. Stephen Theriault.
- Worked with the GBC Diversity Committee to make available the presentation by the University of Utah's Kurt Güner on "Inclusivity in the Classroom," which is being incorporated into the Humanities Toolkit.
- Incorporated the "GBC Talks! Program" in the VHC database to make available to the public.
- VHC arranged for live streaming and recording of the talk by Deepa Willingham sponsored by Rotary International, and attended by Rotarians at GBC centers throughout the service area.
- Continued working with other GBC publications such as *Argentum* and *Tortoise Talk* to place copies of their works into the VHC database.

Cultivate (events or activities arranged to promote humanities at GBC and in its communities):

- The development of the "Elkokoak: The Basques of Elko" online exhibit in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution's celebration of Basque culture at the 2016 Folklife Festival. The online exhibit features oral histories of local Basques, articles from the Northeastern Nevada Historical Society *Quarterly*, the collection of Elko National Basque Festival programs, Mr. Juaristi's articles, and other materials. This exhibit will be permanent.
- Hosted two faculty in-service faculty workshops on incorporating humanities approaches into teaching. The Spring 2016 in-service on discussions was very well attended and the feedback received by VHC was overwhelmingly positive.
- The incorporation of a calendar of Northern Nevada Humanities events into the finalized design of the humanities.gbcnv.edu website.
- Arrangements made with the Western Folklife Center and the Northeastern Nevada Museum for future projects and mutual support in the development of digital humanities projects. Similar relationships are being negotiated with the California Trail Interpretative Center and other partners.
- Hosted a meeting with Ken Waldman, an Alaskan musician and writer who specializes in education-oriented projects, as well as GEARUP and local school district personnel to discuss the possibility of a joint humanities project across the GBC service area.
- Began development of an occasional podcast series of local issues and interviews, tentatively entitled "Conversations from the Great Basin."

- A Tri-Caster system was acquired with NEH grant funding to provide GBC with the opportunity to do multi-camera presentations for events.
- A number of faculty are using VHC content, particularly streaming videos of talks, as extra credit opportunities for students. This year, Deepa Willingham's and Nicholas Vrooman's talks have been the most commonly reported as used.
- Produced a short video on the foundation of Great Basin College. This video, debuted at the Fall 2015 Convocation, is the first in a series entitled "Designing a College for Rural Nevada." This series will be expanded as part of the GBC 50th anniversary celebrations.
- Although the HUM 111 Gateway Course for the Humanities was successfully piloted last year, further development has been halted pending a proposed redesign of the Arts and Letters Department's course offerings and potential new Gen Ed assessment requirements.

Fundraising:

The VHC has also been working with the GBC Foundation to complete fundraising for the VHC Endowment. At the beginning of the current fiscal year (1 July 2016), approximately \$290,000 was needed to achieve the funding milestone for this year. Although fundraising has been slower than anticipated, we are happy to report that it appears that the VHC will achieve its fundraising goal by 30 June 2016. This milestone will release \$150,000 of NEH funding for the endowment, enabling the VHC to remain on target for raising \$1,000,000 in nonfederal funds and obtaining \$500,000 in federal funds by 31 July 2019. As the endowment continues to build, and interest is earned, payments will be made quarterly for approved expenses outlined in the NEH proposal budget. The VHC has also worked with the GBC Foundation to refine a fundraising approach more tailored to the GBC service area.

Note that collectively these activities met the goals set by the VHC in its 2014-2015 Report to Faculty Senate.

ACTION REQUESTED: Renewal of Ad-Hoc Committee Status for 2016-2017

The NEH Humanities Grant is a five-year challenge grant, and we are currently completing the third year of the grant. The VHC requests that the GBC Faculty Senate renew the Center's ad hoc status for the coming academic year.

Planned activities for 2016-2017 currently include:

1. Continued endowment fundraising to complete matching the NEH Challenge Grant. Approximately \$100,000 remains to be raised to complete the 2:1 match goal of raising \$1 million for the VHC Endowment. This activity will be conducted in conjunction with the GBC Foundation.
2. Continued coordination of activities within a two-year theme: "Design for the Human Spirit," including preparation of materials for the GBC 50th anniversary celebrations.
3. Planned faculty workshop activities centered on integrating humanities content in the design of classes, research, or community-oriented projects.

4. Completion of the humanities.gbcnv.edu website over Summer 2016, including increased usability and search capacities.
5. Conduct a complete cataloging of current GBIA holdings at GBC. This project, starting in the Summer 2016, will provide a complete record of GBIA holdings and allow tracking of materials through the current ongoing digitization process.
6. Development of a project with the Northeastern Nevada Museum to digitize and place into the VHC database the complete collection of *Quarterly* journals. This project is intended to be multi-year and supported in part by additional outside grants.
7. A potential state-wide project is being developed in conjunction with Ken Waldman, GEARUP, Great Basin Writer's Project, and local school districts to develop a digital presentation of local writing and art work from the communities in GBC's service area.
8. Continue building partnerships with both GBC components such as the Great Basin Indian Archive, community organizations such as the museums, and other academic institutions.
9. Acquisition and installation of additional lecture-capture capability. Funding remains in the grant for the equivalent of two more MediaSite permanent installations. VHC is currently working with various departments to establish need and support capability for these systems.