Social Science, Arts and Humanities Planning Group Meeting Dates 2010 (all meetings will be held in Anchorage):

- January 20, 2010
- February 24, 2010
- March 26, 2010
- April 28, 2010
- May 18, 2010
- June 2, 2010
Summary Discussion
Liszka
SSHA Planning Group
1.20.10

Preparing Students for Professions
Part of our discussion focused on a proposal, “Preparing Students for Professions,” that would aim to enhance instruction of some of the more essential student outcomes identified in the LEAP document and provide practical demonstrations of these outcomes to employers. The LEAP outcomes have been adopted by UAF as its critical student outcomes, and most of the LEAP outcomes have been adopted by UAA as institutionally recognized student outcomes.

According to the “Employer Survey” associated with the LEAP initiative, http://www.aacu.org/leap/documents/MoreEmphasis_2010.pdf employers are looking at several essential educational outcomes traditionally linked with the humanities, fine arts, and social sciences. These include:

- written and oral communication
- critical thinking and analytic reasoning
- complex problem solving
- creativity and innovation
- information literacy
- ethical decision-making
- teamwork and intercultural competence
- civic knowledge and engagement
- global issues
- role of U.S. in the world
- cultural diversity

Our thought was to initiate this effort by providing opportunities for the professional development of instructors in courses such as oral communication, written communication, public communication, logic, ethics, political science, psychology, sociology, art and music appreciation. This might include, firstly, a system-wide meeting of selected faculty to discuss basic issues of how to better deliver instruction and set course content, so that it might be more practical for students seeking jobs from employers who desire such skills in their employees. Additionally, opportunities to discuss this matter with experts in the field and to examine best practices nationally, either through workshops, seminars, or other venues would be a second consideration. The goal of such an effort would be to enhance instructional delivery of these student outcomes as well as a possible adjustment in course content (it should be noted that UAA is planning to reconsider its GER offerings and this may contribute to that effort).

A second stage of this initiative would involve a meeting between instructors who teach course content involved with ethics and civic issues, and, instructors in various professional fields who may have modules on ethics in their courses. The goal would be to discuss the best means for delivery of this instruction. Currently there is a debate nationally about various approaches:
stand-alone courses, team-taught courses by ethicists and instructors in the profession, ethics modules embedded in relevant courses, or tutoring or training of professional discipline faculty by ethics instructors.

A third stage of this initiative would involve a practical demonstration of a students' competence in these various skill sets, which could assist in employment. John Petraitis proposed the idea of using E-portfolios, which have been advocated in AAC&U national workshop, which John and Patty Linton attended. E-portfolios are something like digital resumes that allow students to provide documents or data to demonstrate skill or competence. The thought would be students could provide evidence of these critical skills in communication, critical thinking, and ethical and civic competence that employers want in their employees, in addition to whatever other skill or competency the student might have. Employers could link to a students' E-portfolios should they be candidates for positions. Platforms for E-portfolios and their maintenance do involve an expense, but they could certainly enhance chances of employment for students. This may be something that is coordinated with Career Services on the various campuses.

The ultimate outcome of the proposal would be a practical link between key LEAP student outcomes and employable skills that could serve as document to employers. By means of this proposal, the humanities, arts, and social sciences can be more manifestly tied to preparation for professions and employment, thereby demonstrating the importance of these disciplines for the workforce.

Training for Strategic Languages
Based on the model of universities in the San Diego area, this proposal would involve providing instruction in key strategic languages to military personnel in the region. Among strategic languages identified by the Department of State include, Chinese, Russian, Japanese, and Arabic. Through such contracts with the military, universities have realized revenue that permits support of language faculty for academic programs.

Tasks involved: Jim Liszka will query SDSU to see how such a program is implemented and executed.

Experiencing the Arts
The gist of this proposal would be creating a network, centered in each of the MAUs, for bringing expertise to their respective art communities, and enhancing artistic work in the area. Each semester, various art programs would bring in an expert (for example in photography, stage design, etc.), and set up workshops for art organizations, agencies, or artists to share in the expertise.

In discussion about this proposal, Dan argued that there has to be some economic connection with this proposal, perhaps to tourism, galleries, or related art business.