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Imagining America

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Imagining America

Newsletter

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A publication designed to foster new cultural alliances

From the Director Chain Reactions

Julie Ellison

IA's mission statement, I admit, does not inflame the imagination. But it does summon creative people to purposeful democratic work that is thoughtful about professional and institutional realities:

Imagining America is a consortium of colleges and universities dedicated to strengthening the public role and democratic purposes of the humanities, arts, and design. IA supports publicly-engaged academic and creative work in the cultural disciplines. It works to advance the structural changes in higher education that such work requires and to constitute public scholarship as an important and legitimate enterprise.

This statement is sifted from the accumulated experience of public-minded scholars, artists, teachers, students, and their many community partners—the people who are changing the production of cultural and humanistic knowledge. By the time their work is distilled into the blah-blah of missionese, its punch and grace are lost.

How does their deeply grounded and graceful work effect institutional change? As described in our latest research report, *Making Value Visible*, public scholarship works through a series of chain-reactions of ever-expanding involvement. A project gives rise to another project, or several projects, which in turn expand collaborations. This process of structuring work through sequences of projects, linked to one another by core purposes of relationships, is crucial to sustaining personal and institutional engagement. Projects that set off these chain reactions have a better chance of becoming contagious enough to change institutions and professional habits.

In my Fall 2005 seminar, I collaborated with Sekou Sundiata, a poet, theater artist, and professor of Creative Writing at New School University. Our work together took the form

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New Research Report on Excellence in Campus- Community Partnerships

In September 2005, Imagining America published a study of excellence in campus-community partnerships, *Making Value Visible*, based on seven focus groups at IA campuses with academic and community collaborators. The report, funded by the Kellogg Foundation, describes the qualities that constitute excellence in partnerships as it is experienced by seasoned practitioners in the arts and humanities, and to spur the development of an evaluation culture in public scholarship.

Seven participating campus sites, the University of Chicago and the University of Illinois-Chicago, California State University Bakersfield, the University of Pennsylvania, Duke University, the University of Michigan, the University of Minnesota, and Arizona State University, participated in the study. These sites were selected for diversity in regional representation, demographics, community partners, institutional type, and degree of campus commitment.

The report reveals a flourishing world of work populated by faculty artists and scholars; staff members of nonprofit organizations and public cultural institutions; and creative citizens working through robust networks. *Making Value Visible* opens a window on the thriving, stressful, but often invisible economy of project-based collaboration in the cultural disciplines. In this report, practitioners describe the qualities and strategies of excellent collaborations, and portray the negotiations of creativity and agency necessary to successful partnerships. The concluding section lays out a series of practical recommendations for Imagining America and describes the needs of public scholars in the field today.

To request a copy of this report, please contact the Imagining America offices at 734-615-8370 or imaginingamerica@umich.edu.



Professor Sundiata, left, leads a poetry discussion with students Emily Squires and Molly Raynor in Professor Ellison's senior seminar, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Photo by Brent Fogt.

Chain Reactions (continued from page 1)

of a series of Citizenship Potlucks with students and poets, culminating in "Checkpoint: A Concert of Poets" held in the intimate auditorium of the Arab American National Museum on December 1st. This event, rich in new cultural work and community relationships, grew out of an earlier project. The story of this project illustrates how IA helps its member campuses to find partners and models for public engagement through the arts—in other words, how IA makes chain reactions happen.

Sekou has named his work in progress *the 51st (dream) state*; this work and its associated civic engagement programs are collectively called *The America Project*. In the project, he is "looking for a clearing" within which to overcome the "estrangement between American civic ideals and American civic practice." An early version of the work was presented at IA's national conference at the University of Illinois in Fall 2003, and connections were sparked between himself, then-Chancellor Nancy Cantor (now President of Syracuse), who was hosting and delivering the keynote address; and Gladstone (Fluney) Hutchinson, a Jamaican economist and Dean of Studies at Lafayette College. Fluney, a skeptical man, had been urged to attend by Ellis Finger, Director of Lafayette's Williams Center for the Arts. Fluney listened hard to Cantor and Sundiata, and left the conference with his analysis of the place of the arts in undergraduate education fundamentally changed. He wasted no time in re-inventing Lafayette's new student orientation and first-year studies programs.

Now heading into its third year, the Lafayette model was developed in partnership with IA and even, with our blessings, named *Imagining America*. It focuses on "the exploration of issues related to America's identity, human security, and civil society." Each year, summer readings and on-line discussions for entering students are linked to the work of an artist-in-residence during the following academic year. Courses, campus events, and community collaborations were all structured around these residencies, with the Williams Center an ongoing partner. Sundiata was the first artist-in-residence for the new program.

New creative work takes place during such residencies through interactions with students, community leaders, and faculty. Sekou's creative process centers on dialogues about democracy sparked by poetry and music and undertaken in small groups. The residencies for *the 51st (dream) state*, like the one that took place between Ann Arbor and Detroit last

fall, are organized around creative thinking about critical patriotism and about the personal and global meanings of America.

Over the last three years, these creative residencies have occurred at the New World Theater of the University of Massachusetts; at the New School University; at Lafayette College; at the University of Michigan; and at Stanford. Some of what is produced takes the form of the artist's own reflections on conversations and stories; other portions take the form of quoted speech, visual images, or videotaped interviews. Local work loops back into the national project.

