

## HEALTH HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL ADVOCACY UCSF Parnassus Education Space Proposal

**Note:** *Health Humanities and Social Advocacy is the primary applicant on this document and also part of a larger group of programs working on related issues across campus and in the broader community. Partner groups are submitting synergistic proposals so we make clear both our separate needs and our strong commitment to shared, multi-functional space, collaboration, and cooperation.*

### **Background**

UCSF is a medical science powerhouse, but science alone cannot adequately address the current challenges facing medicine, healthcare, patients, and providers. UCSF Health Humanities and Social Advocacy aims to bridge the gap between medicine's mission of optimizing human health and its emphasis on big data, science, and technology. Consideration of context, assumptions, ambiguity, individuality, emotions, intersectionality, experience, and complexity requires humanities knowledge and tools. It also requires new modes of communication within healthcare and with the public.

The health humanities seek to improve human health and healthcare using methods and knowledge from medical history, culture studies, communication, economics, law, literature, ethics, science and technology studies, arts, and anthropology. The United States, despite its wealth and technological prowess, has among the deepest health disparities in the western world, with correspondingly poor health outcomes. To translate science into individual lives and reduce these disparities, UCSF needs to provide platforms for individual and community voices, hear them, amplify them, and respond to them with social advocacy, educational, research, and clinical programs. In the face of burgeoning public suspicion of science and technology, we also need the skills and infrastructure to effectively interact with all patients and populations and to communicate clearly, eloquently, and honestly about health, illness, and the latest scientific advances. Our vision for UCSF Health Humanities and Social Advocacy is to make UCSF a leader in using traditional and emerging technological modes of communication to help eliminate both implicit and structural injustices in health practices, institutions, systems, and policies.

The aims and activities of UCSF Health Humanities are closely aligned with those of several other critical programs, in particular the Program in Bioethics, Faculty Development, our professional schools, the Department of History, Anthropology, and Social Medicine, the Center for Community Engagement, and Population Health. As UCSF's mission evolves in the next 20 years, each of these programs represents areas where UCSF needs to grow and lead, taking advantage of its already outstanding science, its growing tradition of social advocacy, and its proximity to Silicon Valley. Health humanities and social advocacy are increasingly well represented in our professional schools, including in the medical school's new Bridges curriculum and in the nursing school where the associate dean for research is a health humanities researcher. Hundreds of faculty members and dozens of programs from the Department of Epidemiology and the Science Policy Group to Global Health and Family Medicine have requested our help, trainings, and programs. We envision new spaces that further our ability to meet these needs.

### **Need for space**

The lack of appropriate space on the Parnassus campus is a major limitation at present to programmatic growth in the humanities, community building, and the ability of UCSF to fully serve the public. Although many members of the UCSF community have demonstrated interest in health humanities, they are scattered across different UCSF departments and campuses. Currently, there are few spaces to host events on the Parnassus campus (e.g. Aldea Center, Lange Room library, and faculty-alumni house). None of them is welcoming to the public, especially those who are sick, disabled, or lower income. None

provides well for collaborative small groups or one-on-one meetings. None is suitable for tech- or art-based teamwork, modern digital displays, performances, or digital health humanities research, and none allows for spontaneity of interaction. None makes UCSF a destination for events, learning, and partnerships that improve human health and lives. Designating a specific space for creativity, collaboration, and activities that are mutually beneficial to UCSF and the public is paramount to achieving UCSF's missions of discovery, education, patient care and community engagement.

### **Vision for the space**

The ideal reimagined Parnassus campus would have spaces that are multipurpose across educational and public programs and interdisciplinary across schools. Serving our unmet needs with well-designed space that is creatively engineered, versatile, comfortable, and can be shared among programs and activities will not only enhance development and growth in the humanities, but inevitably have broad and sometimes unexpected benefits in other areas. This vision is perfectly aligned both with UCSF's overarching educational goals and, in particular, with the library's core values and 21<sup>st</sup> century roles.

We envision an inviting, comfortable, aesthetically pleasing space that attracts people from the UCSF community and the surrounding public. This space would be used for classes, workshops, and research collaborations and displays, as well as for events such as talks, readings, discussions, debates, retreats, art exhibits, and performances. It would be used individually or in small groups for creative work, education, mentorship, and dissemination, all with the goal of innovation and strengthening health-related communication, scholarship, community, and social advocacy. It would be a place where the community beyond UCSF feels invited, listened to, inspired, and included.

Ideal features include, but are not limited to:

- Flexibility and versatility of space for different types and sizes of events (e.g. movable walls, furniture, monitors, and other creative design features)
- Multipurpose use across educational and social programs; interdisciplinary use across schools
- AV capability for supporting and recording events to be shared in the media or across sites
- Space for public, group, one-on-one, and quiet work, including shared offices
- A curator to oversee all events and activities, foster collaborations, optimize evolving technologies, and ensure that space use is in line with UCSF's mission
- Digital screens, feeds, and other modalities to feature people, projects, and products in health humanities and social advocacy, thereby creating a virtuous cycle of inspiration and action

### **Impact of Dedicated Space**

A department, center or program's physical footprint in a university both reflects its import and determines its influence. UCSF is currently respected for its science and clinical care, but it is not seen by most people in the Bay Area as an engaged or leading community resource. UCSF also regularly loses prospective students and faculty because of the paucity of health humanities offerings. A flexible, dedicated, high-tech space will not only allow us to become a local destination for public learning and partnerships, it will also allow us innovatively to apply humanities and advocacy to increase equity and representation in health, thereby transforming health education, research, and care.