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Building a Humanities-Focused Creative Industries Minor at Portland State University

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Building a Humanities-Focused Creative Industries Minor at Portland State University

Humanities+: Career-Minded Approaches to Humanities Teaching and Research



MLA 2023

Portland State



Creative Industries Program Co-Founders at PSU



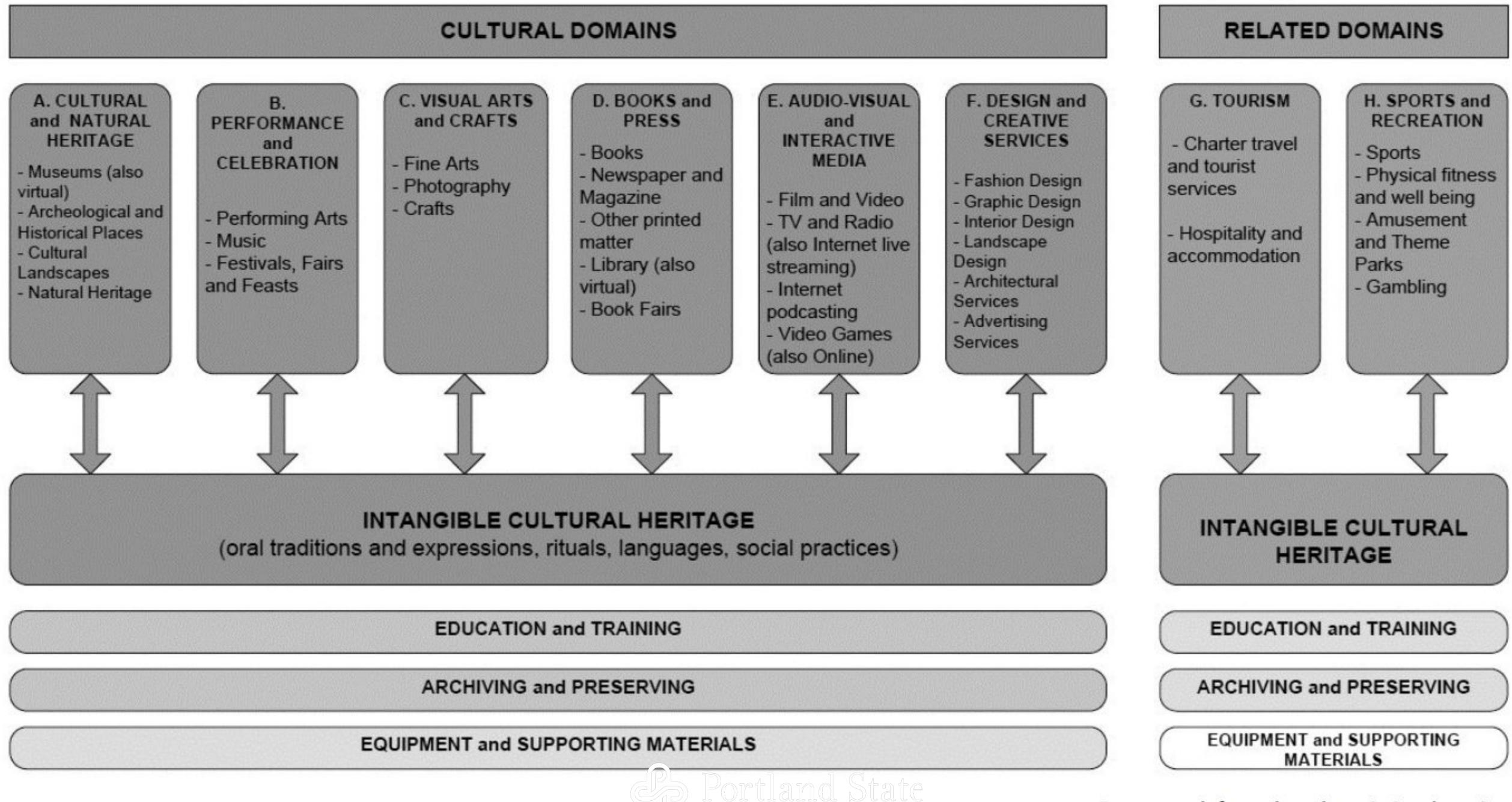


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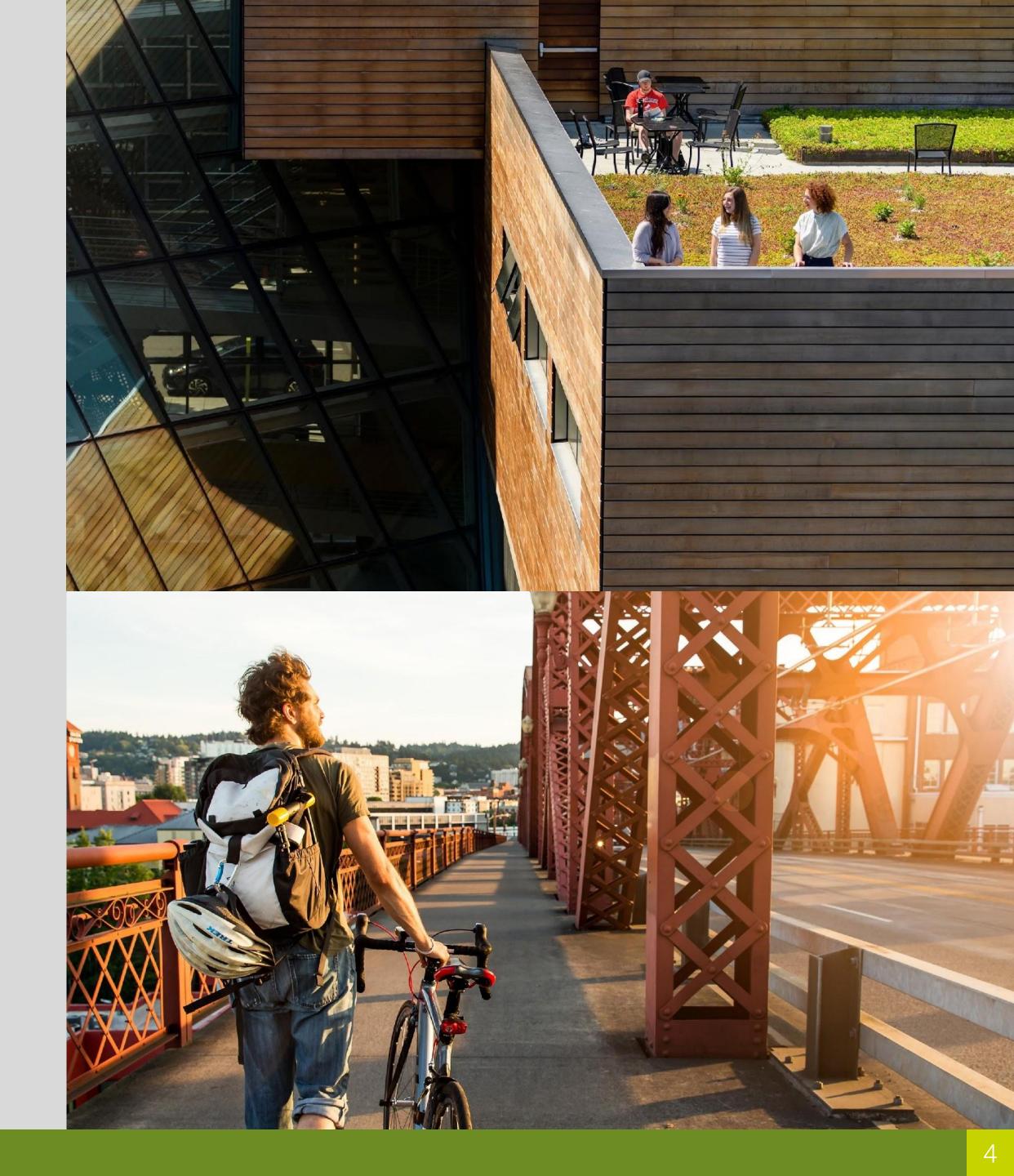


Framework for cultural statistics domains



Why create curriculum in Creative Industries domains?

