



CDHI Annual Report 2024-25



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO



**CRITICAL DIGITAL
HUMANITIES INITIATIVE**
DIGITAL HUMANITIES NETWORK

June 2025
dhn.utoronto.ca

Contents

Executive Summary	1
Governance Structure	2
Building Our Network	3
Research Impact	4
Knowledge Mobilization	5
Social Media Highlights	6
Training Programs	7
Funding & Partnerships	8
Funding Opportunities & Adjudication	9



Executive Summary

CDHI prioritizes critical conversations, social justice, and accountability in DH.

*In 2024-25, CDHI faculty members published **119** innovative scholarly creations, in both digital and analog formats, and **24** peer-reviewed publications. Scholarly creations included digital stories, exhibits, maps, archives, databases, and project websites, as well as workshops, performances, and public exhibits. Our faculty, librarian, and trainee members also shared their research through **70** conference presentations and invited talks, including **38** international presentations.*

CDHI is the future of humanities research at the University of Toronto. We are building vital infrastructure and community to support innovative digital humanities and digital research creation projects invested in social transformation. A needed incubator for innovative humanities research, we are building a shared resource of highly qualified personnel with the creative and technical capacity to bring research to an engaged public.

We have continued developing our distinctive critical research infrastructure. This year, we introduced the **Digital Research Storytelling Workshop**—the first of its kind in Canada—and trained **25** faculty and trainees to create micro-documentaries about their research. The **UX Design for DH Accelerator** worked with **7** faculty-led research teams to build new digital collections, project websites, and interactive maps.

In 2024-25, CDHI amplified research impact, creative knowledge mobilization, and training in critical DH at U of T:

- **\$1,603,002** leveraged funds raised
- **119** innovative scholarly creations
- **24** peer-reviewed publications
- **7** Accelerator Projects built
- **19** digital research stories produced
- **24** national and international partnerships
- **16** hosted events, featuring **32** presenters and **975** participants

As of 01 July 2025, CDHI will continue our work in a new home at the University of Toronto Scarborough. CDHI will become DH@UTSC, an exciting new step in the longstanding collaboration between CDHI and a range of UTSC campus partners and faculty. DH@UTSC will be directed by **Kenzie Burchell** (Associate Professor, Department of Arts, Culture, and Media).

In collaboration with the UTSC's Office of the Vice-Principal Research & Innovation (OVPRI), UTSC Digital Scholarship Unit (DSU, housed in the UTSC Library's Department of Research and Digital Initiatives), and multidisciplinary pedagogical and praxis leaders at UTSC, this tri-campus initiative is deeply aligned with key strategic research priorities on the Scarborough campus, including UTSC Engage. DH@UofT will continue to develop tri-campus infrastructure and knowledge mobilization methods for leading publicly-engaged, critical, and creative research in Digital Humanities.

Governance Structure

Council of Deans & Principals

Ensures that senior leadership is informed of the progress and potential of the CDHI, supports CDHI development, and evaluates the progress and performance of CDHI. Meets annually.

Timothy Chan, Associate Vice-President & Vice Provost Strategic Initiatives

France Gagnon, Associate Vice-President Research, UTM

Alison Mountz, Vice-Principal Research & Innovation, Strategic Initiatives, and Partnerships, UTSC

Stephen Wright, Acting Dean, FAS

Javed Mostafa, Dean, FoI

CDHI Executive Team

Develops and implements strategic planning, designs and delivers all programming and training, implements research resources and supports, manages initiative reporting and evaluation. Meets weekly.

Elsbeth Brown, Faculty Director, CDHI

Jennifer Wemigwans, Director Indigenous Digital Practice, CDHI

Danielle Taschereau Mamers, Managing Director, CDHI

Claire Battershill, Faculty Fellow, CDHI

Alisha Stranges, Digital Research Creation Specialist, CDHU

Matthew Lefaive, DH Developer, CDHI

Elisa Tersigni, Senior Research Associate, CDHI & CDRS

Implementation Committee

Advises on operational and strategic challenges, provides ongoing advice, and helps CDHI identify and secure opportunities. Meets twice per year.

