

Humanities Newsletter

May | 2017

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& Scholars Luncheon, and 2017 Convocation

Dean's Message



Dear Friends,

May 4th and 5th were joyous days for students, faculty, and staff in the College of Humanities. On the 4th we celebrated at our Distinguished Alumni & Scholars event, followed by our college Convocation – two days that were full of joy, pride, and celebration as we watched our students realize their dream of attaining a University of Utah degree. During our Distinguished Alumni & Scholars luncheon that honors our top scholars, I stood humbled as each student described all they had learned in our college, their accomplishments to date, the support they had received from faculty mentors, and their plans for the future. Distinguished Alumna Tracy McMillan, a 1989 Communication alum, gave a keynote address focusing on the particular skills she learned from her education in the Humanities – skills that continue to give her the decisive edge that has helped her succeed as a nationally renowned TV writer, author, and media personality. You can read more about this inspiring event in the pages that follow.

I also had the privilege of being with many of you as we watched each of our 999 graduates step forward and claim their degree on the morning of May 5th at our College of Humanities Convocation. We watched students who arrived in our community as refugees from afar; students who are parents to small children; students who work several jobs in order to make ends meet and stay in school. I watched students graduate who were the first in their families to ever attend a university; students of all faiths, backgrounds, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender orientations, and of varying physical abilities. We watched a wonderfully diverse group of students receive degrees that will help them become the thought-leaders and scholars of the future. The students with which we celebrated on May 5th are the future guardians and stewards of our planet and of our democracy; They will also preserve and give shape and life to our culture. Knowing that they are receiving degrees from the College of Humanities gives me tremendous hope. They hold our future in their very well-educated, creative, and capable hands.

Thank you for your support of U of U Humanities. Together, we are creating a bright and hopeful future for these students, our community, and our world.

Wishing you peace,
Dianne Harris, Dean

Distinguished Alumni & Scholars Luncheon

On May 4th, the College of Humanities hosted our annual Distinguished Alumni & Scholars Luncheon for 150 students, donors, and friends of the College. Held at the Rice-Eccles Stadium Tower, the event featured a keynote address by our Distinguished Alumna, Tracy McMillan, as well as speeches from 12 top student scholars. In addition to these highlights, the Humanities Partnership Board presented Dean's Administrative Manager Natalie Montoya with their first annual Humanities Partnership Board Staff Excellence Award.

Distinguished Alumna Tracy McMillan graduated with a Communication degree from the U in 1989 and has spent the years since working as a TV news writer and producer for shows like NBC Nightly News, before transitioning to writing for TV and books, including the hit shows *Mad Men* and *Good Girls Revolt*. Her revealing insights on love and self-worth earned her a guest spot on Oprah's couch in early 2014, where she spoke candidly with Oprah about relationships and spirituality. Her 2014 viral TED talk on "The Person You Really Need to Marry," has had more than 6 million views, and McMillan's career puts her in a league all her own.

"A HUMANITIES
DEGREE CAN DO
ANYTHING FOR YOU,
AND YOU CAN DO
ANYTHING WITH IT."
-Tracy McMillan

During her acceptance speech at the event, McMillan said the University of Utah holds a special place in her heart and life story. "Some of the most interesting and free-thinking people I've ever met were right here on this campus. And I tell them that's because a strong culture creates an equally strong counterculture, which made for a truly rich working and living and learning environment," she said. "It's actually a testament to what humanities education can do that I'm even standing here. To put it simply, a humanities degree can do anything for you, and you can do anything with it."

McMillan concluded her speech with these inspiring remarks: "The way that my life and career has unfolded is a pretty perfect example of the value of studying humanities. You don't study the humanities because in the end you get a job; you study the humanities because it gives you something much bigger than that. What it gives you is a self. A self that continues to unfold throughout your life and can take you places you never even dreamed of going. You get to develop who you are, what you think, and what you offer that no one else can, and you get to live according to your own values, and let others live according to theirs. You get to be yourself. And when you know who you are, there are truly no limits on what you can do."



Tracy McMillan



Tracy McMillan, Dianne Harris, & Kathryn Lindquist



Natalie Montoya



Nandini Deo

Olivia Juarez

Convocation 2017

On the morning of May 5th at the College of Humanities Convocation, 999 students stepped forward to claim their Humanities degrees at the Jon M. Huntsman Center. With the cheers of proud family and friends ringing out, 894 undergraduate students, 64 master's students and 42 doctoral students claimed their degrees. The diverse and impressive group of graduates ranged in age from 20 to 68, with an average undergraduate GPA of 3.41 and 58 students graduating with Honors.

