



UTAH HUMANITIES

Ideas in Action

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2027



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Dear Esteemed Colleagues and Friends,

The Board of Directors is honored to share our Strategic Plan. It is the culmination of more than six months' dedication to process and in-depth conversations regarding Utah Humanities' future. We are grateful for the many individuals who participated. Their sage judgment and careful analysis of what may be possible measured against what may be a realistic course of action defines our Plan.

This Plan is dynamic and fluid, which assures that Utah Humanities does the right thing at the right time, evolving when necessary. As a result of our considerable effort, Utah Humanities will be properly positioned for organizational strength and community impact.

Our Staff – the beating hearts of our work – are incomparable. Our team structure and expertise will deeply immerse us in the work that unfolds. Our Board – the bedrock that supports this work, does justice to the intelligence and sophistication of the partners we serve throughout Utah.

This exceptional network of statewide partners makes our work possible and we are grateful for and reliant on them. Thank you all.

We have found what we love to do and find it absolutely essential in today's world. With curiosity and courage, we will use the enormous wisdom found in the humanities as a guiding star. Our Strategic Plan will not sit on a dusty shelf!

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phyllis B. Hockett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Phyllis Hockett
Chair, Board of Directors



Dear Friends,

Welcome! We're pleased to share our 5-year strategic plan with you.

Our planning began in early 2022 and included the contributions and dedication of our staff, board, partners, colleagues, and friends. We're grateful for every conversation, survey response, and focus group throughout the process.

It's an exciting time for Utah Humanities as we approach our 50th anniversary in 2025. This plan is our commitment to continue building on the strong foundation we've established over the past 47 years. It outlines bold plans for our future while building on our long-held practices of working in partnership, welcoming diverse perspectives, and strengthening communities through the humanities.

This is a living document that we'll revisit frequently. It will serve as our roadmap for prioritizing our work and resources, assessing and reporting on our progress, and unifying our efforts as an organization.

Whether we've known you for decades or we're saying hello for the first time, we invite you to review our plan, envision the future we hope to create, and join us in achieving our goals together. We look forward to working with you.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jodi Graham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jodi" being more prominent than the last name "Graham".

Jodi Graham
Executive Director

Mission

Utah Humanities strengthens Utah communities by cultivating connections, deepening understanding, and exploring our complex human experience.





Born from Corn: The Soul of the Americas," Photo credit: Nancy Stroaks

Theory of Change

We believe that through our partnerships, we create a Utah where mutual respect is prevalent, difference is celebrated, diverse perspectives are welcomed, and civic dialogue is rooted in curiosity.

VALUES

COLLABORATION

Collaboration is the heart of what we do. We strive to support and uplift one another and actively seek meaningful connections within our organization and with our partners. By amplifying the work of our partners and investing in their long-term success, we create ripple effects that strengthen communities throughout Utah.

THOUGHTFUL

We put great care into our work and aim to bring consideration and empathy into all that we do. We recognize we do not always have the answers but are eager to listen deeply and carefully explore new questions. We provide space for varied perspectives, nuanced conversations, and divergent beliefs.

COMMUNITY-CENTERED

We are mindful of the many and varied geographic, demographic, ideological, and ever-changing communities of Utah. This means our work begins with a community-first mindset, offering perspectives and resources relevant to each community, and continually challenging ourselves to broaden our reach.

PROFESSIONALISM

We hold expertise in our fields and bring a high level of professionalism into everything we do. We approach our work with honesty and transparency and adhere to best practices that result in tangible outcomes. We strive for excellence and seek to partner with organizations, scholars, and tradition-bearers who are experts in their communities.

CATALYST

The humanities are a powerful catalyst for positive change. We gather communities together to understand and honor their differences, consider new perspectives, and transform ideas into action.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

We cultivate spaces where all voices are represented and feel welcome. We see great power in connecting across identities, geographies, values, cultures, political leanings, ideologies, races, religions, genders, sexual orientations, and abilities. We strive to learn from and amplify diverse and marginalized voices. We encourage our partners to broaden their reach within and beyond their communities.







LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Utah Humanities acknowledges Utah's Indigenous communities as the original peoples of these lands. This extraordinary confluence of alpine mountains, salty deserts, and sinuous redrock are the ancestral homelands of Nuche (Ute), Nuwu (Paiute), Newe (Shoshone), Kutsipiuti (Goshute), Diné (Navajo), and Ancestral Puebloan peoples.