Daniel Wright, Associate Vice-President Research, UTM

Andrea Charise, Associate Vice-Principal Research & Innovation, Strategic Initiatives, and Partnerships, UTSC

Jamie Stafford, Vice-Dean, Academic Operations, FAS

Matt Ratto, Associate Dean Research, FoI

Steering Committee

Provides support, guidance, and oversight for the CDHI programs, initiatives, and financial decisions through deliberation, ideation, recommendations, and high-level decision making. Meets quarterly.

Claire Battershill, Assistant Professor, FoI and FAS

Liza Blake, Associate Professor, UTM

Alexandra Bolintineanu, Assistant Professor Teaching Stream, FAS

Leslie Chan, Associate Professor Teaching Stream, UTSC

Marcel Fortin, Head of Map and Data Library, UTL

Carl Knappett, Professor, FAS

Jessica Lapp, Assistant Professor, ISchool

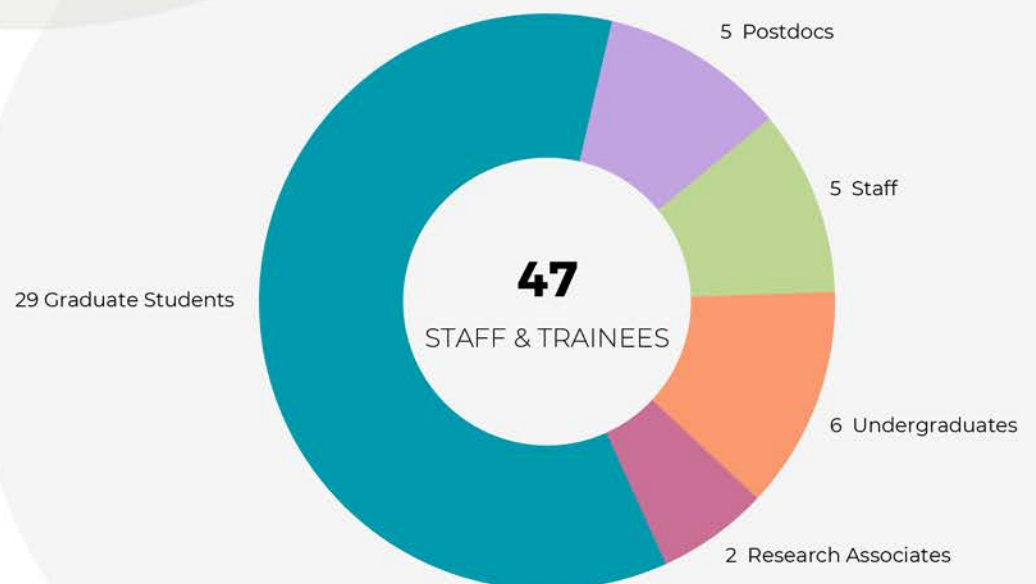
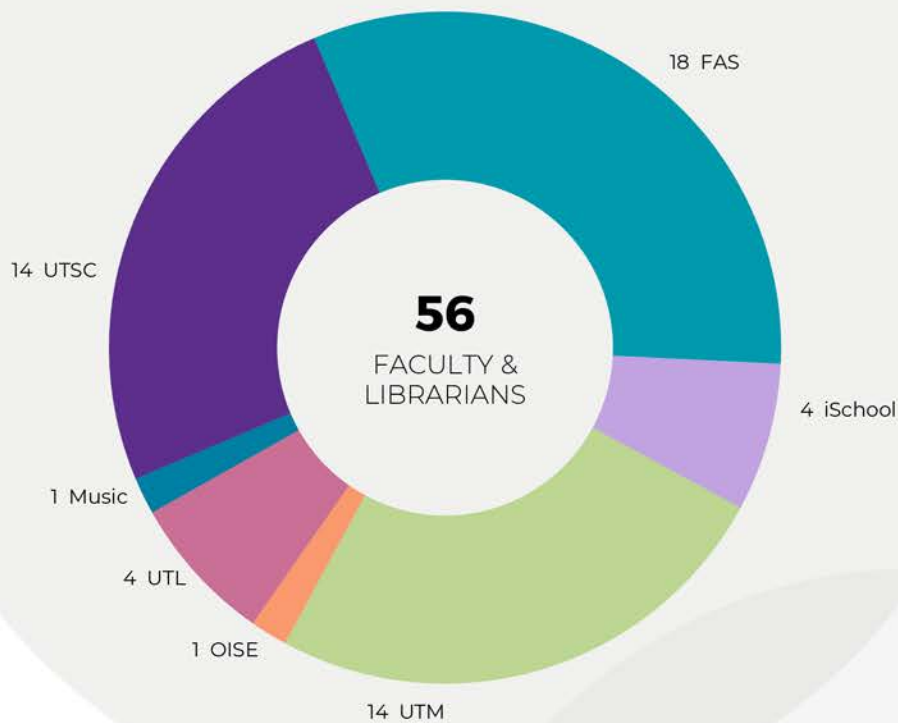
Elisa Tersigni, Research Associate, Collaborative Digital Research Space, UTM