Among the speakers at convocation was Nandini Deo, Humanities Student Speaker, a graduate of International Studies with an emphasis in global health. Deo began her journey in International Studies because her parents are both immigrants from India, and as a dual citizen, she has always had ties to two countries with two completely different cultures.

With her grandparents in the audience, who traveled from India to hear her speak, Deo urged her fellow students to use their humanities degrees to show their human connection. She said the humanities are needed to reveal and explore human actions.

"We are the movers and shakers meant to continue the legacy of human connection but only if we have the courage to act on the ideas instilled in us by our education." Deo added, "the world desperately needs humanities, it needs our vulnerabilities and our action and it needs it now."

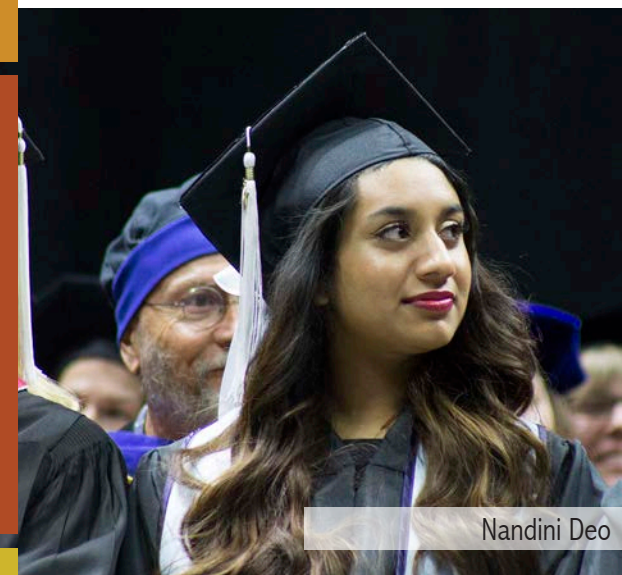
Dean Dianne Harris also introduced Olivia Juarez as the Outstanding Senior and someone who "embodies all the things we strive for in the humanities." Juarez received an honors degree in Peace and Conflict Studies with an emphasis in global justice issues.

"A model of an outstanding student, Olivia is a scholar dedicated to research, an activist committed to improving the world around her, a citizen rooted in empowering her community and a lifelong learner for whom inquiry is an essential part of living," said Harris.

Congratulations to the Humanities Class of 2017! Read on to see a detailed infographic that provides statistics about our graduating class.

"WE ARE THE MOVERS AND SHAKERS MEANT TO CONTINUE THE LEGACY OF HUMAN CONNECTION, BUT ONLY IF WE HAVE THE COURAGE TO ACT ON THE IDEAS INSTILLED IN US BY OUR EDUCATION."