The performance work itself will have a double structure. When completed, it will comprise both the show and the engagement package (including citizenship potlucks and community sings facilitated by the company). During this phase, too, the national touring project can serve to put local engagement projects in touch with one another. These performance residencies are important partnerships. They will be collaboratively sponsored in Chicago by the University of Illinois-Chicago and the Institute for Contemporary Art; in Minneapolis by the Walker Art Center and the University of Minnesota; in Ann Arbor by the University of Michigan and the University Musical Society, an innovative nonprofit presenter.

Sundiata's work is complex and brilliant, and it is provoking serious theoretical and intellectual response by scholars, students, poets, and community leaders. Arts presenters are called on to be active agents in democratic dialogues and are not content to define community education programs solely as weekday afternoon performances for school groups. Finally, colleges and universities are presented with a model for building imaginative engagement into individual courses as well as into larger curricular formations like Lafayette's. The ever-enlarging ripples of this project embody the best of what the new public scholarship has to offer: local public spheres, purposeful democratic work, and the meaningful institutional change that forms the core of *Imagining America's* mission.

Tenure Team Initiative Members

Thomas Bender, Professor of History, University Professor of the Humanities, and Director of the International Center for Advanced Studies, New York University

Craig Calhoun, University Professor of Social Science, New York University; President of the Social Science Research Council

Mary Schmidt Campbell, Dean of the Tisch School of the Performing Arts and Associate Provost, New York University

Carol Christ, President, Smith College

Gail Dubrow, Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost, University of Minnesota

Ira Harkavy, Associate Vice President and Director of the Center for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania

Judith Russi Kirshner, Dean of the College of Architecture and the Arts, University of Illinois at Chicago

Nicholas Lemann, Dean of Journalism and Henry R. Luce Professor, Columbia University

Earl Lewis, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Emory University

Devorah Lieberman, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Wagner University

Ellen McCulloch-Lovell, President, Marlboro College

Judith Ramaley, President, Winona State University

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Imagining America Announces National Tenure Team Initiative for Arts and Humanities

Seeking Better Ways to Value Public Scholarship and Public Art

At our national conference last fall, Imagining America announced the formation of the Tenure Team Initiative (TTI). The Initiative brings together a group of higher education leaders to examine critical aspects of promotion and tenure policy in the arts, humanities, and design. This initiative is grounded in two convictions. First, that community-based teaching and scholarship improve the quality of education in colleges and universities. And second, that engaged teaching and scholarship are central to the collaborations that tackle public needs and create robust public discourse.

Led by National Co-Chairs, Nancy Cantor (Chancellor and President of Syracuse University) and Steven D. Lavine (President of the California Institute of the Arts), the Tenure Team seeks to create a usable resource for deans and chairs that will help them to assess and reward public scholarship and creative work by faculty in the arts and humanities. The TTI prospectus notes that the effort arises from recent developments within the cultural disciplines themselves. These changes, it argues, are led by significant numbers of faculty who believe that public scholarship and creative work taps the most inventive potential of the arts and humanities.

“We absolutely have to pay attention to the fact that a diverse professoriate and a diverse student body want to be engaged with the broader issues of our communities and publics, locally or around the world,” says Cantor. “New policies should examine but also strengthen contributions to democratic citizenship in rapidly changing, multi-ethnic settings.” Lavine agrees: “The voice of the artist in the university almost always requires work outside the university. We must win the battle to get that work to count.” Dr. Julie Ellison, Director of Imagining America and Professor of American Culture, English, and Art and Design at the University of Michigan

and Dr. Timothy Eatman, Imagining America’s Project Director for Research and Policy, direct the effort. At the conference, Cantor announced the confirmed members of the Tenure Team (see sidebar).

The individuals on the Tenure Team, Ellison says, are exceptional in their cross-sector experience: “These people are deeply grounded in the work of humanistic knowledge and artistic creation. Most strikingly, their careers are marked by movement—and intellectual translations between—professions, academic fields, university administration, foundation leadership, senior roles in cultural institutions, federal government positions, experience with policy centers on and off campus. Individually and together, they bring the imagination, flexibility, and range that an undertaking like this needs.”

A group of Consulting Scholars and Artists will ground the work of the Tenure Team in specific fields and practices, and in the analysis of changes in higher education. Tenure Team members will participate in a structured interview sharing their sense about critical directions for policy development in this area. They will also have access to an on-line knowledge resource that includes currently available key scholarship and perspectives. “We intend to make good use of the opportunity to learn from the experience and insights of the Tenure Team members,” says Eatman.

*Interested in contributing to the
TENURE TEAM INITIATIVE?
Visit the IA website to respond to our
online survey: www.ia.umich.edu*

The primary product of the TTI will be a report that presents: 1) an analysis of the key concepts and premises inherent in public scholarship and arts production; 2) a clear definition of the diverse forms of public scholarship in the cultural disciplines; and 3) recommended tenure and promotion policies suitable to publicly-engaged humanities scholarship and artistic creation.

Ellison observes, “Faculty members with a passion for public work often are discouraged, delayed and put at risk by existing practices. We need to change the reward system that constrains and privatizes the flow of discovery across institutional boundaries. The labor of bringing about such changes is going to require both persuasion and policy.”