Kirsta Stapelfeldt, Digital Scholarship Unit Coordinator, UTSC

Chris Young, Head of Collections & Digital Scholarship, UTM

Building our Network

CDHI is a diverse interdisciplinary network within and beyond U of T. By prioritizing diverse researchers and equitable access, our values-driven approach has resulted in 77% of our supported projects being led by women and BIPOC faculty, promoting queer, anti-racist, decolonial, and feminist perspectives.

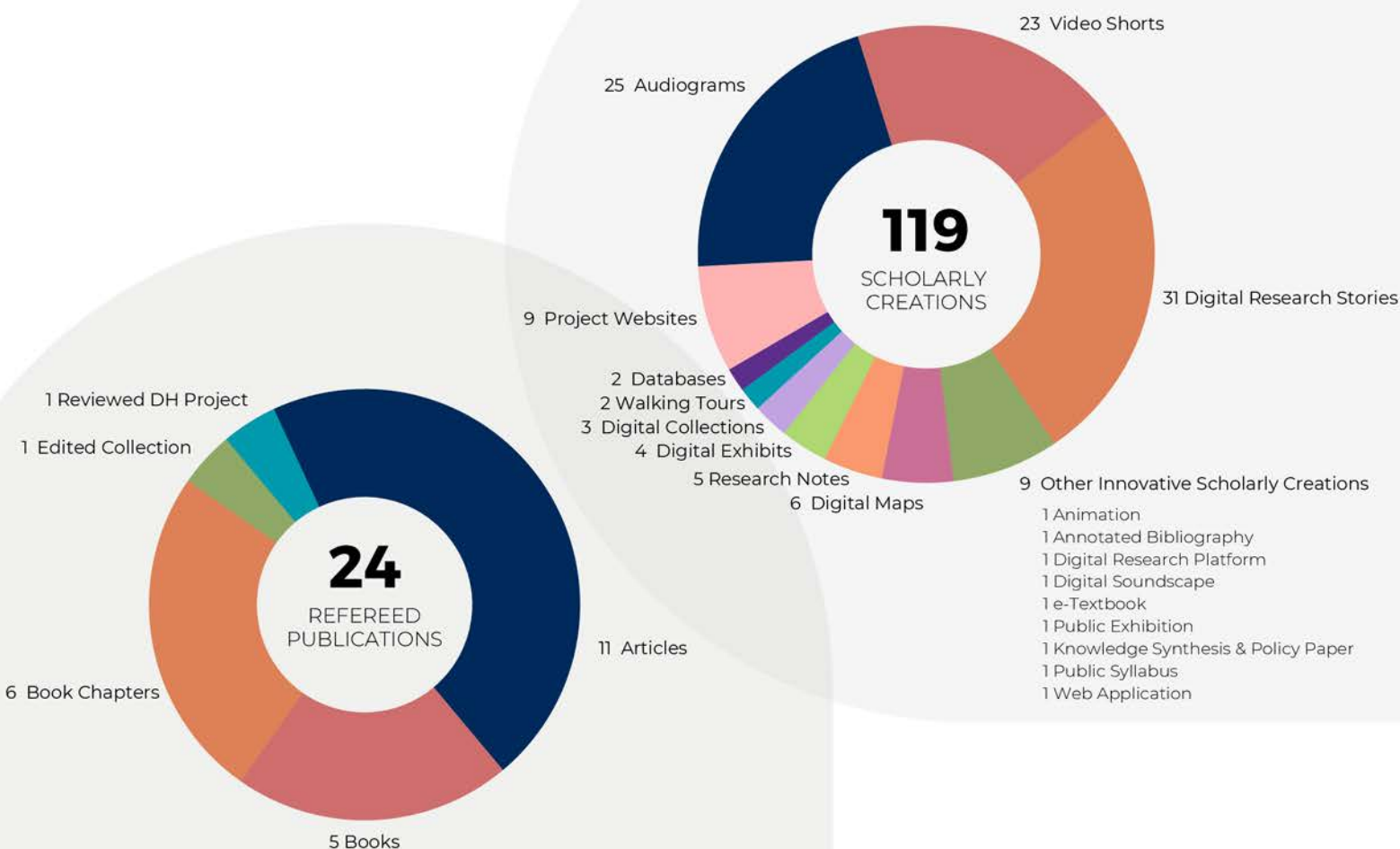


Research Impact

CDHI leads innovative, engaged scholarship from inception to impact with vital infrastructure, creative vision, and technical expertise.

CDHI is vital research infrastructure. Our team of highly qualified professionals support projects throughout their entire lifecycle, from conceptualization to execution. Our distinctive shared research infrastructure model, unmatched elsewhere on campus, ensures user-centric design for inclusive engagement, sustainability-focused programming, creative methodologies, and expert technical guidance. Our flagship programs include the UX Design for DH Accelerator and Digital Research Storytelling Workshop.

Critical DH research is creative research. Our members are publishing their work in peer-reviewed journals and collections, which are being read by international audiences. With support from CDHI's research infrastructure, our members have activated oral histories with video shorts and audiograms; created interactive maps, exhibits, and workshops; developed web applications, digital collections, and project websites; and much more.



Knowledge Mobilization

CDHI amplifies research impact and knowledge mobilization through our digital communications platforms and distinctive programs.

