

## TAFT RESEARCH CENTER

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# TAFT Annual Report

# 2019 / 2020



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## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

This has been a monumental year for Taft Research Center. Taft has been increasingly recognized in national and international humanities and social science networks. In early 2020, I joined the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI) international advisory board, which includes center and institute directors from about 30 humanities and interdisciplinary research centers and institutes across the United States and globally. Our CHCI membership has benefits for Taft faculty and students, including virtual programming in various research areas including the Health Humanities, Border Studies, and Cultural Preservation and Storytelling. For more information, please check out their website: [chcnetwork.org](http://chcnetwork.org).

Taft has continued to collaborate with centers in the College of Arts and Sciences, schools and colleges across campus, the Cincinnati community, and beyond. In Fall 2019, for example, Taft co-sponsored a series of lectures, "Climate Change: Cincinnati," at the Mercantile Library. Organized by UC's Center for the Public Engagement of Science, the three-event series included philosophers, scientists, natural history and community experts who spoke about the environmental, social, political, and economic impacts of climate change, with a focus on the Cincinnati region. The Mercantile Library was packed to the brim at all three events. Special thanks to Dr. Angela Potochnik for her leadership.

In September 2019, Taft co-sponsored the conference, "Disability in Germany, Yesterday and Today," organized by Dr. Kate Sorells and the Department of History. Dr. Warren Rosenblum presented the

keynote lecture, "No Place for Disability: The Origins of Mass Murder in Fantasies of Perfection," held at the Holocaust and Humanities Center. Additional co-sponsors included the Department of German Studies, Holocaust and Humanities Center, and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). Likewise, Taft also co-sponsored the 2019 Society for Women in Philosophy annual conference, organized by Philosophy doctoral candidate Sahar Heyhari Fard. Keynote speaker Dr. Serene Khater presented, "Is Universalism the Cause of Feminist Complicity in Imperialism?," which challenged attendees to rethink universal values of rights.

In February, Taft co-sponsored the Universities Studying Slavery (USS) annual conference, held at the University of Cincinnati and Xavier University in October 2019. A special shout-out to Dr. Holly McGee (History) for her key role in bringing this important conference and set of discussions to Cincinnati. Taft also partnered with UC's Office of Research and the Alliance for the Arts in Research Universities (a2ru) to host the 2020 a2ru keynote speaker, Dr. Nikki Taylor, at the Freedom Center. It was great to have Dr. Taylor back in Cincinnati, where she has conducted much of her research.

Taft has also held commemorative events in recognition of people's heritage and histories. In October, Taft hosted renowned Latino Studies scholar Dr. Lázaro Lima, Taft's Latinx History Month annual speaker. Dr. Lima's book, *Being Brown: Sonia Sotomayor and the Latino Question* (U. California Press, 2019), is an important contribution to studies of race, gender, and law, particularly as it relates to latino/a

lives and political experiences. In November, Taft hosted three speakers for Native American History Month: Joy Gritton, Steve Black Bear, and Helen Danser spoke about "The Role of Art in Native American Healing." Kudos to Dr. Ken Tankersley for his help with organizing this event.

Taft programming was robust in Fall and early Spring. In total, the Center hosted over fifty events focused on a wide range of current and historical issues, from the US Civil War and the legacy of slavery to contemporary policing debates, Latin American poetry, challenges in multiscale modeling of nanomaterials, Holocaust history in/on film, and the (mis)use of science in policy and the courts. Not surprisingly, given the historical moment in which we live, many lectures focused on social justice issues in historical and contemporary contexts.

March 2020 was a pivotal month as we were faced with the pandemic and necessarily shifted to remote programming, teaching, and research. Not surprisingly, some events planned in March and April were cancelled, and our inaugural Cincinnati Humanities Fest plans were placed on hold. Given this situation, I was in the position to create an award program aimed at supporting and helping retool faculty and student researchers in the context of the pandemic. "The World that Awaits Us: Research in the Era of COVID-19," included – and continues to include – four programs to support researchers as they have necessarily had to change their research plans due to travel restrictions and lockdown conditions (more on this program below). I was pleased that faculty and graduate students took great advantage of this

program, which we continue to offer in 2020-2021. One silver lining of this situation is that we were able to offer additional summer research awards to graduate students. Yet another is that with virtual programming, our audience has expanded, as people from most anywhere can log on to view our programming.

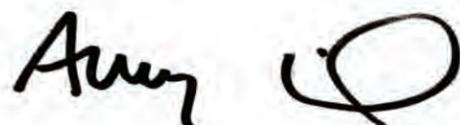
In summer 2020 Taft co-sponsored the Taft Faculty Write intensive one-week writing program, again facilitated by Dr. Laura Micciche (English). This time, the program went virtual and we saw an increase in participants. Taft is now co-sponsoring this popular writing program with UC's Faculty Enrichment Center and have opened it up to all schools and fields at UC. Some Taft faculty participants acknowledged that opening up this opportunity to all fields was even more interesting, as participants discussed their respective research topics, methods, and writing plans across an even wider range of disciplines, from the humanities and social sciences to design, medicine, engineering, and business.

I spent much of last year implementing ideas that were raised at meetings and receptions with Taft faculty, the Taft Faculty Executive Board, department heads, and the college. We added additional award deadlines and continued to work to streamline the application process. Our new website is up and running and is now accessible to all. With my staff, we began to gear up for virtual programming.

Last but certainly not least, I am grateful to Dudley Taft, Bob Rich, and all of the Taft Trustees for stepping up to support Taft Research Center and the College of Arts and Sciences during what has been an historically unprecedented time at the University of Cincinnati. The Trustees' additional, one-time gift of \$500,000 in May 2020, to be used over the course of the 2020-2021 academic year, means more than words can describe to so many of us in the Taft community. I am grateful for the Trustees' ongoing trust in the faculty board and for

their support of our vision and goals as we move forward during uncertain times. Times which, I might add, also provide us with the opportunity to reimagine our society, world, and lives as we move through and beyond the pandemic, and as we work toward a more equitable and sustainable world. Indeed, if anything is certain, it is that the humanities and social sciences are key to these new imaginings!