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R. Eugene Rice, Scholar in Residence, Director of the Forum on Faculty Roles and Rewards, American Association for Higher Education

George Sanchez, Professor of History, American Studies and Ethnicity, and Director of the Center for American Studies and Ethnicity, University of Southern California

Carol Schneider, President, Association of American Colleges and Universities

David Scobey, Director and Professor of the Harvard Center for Community Partnerships, Bates College

Orlando Taylor, Dean of the Graduate School, Vice Provost for Research, and Professor in the School of Communications, Howard University

James Undercofler, Dean of the Eastman School of Music and Professor of Music Education, Rochester University

Christopher Waterman, Dean of the School of Arts and Architecture and Professor of Culture and Performance, UCLA

Robert Weisbuch, President, Drew University

Two New Book Series

University Press Announces Book Series on Public Scholarship

The University of Michigan Press has announced a new book series, entitled, *The New Public Scholarship: Citizenship, Cultural Practice, and Public Life*. The series seeks to encourage alliances between scholars and the community with writing that emerges from publicly engaged and academically consequential work in the arts, humanities, and design. The series will focus on the import and production of democratic culture. It will tap diverse forms of knowledge-making by artists and humanists with experience in universities, schools, public cultural institutions (such as libraries and museums), nonprofits, and grass-roots organizations. The editors will seek new work that speaks to a broad public and balances the languages of hope and critique. The series will focus on the U.S., although it will actively seek work that introduces comparative or global frameworks.

The New Public Scholarship series taps recent work in the areas of public history, community-based cultural and literal studies, American and ethnic studies, explorations of place, and engaged ethnographic and documentary work. It also extends broadly throughout the arts: to new movements in dance, public art, collaboratively-made theater, performance poetry, and multi-media and performance art.

The series will be edited by Lonnie Bunch, Director, National Museum of African-American History and Culture, Julie Ellison, Director, Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life, University of Michigan, and Robert Weisbuch, President, Drew University. Writers and scholars interested in submitting material to the series or seeking more information may contact Julie Ellison at jeson@umich.edu or Alison MacKeen at amackeen@umich.edu.

Publications from the Animating Democracy Initiative

Americans for the Arts, the nation's leading arts advocacy organization, has published a set of books that explores the power of the arts and humanities to foster civic engagement and dialogue, based on the findings from its Animating Democracy initiative, a long-time Imagining America ally. The program, funded by the Ford Foundation from 2000 to 2004, supported a wide range of cultural organizations across the country to develop arts and humanities activity that encouraged civic dialogue on important contemporary issues such as race relations, gentrification, school violence, the role of same-sex couples in society, and the influx of immigrants and refugees in communities. The seven titles, which were on view and discussion at the recent Imagining America national conference, examine the role of these cultural institutions, highlight best practices and outcomes from their endeavors, and identify the challenges and complexities in arts-based public dialogue work.

Titles include *Civic Dialogue, Arts & Culture*, which synthesizes the findings of the Animating Democracy initiative; *Critical Perspectives*, a collection of essays about three Animating Democracy projects that seeks to expand who has voice and authority in critical writing about civically engaged art through an experimental multi-perspective writing approach; and the *Art & Civic Engagement* series, five thematically framed books that offer in-depth case study analyses on some of the most illuminating projects in Animating Democracy.

This important series is available through the Americans for the Arts online bookstore at www.AmericansForTheArts.org/bookstore. For information about Animating Democracy, visit: www.AmericansForTheArts.org/AnimatingDemocracy or contact Michael del Vecchio at 202-371-2830 or mdelvecchio@artsusa.org.



Chancellor Cantor meets with adult learners pursuing their GED at Dr. King Magnet School, Syracuse. Photo courtesy of Syracuse University.



Imagining America thanks outgoing Board Chair Kathleen Woodward, recognized at the 2005 National Conference. Photo courtesy of the Simpson Center for the Humanities, University of Washington.

2005 National Conference Report **Public Engagement and Intercultural Practice: New Democratic Spaces for Scholars and Artists**

On two beautiful days, September 30 and October 1st, Imagining America met for its fifth annual conference at the New Brunswick campus of Rutgers: The State University of New Jersey. Our extraordinary host was the newly-created Office of the Associate Vice President for Academic and Public Partnerships in the Arts and Humanities, headed by Isabel Nazario. The theme was “Public Engagement and Intercultural Practice: New Democratic Spaces for Scholars and Artists,” a matrix that generated an astounding range of ideas and responses. The keynote speaker was Dr. John Kuo Wei Tchen, Director of Asian/Pacific/American Studies at New York University and co-founder of the Museum of Chinese in the Americas, speaking on “Homeland Insecurity.” Other speakers included President Nancy Cantor of Syracuse University and Co-Chair of Imagining America’s Tenure Team Initiative, President Richard McCormick of Rutgers University, and Professor Clement Price, Director of the Institute of Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience at Rutgers-Newark.

Approximately 175 faculty, administrators, graduate and undergraduate students, arts leaders, and community organizers met for panels and networked during social gatherings full of lively exchanges. The workshops and panels covered a group of often-intertwined themes: faculty diversity and engagement, tenure policies, citizenship and patriotism, evaluation and assessment, and the relation of scholarly writing and the civic work it describes. We heard from—to name only a few—university-based performers working with migration, refugee, and reservation populations in the Southwest; a Tulane faculty member and a New Orleans artist grappling with how to shape their work post-Hurricane Katrina; participants in the cross-regional study sponsored by Imagining America; Rhode Island high school students discussing how a collaboration with Rhode Island School of Design has affected their sense of aesthetics; and a New Jersey State policeman who worked with Rutgers-Newark’s renowned Institute on Ethnicity, Culture and the Modern Experience. The P.A.G.E. (Publicly Active

Graduate Education) Fellows met for a working lunch session open to all conference participants.

