NEH Application Cover Sheet (CHA-264402)
Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grants

PROJECT DIRECTOR

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INSTITUTION

Roanoke College
Salem, VA 24153-3747

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Title: *Humanities Collaboration Center*

Grant period: From 2019-05-01 to 2021-04-30
Project field(s):   English; Communications; Film History and Criticism

Description of project: Roanoke College's Fintel Library proposes to renovate its ground
floor classroom and technology infrastructure to better support the pedagogies and learning styles of humanities faculty and students. The classroom will evolve into a space that enriches collaboration and civil discourse and accommodates a variety of teaching pedagogies and learning and study styles critical for advancing a liberal education and humanistic principles. Renovation will facilitate flexible arrangement to support individual learning, small group activities, and lecture-style seminars, classes, or film screenings. Technology upgrades--state-of-the art multi-media displays, lighting, and controls--will improve multi-media presentations, use of personal devices, and projection and enhance creation, analysis and presentation of digital humanities projects. Funding will help transform the classroom into a center of engagement supportive of the 21st century liberal education that Roanoke College offers.

BUDGET

Outright Request	0.00	**Cost Sharing**	188,356.00
Matching Request	62,785.00	**Total Budget**	251,141.00
Total NEH	62,785.00		

GRANT ADMINISTRATOR

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ROANOKE COLLEGE
INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPACITY BUILDING CHALLENGE GRANTS
NARRATIVE

Roanoke College is requesting a $62,785 NEH Challenge grant to create a Humanities Collaboration Center in its Fintel Library. This Center will accommodate humanities-focused courses in the College's general education curriculum, will enable broader use of visual or screen media and will incorporate digital projects into humanities courses. The Center will also provide much-needed space for the Writing Center and for Subject Tutoring in the humanities.

For over 175 years, Roanoke College in Southwest Virginia has served as an institution of higher education with an emphasis on liberal arts and the humanities. Today, Roanoke serves 2,037 students from 42 states, Washington D.C. and 33 countries. Students select fields of study from 34 majors, 54 minors and concentrations and 12 pre-professional programs, and the College awards Bachelors of Science, Bachelors of Arts, and Bachelors of Business Administration degrees. Since its inception in 1842, the College's core mission has been to develop students as whole persons and to prepare them for responsible lives of learning, service, and leadership. Roanoke College focuses on intellectual, ethical, spiritual, and personal growth through a broad and deep liberal arts education, while also addressing the demands of changing times.

The College administration, faculty, and Board support the premise that the humanities offer opportunities for exploration, understanding, and critical analysis of who we are, how we have come to exist, and the impact of our current and future actions. Roanoke College humanities departments include Fine Arts; English, Creative Writing and Communications; Modern Languages; History; and Philosophy and Religion. Of 1548 class sections offered by the College this past year, 37% (579 sections) were from these five Humanities departments.

Since 2013, the Academy of Arts & Sciences' (AAAS) indicators have shown a continuing decline in the number of humanities bachelors degrees awarded overall. Though numerous forces undoubtedly contribute to this decline, a significant one is the reluctance of students from other majors to take humanities electives. Many have become so "screen-oriented" that the traditional written texts of humanities study are

not immediately engaging. Others are drawn to the humanities but question their practicality and applications in the work world. Roanoke College is committed to addressing these factors in order to provide its students with the critical skills and perspectives developed through the study of the humanities. The College has taken a three-pronged approach to increasing the long-term viability and integration of the humanities into its mission and activities:

1. the Intellectual Inquiry general education curriculum (INQ) that focuses on critical skills development;

2. the use of visual or screen media to draw non-humanities majors into humanities courses; and

3. the incorporation of digital projects into humanities courses that provide students with visible evidence of their skills.