These first peoples hold the entire landscape as sacred, not only for themselves, but for their ancestors, future generations, and humankind as a whole. We honor their stewardship, respect their resilience, and celebrate their traditions and living cultures. We honor the land and respect the kinship others hold for these landscapes.

We foster respectful connection to Utah lands and first peoples through our programming. Working in partnership with Utah's Indigenous communities, we re-commit ourselves to providing sustained opportunities for Utahns to understand systems of oppression, protect and honor memory, and preserve and support Indigenous cultures. We call for a brighter future together, for people and the land – one human interaction at a time.

OUR REALITIES

THE HUMANITIES

Just as human beings are complex, so are the humanities. As the study of what it means to be human, the humanities encompass a vast range of topics and methodologies. Because the definition is broad, it can be difficult to explain. The humanities are more than traditionally identified disciplines: languages, linguistics, literature, history, jurisprudence, philosophy, archaeology, comparative religions, ethics, and the history, criticism and theory of the arts. They also include how we explore the human experience: reflecting on our diverse heritage, traditions, and history, and exploring the relevance of the humanities to current issues. This broad definition means we have the freedom to be flexible and responsive to the needs of communities with our programming, but it also presents a challenge in communicating what the humanities are and what we do.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

All of our programming is done in partnership. We rely on our partners to help us reach our audiences (with particular attention to rural, youth, and marginalized communities), meet our statewide mandate, and leverage our public funding for greater impact. Some of our partnerships are long-term, with deep collaborations that last for several years, while others are more informal and short-term. Working in partnership means we share successes and failures, and we are committed to strengthening our partners. It also means we are impacted by the health, functionality, and decisions of the organizations and individuals we work with.

VISIBILITY

While working in partnership brings many benefits, it raises challenges for visibility. Working collaboratively means our role is not always clear to the general public, and we aren't visible in the traditional sense. Because our focus is on extending our reach through partnerships, a deep understanding by the general public is not our goal. Rather, we strive to ensure our partners are keenly aware of us and our work and understand how we are improving Utah communities together.

PUBLIC FUNDING FOR THE HUMANITIES

We are fortunate to have bipartisan support for the humanities through public funding at the county, state, and national levels. As an independent nonprofit, we strive to continually educate our elected officials on the importance of the humanities and demonstrate that we are careful stewards of precious public funds. Each election cycle brings opportunities to introduce new leadership to the critical role the humanities play in strengthening communities, and affirm that funding for the humanities is critical for a thriving democracy.

ALIGNMENT WITH STATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES

Each election cycle brings a potential shift in priorities at the local and national levels that frequently aligns with our programming. The Biden administration has identified these five pillars as the focus for the work of the National Endowment for the Humanities: Advancing Racial Equity; Confronting the Climate Crisis; Restoring America's Global Standing; Responding to the COVID-19 & Economic Crises; and Strengthening Our Democracy. At home in Utah, Governor Spencer Cox has identified these priorities: Bills, Civility and Service, COVID-19/ Public Health, Education, Future Prosperity, Opportunity for All, Pledge to Protect the Past, and Rural Matters. Our programs align naturally with many of these areas, exploring issues of importance to our state and nation.

WHAT WE DO

All of Utah Humanities' work is intended to build community and promote engagement in the humanities. Our programs are divided into four Centers, each of which has a specific focus and associated activities that enrich public discussion and encourage civic involvement—they are designed to inspire, engage, and prompt action.

CENTER FOR THE BOOK

As the state affiliate of the National Center for the Book at the Library of Congress, UH's Center for the Book fosters a love of reading and books as well as the exploration of contemporary issues through literature. Center for the Book programming promotes public interest in books, reading, authorship, and libraries throughout the state.

UTAH HUMANITIES BOOK FESTIVAL

A highly visible signature event for Utah Humanities since 1998, this annual fall festival brings together writers, performers, and their audiences to celebrate literature and momentous ideas.

LITERARY EVENTS

The Center for the Book collaborates with libraries, schools, and community organizations around the state to host a variety of literary events year-round.



Author Lin Flores at Under the Umbrella Bookstore
Photo credit: Willy Palomo

CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL ACCESS

The Center for Educational Access uses the humanities to expand educational opportunities for people underrepresented in higher education. Programs introduce concepts of art history, literature, philosophy, history, and critical writing to encourage nontraditional, underserved, and low-income populations to pursue (and succeed in) higher education.

VENTURE COURSE IN THE HUMANITIES

The Venture Course in the Humanities is a two-semester, college-level humanities course offered free to people living on low incomes. Books, daycare, and transportation are provided without cost.