Best wishes,



**AMY LIND**  
TAFT RESEARCH CENTER DIRECTOR & FACULTY CHAIR  
MARY ELLEN HEINTZ PROFESSOR OF WOMEN'S, GENDER, AND  
SEXUALITY STUDIES, COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY  
OF CINCINNATI



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### Competitive Dissertation Fellowship

At the behest of the Taft Faculty Board, Dr. Danielle Bessett conducted a survey of PhD-granting program Directors, as to the imagined and real purpose of both allocated and possible competitive programs. Following her presentation of findings to the faculty board and discussion of the programs, the board voted to re-establish the competitive dissertation program. Graduate students from across the nine PhD-granting Taft-eligible departments compete for the five competitive fellowships.

This key program provides advanced graduate students the opportunity to complete their doctoral work in a timely manner. The expansion of the program is intended to help departments bring more students to completion, earlier, with greater future job prospects.

### Graduate Summer Fellowships

In addition to permanent expansion of the Dissertation Fellows program, we found ourselves in the unique position of expanding graduate support by adding an additional 10 Summer Graduate Fellows, affording 17 students the means to dedicate time to their research and writing.

### New Application Portal

Taft has been working with the UCIT Development team for over a year on a new, streamlined application system for faculty, students, and researchers. The Taft system is unique in several ways, advancing several novel features that will be used downstream by other UC units using the same system. This is due to both the number of TAFT programs but also the complexity of our application and committee structure. The UCIT Development team have frequently commented on the complexity of our system. In short, the new system

removes duplications, streamlines the interface for all users (applicants, committee members, and admin), with fewer fields overall. Additionally, the system will afford reduced response times as well as improved record keeping and analytics. Our new system should help Taft better respond to the needs of faculty and students, both more quickly and more thoughtfully, in terms of current and future programming.

### Research Seminars

#### Andean Literature: The Literature and Art in Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Chile and Colombia

This seminar will examine Andean literature and art. From the Comentarios reales written by Inca Garcilaso de la Vega and published in 1609 in Lisbon, on to the 21st century, the literary and artistic output is impressive in volume and quality. In the 19th century Ricardo Palma wrote short narratives that became known as “tradiciones”, a mixture of essay and short story that preserve knowledge and folkloric traditions in a humorous and entertaining way. In the first part of the 20th century the work of Cesar Vallejo is a monumental tour de force of the language and human sorrow. He conveyed better than anyone the tragedy of the human condition through original and innovative

poetry. At the same time José Carlos Mariátegui was working on his Siete ensayos de la realidad peruana, a Marxist informed analysis of the economic conditions in Peru and the Andean region. That strong Peruvian literary tradition has continued throughout the 20th and 21st century, and is best represented by the Nobel Prize winner Mario Vargas Llosa. Bolivia, Ecuador and Colombia have also produced great writers and painters that represent their cultural landscape within the Andean region. This seminar will examine many such works, host several Andean scholars.

### Recent Advances in the Bellman Function Method in Harmonic Analysis

A fundamental problem in engineering, natural sciences, and mathematics is to describe a transformative device in terms of the relationship it imposes on the input and output data. An electrical engineer may study how the shape and strength of a signal change when the signal is transmitted over a network. A biologist may view the dynamics of an animal population as that of the solution of a partial differential equation with specified initial conditions. A mathematician supplies the rigorous foundation for such pursuits and also deals with more abstract transformative devices: maps (operators) between function classes (collections of signals, or functions, with specified characteristics). In harmonic analysis the input-output relationship is typically expressed in terms of certain aggregate measures (integrals) of the functions and one seeks to find the best possible (“sharp”) bounds on these integrals.

A similarly fundamental problem, is that of constrained optimization. A programmer seeks to

minimize computing time while preserving memory resources; an economist designs an interest-rate policy to maximize employment while controlling inflation; and a systems engineer chooses a path to reposition a robotic arm with minimal effort, subject to the system’s mechanical tolerances. When given proper mathematical formulations, such tasks are often amenable to the so-called dynamic programming, an optimal control method that goes back to Richard Bellman in 1950s.

The Bellman function method in harmonic analysis is a re-imagining of dynamic programming in the service of obtaining quantitative descriptions of operators. It unifies the problem of finding sharp bounds for various operators with the problem of designing optimal configurations of inputs. Indeed, one obtains the configurations and the bounds at the same time. The method retains the hallmarks of Bellman’s original work – optimality principle, Bellman equation, etc. – but it also works in mathematical settings that are often structured very differently from, and much more loosely than, the classical optimization problems described above. However, while the method was formally applicable to a broad range of formulations, in practice it was limited by an incomplete geometric understanding of certain partial differential equations. Since then, a concerted study of these equations has taken place, which has yielded complete optimal descriptions of several important function classes. In addition, much progress has been made in the study of transference: a situation when model Bellman functions from well-understood settings are used to obtain good, or even sharp bounds in settings with poor structure. It is this last period of theoretical and practical activity that is the focus of this seminar.