INQ is creating a model for 21st century general education and offers a humanistic perspective to Roanoke students through a series of required scaled courses. The classes are designed to help students learn to distinguish important questions, frame those questions, and marshal the research and skills necessary to answer them. INQ uses a topical, skills-based approach to challenge students with problems that have a global perspective—complex problems that require complex reasoning. It also instills in students a sense of personal responsibility for learning, the expectation of proactive inquiry, and the ability to think critically from multiple perspectives. In any semester, 80+ INQ courses may be offered. Approximately half of those courses serve as an introduction to critical inquiry and ethical thinking for 500+ first-year students. Students actively pursue answers to interesting and urgent questions and acquire the relevant facts and methods in the process. In lower level courses, students use an inquiry format to explore content, develop communication and analytical skills, and learn to apply the methodologies of the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. In upper level courses such as INQ 300 Contemporary Issues, the capstone course taken in the third or fourth year, students demonstrate their proficiencies by working in small teams to first examine and then problematize a contemporary issue. Students are required to develop a concrete proposal to address this problem. In a single 90-minute class period, an instructor may be monitoring multiple simultaneous team meetings, pulling some or all of the teams together for a

large group discussion, critiquing one team's research methodology, and evaluating another team's oral presentation. Teams may also be tracking down library resources or consulting with a reference librarian. Faculty who teach INQ courses have noted that there is currently no single space on campus that fully supports such engaged learning.

In addition to the humanities-focused core curriculum, Roanoke has also increased emphasis on the use of visual teaching methods to build the prominence and relevance of the humanities and a liberal arts education across all disciplines. In spring 2015, Roanoke College faculty and administration approved a concentration in Screen Studies, housed under the English and Literary Studies department. (See Appendix A) The term Screen Studies acknowledges the broad scope of communication media and art that are based on moving pictures. Screens enable individuals to create verisimilar or realistic documents, tell stories, persuade others, play games, express themselves, and much more. The history of screens began with photography and motion pictures, and evolved into television, video, and, more recently, interactive media, including screen-based mobile technologies and video games. In light of the variety in screen-based media, the teaching of screen visual literacy must include the study of screen history, criticism, culture and critical theory, media effects, the art and practices of media production, and media industries. Consequently, the study of screen phenomena is strikingly interdisciplinary. The Screen Studies Concentration at Roanoke highlights its strengths as a liberal arts college by encouraging exploration of this area of study through multiple disciplines, including Literary Studies, Communication Studies, Creative Writing, Fine Arts, History, and Psychology.

Roanoke's Screen Studies Concentration is designed to allow students to pursue their interests in this diverse field by using the analytical approach found in film studies, screenwriting, performance, production and design of a variety of screen media. Courses in photography, two-dimensional design, acting, stage design, and the science of vision and perception are all relevant to the reasons students come to Screen Studies, and students benefit greatly from numerous internship opportunities that offer practical experiences in these fields.

Faculty view the concentration as unifying by bringing together students from diverse disciplines. Thus far, the concentration has been widely successful with incorporating non-humanities students into the study of the humanities. During the last academic year, students with majors in Business Administration, Computer Science, International Relations, Physics, Public Health, and Psychology declared a screen studies concentration in addition to students majoring in traditional humanities fields.

In conjunction with the formal academic programming of Screen Studies, film and media are being used increasingly in disciplines across campus as a medium for helping students to enter into the humanities on a more personal, visceral level. Over the past two years, film labs, production, and viewing have been incorporated into 34 humanities and INQ courses, inviting students into conversation, learning, and engagement with course material in a relatable format. Examples of courses that incorporate film at Roanoke are "Law and Film," "Psychology in the Media," Explorations of Race Portrayals in the Media," "20th Century Film and Novels," and "Visual Culture and the Graphic Novel." In all courses that involve film or visual storytelling, students must critically reflect upon their projects and determine which tools and images may be appropriate, what makes a provocative narrative, and why the narrative may be constructed in a certain way. Students gain more than just a theoretical understanding of the discipline; they develop visual literacy skills, digital fluency, and skills appropriate for the marketplace. By marrying theory and practice, students gain practical skills through the experiential process of creation, production, and presentation. There is an increased interest across campus for extra-curricular and community involvement with film production as well. Students involved in film projects outside of the classroom under the direction of the Student Activities Director develop marketable skills and exposure to the professional community through participation in the student-juried film competition and film festival, *Basically Tarantino*. The festival features short films written and produced by students, nominated for awards, and screened on campus and at a local theater. Screen studies faculty believe that a physical space which can support all aspects of teaching and learning…lecture, brainstorming, production, and viewing…will strengthen this program. Currently, there is one classroom on campus designed to accommodate film viewing with room