CLEMENTE COURSE IN THE HUMANITIES

Clemente is a college-level academic experience for high-school students who will be first-generation college applicants. The course is intellectually rigorous and encourages students to find their own voices and agency in their communities, as well as apply for and succeed in college.



West High Clemente instructor Brenda Sieczkowski with students on a visit to the Salt Lake Community College campus. |Photo Credit: Josh Wennergren



Our River Is Our Community exhibition developed through UH museum interpretation workshops, JWP River History Museum.
Photo Credit: JWP River History Museum

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY HERITAGE

The Center for Community Heritage encourages Utahns to explore, preserve, and share their unique local history, culture, and traditions.

MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET

As the leader for the Smithsonian’s Museum on Main Street program in Utah, we bring together partners across the state to reach underserved areas through community-based programming.

HERITAGE WORKSHOPS

Utah Humanities provides statewide leadership in building the fundamental capacity of Utah’s museums, libraries, historical societies, and cultural organizations by offering hands-on training in organizational readiness, best practice history research, collection stewardship, and interpretation techniques.

CENTER FOR LOCAL INITIATIVES

The Center for Local Initiatives supports grassroots humanities projects throughout the state. Communities identify important issues and use the humanities to address them.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Community Conversations bring people together with the belief that dialogue encourages community engagement better than rhetoric and argument. By examining current issues through a humanities lens, we provide opportunities for Utahns to connect around shared human values.

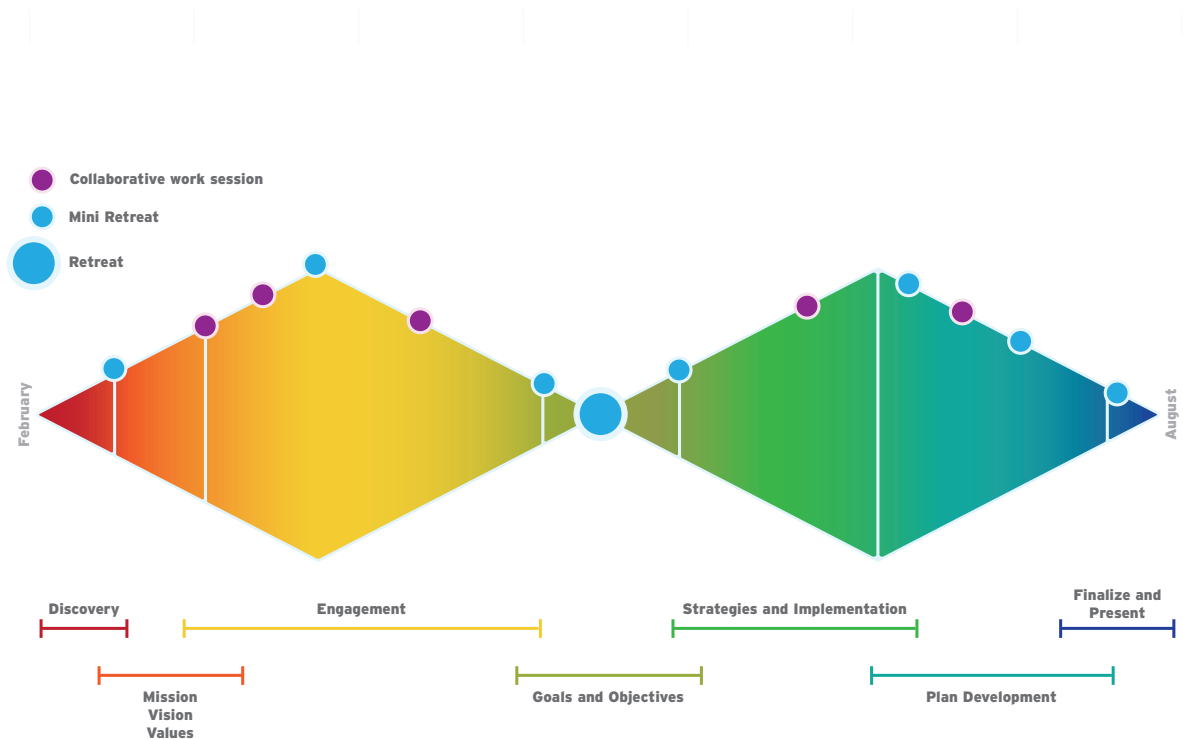
GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Our grants and fellowships are designed to support projects that directly involve the humanities in engaging a community for the purpose of improving it. Our grant categories provide financial support to help support educational programs, interpretive exhibits and activities, local history projects, oral history projects, media projects, and more around the state.