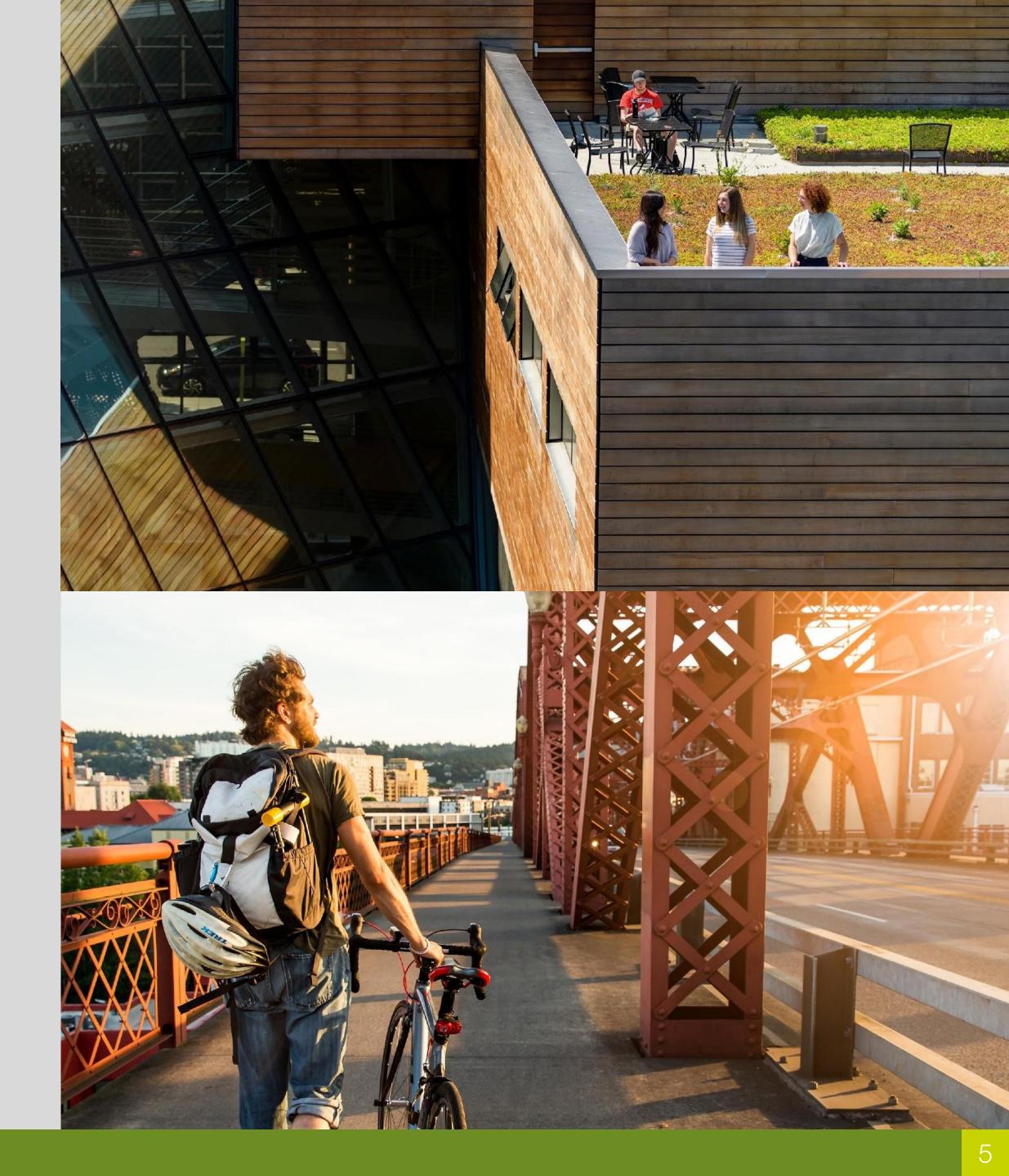
- PORTLAND: A CREATIVE HUB
 - "Let Knowledge Serve the City"
- PSU UNDERGRADUATES
 - **R-2**
 - Average age: 26
 - Hispanic-serving, AAPI-serving Institution
 - Greatest # of 1st-Gen and Pell Grants in OR
- EXISTING PSU STRENGTHS
 - Ooligan Press: hands-on, student-run trade press in 22nd year
 - Comics certificate: Eisner Award-winning faculty; strong placement in local indie comics
 - $\circ~$ Noted design, music faculty in community arts





Creative Industries in Higher Ed.