darkening, a proper screen, Blue Ray capabilities, and high quality sound equipment. This room has capacity for 35 students at a time, but the demand for its use far exceeds scheduling availability.

The third area of growth and focus for the humanities at Roanoke College is through the digital humanities. In 2017, the College committed to explore the inclusion of digital humanities in the college curriculum by convening a Digital Humanities Study Group (DHSG). The committee was formed as an outgrowth of the Liebman Technology Grant, a donor sponsored initiative "designed to promote awareness of new technologies that can enhance teaching and related student experiences." Consisting of an interdisciplinary segment of faculty, staff, and librarians, the DHSG meets periodically throughout the academic year to learn and test digital humanities tools, discuss inclusion of tools in class assignments, and share progress on research projects. In addition, nearly one-third of Humanities faculty have been involved in Digital Humanities activities over the last 18 months (short and multi-day workshops, ongoing study groups, showcases, and conferences). Ten faculty also attended a Geographic Information System (GIS) long course and another 10 attended a short course. An additional five faculty have taken advantage of support for a Digital Humanities Student Assistant for class projects that involved the creation of audiobooks in Spanish, a digital archive of materials related to medieval saints, Wordpress sites related to Slavic folklore, ethics podcasts, 3D visualization of archaeological space and creation of a map of food insecurity in Roanoke, Virginia. All involved faculty report increased levels of student engagement, evidenced in a meaningful way by student presentations.

The goal of digital humanities is to teach students how to interpret and present humanities projects in the digital sphere, which includes creation and/or incorporation of visualizations, maps, images and video. INQ 277, *Food: Mapping Needs and Community Action*, demonstrates the value of digital humanities in student coursework. The course professor asked students to employ digital humanities tools in their assignments as they presented an analysis of the needs and impact of grassroots action in the Roanoke community on food security/insecurity. The professor found that collaborative learning and inclusion of digital humanities helped the students to become more independent in their thinking, more critical about how they implemented tools within projects, and more willing to take risks. Students related better to

justice narratives, became more responsible in their group efforts (participation by all improved the chance of a successful project), and became critical consumers of information (the importance of identifying valid data versus "fake news" became clearer since their own work would become publically accessible for use by a local nonprofit). The students used Story Map Crowdsource to document their findings. The course was taught in a traditional classroom and computer lab. Whenever the focus of the course activity was on the tools or research product in development, the class was required to relocate to the lab. The professor found this challenging, perceiving that the change in venue disrupted the thought process. In addition, the lab's fixed arrangement, lack of collaboration tools, and lack of direct access to library resources inhibited group work and brainstorming. A central location of resources in Fintel Library would solve this issue for a range of classes with this challenge in the future.

In 2017, the American Academy of Arts & Sciences released a report which stated,

In a future that may lean toward greater social division, colleges and universities should play a large and constructive role in promoting greater cohesiveness. As cultural crossroads and sites of reasoned debate, they could set new standards for civility and mutual understanding in a society sorely in need of new models. An increasingly fractured nation will require more common spaces and more opportunities for meaningful interaction, whether they exist physically or virtually… institutions must also double down on teaching the skills that are most difficult for machines to replicate, such as solving unstructured problems, working flexibly with new information, and working effectively in groups.

Roanoke College's vision is to be a model of experiential learning, and a community committed to open discourse and civil debate as ways of learning and as preparation for service in the world. Its faculty have expressed the need for a flexible convening space that will foster and support creativity, innovation and collaboration. To better accommodate these humanities-based activities, Roanoke College's Fintel Library proposes to adapt part of its ground floor for specific use by INQ courses, Screen Studies and film production, and digital humanities initiatives.