“Shakespeare, Our Contemporary: Voices of Our Time,”
Photo credit: Kathy Curtiss

PLANNING PROCESS

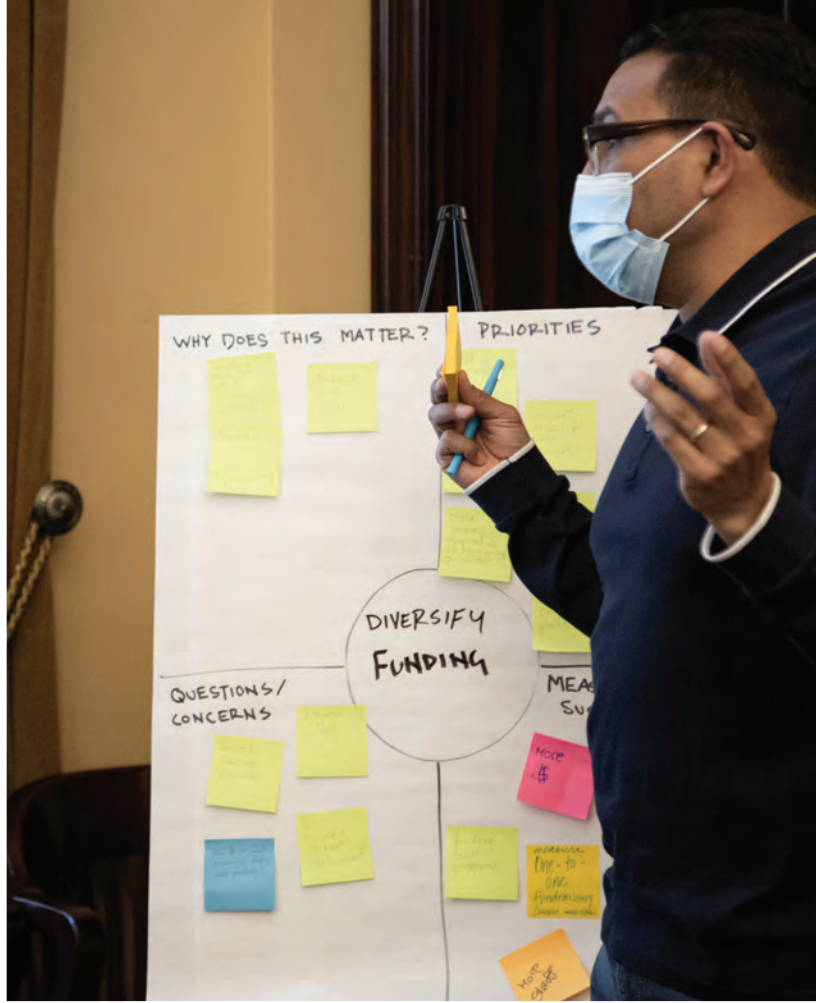


The strategic-planning process was facilitated by Union Creative Agency in close collaboration with our full board and staff. The process also included robust engagement with our partners, stakeholders, and constituents through an online survey, interviews, and virtual roundtable discussions.

The process followed a design-thinking Double Diamond approach of divergent and convergent thinking spread over seven interconnected phases.

- Phase 1: Discovery
- Phase 2: Mission, Vision, Values
- Phase 3: Engagement
- Phase 4: Goals and Objectives
- Phase 5: Strategies and Implementation
- Phase 6: Plan Development
- Phase 7: Finalize and Present

Throughout the process, our board and staff participated in seven virtual mini-retreats, five collaborative work sessions, and one in-person retreat held at the Utah State Capitol. The process culminated in a final presentation and discussion at our annual retreat held in Monticello.



GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

**SUPPORT THE
CAPACITY AND
SUSTAINABILITY
OF PARTNER
ORGANIZATIONS AND
GRANTEES**

**STRENGTHEN
THE HUMANITIES
ECOSYSTEM
STATEWIDE**

**CONTINUE TO
CULTIVATE AND
DIVERSIFY OUR
RELATIONSHIPS
WITH RURAL,
MARGINALIZED
COMMUNITIES, AND
YOUTH**

**DEEPEN CONNECTIONS
BETWEEN UTAHNS
AND THEIR
COMMUNITIES, LAND,
AND CULTURE**

**IMPROVE OUR
ORGANIZATIONAL
HEALTH TO ENSURE
WE ARE STRONG,
RESILIENT, AND
SUSTAINABLE**

GOAL: SUPPORT THE CAPACITY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND GRANTEES.

