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FIND YOUR BRIDGE: VIRTUAL EVENT CONNECTS STUDENTS AND FACULTY WITH RESOURCES TO NAVIGATE THE JOB MARKET AFTER COVID-19

MADISON, Wis. (May 1, 2020) – On April 28, 2020, the UW-Madison Center for the Humanities hosted a “Virtual Brown Bag” on changes to the career landscape following COVID-19. Nearly 100 people joined the conversation, including graduate students from UW-Madison and other institutions, administrators, directors, faculty, and public humanities specialists.

Through the event, “Academic and Public Job Markets after COVID-19”, the Center provided timely resources and recommendations for humanities PhDs weathering the pandemic and the resulting changes to academic and public job markets this year and beyond.

Panelists included Russ Castronovo, Director, Center for the Humanities; Florence C. Hsia, Associate Vice Chancellor for Research in the Arts & Humanities and Associate Dean for Graduate Education, Graduate School; Megan Massino, Associate Director, Center for the Humanities; and Aaron Fai, Assistant Director of Public Humanities, Center for the Humanities. They discussed likely changes to the career landscape, as well as strategies to manage current uncertainties.

Russ Castronovo started the discussion with a vital call. “Being kind to yourself is an important strategy at this time,” he said.

Florence Hsia offered concrete actions in reaction to pre-questions from participants. “Know what you can bring to the table,” she said. “What are your shovel-ready projects?”

Aaron Fai highlighted creative solutions in the public humanities as well as advice from humanities leaders to ground yourself in uncertainty, build on existing skills, and engage proactively with potential employers, be they academic, nonprofit, private, or government.

Lenny Cassuto, professor of English at Fordham University and author of the monthly “The Graduate Advisor” column for the Chronicle of Higher Education, also joined the conversation.
“You’re receiving some of the best advice that I have seen out there,” he said. “I hope that you can take a lot of what’s being offered as a collection of trailheads that you can follow to find not so much your bliss but your bridge.”

Please stay tuned for another event in fall 2020, when the Center and others will share more strategies and recommendations to navigate the job market in 2020 and beyond.

A link to a recording of the Virtual Brown Bag is here: https://vimeo.com/414033181

As Wisconsin and the world navigates this pandemic, the UW-Madison Center for the Humanities affirms its commitment to public humanities partnerships as essential projects of hope that reflect the necessity of the humanities and the Wisconsin Idea in challenging times.

Another way to get involved right now in furtherance of scholarship and community engagement is through the Center’s “Humanities Responders” initiative. The Center calls for undergraduate and graduate students to serve as “Humanities Responders” by creating remote projects that serve and bolster the current work of community organizations, non-profits, cultural institutions, and public agencies.

Interested students can apply to serve as Humanities Responders through the Center’s long-running Humanities Exchange programs, which will supply accepted applicants with projects funds of up to $2000 as well as project mentorship. More information is available here: https://humanities.wisc.edu/public-humanities/exchange-program