$$V(s) = \max_a (R(s,a) + \gamma \sum_{s'} P(s,a,s') V(s'))$$

$$V(s) = \max_a (R(s,a) + \gamma V(s'))$$

## The World that Awaits Us: Research in the Era of COVID-19

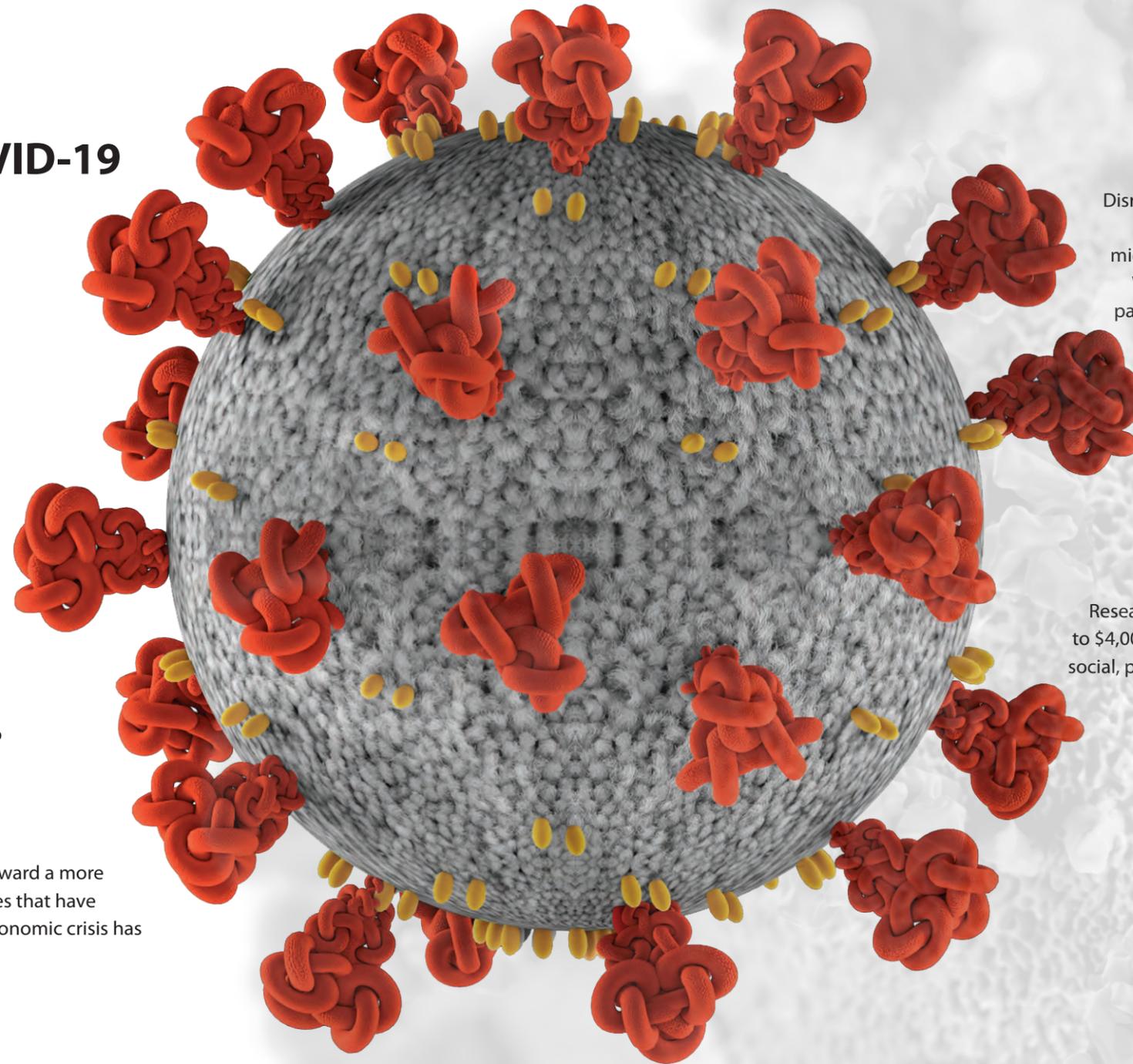
Recognizing the impact on research and the urgency of response needed to address the total shutdown in travel, TAFT created four new award programs responding to the SARS CoV-2 crisis and its impact on research at UC.

### RAPID RESPONSE

The Taft Rapid Response program provides up to \$3,000 for faculty or students whose research has been delayed or disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### REIMAGINING POST-CRISIS FUTURITIES

Reimagining Post-Crisis Futurities offers Taft faculty up to \$2,500 for events and programming that address the problems of and “solutions” to a post-crisis future. This program is designed to bring together scholars, activists, artists, performers, policy-makers, and others to address how communities, both locally and globally, can work toward a more equitable future in light of the deep structural inequalities that have become so much more evident during the health and economic crisis has revealed so starkly.



### DISRUPTING RESEARCH

Disrupting Research provides up to \$2,000 in funding for workshops that help researchers retool in the midst of crisis, where fieldwork is no longer possible. Workshops may directly address the global health pandemic and concomitant economic, political, and social crises, as well as change in research questions, goals, and/or foci.

### RESEARCH DISRUPTION

Researching Disruption awards faculty and students up to \$4,000 in support of research related to the economic, social, political, health, cultural, and ideological aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic, broadly defined.

## RESEARCH GROUPS

In the fall of 2019, we announced the formation of the Taft Research Groups program. Seeking greater research inclusivity and collaborative excellence, we sought an organic formation for collaborative activities and an impact-oriented shared research agenda. Taft Research Groups provide seed monies for up to three years. Groups must demonstrate a potential for leveraging external funding, among other possibilities, and/or working toward a final product, such as an edited volume. Groups are asked to find ways to disseminate research to broader audiences, for example, via op-eds or social media platforms, and to consider other activities that promote dialogue within and/or beyond the proposed research group and the Taft research community. Below you will find the inaugural cohorts:

### Algorithms, Simulations, Platforms

This group seeks to understand the media, infrastructure, culture, and emergent systems of our modern digital ecosystems, as well as non-digital appropriations and responses to those ecosystems, through the lens of humanities and social sciences. This approach is offered as a corrective to a dominant narrative that heedlessly champions "technology" without considering its due constituents and effects.