- MOSTLY LOCATED IN BUSINESS SCHOOLS
- OPPORTUNITY & NEED FOR HUMANISTS
 - Critical infrastructure, platform studies
 - Study AI developments in creative industries
 - Artist compensation?
 - Adjacent orgs: e.g., public libraries; how to adapt as demand for digital materials is platform-exclusive?
- COMPARITOR CI PROGRAMS • UK, Canada, Australia







Value 8 Values





Ooligan Press

- **1. Trade press run by PSU Book Publishing master's candidates.**
- 2. A two-year internship; horizontal, feminist management structure.
- **3. Management skills and** collaborative workflow at core of experience.
- **4. Financially self-sustaining. There** is no safety net.







Ooligan Press

5. Applied humanities: tight circuit between research curriculum and **Ooligan Press practicum.**

6. Practical experience drives research inquiry.

7. Industry Advisory Board coaches students and provides guidance in curricular development.









Ooligan as DH Lab

- Students decide which projects the Press will develop as a byproduct of their labor.
- Integrates a technically intensive **business** [the Press] into curriculum. Empowers critique and analysis of Silicon Valley products, KPIs, and ethos.





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Ooligan Press: Building and Sustaining a Feminist Digital Humanities Lab at a R-2

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Abstract

How can practitioners outside of R-1s afford to build a DH lab? How to connect a lab's output to the communities it serves? This essay is a case study of Ooligan Press, a student-run trade press housed within a R-2, teaching-intensive university. Two elements make Ooligan Press distinctive as a DH lab. First, Ooligan is a not-for-profit business folded into a Master's program in Book Publishing. Profits from sale of Ooligan Press books sustain the lab, which would collapse if its books were steadily unprofitable. Second, the essay uses the DH feminism "M.E.A.L.S." framework to explain how Ooligan's horizontal management structure and student ownership of the press manifest in an ethic of care. Unlike most R-1 DH labs, where priorities are set by senior scholars and directors, graduate students decide which projects the lab will develop, and which skills they want to master in exchange for their labor. Because Ooligan is self-sustaining, it can also be self-directing.

















Situatedness





Care





PSU students are food insecure

Career pathways matter.



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Survey of Students 1812 responses

67% interested in Creative Industries

- Top majors for those interested: 1) business; 2) psychology; 3) art; 4) computer science
- More BIPOC and nonbinary students want CI

Need for Career Preparation

- Only 38% strongly agree that current major is preparing them for a career in field of choice.
- **Only 31%** strongly agree they clearly see how to apply classroom learning to future career.
- Only 24% strongly agree they feel confident about ability to get a job on career path after graduation.





Welcome humanists back

-Attract career-minded students back into humanistic inquiry.

-Build trust. Grow our capacity to connect classroom to jobs.

