

## *Curricular Pathways for Digital Scholarship at Liberal Arts Colleges*

### *An AALAC faculty workshop proposal*

#### Workshop Description:

*This workshop will explore curricular pathways for digital scholarship with the goal of developing a set of guidelines and best practices for supporting such innovations at liberal arts colleges.*

Digital scholarship has gained widespread traction across the academy in recent years, profoundly disrupting long established practices in both research and pedagogy. Large, well-resourced state universities like UCLA have been able to develop not only strong graduate degree programs but also curricular options for undergraduates, through major and minor tracks in Digital Humanities or Digital Studies. At small liberal arts colleges, in contrast, this major methodological shift began with small and scattered initiatives. Pioneering faculty members attended THATCamps and summer institutes to gain technical training in digital methods, and motivated professors experimented with digital pedagogy and began offering courses and modules that brought these new techniques into their classrooms as well as their research. As experiments with digital scholarship spread beyond the early adopters, individual institutions began founding centers, labs and distributed initiatives to support the Digital Humanities or Digital Liberal Arts on their campuses. These developments increasingly expose students at liberal arts colleges to innovative digital methods and theory. What they do not provide, however, is a sustainable framework for linking diverse experiences into an integrated understanding of how digital tools and practices shape the student experience. Thankfully, this situation is beginning to change, as more and more SLACs adopt or plan for curricular pathways in the Digital Liberal Arts.

Curricular pathways can take many forms, and this workshop aims to bring together representatives from AALAC members in order to compare the experiences at our respective institutions. Some, like Davidson College, have well established [interdisciplinary minors in Digital Studies](#). Others are actively engaged in setting up new concentrations or programs, while still more are just beginning to think through these possibilities. The principal planners of this proposal (Mason and Alexander) have been named to a task force at Carleton College on Digital Curriculum Initiatives and Pathways, whose brief is to investigate curricular structures

for digital scholarship in the arts and humanities, and we are keen to explore what our peer institutions are considering or have already implemented in this arena.

We will invite faculty participants from colleges at various stages of the planning and implementation process to discuss several key areas of concern for curricular pathways at liberal arts colleges. What are the relative merits of different structures like majors, minors, concentrations, or certificate programs? What do we call these programs to most accurately reflect the goals of our institutions: Digital Humanities, Digital Studies, Digital Liberal Arts, something else? What is the best balance of courses across disciplines between requirements and electives at various departments and levels? How helpful or necessary are pre-existing centers or labs for supporting curricular pathways, since many AALAC schools have developed these with previous DH grants, while many others have not?

The participants will each prepare a brief position paper in advance of the workshop addressing one or more of the questions above in light of their specific campus climates. Over a day and a half at Carleton College, we will debate these topics in round table sessions with the goal of drafting a collaboratively authored white paper outlining the community's best practices and recommendations. We anticipate a total of 12 participants representing a broad range of AALAC institutions at various stages of the process.

## Workshop Leaders and Organizers:

- **Austin Mason**, Assistant Director of the Humanities Center for Digital Humanities & Visiting Assistant Professor of History, Carleton College
- **Eric Alexander**, Assistant Professor of Computer Science, Carleton College
- **Erik Simpson**, Professor of English, Grinnell College
- **Mark Sample**, Associate Professor and Director of Digital Studies, Davidson College
- **Rachel Schnepfer**, Director of Academic Technology, Wesleyan University

## Designated Workshop Liaison

**Austin Mason**, Carleton College: [amason@carleton.edu](mailto:amason@carleton.edu)