The Consortium Representatives and the National Advisory Board met the Thursday prior to the conference. The crowded and lively Consortium Representatives meeting was marked by a wonderful influx of new faces from our many new member institutions. More and more, this cohort has become a working group in which representatives turn to each other for a free exchange of knowledge, models, and ideas. That meeting, like the National Advisory Board meeting that preceded it, addressed the significant growth of Imagining America, the Tenure Team Initiative, and the plans to move Imagining America to another host institution in 2007. The National Advisory Board also had the pleasure of paying tribute to its original Board Chair, Kathleen Woodward, as she completed her term, and welcoming David Scobey as her successor (see page 15).

We are deeply grateful to our hosts at Rutgers for sharing with us their profound knowledge and experience with community engagement, as well as their generous and warm hospitality.

2006 Imagining America National Conference: **Engaging Through Place**

Engaging Through Place

We are delighted to announce that the sixth annual Imagining America national conference will take place at Ohio State University, October 6-8, 2006, hosted by the innovative Institute for Collaborative Research and Public Humanities. Ohio State was a founding institutional member of Imagining America, and we are immensely pleased to be joining them in Columbus.

Conference Theme

Place has many dimensions for individuals and institutions committed to public scholarship and public art, active citizenship, and engaged learning. Universities are places that are shaped by *engagement with* and *access to* particular publics—publics that are rooted in the histories of specific localities. Scholars and artists undertake projects that are “about place,” and they work “in place.” Community institutions are also grappling with place. Like universities, they are developing structures and practices to support civic collaborations. This

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2006 Imagining America National Conference (continued from page 5)

conference provides a forum for innovative public scholars and culture-makers to bring their work and move it forward.

Conference Highlights

Provocative Speakers: Scott Peters of Cornell University's Department of Education is this year's keynote speaker. A major scholar of the democratic dimensions of the land grant tradition, including the little-known history of ambitious theater programs fostered by university extension programs, Peters has just published a new book, *Engaging the Campus and Community: The Practice of Public Scholarship in the State and Land-Grant University System*, with support from the Kettering Foundation. This collaborative study provides a significant new framework for civic professionalism. His research program combines the study of American higher education's public mission with a study of the civic practices of contemporary academic professionals and community educators.

The Work of Imagining America: Sessions will focus on expanding the scope and impact of Imagining America: the institutionalization of public work at research universities, new models for undergraduate curricula and graduate studies, new research-based tools for understanding the cultural life of communities, and the work of the Tenure Team Initiative, designed to develop policies that support the new public scholarship. A workshop for Imagining America member campus representatives will develop representatives' skills in forging new alliances and building constituencies for engaged cultural work on their campuses.

National Scope: The Imagining America conference draws an energetic national network of people, projects, and programs. Teams of scholars and artists from around the country will challenge participants to join them in advancing intercultural practice, engagement, and the stewardship of place.

Regional Specificity: The conference will have sessions grounded in campus-community partnerships and public cultural work in Columbus. The city itself offers wonderful opportunities to explore the theme of Engaging Through Place. It combines a state capital; a land-grant university committed to outreach; a downtown with a riverfront, museums, and markets; and Short North, the corridor between downtown and campus.

Registration

Register online beginning May 1, 2006, through Imagining America's website at www.ia.umich.edu. Hotel information and the conference program will also be posted with regular updates. For more information, contact Juliet Feibel at julietf@umich.edu or 734-277-2630.

Please note: Imagining America's institutional representatives and National Advisory Board will meet on Friday, October 6.

Unique to 2006

We have a sibling conference this year, the **Outreach Scholarship Conference**, which runs from October 8-10th, 2006, in Columbus. This important conference brings together senior staff and institutional leadership in engagement programs across the disciplines, and offers an unusual opportunity for us to share ideas and knowledge. The two conferences, which will overlap on Sunday, October 8, have powerfully related themes. Our theme is "Engaging Through Place." This emphasis on the local complements the Outreach Scholarship theme, "Engaging Through the Disciplines."

The Outreach Scholarship Conference connects Imagining America with two groups that we need to be working with and learning from:

- First, university extension programs. Staff and faculty in these programs tap the deep land-grant tradition of partnering with agricultural communities to make life better in those places. Extension programs are changing in the new era of institutional engagement. We need to understand these changes and come into alliance with these colleagues.
- Second, the Outreach Scholarship conference connects Imagining America to hundreds of engagement professionals who hold staff positions in the university. As the infrastructure for engagement grows, staff leadership grows more important. Engaged faculty members need to forge relationships with committed career administrators.

We invite participants to take advantage of this opportunity to register for both conferences, for a long weekend of networking with publicly engaged colleagues. For more information on this partnership, please visit www.ia.umich.edu and www.outreachscholarship.org.

For all of these reasons, we look forward to seeing you in Columbus next October.



Bruce Burgett, left, views designs for the Wing Luke Asian Museum's expansion at the new East Kong Yick Building site, International District, Seattle. Photo courtesy of the Simpson Center for the Humanities, University of Washington.

Imagining Washington:

Case Studies from University of Washington Campuses

In this issue, we feature the engaged cultural work of the three campuses of the University of Washington. These projects range from stand-alone oral histories to long-term programs involving multiple campuses. All are remarkable for their deep commitment to developing civic and cultural leaders on regional and national levels.