CDHI Members are sharing research at National & International Conferences

38 INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATIONS **32** CANADIAN PRESENTATIONS **12** COUNTRIES



NEWSLETTER

Subscribers: 1.8K | +209 | +13%
Open Rate: 40.9%



INSTAGRAM

Followers: 1.1K | +155 | +300%
Impressions: 33.4K



WEBSITE

Visitors: 13K | +1K | +8%
Page Views: 34K

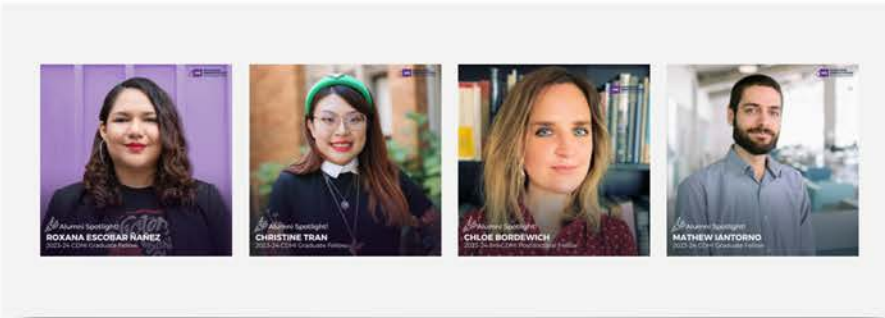
CDHI creates a vital environment for research exchange with our bi-annual **DH Fest** research showcase, **Visiting Speaker** and **Lightning Lunch** series, as well as workshops and special sessions. This year, CDHI hosted **11** events, featuring **26** presenters from U of T and beyond. Attracting **239** participants, our events are a launch pad for exciting new research collaborations and partnerships. Through our funding programs, CDHI co-sponsored **7** additional events with **736** participants.

Social Media Highlights

Over the 2024–25 fiscal year, CDHI’s Digital Research Creation Specialist, **Alisha Stranges**, crafted a visually cohesive and values-driven social media presence that amplified our programs, events, and community. Through a strategic mix of informative carousels and engaging reels, Alisha showcased the dynamic work happening across CDHI while expanding our visual storytelling toolkit.

New Series: Alumni Achievements

This year marked the launch of Alumni Achievements, a new carousel series celebrating the work of CDHI’s graduate and postdoctoral alumni. Designed to spotlight how our community continues to shape the field of digital humanities, the series profiled four researchers: **Roxana Escobar Ñañez**, **Christine Tran**, **Chloe Boredwich**, and **Mathew Iantorno**.



A Values-Aligned Exit from Twitter/X

In October 2024, CDHI made the decision to step away from Twitter/X in light of the increasingly divisive rhetoric and unsafe platform dynamics under Elon Musk’s leadership. This move aligned with our commitment to accessible, anti-racist, feminist, and queer research—and our community responded with support. The announcement post received a **10.5% engagement rate**, the highest of the year.



Reels as Real-Time Research Storytelling

Alisha also deepened her fluency in Canva Pro and explored new creative techniques for promotional reels. These short-form videos offered both behind-the-scenes glimpses and real-time updates, helping our followers stay connected to CDHI’s work as it unfolded.



VIEW ON
INSTA

Meet Claire Battershill
Profile on our Acting Faculty Director



VIEW ON
INSTA

ICYMI: Lightning Lunch
Wrap-up on “Teaching with Digital Storytelling”



VIEW ON
INSTA

DH Fest 2025: Save the Date
Promoting our annual conference



VIEW ON
INSTA

DH by 2030
Insights from our DH Fest 2025 visioning session

Training Programs

CDHI is an innovative learning and resource hub for faculty and trainees.

5 Programs **72** Participants

CDHI held **two** Praxis Workshops and **two** Digital Research Storytelling Workshops. We supported **five** trainees in accessing DH training outside of U of T. We provided a unique experiential learning opportunity for students, faculty, and co-op students via our UX Design for DH Accelerator program.

Postdoc Spotlight

Fellow: Christopher Miller

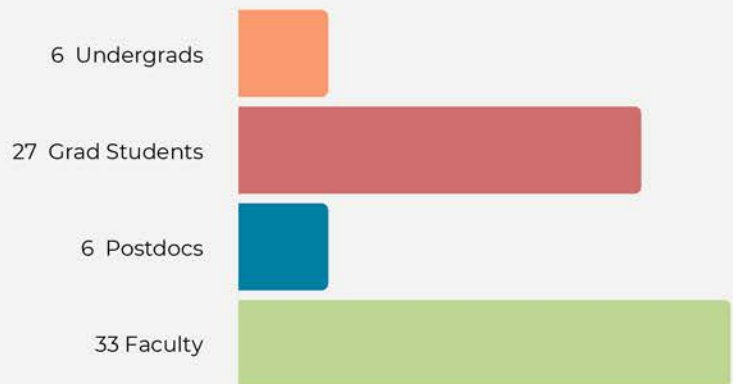
JHI-CDHI Postdoctoral Fellow in DH (FAS)

Over the past year, Chris has engaged deeply in research and data collection for his study of green burial in Canada. Green burial offers an alternative to conventional practices such as traditional burial, cremation, or embalmed interment, aiming to minimize one's ecological impact upon death.