The group draws on interdisciplinary fields such as critical algorithm studies, game studies, cultural studies, communication, and media studies to examine algorithms, simulations, and platforms as means of artistic, literary, and social expression. They both instigate -- and reflect upon -- the fraught societal dynamics of the 21st Century, and inhere within them centuries of capitalist and technological assumptions. The goal of the proposed group is an edited series of public media on these topics, much in the model of HASTAC ([hastac.org](http://hastac.org)) or Culture Digitally ([culturedigitally.org](http://culturedigitally.org)), in the form of essays and podcasts published via the University of Cincinnati Press's Open Educational Resources.

In its inaugural year, the group met, hosted shared readings, began planning future, shared scholarship, developing curricula for future courses based on the reading, and increasing digital literacy. To the last end, the group sponsored attendance for several members to the Summer Institute in Digital Literacy in Chicago, IL.

### Transnational Cultural Studies

Transnational cultural studies" (TCS) refers to the comparative analysis of the exchanges and flows of discourses, ideas, theories, and peoples across national borders. TCS recognizes the roles of global capitalism, colonialism, nationalism, migration, and other movements in bringing cultures into contact with one another, often by force. TCS builds on the insights of older fields, such as comparative literature and studies, and overlaps with new fields, such as comparative area studies. TCS emphasizes nimble, transnational comparisons over "global studies" perspectives that gloss over important distinctions between countries and world regions. In line with UC President Pinto's Next Lives Here initiative, TCS is

poised to carry UC into twenty-first-century research excellence by overcoming disciplinary compartmentalization that keeps faculty from talking and learning across fields.

TCS brings together faculty from a variety of Taft Center disciplines including but not limited to: Africana studies; anthropology; communication; English and comparative literature; German studies (which houses Asian studies); history; Judaic studies; political science; Romance and Arabic languages and literatures; sociology; and women's, gender and sexuality studies (WGSS). Topics of interest to TCS members include: language and identity studies; "text, representation, and context"; popular and visual culture; postcolonial, postsocialist, and postcommunist studies; comparative racial, ethnic, gender, sexuality, and religious studies; intercultural communication; and transnational social movements.

The three TCS founding members met in April 2019 to establish the principles of the research group and met over the summer to flesh out intellectual projects of interest. The group sponsored two retreats in the fall of 2019, that brought together faculty from a variety of Taft disciplines, to discuss developments in TCS and possible collaborative research projects. We have also met a number of

times over the 2019-20 academic year, as one of our goals has been supporting the creation of a School of Global Cultures, Languages, and Religions that could eventually house a Center for Transnational Cultural Studies.

TCS also won a \$20,000 Strategic Collaborative / Interdisciplinary or Group Faculty Award from the Office of the Provost, College of Arts & Sciences, and Taft Research Center this year in support of research and professional-development opportunities of interest to WGSS faculty with transnational research agendas.

In January 2020, TCS organized a one-day workshop led by Dr. Wendy Belcher (Princeton University), the author of *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks*, about this book, and TCS used Taft RG funds (\$1,407) to buy books for workshop attendees. 28 people signed up for the workshop, which was held at the Faculty Enrichment Center.

In addition, the group has formed plans to produce an edited volume inviting scholars and other contributors to reflect on their positionalities. While some edited volumes focus on different positionalities within a particular humanities or social-science discipline, we have found few collections that take up researchers' positionalities from the perspective of transnational cultural studies.

## Social Justice Research Group

The social justice research group is composed of scholars whose research, teaching, and community activism prioritizes equity and inclusion and protection of our natural environment. We are deliberately invested in identifying and dismantling structural and systemic apparatuses that oppress, restrict, contain, demean, degrade, and deny the dignity of individuals' humanity. We recognize human diversities across and within socially constructed categories such as "race," "gender," "sexuality," "class," "ability," "religion," "nationality," "citizenship," etc. We believe that equity and inclusion is key to social justice and that every human person is entitled to good health and material well-being and that any true justice is fairness driven and will actively seek to protect individuals' autonomy, right and opportunities for a good quality life. The foundation of a good quality life includes: secure, clean and sustainable housing; access to health services and health care providers; employment with livable wages; an education; the right to live, work, and play in environments free of hazardous toxicants; right to bodily autonomy which includes the rights to marry another individual irrespective of gender, race, nationality, etc.; the right to have children or not and the right to live life in the absence of violence (interpersonal, spatial, state, and structural).

## Health Humanities

The Health Humanities research group focuses on the intersection of the arts and humanities, health, illness, and healthcare in order to understand the

health experiences of patients, caregivers, and communities. Areas of study includes medicine, the humanities, the social sciences, the arts, allied health, and the community at large.

Consisting of a highly interdisciplinary group, interests range broadly but particular areas of strength include contemporary and historical research on reproductive health, eugenics, medical ethics, rhetoric of health and medicine, health disparities, and trauma; and a strong interest in the allied field of Disability Studies.

The group seeks to promote collaborative research and grant seeking in the field of Health Humanities and to organize events on and off campus that showcase this research, build connections to other research groups and centers on campus, and engage community partners.

In 2019 - 2020, the Health Humanities group co-sponsored events focused on four outcomes:

- Pressing current issues;
- Outreach and public engagement;
- Opportunities to learn from scholars who have attracted major external grants and fellowships;
- Foundations for final products such as grant applications and publications. Below is an itemized accounting of our collaborations.