One: Building A New Degree Program

University of Washington, Bothell (UWB)

The Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences (IAS) program at the Bothell campus will soon be home to a new community-based Master of Arts in Cultural Studies (MACS). MACS will situate the study of culture in relation to the regional needs of the diverse local, national and global communities served by the three UW campuses. It will be one of very few national programs to partner the interdisciplinary study of art and culture with a community-based learning network that prepares students either to work with public, private, and non-profit organizations or to pursue further graduate education across the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

Projected to welcome its first cohort in 2007, the program has been in development since 1998. At that time, UWB faculty and staff began conversations about educating students who live in the Seattle metropolitan area about how best to work with regional arts and cultural organizations. Simultaneously, the field of cultural studies was booming, with graduate and undergraduate programs springing up across the country and the world. Though these programs vary greatly, all share a focus on critically examining how cultural meanings and practices are created, negotiated, and contested. MACS adds another dimension to this inquiry: that of practice, and specifically, the educational goal of honing the critical and collaborative skills that students need to become engaged cultural workers in and across diverse academic and non-academic practice sites.

Bruce Burgett, Professor of American and Interdisciplinary Studies at UWB and one of the architects of MACS, describes the program as “shifting what ‘cultural studies’ means and does. We really think about it as a MA in culture work or cultural activism.” To develop this direction, the IAS program hired a small group of publicly engaged faculty in fields ranging from community psychology to performance studies and charged them with finding ways to integrate the kind of public and policy work so often based in the social sciences with the creative and critical practices typical of the arts and humanities.

One example of this integration is Assistant Professor Kanta Kochhar-Lindgren’s founding of the Empty Suitcase Theatre Company (ESTC). The ESTC is comprised of UWB students and staff, and members from the local community. Together, they develop productions that use story and movement to address pressing issues such as water use (“Water Writes”), civil rights (“Bus Chronicles”), and disability (“Disability/Experience”). The company also conducts an outreach program in local schools and a series of free Saturday workshops, and is beginning to document its work at national and international events and conferences.

Taught by a faculty actively involved in such projects, the MACS curriculum will combine classroom-based teaching with site-visits and workshops, opportunities for service learning and internships, and on- and off-campus collaborative research. The core curriculum will contribute to the student’s electronic degree portfolio and will culminate in a capstone project. These portfolios, Burgett says, “will include an element of reflection, and may incorporate evidence of different kinds of individual and collaborative work, ranging from a more typical MA thesis to documentation of site-based project development and assessment, student-generated performances or workshops, and curatorial or archival work.”

The portfolio basis of the program is similarly flexible. “Students will be encouraged to include collaborative projects within their individual portfolios,” Burgett emphasizes. He also points out the heightened significance of the portfolio for MA students who are not intent on pursuing further graduate education: its applicability to careers outside of the academy. “It gives them tangible products they can use to evidence their skills and competencies

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At the Wing Luke Asian Museum, Seattle, George Quibuyen, center, meets with University of Washington doctoral students. Photo courtesy of the Simpson Center for the Humanities, University of Washington

Exploring Interdisciplinary

Imagining Washington (continued from page 7)

on the job market. The documents that make up a given student's portfolio will vary depending on where that student wants to end up."

Some of the lessons that inform the development of the new MACS program were learned through a year-long symposium for faculty and academic staff at UWB, UW Seattle, and Cascadia Community College, *Placing the Humanities: New Locales, New Meanings*. Funded by the Simpson Center for the Humanities and co-directed by Burgett and Kochhar-Lindgren, the symposium explored ways to build arts- and culture-based bridges for teaching and research among colleges, universities, and diverse community sites. The participants read essays and plays, met with national leaders in the public humanities, and traveled to regional sites of innovative cultural practice. These site visits proved to be crucial in envisioning how to develop new pathways for projects with off-campus partners and collaborators.

Burgett describes the process of setting up these visits as a shift away from a "field trip" model to a more participatory process. "We learned to move away from the question 'What work does the site do?'—an approach that encourages observational tours, presentations, and question and answer sessions—and toward asking 'How does work get done at this site?'" This second question, he explains, brings the faculty and staff into the community organization as initiate users, and encourages a hands-on experience in which the participants learn about how knowledge is and can be made at that site. "It also opens up onto a less conventionally academic skill set, getting people to think about specific potential pathways for collaboration."

The success of these diverse activities is evinced by the ongoing work of the *Cultural Studies Praxis Collective*, a tri-campus group of sixteen faculty and academic staff who continue to build bridges for engaged cultural work, to develop the praxis-based graduate curriculum for MACS, and to disseminate their research both nationally and internationally.

Two: Exploring "Interdisciplinarity" at the Simpson Center

University of Washington, Seattle (UWS)

One of the hallmarks of the Simpson Center for the Humanities, located at the University of Washington's Seattle campus, is interdisciplinarity. But interdisciplinarity, in the words of Director Kathleen Woodward, "is a keyword that has many meanings in the academy today, one of the most important of which is that it serves as shorthand for public scholarship." "Among other things," she explains, "interdisciplinarity captures the wish of scholars and students that their work be responsive to a larger sphere, one beyond the academy."

Simpson Center Assistant Director Miriam Bartha also recognizes "the humanities" as symbolizing both a specific academic enterprise and an ethos of inquiry that travels more broadly. "Universities institutionalize divisions between the humanities and the social sciences in various ways," she says. "But cross-disciplinary collaborations and conversations invite us to refigure those intellectual maps. And if we move outside the university, we find that the humanities take form differently in other public spaces and creative community projects."