Wordcloud of terms from Chris's text analysis of green burial news articles

PARTICIPANT BREAKDOWN



Informed by digital humanities methods, Chris's work includes text analysis of news articles as well as the websites of cemeteries and advocacy organizations. This analysis sheds light on how green burial is framed in public discourse and highlights the range of reasons why people are drawn to natural burial practices. Complementing this approach with ethnographic methods, Chris has also visited more than ten natural or hybrid cemeteries across the country.

This fieldwork offers a deeper understanding of how green burial is practiced in Canada and reveals how death and nature co-exist in these spaces. Chris has also conducted over 60 semi-structured interviews with a diverse range of stakeholders, including cemetery staff, funeral directors, entrepreneurs, volunteer activists, and individuals seeking a green burial for themselves. These conversations provide insight into not only why people desire natural burial, but also how death is ritualized and understood in connection with the natural world.

Funding & Partnerships

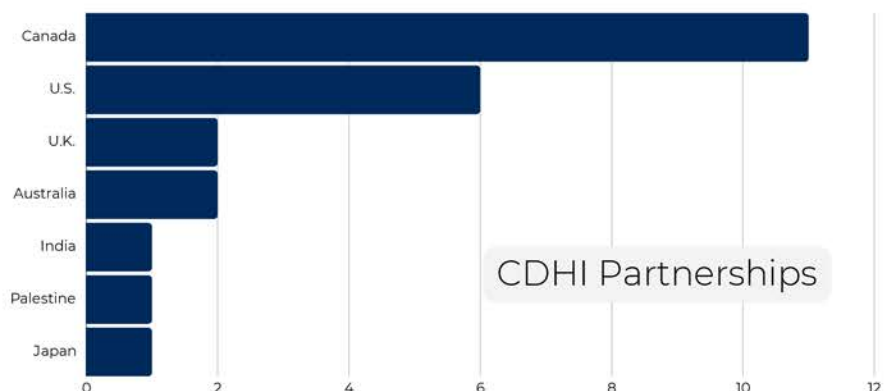
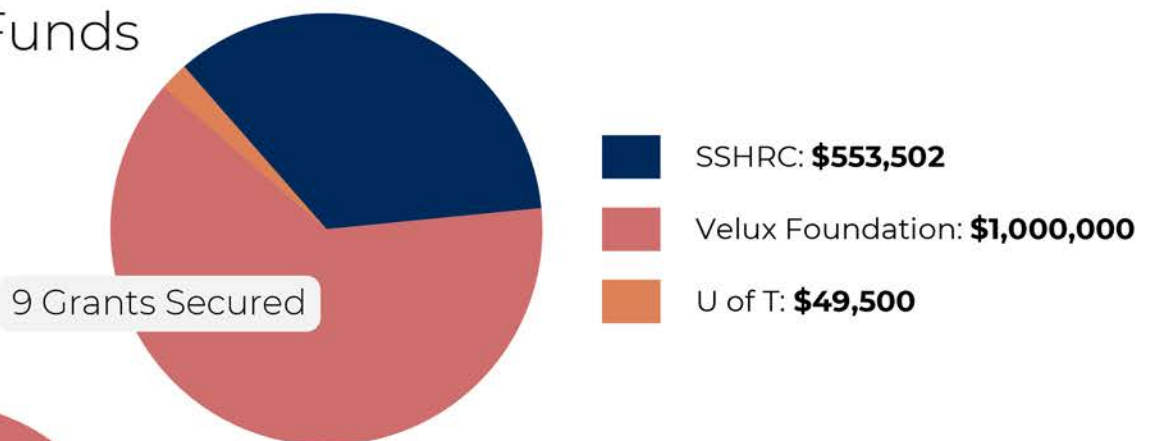
CDHI funding opportunities, research resources, & consultations have led directly to successful grant applications & partnerships.