Objective: Provide training, mentoring, and technical assistance opportunities for partners and grantees.

Strategy: Define a framework of partner tools and resources to be used consistently by all Centers.

Strategy: Provide technical assistance for grantees and partners on accessing funding and reporting requirements.

Strategy: Develop an onboarding process and toolkit for new partners and grantees.

Strategy: Provide our partners with tools and resources to hold space in their communities for challenging and vital conversations.

Strategy: Explore opportunities to expand and amplify the I.D.E.A. work of our partners and grantees.

Objective: Increase our ability to provide communications support to partners.

Strategy: Clarify communications roles with partners to ensure mutual understanding of shared outreach, marketing, and communications responsibilities.

Strategy: Establish a communications toolkit for partners to provide resources, information, and suggestions on outreach channels, language, visuals, advertising strategies, etc.

Strategy: Utilize our website, social media, e-newsletter, press releases, and other outreach channels to amplify the work we do with our partners.

Strategy: Develop a practice of cross-promotion with partners on social media.

GOAL: CONTINUE TO CULTIVATE AND DIVERSIFY OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH RURAL, MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES, AND YOUTH.

Objective: Improve our relationships with and service to Indigenous communities.

Strategy: Develop and implement an organizational Reconciliation Action Plan.

Strategy: Invest in long-term relationship building with tribal leaders, communities, and tradition-bearers.

Strategy: Consistently use the UH Land Acknowledgment Statement in our programming and communications.

Objective: Deepen and strengthen relationships with rural partners and communities.

Strategy: Develop and implement an organizational plan for outreach within rural communities.

Strategy: Create processes and seek opportunities for extended outreach stays in rural areas.

Strategy: Expand outreach efforts to include current board members, board alumni, and local partners in outreach efforts in or near their communities.

Objective: Strengthen partnerships with youth and family-centered organizations.

Strategy: Assess current partnerships and efforts to reach youth and families across all Centers.

Strategy: Continue to support statewide efforts focused on youth such as Utah History Day and Civic Season.

Strategy: Explore opportunities to strengthen partnerships with educators and public libraries.

Objective: Continue efforts to improve organizational Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (I.D.E.A.).

Strategy: Refine and adopt an organizational I.D.E.A. statement.

Strategy: Refine and adopt an organizational Accessibility Plan.

Strategy: Increase resources and opportunities for translation services and non-English program offerings.

Strategy: Revise grant structure, guidelines, applications, and reporting forms to be more accessible to small organizations and new applicants.

GOAL: IMPROVE OUR ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH TO ENSURE WE ARE STRONG, RESILIENT, AND SUSTAINABLE.

Objective: Diversify our funding sources for sustained financial health.

- Strategy: Increase development staff to strengthen our ability to cultivate new funding opportunities and decrease our reliance on government funding.
- Strategy: Explore fundraising opportunities for establishing endowments and/or naming of each Center.
- Strategy: Seek funding opportunities to inform/fuel new program development.
- Strategy: Assess current board giving trends and establish a revised board giving policy.
- Strategy: Ensure the organization has cash reserves and investments necessary for long-term success.

Objective: Assess, strengthen, and develop the capacity, role, and engagement of our Board of Directors and Board Alumni.

- Strategy: Establish clear opportunities for board members and alumni to serve as ambassadors for the humanities and provide opportunities for active engagement.
- Strategy: Develop a robust and consistent onboarding process for new board members.
- Strategy: Provide ongoing board mentoring and training opportunities in specific areas i.e. budgeting, fundraising, etc.
- Strategy: Improve the effectiveness of board committees by creating committee charters, identifying recurring tasks, and setting annual committee goals.
- Strategy: Strengthen and diversify potential board member pipelines paying particular attention to young talent, communities of color, rural representation, and subject matter expertise.
- Strategy: Annually assess board diversity and representation so that the board reflects Utah's diverse communities and supplements the leadership needs of the organization.

Objective: Improve our internal systems and processes to be more consistent, transparent, and unified as an organization.

