The Working Group on Arts and Humanities coordinated its activities with the strategic planning efforts of Trinity College of Arts and Sciences. To that end, Dean Karla Holloway served as an ex officio member of the committee. Individual proposals from faculty were discussed with Deans Holloway and Bill Chafe, and a number were incorporated into the Arts and Sciences strategic plan.

The Working Group’s sixteen members met six times during 1999-2000. Much of the discussion centered on ways that the new John Hope Franklin Center for Interdisciplinary and International Studies and the Franklin Institute could be made responsive to interdisciplinary proposals across the arts and humanities. It was recommended that a portion of the Provost’s Common Fund be designated each year for a competition to support non-residential seminars as well as interdisciplinary research clusters on areas complementary and supplementary to the topic sponsored by the annual residential Seminars offered by the Franklin Institute. In response to individual proposals and interest, a new center on Globalization and the Humanities, to be headquartered in the Franklin Center, was also established.

The Working Group discussed two other projects to be located in the Franklin Center. The first is "New Technologies, New Knowledges," where faculty present workshops to show the ways new information and other digital technologies have transformed their fields. This series begins with workshops in classics, medieval and renaissance studies, Chinese art, and Muslim networks. The second is the Franklin Center Book Prize and Lecture Series, in conjunction with Duke University Press, including a series offered by Press leaders on how to turn a dissertation into a first book, interdisciplinarity, and other professional matters key to the success of graduate students and junior and senior faculty.

The Working Group also recommended that the strategic plan include an initiative to "Improve the Integration of the Arts into the Academic Mission of the University." Duke does not have a major presence in the arts, and yet the new media world in which our students live requires a sophisticated understanding and appreciation of the full range of the visual, aural, and performing arts. The Working Group recommends further integration of the arts into the classroom, including short-term visiting residencies by creative writers, new media artists, film and video makers, visual artists, musicians, dancers, and other performing artists. For this to be possible, we need to significantly upgrade Duke’s performing and studio art facilities, experimental production and exhibition spaces, and music practice rooms, ideally in an
integrated and media-forward facility that allows for creative cross-fertilization and impact. The Group also recommends that instruction in the performing arts be integral to Curriculum 2000’s emphasis on interpretive and aesthetic approaches, and that arts and humanities issues be included in the recommended new certificate program in Information Science and Information Studies.

Finally, to make the arts and humanities truly interdisciplinary across the University, the Working Group helped craft a survey to deans and department chairs to explore new ways that individual units might count interdisciplinary faculty effort (in teaching, research, and administration); sponsored a memo to the APT review committee suggesting that Duke revisit the issue of tenure for some Professors of the Practice in the arts; and suggested structures for experimental new forms of team-teaching that integrate the arts, humanities, and social sciences.