

Dr. Michelle Iden
Community College Humanities Association National Conference
October 12-14, 2023
Austin Community College, Austin, Texas

Activities Attended and Value of Conference

Attended the Community College Humanities Association National Conference “A Life Worth Living Together: Humanities as Collaboration” in Austin, Texas 10/11-14/22.

On Saturday, October 14 I presented “Parks Program: Campfire Stories on Interdisciplinary Community Engagement” with CCM’s Parks Program. I started the presentation with an explanation of what Parks Program is and then provided my “campfire story” about how the interdisciplinary work we do has impacted my classroom. The other presenters then expanded upon Parks Program, including its history, with their own “campfire stories”. I then closed the presentation with a discussion of our future plans and challenges. We then moderated an engaging discussion with the audience that resulted with the exchange of information for potential future collaborations. Throughout the presentation the value of the humanities and its interconnectedness to other disciplines was emphasized.

The conference helped provide information about CCHA itself and how to better incorporate the humanities into the overall community college experience. I attended sessions on “Examined Lives” with presentation on how to personalize the classroom experience for our students through philosophical and literary approaches. A panel on “Visual and Cultural Literacy” nicely complemented the themes of that session as it was particularly moving in showing how social justice can be modeled in the classroom.

The exchange of information that happened during the Q&A for the Parks Program presentation was not limited to just our session. There was great value in attending the

conference by connecting with other humanities scholars at community colleges from throughout the nation. Of particular interest is a panel I attended titled, “CCHA Dean’s Committee: Challenges and Opportunities in Community College Leadership”, in which I learned their name is misleading as they accept members and participants from a variety of leadership roles. It is a committee that leadership within CCM’s Liberal Arts school may be interested in joining in the future.

In addition to this summary, I’ll report my conference experience to the Arts & Humanities Department so that we can discuss interdisciplinary approaches to the humanities.