To provide doctoral students with incentives and tools for working across these boundaries within and beyond the university, the Simpson Center has developed an intensive week-long *Institute on the Public Humanities for Doctoral Students*. The Institute provides twenty-five doctoral students selected from the humanities and interpretive social sciences with grounding in the questions, methods, and scholarship of the public humanities. Site visits, workshops, presentations, and readings offer students multiple models for campus-community partnerships and invite them to imagine collaborative teaching and research engagements at different scales. Launched in 2003, the Institute is the first such program in the nation and emerged from conversations initiated by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation's Responsive Ph.D. Initiative. One of the ambitions of the Institute is to effect structural change in universities and colleges across the country by influencing a new generation of faculty who believe in the profound importance of the connections between scholarship and publics beyond the

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Imagining Washington (continued from page 8)



Current site interior, Wing Luke Asian Museum, International District, Seattle. Photo courtesy of the Simpson Center for the Humanities, University of Washington.

academy and act upon those convictions. The Institute is co-sponsored by the UW Graduate School, which has supported it for the past three years.

In September 2005, Bartha and Burgett co-directed the Institute and drew upon models developed through *Placing the Humanities* and collaborative work central to the students' learning experience. In visits to Seattle's Richard Hugo House—a community-based writing center—the historic Panama Hotel, and the Wing Luke Asian Museum, community organizers and university faculty guided students in site-specific, hands-on experiments in collaborative project development. These activities gave students insight into how knowledge and community were produced in other cultural spaces, and they allowed students to construct relationships to these sites and to one another.

As one student remarked, the Institute “really helped me imagine concrete public scholarship projects. I think I had many grand intellectual ideas—but now I have a better image of how to *enact* them.” Students used this experience and the Imagining America's web resource on “Specifying the Scholarship of Engagement: Skills for Community-based Projects in the Arts, Humanities, and Design” to reflect upon the professional capacities they were developing in and through their doctoral programs and to recommend changes that would make graduate education more supportive of collaborative, engaged scholarship to campus administrators.

Another extraordinary project operating under the aegis of the Simpson Center is the *Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project*. Developed by Professor James Gregory in the UWS Department of History and Labor Studies, this online multimedia project explores the history of movements for racial and economic justice in Seattle and western Washington state. The civil rights movement in Seattle started well before the celebrated struggles in the South in the 1950s and 1960s and the Seattle movement relied not just on African-American activists but also Filipino-Americans, Japanese-Americans, Chinese-Americans, Latinos, Native-Americans, and some elements of the region's labor movement. This resource features more than 50 interviews with former activists as well as hundreds of photographs, documents, research reports, dozens of streaming-video oral histo-

ries and personal biographies of the movement's leaders. The multiple partners and knowledge-sources that contribute to the site exemplify the depth of local collaborative research in the Seattle area.

Lastly, *The September Project*, by the Simpson Center, has had a broad international impact as well as a national one. To mark the links between democracy, freedom, and literacy during the anniversary of September 11, The September Project encourages libraries around the world to organize public and campus activities about the meaning of freedom, the role of information in active citizenship, and the importance of literacy in understanding the world around us. Six hundred and fifty-six libraries participated this past year alone, with one hundred and thirty of them located abroad. Programs ranged from voter education programs, essay competitions focusing on democracy, film screenings, art exhibitions, discussion panels and events targeted for children and young adults.

David Silver, Assistant Professor of Communication at UWS, and Sarah Washburn, an off- and online community consultant, run the project. Both Silver and Washburn identify libraries as the logical place for these kinds of civic dialogues. “Libraries are free. Libraries are public. And because they are non-partisan, libraries are safe spaces for engaged discussion,” Silver says. Although the libraries remain a constant, the responses in the years since 2001 have changed. Washburn says, “This past year, we saw more creative programming and more programs that extended well beyond September 11, some not even starting until October. These changes illustrate for me that people are yearning for open dialog more often, not just on September 11.” Happily, they also see that the kind of library involved has changed; while the activities originally began in public libraries, now more and more academic libraries at community colleges, colleges, and universities are participating.

Three: Recording the Heritage of Tacoma

University of Washington, Tacoma (UWT)

The University of Washington, Tacoma opened its doors in 1990. The campus is housed in the Warehouse District of Tacoma, adjacent to Union Station. Many of its academic buildings are nineteenth-century ware-

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houses that have been converted into classrooms and labs. In the fifteen years since it was established, UWT has been involved in a number of projects to record the heritage of the area on which it now sits.

One example of these projects involves the history of Tacoma's large Japanese-American community in the years prior to World War II. A Japanese Language School, one of many established on the West Coast and Hawaii, originally stood in what is now the UWT campus footprint. Between 1911 and 1942, the School educated second-generation Japanese-American children in Japanese language and culture. Children would attend the school weekdays between four and six in the afternoon, after public school ended for the day and before returning home for dinner.

After the forced relocation of Tacoma's Japanese-American community to internment camps, most of its members never returned to the city. The School fell into disuse and disrepair. UWT had originally planned to renovate the building, but it proved too decrepit and was demolished in 2004. In order to preserve the memories of the building and the community it served, Professors Mary Hanneman and Lisa Hoffman launched an oral history project that explores the construction of identity and negotiations over belonging for Japanese-Americans in pre-World War II urban America. They began to interview the former students of the School, traveling to Los Angeles, Chicago, and the Bay Area to do so. These former students are now mostly in their 70s and 80s, and their memories are rich with content of both local and national significance. Many recalled running down the streets that were lined with Japanese businesses, and having to stop all the time to bow properly to their elders. One woman recalled that the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the principal of her high school gave her the honor of leading the school in the Pledge of Allegiance. A few months later, however, she and her family were relocated to an internment camp.