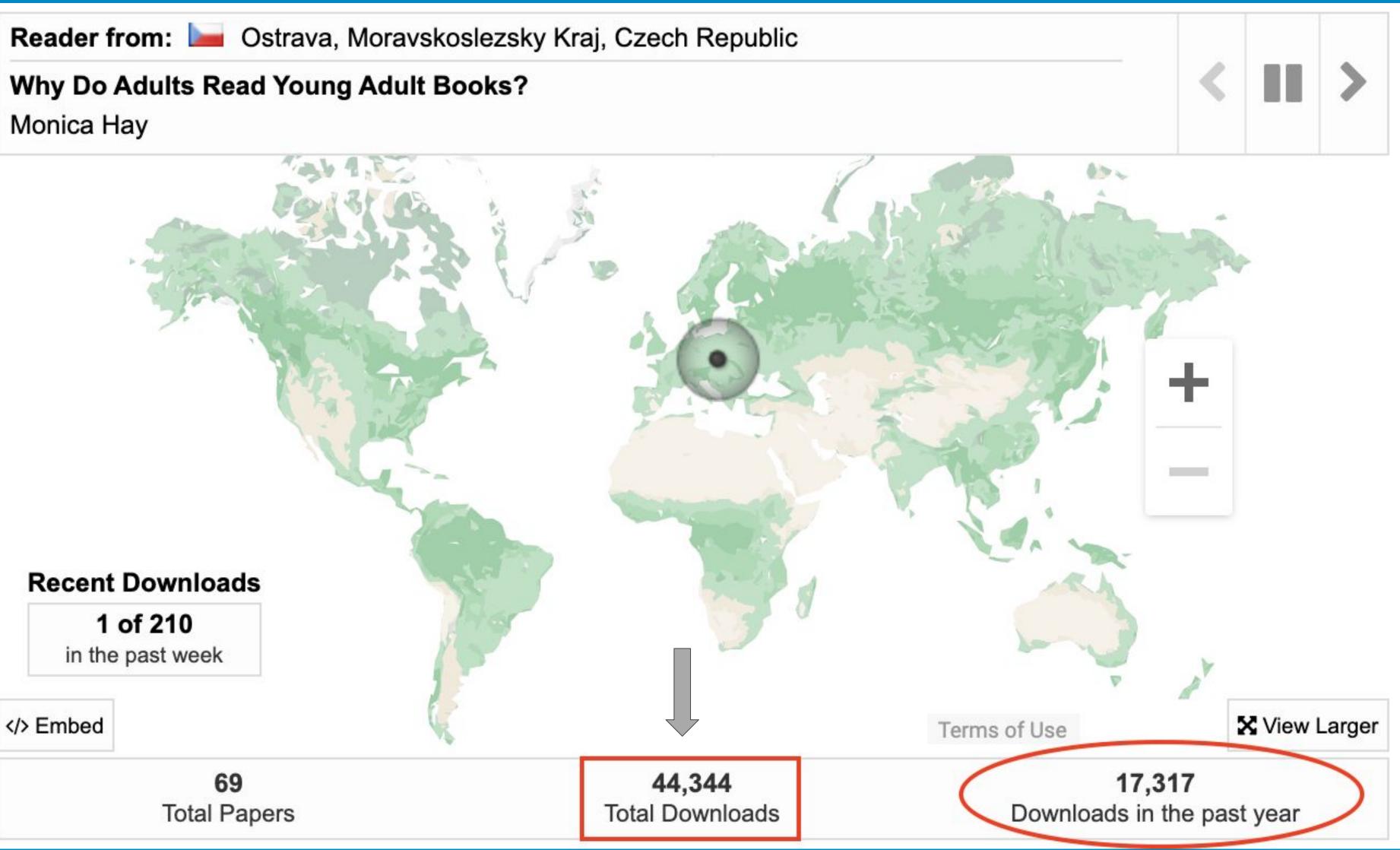
-How to do so without becoming merely vocational?





STUDENT ÷ RESEARCH PAPERS

Monica Hay



<u> https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/</u> eng_bookpubpaper/











Book Publishing grads employed in publishing or publishing-adjacent fields.

91% say the degree was worth their investment.





