To: The Review Committee,
Re: Humanities Research Centre and Digital Humanities Hub

We appreciate that the staff of the Humanities Research Centre (HRC) and Digital Humanities Hub (DHH) have a wide mandate, that there are high expectations of what they can achieve, and that they are a major research asset for the College, since related disciplines are to be found in both RSSS and RSHA.

**Background:** We do not believe that best use is being made of this major research asset. There is little flow between staff and visitors in the HRC and SLS. There is no outreach by the HRC to SLS, except for the notices of conferences and seminars, and the information flow is haphazard. Close ties are further impeded by the location of the HRC some 10 minutes’ walk from the Baldessin Precinct Building, and by the fact that seminars are often scheduled during prime teaching time, and often change times. These constraints make it very difficult for School staff to get to seminars, in particular given their heavy teaching loads. The DHH has had some engagement with SLS (including proposing a jointly taught undergraduate course), but this has been due to the outreach work of the Director, Katherine Bode, rather than to the structure of the DHH.

The relative lack of engagement between the HRC and SLS researchers is regrettable. It is in part due to the lack of information flow, and in part due to the structure of the HRC. This is detrimental both to the HRC and to the research culture of Humanities at ANU. SLS staff strongly favour the HRC and the DHH moving to central campus, and having structural connections put in place to ensure that the considerable resources invested in the HRC and DHH are made accessible to all staff working in Humanities at ANU.

**Proposal for the HRC**

We see certain synergies in having the HRC attached to the new School emerging from the coalescence of SCI and SLS, but as a separate budget entity, just as the Australian National Dictionary Centre is attached to SLS. We note that the new school will cover more humanities disciplines than any other school in RSHA (literature, gender studies, ancient and modern languages, ancient history, film studies, linguistics), which makes it a logical umbrella for HRC.

Currently, there is no means to ensure representation of all humanities disciplines in the distribution of fellowships or the choice of conference themes. Most RSHA Schools have no representation on the new humanities fellowship committee, with the committee being made up primarily of IHuG members.
Regardless of whether the HRC remains independent, or not, we believe that better use needs to be made of the College’s considerable investment in the HRC to ensure that it benefits all humanities disciplines.

Two partial solutions to the information flow and governance concerns would be:

1. A rotating directorship – every three years – to be advertised. The candidates (drawn from ANU scholars in the humanities) would be asked to present an application not unlike a grant application to show their ideas for what the HRC could achieve in their term as director, and how this would benefit ALL the humanities at ANU. The director of the HRC, and the HRC itself, would maintain independence just as the ANDC does (for example, although being administratively part of SLS, the director of the ANDC maintains links to History and teaches courses and organises internships in that School).

2. A Management Committee for the HRC comprising at least:
   a. Heads of RSHA and RSSS
   b. Dean of CASS
   c. Representatives of all the AOUs teaching in the humanities.
   d. Membership, open for application.

   Responsibilities of this committee would include matters such as choosing the Director and Deputy Director, enhancing the educational activities of the HRC, assisting the HRC to make its budget sustainable, ensuring that HRC is maximising its benefit to the humanities across ANU, and promoting the HRC. Either this committee or a sub-committee appointed by it would assess the visitor and fellowship applications, and choose the theme for the annual conference.

Other remedies for the information flow would be:

- Having once or twice yearly meetings with AOUs
- Outreach by the HRC to the Schools in the form of seminars by HRC staff and visitors in the regular Schools seminar series, rather than in the Roland Wilson Building.

Activities that a renewed HRC could undertake would be:

- Brainstorm research opportunities – how can the HRC help actively promote research on the humanities in different AOUs?
- Research-led teaching:
  - Visitors and doctoral students could be encouraged to give guest lectures in undergraduate and postgraduate coursework courses – for example courses such as “Language and identity in Europe” or “Postwar German society” are obvious candidates.
  - On a longer-term basis, SLS is expanding its offerings of “common options” – courses in European literatures, gender and intercultural studies and so on that are taken by students across the languages, which are likely to expand further with the merging of SLS and SCI; specialist options are also offered (e.g. a 2012 course on the language of Italian legal and government systems). The involvement of HRC visitors, postdoctoral fellows, staff and doctoral students in such courses could be regularised, which would not only benefit the students and enhance links between the Schools and HRC, but could also result in some income for HRC through EFTSL transfer.
• **Marketing:** The HRC could carry out outreach activities for high school students in conjunction with Schools, to get students excited about the humanities.

**Proposal for the Digital Humanities Hub**

One exciting possibility for the DHH would be to move into the AD Hope building, and operate as a virtual centre with co-location. As visualisation is essential for understanding large data sets, it is natural that it be incorporated with text. While the scholars DHH working in text have close links with languages, linguistics and literature, those working in visualisation have close links with anthropology. Thus, in moving into the AD Hope, the scholars in visualisation could readily work with, and be attached to Archeology & Anthropology, the text scholars could work with, and be attached to, the new School of Languages, Linguistics and Literatures. Digital Humanities would remain as a virtual centre but with the advantage of co-location. This would parallel the planned creation of a Languages Institute with the co-location or near co-location of language staff in CAP, SLS and CAIS.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Travis, Chair of Modern European Languages,