

Krebs Center for the Humanities: Final Workstream Status Report / April 2025

The Implementation Task Force (ITF) workstream for the Krebs Center for the Humanities concluded its second year of strategic planning and implementation.

Year in Review: Progress and Milestones: Building on foundational efforts from Year One (2023–2024), the Krebs workstream entered the academic year with renewed momentum. Reaffirmed through 24-25 planning, the workstream successfully advanced initiatives aligned with the Center’s three core pillars: exceptional scholarship, excellent teaching, and public engagement with the humanities.

Krebs Humanities Scholars Program: A significant achievement was the pilot launch of the Krebs Humanities Scholars Program, a research and creative project initiative that pairs students with faculty mentors for credit-bearing scholarly work. Launched in Spring 2025 with six student-faculty pairs, the program is designed to scale up to 15 students annually. Notably, the initiative supports the College’s new minor in Artificial Intelligence, particularly its “AI Studies” track, which examines ethical, historical, and cultural dimensions of AI through a humanities lens.

The program is also one of the first to benefit from the HUMAN grant, which will fund future student-faculty research on the societal impacts of emerging technologies.

Krebs Ambassador Program and Student Tours: The workstream initiated development of the Krebs Ambassador Program, which will engage current student admissions ambassadors and train them as guides and peer advocates for the Center. These student ambassadors will play a vital role in prospective student outreach and will help establish a welcoming, informed, and student-driven presence at the Krebs Center. We are in the early stages of this work and expect to make significant progress in the coming year.

Public Programming and Awareness: The Center significantly expanded its public and campus visibility. A highlight of the year was a major public lecture by Danielle Allen, which drew robust engagement from both campus and the greater Lake Forest community. Continued partnerships with Ragdale, the Chicago History Museum, and the Lake Forest Library enhanced the Center’s regional footprint. Other interdisciplinary events throughout the year reinforced the Center’s role as an emerging hub for public humanities programming.

Next Steps: To sustain momentum and support long-term growth, the Center will inpanel a Faculty Advisory Committee for 2025–2026. This body will advise on programming, campus engagement, and the development of our initiatives, ensuring alignment with faculty expertise and institutional goals.

Looking Ahead: Looking to the future, the Krebs Center is also collaborating with the College’s AI grant on Cosimo, a whole-home AI assistant currently in development. Cosimo will serve as a model for ethically informed AI design and interdisciplinary inquiry, further embedding the humanities into conversations around technological futures.

Final Thoughts: Although the year included a leadership transition, the workstream’s accomplishments have laid a solid foundation of implemented programs and sustainable models. The progress made reflects a deep and collaborative commitment to the humanities’ enduring relevance in contemporary academic and public life.