- Strategy: Review and update organizational policies, processes, and procedures, and provide regular support and training for staff.
- Strategy: Establish consistent, transparent, and streamlined program administration processes across Centers for funding, planning, reporting, communications, and evaluation.
- Strategy: Clarify and unify our communications processes, procedures, tools, channels, roles, and responsibilities.
- Strategy: Upgrade the database interface and key features for better integration with online applications and reporting tools.
- Strategy: Change our accounting software systems from Abila to QuickBooks to streamline financial processes and reporting.
- Strategy: Change our website hosting platform from Joomla to WordPress to streamline content and editing capabilities and improve compatibility with other office systems such as the database and accounting software.
- Strategy: Create and implement a digital archive and retention policy.
- Strategy: Create and implement an organizational succession plan and emergency protocols.

Objective: Increase collaboration opportunities between Centers.

- Strategy: Create and implement a series of operational tools and systems that support collaboration and information sharing throughout our organization.
- Strategy: Explore opportunities for each Center to include both nimble and long-term programming.
- Strategy: Identify opportunities for staff to participate in the programming of all Centers.

Objective: Staff development, growth, and repositioning.

- Strategy: Establish plans and criteria for staff retention, compensation, and benefits.
- Strategy: Position communications and development staff to function in proactive leadership roles.
- Strategy: Expand staffing throughout the organization to increase our existing capacity and ensure we are able to sustain providing high-quality work statewide.
- Strategy: Encourage staff to utilize their annual professional development stipends.

GOAL: DEEPEN CONNECTIONS BETWEEN UTAHNS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES, LAND, AND CULTURE.

Objective: Cultivate space for discourse, programming, and partnerships that bridge divides and differences throughout Utah.

Strategy: Align programming with important, relevant, and contemporary community topics, challenges, and priorities.

Strategy: Ensure programming, partnerships, and communications are non-partisan and include balanced viewpoints.

Strategy: Seek opportunities for non-traditional and interdisciplinary partnerships.

Objective: Honor and celebrate the ever-changing landscapes, communities, and stories of Utah.

Strategy: Explore partnership opportunities with organizations and individuals that work with and live on Utah's wild and sacred lands.

Strategy: Develop programming elements across Centers around the themes of Urban/Rural Divides, Civic Engagement, and Climate Change.

Strategy: Collaborate with state and community partners to tell the diverse stories of Utah's history.

GOAL: STRENGTHEN THE HUMANITIES ECOSYSTEM STATEWIDE.

Objective: Clarify our role as a leader within the humanities ecosystem and ensure the humanities are seen as a valuable and relevant part of life in Utah.

Strategy: Continue our relationship-building and advocacy work with elected officials, policymakers, and community leaders throughout Utah to ensure the humanities are supported, accessible, and valued statewide.

Strategy: Strengthen relationships with cities/towns, higher education institutions, relevant membership organizations, and adjacent state agencies to foster greater awareness of and connection to the humanities.

Strategy: Facilitate partnerships and collaborations between our partner organizations.

Strategy: Highlight the work of our partners and grantees throughout the state.

Objective: Plan and implement a 50th anniversary campaign to celebrate the history, success, and future of Utah Humanities.

Strategy: Establish a 50th Anniversary task force to plan and implement activities.

Strategy: Begin collecting stories from board alumni and former staff to capture the oral history of UH.

Strategy: Assess the reintroduction of the Human Ties Award or a similar recognition program that celebrates outstanding humanities work in Utah.

Objective: Cultivate pipelines and opportunities for emerging/young talent to engage with and work within the humanities.

Strategy: Formalize a structure to work with humanities students through graduate fellowships and/or internships.

Strategy: Explore interdisciplinary collaborations with educators and scholars to encourage students to engage with the humanities.

Strategy: Strengthen relationships with college and university humanities departments.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

This strategic plan will serve as a guiding document and roadmap for our staff and board. This document will be used regularly and will directly inform our actions, decisions, programming, and big ideas over the coming years. The following outlines several of the primary actions we will take to ensure this plan is successfully implemented.

- Align board meeting agendas with the Strategic Plan.
- Align the work of board committees with the Strategic Plan.
- Align annual staff work plans and bi-annual reporting with the Strategic Plan, specifically referencing progress made on the strategies identified in this document.
- Utilize this document as a reference tool and guiding light when making critical organizational decisions.
- Share this document with funders and partner organizations to communicate our organizational priorities and strategic direction.
- Provide this document to future board and staff members.
- Develop, utilize, and monitor an implementation dashboard tool that allows for progress tracking by strategy and provides streamlined reporting capabilities.
- Board and staff annually review and discuss implementation progress.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Phyllis Hockett, Chair, Salt Lake City
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