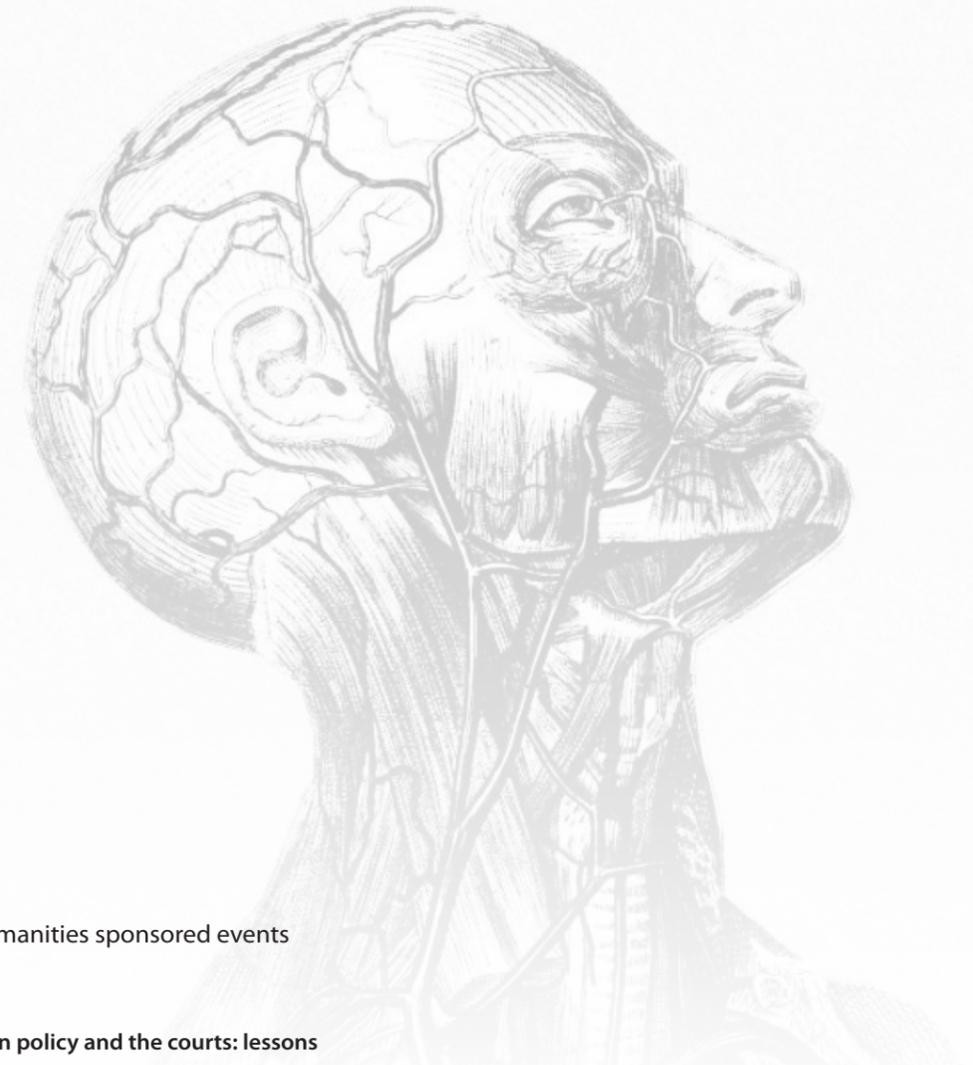
2019 - 2020 Health Humanities sponsored events include:

**The (mis)use of science in policy and the courts: lessons from the case of abortion and mental health**  
Julia Steinberg, University of Maryland

**Dis/ability in Germany, Yesterday and Today** (conference)  
This conference brought together an interdisciplinary group of scholars from the US and Germany to discuss the state of Disability Studies in German-speaking countries and in the US. The aim was to initiate more collaboration on disability research, strengthen relationships to community partners, and engage a broad public and academic audience. Cincinnati's Holocaust and Humanity Center (Union Terminal) co-hosted a section of the conference on the persecution and murder of people with disabilities by

**Academic Ableism and Its Alternative** (lecture) and **UD@UC: Teaching Through Universal Design** (workshop)  
Jay Dolmage, University of Waterloo

A leading scholar in disability studies, Dr. Dolmage's first book, *Disability Rhetoric*, was published with Syracuse University Press in 2014. *Academic Ableism: Disability and Higher Education* was published with Michigan University Press in 2017. *Disabled Upon Arrival: Eugenics, Immigration, and the Construction of Race and Disability* was published in 2018 with Ohio State University Press. He is also the Founding Editor of the *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*.



## Collaborations

Partnering with private and public companies, community partners, program units, and faculty, TAFT collaborations provides agility and responsiveness to emergent programming. In FY20, Taft sponsored three major collaborative events:



In the early summer of 2019, Dr. Holly McGee (History) approached Taft about co-sponsoring the Universities Studying Slavery (USS) Fall 2019 symposium, with the theme “The Academy’s Original Sin.” This consortium of more than 50 member academic institutions in the U.S. and U.K. is dedicated to facilitating collaboration among colleges, universities, and disciplines to address issues dealing with race and

inequality in modern American society. The University of Cincinnati joined USS in 2018 and co-hosted the symposium with Xavier University in October 2019. This symposium focused on the role of enslaved people and their relation to higher education.

In partnership with UC Forward, the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs and the Division of Experience-Based Learning and Career Education, Taft is sponsoring faculty Collaborative Mini-Grants for the development of Cross-Disciplinary Course Development, with a focus on Urban Resilience in the Pandemic. Grants of up to \$20,000 are available to support cross-disciplinary faculty teams of two or more to collaborate in coordinating and leading undergraduate courses and associated co-curricular activity during a semester that will produce tangible outcomes such as applied research, project work, and service in this theme. Coursework and associated co-curricular activity must be conducted with, and benefit, external

partners from the greater Cincinnati area. Submissions are accepted August 2020 through April 2021.

In addition to the grant, the Faculty Enrichment Center will sponsor and host events throughout the program duration to promote best practices and dissemination of project work.

Also in partnership with the Faculty Enrichment Center, Taft sponsored TAFT FACULTY WRITE!, a week of intensive writing along side others, virtually.

Taft was a proud sponsor of the Society for Women in Philosophy keynote lecture by Serene J. Khader, Jay Newman Chair in Philosophy of Culture, Brooklyn College.