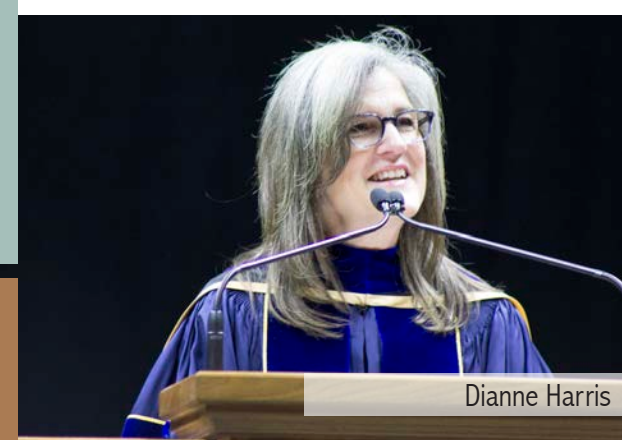
- Nandini Deo



Nandini Deo



Tracy McMillan



Dianne Harris

MAY 2017 GRADUATING CLASS

985

Graduates

3.41

Average Undergraduate GPA

1,000

Degrees Awarded

230

Minors Awarded

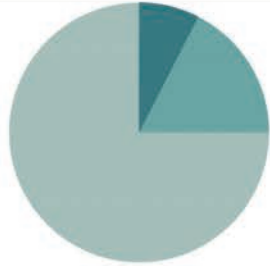
20
YOUNGEST GRADUATE



Age Range



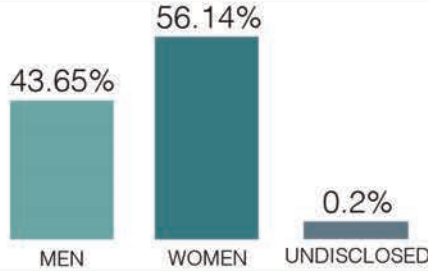
68
OLDEST GRADUATE



10.05%
Out of State

17.16%
Resident Changed

72.79%
In State



34

International Students

1

Graduate from University Asia Campus

2

Humanities House Graduates

167

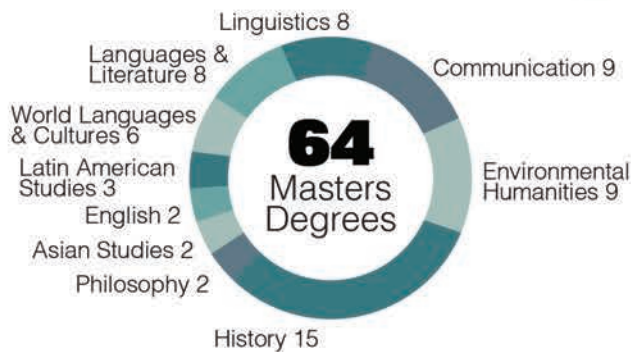
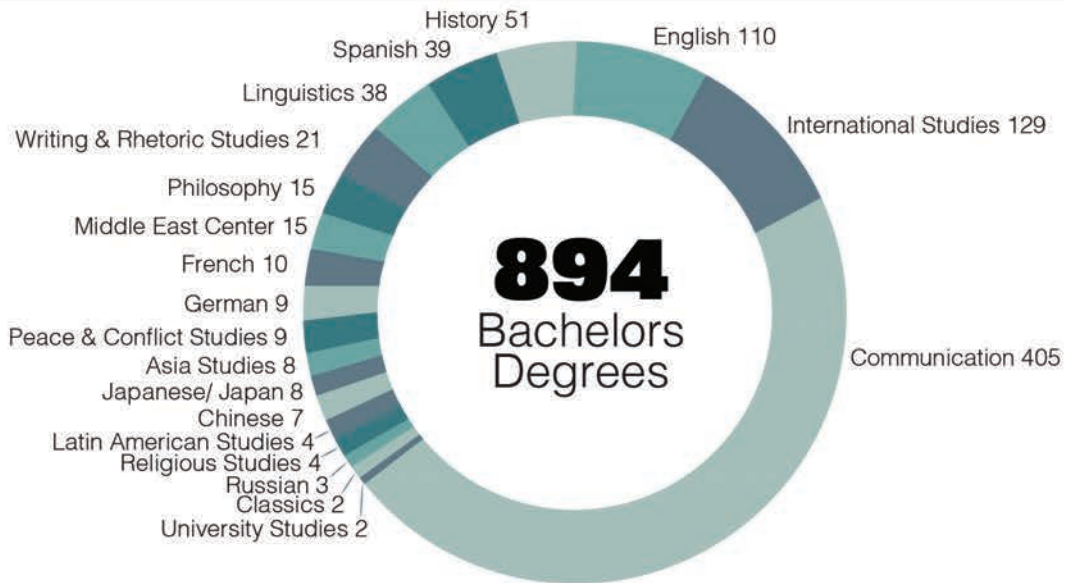
Scholarships Awarded This Year

58

Students Graduating with Honors

28

Honors Students



Give to the Humanities

Your contributions provide scholarships for students, help develop new programs, and fund innovative research that keeps this college on the cutting edge.

humanities.utah.edu/giving.php

Our theme for the year reflects a powerful truth: **Humanities Gives You the Edge**. Alumni of Humanities not only lead lives of extraordinary fulfillment, but they also excel at whatever they do. Our thousands of alumni unanimously tell us that **Humanities gave them the edge** that helped them succeed as excellent communicators; multi-lingual and culturally sophisticated global citizens; critical, ethical, and logical thinkers; and outstanding creative partners. And research backs this up! Studies show that Humanities students find careers that provide financial security and job satisfaction that matches those of students in nearly every other major. Employers increasingly seek employees who have strong skills learned in Humanities (writing, problem solving, listening, speaking, critical thinking, etc.). Humanities gives people the edge they need to thrive today. How does Humanities give YOU the edge?

