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Highlighting the Humanities

Will Van Winkle

University of Dayton

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Highlighting the Humanities

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A newly formed University of Dayton student committee is working to create an inclusive community for all humanities majors. The Humanities Visibility Project, facilitated by assistant professors of English Shannon Toll and David Fine, successfully hosted its first large-scale event in October.

“The idea is to create a visible social identity for humanities students at UD — that humanities goes beyond, far beyond, the first year of the Common Academic Program,” said Andy Slade, associate professor and English department chair.

The Common Academic Program requires students to take courses that intentionally cross disciplinary boundaries and incorporate relevant non-classroom experiences.

The committee began meeting in mid-September to plan events that would create community within the humanities disciplines and draw in outside interest.

“The project, to me, seems to have two goals: Promote the humanities on campus — making students aware of possibilities — and to build community within the humanities,” Fine said.

“We need to use our imaginations here to conceive ways of reaching students who otherwise wouldn’t notice us and provide them with a sense of the resources available in the humanities — which, I think, are not undervalued rather taken for granted.”

Humanities Fest, the first event hosted by the group, was Oct. 19 and featured a bounce house, a second-hand bookstand, a cotton candy machine and even faculty’s dogs. Faculty chatted with students about future humanities course offerings and answered questions about current courses.

University President Eric F. Spina made a surprise visit to share his perspective and enjoy the festivities.

“Humanities are at the center of everything we do,” Spina later said in an Instagram post from the event.

Humanities departments and programs within the College of Arts and Sciences include English, global languages, religious studies, philosophy, history, international studies, and women’s and gender studies.

The committee will host its next event in February. Plans call for a faculty panel discussion on a variety of humanities-related topics.

“We are doing interesting and innovative things that can stand on their own,” Fine said. “But a double major or minor in the humanities can help students in other fields to develop communication skills and a sense of historical consciousness — there’s a lot of possibility that we want to remind students is here.”

To see more from the Humanities Visibility Project, follow their [Instagram here](#).

- *Will Van Winkle '18*