### Understanding Climate Change

Carlie Trott, Assistant Professor

Social and Community Psychology, University of Cincinnati

Brooke Crowley, Associate Professor  
Geology and Anthropology, University of Cincinnati

Brenda Hunda, Curator  
Cincinnati Museum Center

### Climate Change and Social Justice

Nancy Tuana, Professor of Philosophy and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies,  
Founding Director of the Rock Ethics Institute, Pennsylvania State University

### Climate Change and Cincinnati Life

Joseph Tomain, Dean Emeritus and Wilbert and Helen Ziegler Professor of Law  
University of Cincinnati College of Law

Nicole Gunderman, Director of Education  
Gorman Heritage Farm

Oliver Kroner, Sustainability Coordinator  
City of Cincinnati

This event series was organized by Dr. Angela Potochnik, Director of the UC Center for Public Engagement with Science, and in partnership the Mercantile Library

## Commemoration

### Native American Heritage Month Native American Healing Through Art

In November 2019, the Taft Research Center welcomed three guests for Native American Heritage Month: Stephen Black Bear LaBoueff, co-founder of the You Are Not Alone Network for Native youth; Joy Gritton, art history professor at Morehead State University; and Helen Danser, chair of the Kentucky Native American Heritage Committee. During their visit, LaBoueff, Gritton, and Danser discussed art, healing, and community with Taft GA Katelyn Lusher in a special episode of the Taft Research Center podcast, Humanities Unbound. All three guests provided prolific commentary on the complex and painful history behind Native American diaspora from ancestral lands and the wounds that the Native American community is trying to heal through history, heritage, and mental health awareness.

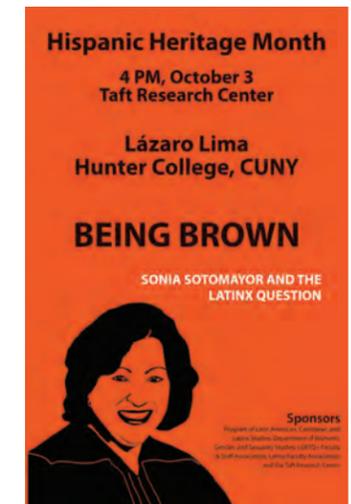
Art and culture, Gritton and LaBoueff stated, are what help bring the community together even when time has fragmented their connections to one another. "What we're trying to talk about and understand is that Native peoples come out of cultures that were based in a particular landscape and [we were taught] traditions in our lifetime...we're losing those unless we spend the time to reclaim them and live them, not just talk about them," LaBoueff said. Danser similarly explained that without proper education about

Indigenous peoples, their existence in history will be erased. "We are here, we never left," Danser said. "If we do not integrate into our educational system the history of [indigenous] people, our people, our ancestors, we will truly become extinct. It will be as if we never saw the face of this Earth."

by Katelyn Lusher, PhD candidate, English & Comparative Literature

### Hispanic Heritage Month Being Brown: Sonia Sotomayor and the Latinx Question

In October, Taft hosted renowned Latino Studies scholar Dr. Lázaro Lima, Taft's Latinx History Month annual speaker. Dr. Lima's book, *Being Brown: Sonia Sotomayor and the Latino Question* (University of California Press, 2019), is an important contribution to studies of race, gender, and law, particularly as it relates to latino/a lives and political experience



# The BIG

Secret:

## Charles McMicken Benefactor & Enslaver



Image of Bayou Sara with Saint Francisville visible on the hillside in the distance. Lewis Henry (1819-1904), published in Das illustrierte Mississippthal (Düsseldorf: Arnz & comp., 1857).

Charles McMicken had a secret. In his own time, people knew his secret in the way that people know things that you shouldn't talk about in polite company or write down anywhere, but by the turn of the twenty-first century the hushed voices of McMicken's time had died down, and the secret had been largely forgotten.

On February 18, 2020, the Taft Research Center and the Department of History brought retired law professor and Louisiana State University PhD candidate Evelyn L. Wilson to campus to remind us. She came to describe McMicken's world, not in Cincinnati where his wealth helped create a university, but in the slave state of Louisiana, where he lived much of the year. Her talk packed the Annie Laws room. Students, faculty, staff, and community members were standing in the back, straining to hear.

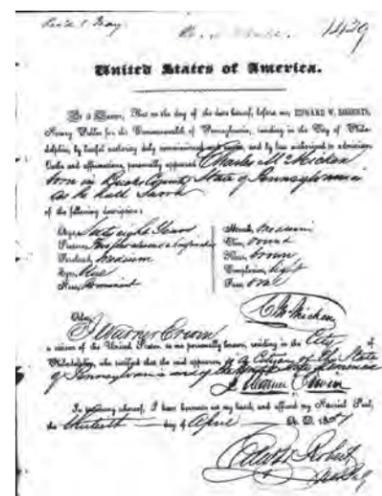
After his death in 1858, Cincinnatians remembered Charles McMicken as a successful merchant and the

benevolent founder of the University of Cincinnati. For much of the university's history, this narrative went unquestioned and unexamined. Yet McMicken had another story. For most of his life he split the year between a mansion on a Cincinnati hillside and a small white house in a sleepy Louisiana town. It was in this little town of Saint Francisville that his secret was probably born. The secret was really two secrets, and their names were John McMicken and Adeline Richardson. They were the children Charles McMicken fathered with African American women he enslaved. This was the open secret that many Cincinnatians knew in McMicken's time. His relationship with his

children is just one of many mysteries surrounding McMicken. Indeed, we know little about how he made the money that he used to endow UC.

Evelyn L. Wilson has spent the last five years studying the free Black community of Saint Francisville in pursuit of a doctoral degree in History. She came to Cincinnati to describe the bi-racial but divided community in Louisiana, and to help us make sense of Charles McMicken's life as a merchant and slaveholder. Her visit helped contribute to the university's ongoing effort to understand its past and rewrite the McMicken narrative in a way that is just and responsive to every member of the university community.

