University of Missouri - St. Louis

Center for the Humanities

Mission Statement

The Center for the Humanities at the University of Missouri-St. Louis is the only Center of its kind in the region and in the entire state. The Center for the Humanities has two central objectives: to provide visibility and focus for humanities activities at UM-St. Louis and to attract and channel resources for the support of interdisciplinary humanistic inquiry. To this end the Center has sponsored a variety of conferences, symposiums, and lectures. Over the last several years, the Center has sponsored a conference entitled "What is a City?", which examines the structure and social environment of cities and their effects on social and cultural diversity. The Center for the Humanities also sponsors the Monday Noon Cultural Series throughout the academic year, which features a variety of humanistic lectures and musical performances every Monday at 12:00 noon. The Center also supports and coordinates the Poetry and Reading Series, which features original contemporary authors reading their works. In addition, the Center houses and funds the journal Theory and Society, a refereed, interdisciplinary journal of social theory and practices, published by Kluwer Academic in The Netherlands. The Center disseminates information on the humanities on their web site and promotes the development of interdisciplinary outreach courses.

The Center for Humanities at the University of Missouri-St. Louis was launched in 1992 and is the only Center for Humanities in the University of Missouri four-campus system, the region, and the state of Missouri. Serving a diverse, urban population of predominantly older students, the Center for Humanities has as its mission to emphasize the humanities in an urban area that otherwise would not be well served by humanities programs.

In a Civic Progress (local corporate leaders) Higher Education Study of St. Louis made in 1990, important area employers voiced concern about the lack of global awareness and understanding of other cultures and humanities that characterized most graduates. In response to this concern, the Center for Humanities was conceived and has as its goal to promote the humanities that have been afflicted by a general loss of funding for humanistic research, lectureships, and conferences leading students to confine their humanistic inquiries only to required university courses.

The Center for Humanities offers a wide range of humanistic interdisciplinary events and functions to students, faculty, community, and even world-wide with our informational web site at a time when Humanities majors constitute only 9 - 10% of the total student body of most universities. Consequently, the Center offers opportunities and advantages in the humanities that otherwise would not be available. In an era of technology and science dominance, the Center for Humanities is a phenomenon of people, society, and cultures that should not be overlooked nor neglected.

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