In the 1960's, Fintel Library moved into its current location, and in the 1990's that facility was totally renovated and doubled in size to accommodate a growing student body. Over the years, the concept of what a library should be has changed considerably. College libraries are no longer only hushed places for quiet study. They now tend to be sites of interaction, collaboration and discussion. Recognizing this trend, 10 years ago, Roanoke College's faculty, students and library staff worked with an outside consultant to create a renovation study plan which re-conceptualized Fintel Library as a central place on campus for collaborative research, study and exchange of ideas. That process resulted in a Master Plan (See Appendix B) for use in moving forward. Due to cost considerations, the College made the decision to divide the renovation project into phases that could be accomplished as budget funds and opportunities for external funding became available. As the Master Plan outlined needs and priorities by floor, four phases were determined in that way. The decision to work in phases was made with the stipulation that all designs should be harmonious and service-oriented with the goal of encouraging collaboration and study while providing comfort and a variety of seating choices and increased availability of technology. Phase 1 involved the renovation of the first floor, and that has been accomplished along with smaller projects elsewhere in the library such as new furniture in the computer lab upstairs. The entire first floor has been refurbished with paint, new floor coverings and moveable, flexible furniture that can be easily re-arranged for individual or collaborative work. A coffee shop has been added to make the atmosphere more informal and comfortable. Students and faculty have responded very well to these changes, and the transformed space is used to a much greater extent now. Now attention is being turned to Phase 2, the ground floor, with the hopes of repeating this successful renovation in a different layout.

The ground floor of Fintel Library is heavily trafficked with students attending classes, participating in Subject Tutoring sessions, and visiting the Writing Center, but it is, unfortunately, outdated. It has one 1200-square foot classroom furnished with 32 arm tablet desks that allow for minimal rearrangement and flexibility. It is a dark, windowless, uninviting space. However, if refurbished, the size and structure of the room will make it a prime area for a collaborative learning space. The Library is already a center of learning and resources used by all students. To bring this classroom into the visual and teaching

capabilities of the 2020 era, significant renovations will be required. In recent months, it has become evident that an area is needed to provide space for the study of the humanities, particularly with the introduction of Digital Humanities and a Screen Studies Concentration. Plans are now underway to convert this stagnant, outdated space into a modern multi-purpose classroom with the flexibility to highlight the vibrancy and relevance of the humanities. The vision to bring this new classroom to fruition will allow faculty and staff to put engagement with humanities curriculum and collaboration across disciplines at the forefront. Renovation and flexible furniture will permit swift conversion of the classroom from one teaching and learning activity to another and will significantly facilitate course learning outcomes. The renovated classroom will:

1. Offer space that flexibly supports intellectually engaging work;

2. Encourage creativity and collaborative learning;

3. Facilitate group work, presentation practice, or film pre/post production and analysis;

4. Provide space for individualized efforts within a class session;

5. Create adjacencies to library services, resources, and staff complementary to the academic process.

This renovated classroom will offer faculty and students a flexible convening space that supports a variety of teaching and learning needs, encourages engagement, creativity and innovation, and provides easy access to library resources and services that are complementary to academic pursuit and preparation for life beyond. It will become a scalable teaching and learning environment that will serve planned instruction and facilitated engagement as well as post-instruction collaboration and study.

Unique to other spaces on campus, the classroom's collocation to expert librarians and library resources will enhance research, critical inquiry and analysis. Adjacency to the current media and film production studio immediately next door to the classroom will facilitate pre-production and post-production work of students in screen studies and provide presentation practice space for group work. That which students learn and/or create will easily transfer from one space into the other. Flexible seating will replace traditional arm tablet desks to facilitate reconfiguring the space for a variety of collaborative activities and

teaching styles. Technology, including upgraded projection, displays and monitors, and collaboration software will be employed. Easy-to-use controls will be installed to manage audio and video displays, facilitate presentation and incorporate student and instructor devices,. Adjustable lighting will be upgraded for projection,viewing and to support campus energy initiatives. A glass wall with room darkening properties will be installed to accommodate film screenings and presentations and support creative thinking and design. The glass wall will also highlight engagement between the instructional space and the adjacent convening space that will extend activities from the classroom. The transparency and visibility into the classroom will showcase the interactive energy occurring in that space. The goal is to have humanities activities on display in a central location that all students, faculty and staff pass by throughout the course of their engagement with the College's library resources. Updating the instructional classroom will create a flexible space that fosters creativity and innovation.

