

Beyond Bow Ties

Charter and Project Proposal

Updated Friday, May 2, 2014

Christian Martine, Project Manager
Kelsey Carter
Melissa Coggins
Patrick Ozark

Beyond Bow Ties Charter

Goals

Developing Skills

We recognize that the success of a digital humanities project is defined by the success of a project's deliverable *and* the success of each member's professional development. We would like to gain a better understanding of technical skills that include Wordpress, social media, digitization, and tools to curate and interpret artifacts.

Product

Our goal is to create a digital tool that allows visitors view and respond to how Washington and Lee University implemented coeducation in 1985 despite wide controversy. We aim for our tool to be accessible and readily understood by current students, alumni, and researchers. In a four-week period, we aim to initiate a model that highlights emotionally charged events in the history of our university with the hope that our work will serve as a starting point for further research.

Core Values

Flexibility and Understanding

We acknowledge that each member of the group is part of various activities outside of the Digital Humanities course (including recovery from the "Lenny" sickness). With this in mind, we believe in flexibility and understanding in order to create a successful atmosphere when we set time aside to meet in person.

Honorable Determination

Determination is an important value that we each share, and one that adds to our quality of work in the limited time that Spring Term offers for such an in depth project. We aim to complete this project with the goal of creating a professional product that can be readily expanded upon.

Creativity/Open-Mindedness

We build on each other's creativity that stems from our individual interests in different humanities departments on campus. We each bring different talents to our meetings, and by utilizing each of our strengths, we can build on our multi-faceted approaches to our project. We recognize that this creativity may cause disagreement, however each member is given due opportunity to voice his or her opinions.

Fun

Have fun, dammit.

Team Management

Organization

We agree to use tools readily accessible to each member of the team. Our punch list and list of central documents will be organized on Google Drive. Papers and presentations will be created in Google Docs and/or Microsoft Office products.

Accountability

We will be present at all meetings that we are expected to attend and complete all portions of the project that our team members trust us to complete.

Conflict resolution

We will address a given conflict by first meeting one-on-one. If resolution is not found, we will address a given conflict with the team. If neither one-on-on discussions nor team meetings resolve a given conflict, we will consult the advice of Professors Sara Sprenkle and Paul Youngman.

Project Administration

We are under agreement that we will receive equal credit for our work on Beyond Bow Ties. We will create and abide by standards for organizing information on Wordpress (e.g. artifact pages, redactions standards, and resolution standards). We will use Twitter as the primary medium to spread the word about our project.

Beyond Bow Ties Project Proposal

Statement of Problem

The decision for Washington and Lee University to admit female students is a hallmark of the institution's history and legacy. However, there is not a collective and easily accessible resource containing artifacts from the era of coeducation.

Motivation

Understanding the importance of coeducation to the university, our main motivation for this project is to compile a database that allows viewers to reflect on and learn from the coeducation decision. Realizing that an abundance of information on the transition to coeducation exists, we believe that creating a resource that is easily accessible is in the best interest of university stakeholders.

Despite the wide controversy surrounding coeducation, the university successfully implemented coeducation. If we better understand the successes and failures of how coeducation was implemented, then the university could better address future controversial issues. Through teamwork and careful attention to our goals stated in our charter, we hope to initiate conversation on rediscovering and publishing other pieces of W&L's history in a similar manner.

Related Work

Our project is unique in its comprehensive nature of the coeducation movement at Washington and Lee University. Similar works that have been published online include a Rockbridge Report celebrating twenty years of women attending Washington and Lee University and reports published by many of W&L's peer institutions. These efforts generally do not qualify as digital humanities projects because they do not focus on the interpretation and curation of artifacts, but rather on summarizing a sequence of events.

Research Questions

- 1) How did the coeducation decision effect social and academic environments in the years following implementation on the Washington and Lee University campus?
- 2) How can our research, collaborative ideas, and use of technology reveal an important aspect of Washington and Lee's history that can be used to better address difficulties in the future?

Hypotheses

A collaborative, interdisciplinary, and project-based study of Washington and Lee University's history of coeducation will [H1] ignite discussion on how the university currently curates historic data, [H2] will give insight into how the implementation of coeducation affected culture at the time

of passage and now, and [H3] will affirm that the decision to admit women to W&L has been holistically positive for the university.

Methodology

We will be compiling a sample of sources across various mediums that are made available to us by Washington and Lee University. We will work with the librarians in Special Collections to collect historical artifacts that relate to coeducation. These artifacts include letters, surveys, press releases, meeting minutes of the Board of Trustees. We will contact known faculty and alumni who attended W&L during the implementation era for interviews, which may involve requesting access to relevant artifacts from the era. We will digitize sources that only exist in paper form in order to display them on our website. The *Ring-Tum Phi* (the primary student-run student newspaper) and the Calyx (the university's yearbook) have already been digitized. We will search the 1984-86 editions of these student-produced mediums to find valuable material relating to coeducation that we can publish to our website.

Alumni Weekend falls during the time period when we will be conducting our research, and the men and women of the first coed class are celebrating their twenty-fifth reunion. We will be attending a reception to interview these alums on video. Furthermore, we will take advantage of the tools presented to us in class, like the W&L forms/mapping tool, OCR, Mallet, and Voyant Tools.

Limitations

Considering that we have approximately two weeks of working time remaining, our focus is to create a digital humanities project model that can be scaled up in the future. Our overarching goal is to inspire others to use digital humanities projects to recover and disseminate knowledge.