Professors Hanneman and Hoffman plan to make these oral histories the subject of a book and perhaps to create a documentary video. In a separate but related development, plans have been drawn up and fund-raising begun to create a memorial garden on campus that will commemorate the Japanese community in Tacoma and the Japanese Language School.

Former students of the School have been integral in creating the plans for this garden. In a fortuitous combination of design and local memory, the plans for the garden were designed on a pro bono basis by a Seattle-based landscape designer whose mother was a student at the Japanese Language School.

For more information about UW Bothell's MACS program, contact Bruce Burgett at bburgett@uwb.edu. To visit the Simpson Center for the Humanities and to learn more about either the Institute on the Public Humanities or the Cultural Studies Praxis Collective, go to www.depts.washington.edu/uwch/. To enter the Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, go to www.depts.washington.edu/civilr/. The September Project can be found at www.theseptemberproject.org/. To learn more about the Japanese Language School oral history project, contact Mary Hanneman at hanneman@u.washington.edu



Wing Luke Asian Museum Program Director, Cassie Chinn, left, talks with Deborah Kimmey, English graduate student, inside the new site for the Wing Luke Asian Museum's expansion. Photo courtesy of the Simpson Center for the Humanities, University of Washington.



Dr. George Sanchez.
Photo Courtesy of the College of
Letters, Arts, and Sciences, USC.

An Interview with George Sanchez

George Sanchez is Professor of History, American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California, and Director of the Center for American Studies and Ethnicity there. Sanchez's work addresses historical and contemporary topics of race, gender, ethnicity, labor, and immigration. He is the author of the award-winning book, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900 - 1945* (Oxford University Press, 1993), and is one of the co-editors of the book series, *American Crossroads: New Works in Ethnic Studies*, from the University of California Press. He is working on two projects: a book on the impact of contemporary Mexican migration on the culture and politics of Los Angeles at the beginning of the 21st century, and *Remaking Community: A Multiracial History of the Boyle Heights Neighborhood of East Los Angeles, California*, a historical study of the ethnic interaction of Mexican-Americans, Japanese-Americans and Jews. A recent talk delivered at the University of Michigan, *Crossing Figueroa: The Tangled Web of Diversity and Democracy*, became the fourth *Foreseeable Future*, Imagining America's series of position papers, and inspired a panel at the recent national conference. Juliet Feibel, Associate Director of Imagining America, interviewed him about his current work, the relations of minority faculty to engaged scholarship, and the role of ethnic studies.

What's been different about writing Remaking Community from writing Becoming Mexican American?

As a historian, the project behind *Remaking Community* allowed me to go up to the present—a combination of archival work and interviews, dealing with people's memories of the events and engaging with them. You reveal things to them that they might not have been aware of in the past. Many times, I would find myself giving public talks when people share their memories, and in return I gave them archival documents so their memory could grow with a wider historical understanding.

Another thing I experienced—and this is both a blessing and a curse—is the generational

changes within the community. The Boyle Heights community as it is right now is 98% Latino, and a lot of people don't know its broader history. It's been wonderful to see contemporary residents engage with the community that was so different demographically in the 30s and 40s. There are people who still think of themselves as members of that community but who haven't been in it in fifty years, and haven't really dealt with their feelings about it and how it's changed. People had very romantic ideas about the place they left: a narrative about how their parents took them away, as the community was deteriorating. Now, for them, it's a community they don't know; it's unfamiliar, with gangs.

But we discovered that there are so many stories they can share, and commonalities they can recognize. Those commonalities helped create a broader regional vision that can give people more hope. For example, we held a community forum as we were doing the research for the exhibition on Boyle Heights at the International Institute, an organization that had served the neighborhood for 90 years. We built up a range of contacts for people who had lived there in the 30s and 40s, and also invited people who currently live there. There were discussion leaders who were drawn both from museum personnel and graduate students in histories, and they took participants through a series of exercises to recall their memories of the community. In one case, we had someone who lived in a very specific house in Boyle Heights sitting at the same table with someone who lived in the same house during the 1940s. They were from very different backgrounds but had similar experiences. The person who had lived there in the 40s had fought the building of the freeways into the neighborhood. The current inhabitant of that house is a recent Latino immigrant, who is very worried about the building of the subway into the community and its potential impact. As they listened, they realized they were telling the same story, a story about a similar process that violated their same sense of democracy. We had that experience over and over, sometimes over political issues, sometimes over personal issues or education or hopes for one's children. You realize how rare it was for people to come together because of a common interest in a particular place. But coming from very different perspectives and realizing that we are fundamentally not very different, we should be able to

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think about larger regional approaches to these problems.

It was a wonderful experience being part of that collective effort and having it shape the scholarship that I can produce at this point. Sometimes the way we think about community engagement is that the scholar has all the answers and brings wisdom to the community. Clearly, this was not my experience. I had a lot of questions that were answered by listening to people in the community, to people experiencing the exhibitions, people coming up with stories that haven't been told before. The basic question I started with was a little corny, the one Rodney King asked during the L.A. riots: "Why can't we all just get along?" If you put that question into a historical framework, we have to ask about the underlying frameworks for shaping, making, and destroying multiracial communities. That's really the question that gets embedded in this particular work.