The community conversation about McMicken began shortly after the murder of Samuel DuBois in the summer of 2015. Student protests drew attention to inequality on and around campus, and one of the issues that arose was the language contained in of this issues that arose was the language contained in McMicken's 1858 will, in which he left a significant gift to the city of Cincinnati for the creation of a university to serve "white boys and girls." That phrase, and the fact that McMicken had held people in slavery, was at the heart of four years of student protest. Responding to student – and eventually faculty and staff – demands, President Neville Pinto formed the McMicken Working Group to investigate the issue in the fall of 2018. The Working Group conducted no new research on McMicken, but instead relied on what the university community already knew, or thought it knew.



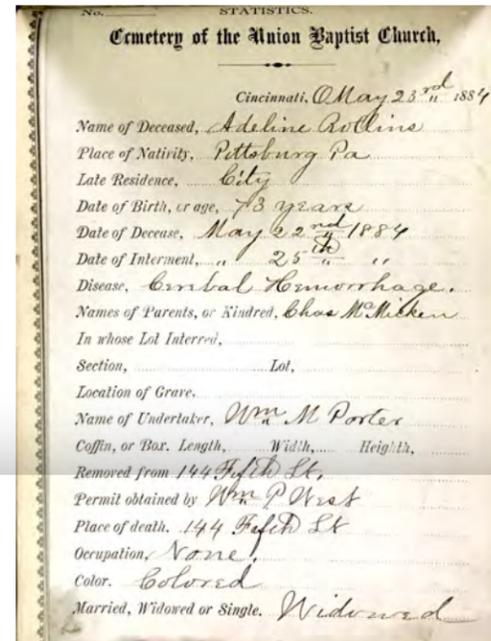
Charles McMicken passport application, from Ancestry.com, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington D.C.; Roll #: 36; Volume #: Roll 036 - 07 Apr 1851-22 May 1851

by Anne Delano Steinert and David Stradling

Despite the lack of resources for new research, over the years the conversation about McMicken evolved, as the community learned more about his life. What little historians knew about McMicken raised more and more questions. In August 2018, a few months before the creation of the Working Group, Provost Kristi Nelson announced that UC would join Universities Studying Slavery (USS), a growing organization of institutions engaged in conversations about their connections to slavery. To conduct its own research, UC formed a research panel to explore the university's treatment of the African American community more broadly.

As part of the exploration of McMicken's connections to slavery, the College of Arts & Sciences sent Anne Delano Steinert, a doctoral student in the Department of History, to Saint Francisville. While researching in the West Feliciana Parish records, Steinert met Evelyn Wilson, a doctoral student at LSU writing a dissertation on the free Black population of antebellum West Feliciana Parish – the exact place and time of Charles McMicken's slaveholding. Conversation over lunch, followed by email correspondence, resulted in an invitation for Wilson to speak at UC.

In her talk, "Charles McMicken and the African American Community in West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana," Wilson contextualized McMicken's life using a rich collection of legal records detailing land transactions, slave sales, and lawsuits. Her talk vividly described the multi-racial world of the adjacent towns of Saint Francisville and Bayou Sara where whites, enslaved African Americans (of both white and African American parentage,) and free Blacks



Adeline Rollins Interment Record, courtesy of Union Baptist Church.

shared one community. Though small, these towns were then a bustling Mississippi River port and commercial center.

Wilson used the story of George Douse to illustrate McMicken's business dealings. Douse, a free Black man from Philadelphia, purchased land from McMicken to enlarge an entertainment hall of which he was the proprietor. An economic downturn prevented Douse from paying his debt to McMicken. Douse's property, including an enslaved man and woman valued at \$5,000, was sold by the sheriff to satisfy his debt to McMicken. McMicken himself purchased the property from the sheriff for \$2,600.

As the complexities of this example make clear, while McMicken conducted business with a wide range of people, his goal was always profit—even when securing it involved trading in human beings. It was this business sense that built the fortune he left to the city of Cincinnati.

In addition to her formal talk, Wilson also hosted an informal question and answer session at the African American Cultural Resource Center, met with history graduate students, and with members of the College Hill Historical Society to share her work as broadly as possible both within the university and outside it.

After the years-long conversation about the use of McMicken's name on campus, two months before Wilson's visit to campus the UC Board of Trustees voted to remove McMicken's name from the College of Arts & Sciences. The Trustees retained the names McMicken Hall and McMicken Commons. To help explain their decision-making, President Pinto asked for the creation of a touch-screen panel, now installed just in front of the iconic building, that allows the curious to learn about the debate, McMicken's will, the history of the college and, to the degree that we understand him, about McMicken himself. As Wilson's visit made clear, especially given the size and engagement of the audience, there is much more for UC to learn about McMicken, and a broad community that is eager to learn it.



Evelyn L. Wilson (pictured above) earned her JD from Louisiana State University, PhD in History from LSU, and taught at the Southern University Law Center for nearly thirty years.

## THE CENTER FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WITH SCIENCE

The University of Cincinnati's Center for Public Engagement with Science has been growing over the past three years, and it is finding its place in the rich research and outreach activities at UC and the Taft Center.

This Center is an interdisciplinary initiative to expand and enrich the interface between science and the public to the benefit of all stakeholders. The Center aims to:

- Increase engagement with science by connecting the university to community partners and the public; and
- Improve quality of science engagement by promoting dialogue among and benefit for all stakeholders; and
- Innovate forms of science engagement by drawing on philosophy and other humanities, natural and social sciences, and science education.

The Center for Public Engagement with Science was initially spearheaded by Dr. Angela Potochnik, Professor of Philosophy at UC, who serves as its inaugural Director. Dr. Melissa Jacquart, another philosopher with considerable expertise and interest in public engagement, has worked as the Center's postdoc and has become its Associate Director this fall, now an Assistant Professor.