Professor **Elsbeth Brown** (UTM) secured a SSHRC Insight Grant for “The LGBTQ Oral History Digital Collaborator.” Elspeth will continue her pathbreaking work in co-creating a “usable past” for LGBTQ+ people in the present and developing new methods for audio and visual-focused digital collections research. CDHI supported earlier phases of this research with our UX Design for DH Accelerator, Graduate Fellowship, and Graduate Project Partner Grant programs.

Professor **James Ginther** (FAS, St. Michael's) secured a SSHRC Insight Grant for the “Digital Burgundio Project.” The project will create online and print editions of the translations by Burgundio of Pisa (d. 1193) of Greek theological texts that are either unpublished or in need of critical re-editing. The editions will be mounted online as TEI/XML machine readable texts.

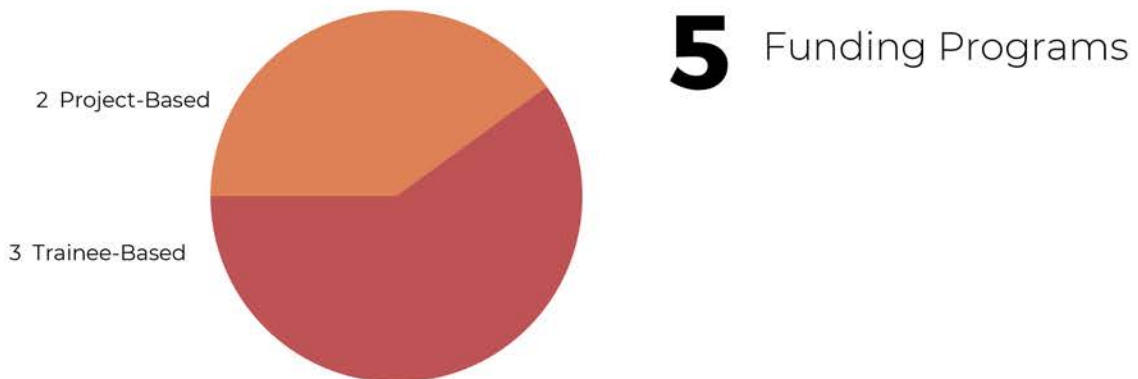
\$1,603,002

Leveraged Funds



Funding Opportunities & Adjudication

\$96,040 Funds Awarded



In Year Four, CDHI administered **5** funding programs, awarding **\$96,040** to **39** recipients across the Tri-Campus. These funds supported emerging and established research projects that innovate methods in critical digital humanities research and knowledge mobilization. Many of these projects are collaborative, community-engaged, and designed to reach diverse public audiences.

Project-Based Programs

UX Design for DH Accelerator and Digital Research Storytelling Workshop.

Trainee-Based Programs

JHI-CDHI Postdoctoral Fellowship in DH, CDHI-Woodsworth Digital Project & Research Award, and CDHI Training Bursaries for DHSI.

At CDHI, we see adjudicating funding programs as an important opportunity to engage our members in decision making and governance. Each CDHI funding program is adjudicated by a committee that includes a representative for each of our 4 contributing divisions (UTM, UTSC, FoI, FAS) and, in most cases, a Digital Scholarship Librarian. Each adjudication committee is selected after applications are received, to minimize conflicts of interest. In rare cases where conflicts of interest emerge, committee members recuse themselves from discussion. In some cases where funding programs do not involve the direct transfer of funds (eg: Accelerator, Digital Storytelling Training), competitions are adjudicated by the CDHI Executive Team. Adjudication processes are facilitated by the CDHI Managing Director. The CDHI Faculty Director is not directly involved in the adjudication, but reviews committee decisions prior to announcing the adjudication outcome.