Just outside this classroom is an open area which has great potential as a convening space for students and faculty to continue the work begun in the classroom. When equipped with updated, movable and inviting furniture, this space will provide an opportune area for formal and informal collaboration as well as group and individual study. Its versatility will also allow it to be used for Subject Tutoring in the Humanities and for Writing Center collaborative projects. The Writing Center needs improved space to accommodate oral presentation practice sessions, space for private/confidential consultation with students, and external speakers. The Subject Tutoring program needs expanded space for small and large groups of students in tutoring sessions.

It is essential that Fintel Library uses design professionals skilled in needs of both academic libraries and learning environments. These professionals are consulting with the library in order to define specific programmatic requirements for these spaces. They will then produce necessary design, bidding and construction documents for both the new furnishings and physical alterations to the building that will have a similar character to the recently renovated first floor of the library.

To assess the impact of the renovated space, library instruction evaluations will incorporate questions for faculty that address the value of collocation to library resources and the perceived impact

upon students' performance on assignments. Student evaluations will incorporate questions about their perceptions of the quality of engagement (student to student and faculty to student) in the classroom and the perceived impact of collocation to librarians, resources, and services on their academic success.

Roanoke College values fiscal integrity and stability and has operated with a balanced budget for more than 60 years. While the plans for this newly renovated space align with both the College's and Fintel Library's strategic foci, renovation and technology costs exceed the College's current internal budget for infrastructure and program support. In May 2018, the College was notified of its award of a challenge grant for $250,000 from the Robert G. and Maude Morgan Cabell Foundation to help support several strategically planned capital improvements on campus. The greatest need identified by the Cabell Foundation was the vision for the classroom on the ground floor of the library, to which they will allow $125,000 of the challenge grant to apply. The fundraising staff at the College is tasked with raising the remaining funds to complete this $251,141 renovation in order to access the designated Cabell funding. If granted $62,785 from NEH in the form of a challenge grant, the $125,000 from the Cabell Foundation's challenge will be applied to NEH's matching requirement. The remaining fundraising of $63,356 to complete this project and meet both matching grant requirements will be accomplished through plans to approach private foundations and individual donors. The College has identified two additional private foundations, one individual donor, and have plans for a mini crowd-funding campaign in early Spring 2019 to solicit individuals who may be interested in this critical project. The Development office will begin working immediately to close the funding gap and bring the project to fruition. A document containing a description of the College's current financial situation and a fundraising plan is attached in Appendix C.

An NEH challenge grant will help to elevate the humanities across campus as a vote of confidence and support for a strategic priority for Roanoke College. Funding from NEH will only need to be for a two-year period, as the classroom will be renovated in Year 1 and the adjoining space in Year 2.

FINTEL LIBRARY RENOVATIONS- PROJECT BUDGET

<u>Total NEH Funds Requested</u>:	$62,785
Year 1:	$52,785
Year 2:	$10,000
Total nonfederal contributions:	$188,356
Total Grant Funds (NEH plus match):	**$251,141.00**

Budget Category	Projected Cost	Notes
Architectural and engineering fees	$8,441	Conceptual design
	$16,000	Interior design & construction documents
	$7,200	Engineering fees
Demolition and removal	$45,400	Glass wall
Construction	$19,719	Finishes
	$26,500	Lighting
Equipment	$70,000	($30,000 classroom; $40,000 extended space)
	$57,881	Instructional technology
TOTAL:	*$251,141*	