The Center has grown to include eight faculty affiliates from several UC A&S departments, as well as eight community partner organizations active in science engagement here in Greater Cincinnati. Taft Chair Amy Lind serves as one of five members on its Advisory Board. This fall, with support from Taft, the Center has also brought on a Program Director, Ryan Feigenbaum, who has substantial expertise in organizational management and digital humanities, as well as its first Social Media and Outreach Coordinator (a graduate student position currently held by Emily Michelle Bruff Simpson, PhD student in Geology).

Center projects include organizing campus and community events about science, developing related undergraduate and graduate coursework, and conducting research on the nature of public engagement with science.

The Center is also developing opportunities for UC students. For undergraduates, there is the How Science Works course offered every semester by the Philosophy Department, which satisfies Natural Sciences and Quantitative Reasoning requirements. The textbook for this course was coauthored by the Center Director.

For graduate students, Jacquart and Potochnik recently piloted an interdisciplinary course on public engagement with science. Students from graduate programs ranging from Geology to Professional

Writing worked in teams to develop science outreach projects for a variety of community partners in Greater Cincinnati. The Center is working to develop this course into a series of graduate training opportunities in public engagement with science, including internship opportunities. Several graduate and undergraduate students have already worked as Center research assistants for one or more semesters.

When it comes to research, the Center also coordinates the SEPOS Research Group, an interdisciplinary group focused on socially engaged philosophy of science. The group meets weekly and has two research articles in progress. The Center is also partnering with researchers pursuing NSF funding to assist with their planned outreach activities; two such grants were just funded.

The Center is also hosting a workshop on Public Engagement with Science this spring, cosponsored by the National Science Foundation (Award SES-1946951) and Taft. The workshop will be held May 5-7 if travel is safe by then; if not, it will be a series of online exchanges over three days: April 30, May 7, and May 14. Registration for the event is open to anyone and free.

The Center for Public Engagement with Science was just named one of the Taft Research Groups. UC faculty and students should keep an eye out for opportunities to learn more and get involved with Center activities in the coming year.

To learn more about the Center for Public Engagement with Science, see [UCEngagingScience.org](https://www.uc.edu/engaging-science), email [EngagingScience@uc.edu](mailto:EngagingScience@uc.edu), or find the Center on Facebook or Twitter.

## CELEBRATION & RECOGNITIONS

Littisha Bates (Sociology) is the inaugural Associate Dean for Inclusive Excellence and Community Partnership, leading the college equity and inclusion practices and policies, liaising on University-wide diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, and cultivate community partnerships. In addition to her new position, Dr. Bates won the 2020 Faculty Senate Award for Service to the University.



Dr. Ronald L. Jackson II will be awarded the 2020 Distinguished Scholar Award from the National Communication Association in November 2020, a prestigious lifetime research achievement award. Dr. Jackson is past President of the National Communication Association.

Dr. Sarah Jackson (Anthropology) is the new divisional dean for the Social Sciences, representing Africana Studies, Anthropology, Communication, Journalism, Political Science, Sociology, and Women's Gender, and Sexuality Studies, as well as the Dean's office with the Research Advisory Board, the IRB Advisory, the Faculty Senate, and the Innovation Council.



Dr. Willard Sunderland, Henry R. Winkler Professor of Modern History in the Department of History of the University of Cincinnati, a Taft Center Fellow this year, was awarded the George Rieveschl Jr. Award for Creative and/or Scholarly works. This award from the Faculty Senate recognizes Dr. Sunderland's superior scholarship and continued creativity over a sustained period of time.



Stephen Depoe (Communication, Head) was named a 2020 Inductee of the Fellows of the Graduate School. This program recognizes distinguished researchers and scholars not only for their outstanding individual accomplishments, but also their experience and graduate-student mentorship.



John Lynch, Professor in the Department of Communication, won the prestigious 2020 Book of the Year award from the Association for the Rhetoric of Science, Technology, and Medicine (ARSTM), for *The Origins of Bioethics: Remembering When Medicine Went Wrong* (Michigan State University Press, 2019).

*The Origins of Bioethics* is a focused and nuanced engagement with the rhetoric of biomedicine. It skillfully enlists historiography and mobilizes analytic affordances of rhetorical theory to understand how some of the most egregious biomedical misdeeds emerged from a host of material-discursive mechanisms. It further argues that public memorializing of biomedical malpractice is rhetorically important for shaping our response to human suffering and for preventing future malpractice.

Crystal Whetstone, PhD in Political Science (summer), was awarded the prestigious Presidential Medal of Graduate Student Excellence, awarded by the university president to exceptional graduate students. Awardees are judged to best exemplify scholarship, leadership, character, service and the ideals of the University of Cincinnati.

Dr. Whetstone is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Sam Houston State University.

## BUDGET OVERVIEW

### FACULTY AWARDS: 46.09%

Faculty awards consist of travel, center fellowships, summer fellowships, release fellowships, research supplements, research support, departmental allocated research support, publications, and collections, totalling \$646,500.

### FACULTY & STUDENT COMBINED AWARDS: 5.49%

Program include conferences, competitive and departmental lectures, and research seminars, totalling \$77,000.

### STUDENT AWARDS: 29.05%

Program include graduate travel, graduate enhancements, dissertation fellowships, Graduate & undergraduate summer fellowships, graduate and undergraduate enrichment, and undergraduate research awards, totalling \$407,486.

### CENTER PROGRAMMING: 5.77%

Program include commemorative events, TAFTtalks, TAFTco-labs, humanitiesNOW graduate conference, annual research symposium, LTAB, research groups, and CHCI membership, totalling \$80,914.

### ADMINISTRATION: 13.59%

Administration costs of faculty programs, student programs, combined faculty & student programs, and center programs comprises almost 14% of the total budget and organizational management, including a new graduate assistant position as Outreach Coordinator (a graduate student position), totalling \$190,651.