Creative Industries How-To

OOLIGAN PRESS AS A MODEL

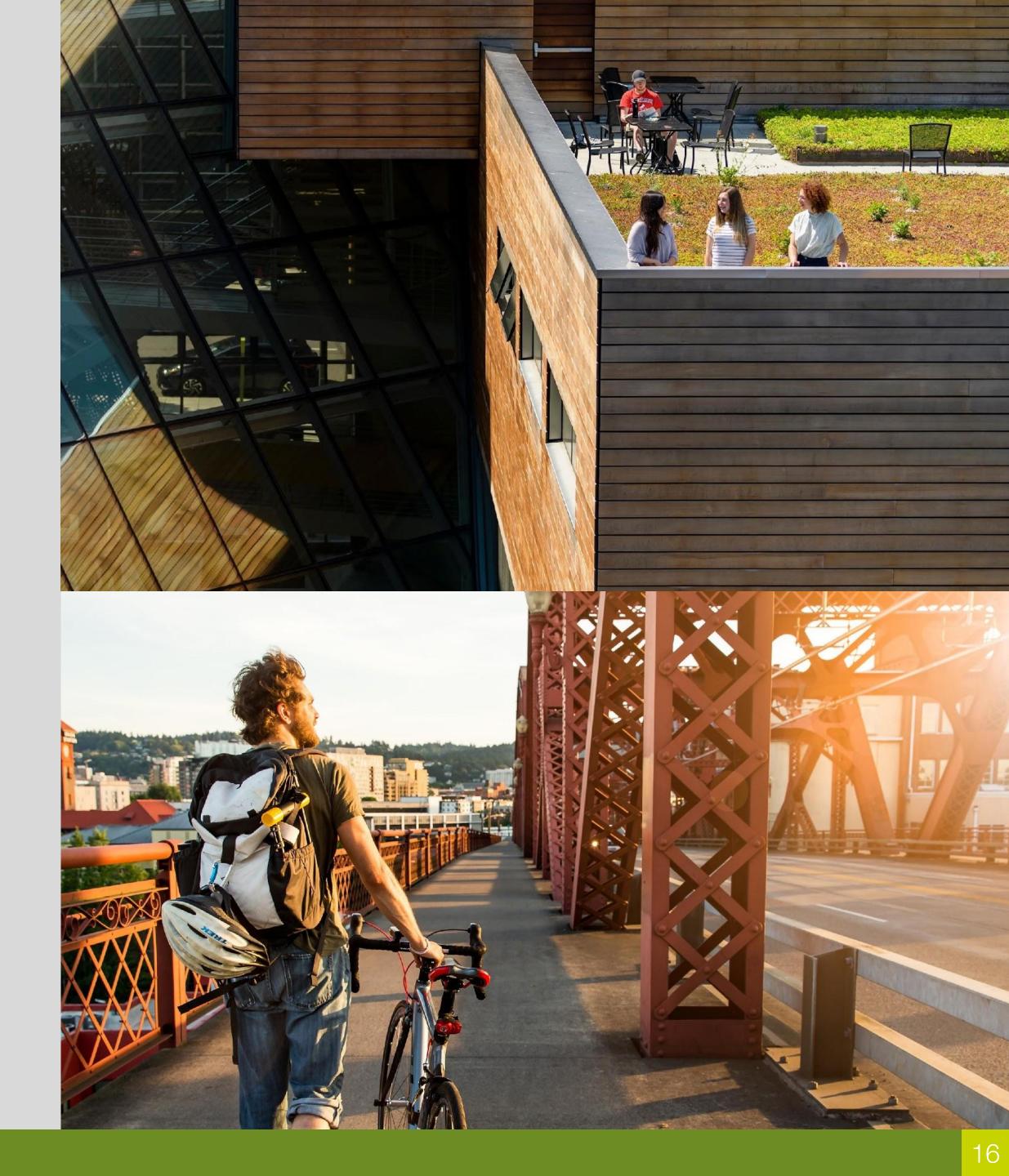
• CHALLENGES

- Arts market is volatile
- How will AI influence creators' earning potential?

Examples: Synthetic voice in audiobooks; colossal growth of self-publishing

• ADVANTAGES

- WORKING DIRECTLY IN MARKETS gives
 students firsthand experience of how they
 can/should position themselves.
- MODEL HOW TO BUILD COLLABORATIONS and find common ground across silos.



Next Steps – a Minor in Creative Industries

Broad support across 6 units at PSU and from President and Provost.

Faculty in computer sciences, design, linguistics, Latinx studies, Indigenous studies, sociology, music and business have committed to teach existing course within CI minor, and co-develop new courses.

NEH Humanities Connections grant submitted. Decision in April.

A hangup? Faculty are nervous/skeptical of known barriers to interdisciplinary. Specifically: how to share SCH [student credit hours]?



Consensus: Cl requires dedicated admin support to break barriers constraining interdisciplinarity.