You're a member of IA's Tenure Team Initiative. In your talk, "Crossing Figueroa," you begin to address the stresses placed on faculty of color, especially those engaged in community-based work. What changes or responses are you seeing in junior faculty and outstanding graduate students in ethnic studies? How do we retain them in the current environment?

A lot of the motivation for young people of color to get into academia has been, for a long time, the possibility that not only could they benefit individually through their education, but somehow they could have a role in reshaping their community, as teachers. I think most minority scholars will tell you that the real confrontation comes in graduate school when they realize that they have to engage academia with a language and with a professional detachment that takes them away from the initial impulse that drove them to want to become professors in the first place.

People have a variety of ways they react. Some clearly say "I'm not going to make it with this kind of motivation" and become more individualistic and driven by their own sense of what is realistic and possible in academia. This isn't just minority scholars—the early generations of women's historians were told they shouldn't write about women and ended up with books and dissertations that

were not about women. Minority scholars are steered away from their original approaches as well. Some fight it differently—they decide that they shouldn't be in a Research I institution if detachment defines research. They end up teaching in community colleges or smaller state schools where they teach a lot of students and are very happy with their work.

And then there are people who are able to break through and do both. It's the most difficult route. A lot of the scholarship *Imagining America* points to takes exactly this difficult route: Vicki Ruiz, Robin Kelley, people who embody engagement with the community *and* first-rate scholarship, and are unwilling to make it an either/or thing. Because their scholarship is so valued in the wider academy, they are the role models for incoming graduate students today. But the contradictions between traditional departmental culture and the counter-culture of engagement that Julie Ellison has pointed out hasn't gone away. Minority scholars have seen this tension right from the get-go and have tried to find a middle path. Often for better or worse, they take on the role of translator—translating what they know from the community into the academy or the other way around. That role means walking a tightrope, with the possibility of a lot of failure along with it.

There's something very odd about our position, that we in academia have put out this very strong vision about academic democracy and academic diversity as fundamental to what we do, but when we actually look at the practices around tenure or promotion, we are nowhere as democratic or diverse as we promote ourselves to be. A lot of disappointment in grad students and young scholars comes from how difficult it is to enact the vision you see coming from university presidents, and how to make it work at the local level. It's very typical for us to say to young scholars, "That's great, we really value that work. But you should really wait until after tenure." You can't say the university really values community engagement AND that only senior faculty should be allowed to do this work. You have to incorporate it into the very guts of the institution and what it values.

It's not an easy situation, particularly not for minority scholars who still have to display that their scholarship itself is valuable. It doesn't take a lot for an English scholar who

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studies Shakespeare to convince others that Shakespeare is important. But it's very different to get people to understand that studying Sandra Cisneros is also valuable. And then you put the idea of community of engagement on top and you create an even more difficult tightrope for these scholars to walk.

As for retention, I do think that the universities are working to become community engaged or to be of a global system of education—those that are really trying to think of themselves as 21st century universities—are much more likely to retain these faculty. It's almost as if the universities are catching up to the rhetoric that drove these individual faculty members to the university in the first place. If people can implement this rhetoric, there's a lot of potential. The problem a lot of university presidents and faculty have right now is that they are still operating in the model of the 1950s university and its narrow public. Right in their own student bodies, publics and faculties, individuals who have done this as scholars, that work has been off the radar of tenure committees. We have to do a better job of acknowledging that work that has been done, and universities have to be very explicit about its importance. The question of "Why should there be tenure at all?" is related to other questions the public asks: "Why should I give tax breaks to my local university? What does it do for the local community as a whole?" Those questions have to be also addressed to scholars, to the bright young scholars we want in academia, as opposed to them becoming lawyers or doctors or other people who seem to benefit communities in a much more straightforward way. We have to have an answer not just for the individual student but for the community at large as to why this work is valuable.

In "Crossing Figueroa," you talk about USC's "decentralized" approach to community engagement. What do you see as helpful or hindering in this institutional organization?

USC sees itself as an entrepreneurial place. It wants to try and create a place where people can take different approaches. On the positive side, it's allowed for a variety of entrepreneurs to move towards these efforts that are applicable to a school of public policy or social work or undergraduate engagement in the curriculum. In my own field, it's allowed us to create

a vision in American studies and ethnic studies that attracts first-rate minority scholars and young scholars who don't want to do that separation—it can be a place where the personal, the political, and the personal and academic can all be intertwined. And it's interdisciplinary. It's an ideal environment for many young minority scholars. All of us can bloom together.

The negative side of it is that while there's a lot of good work happening, there's not necessarily the kinds of conversations going on across disciplines that let you ask the big questions. Questions like: "If I'm in a school of music and I'm responding to the challenge of the local schools dropping their music programs, am I hurting the long-term political process of getting better funding for schools?" We're not at our best when we're simply privatizing what has been traditionally public investments in the future like education. If universities are picking up the private side, that is not going to force the major discussions about budgeting and investments in the future that the public as a whole has to make. I'm concerned that a decentralized approach may not give you enough to engage these larger questions that reach across disciplines.

What do you see as current trends in public scholarship?

Let me point to two areas that are critical in new public scholarship. The first is the way we think about communities. The issues of differences, in race or whatever, these are much more permeable than we've thought about. Ideas like "the African-American Community" and "the Latino community"—those kinds of blanket statements have to be broken down. Often these groups are very mixed and don't represent a single ethnicity. This multiplicity is often missed by scholars who don't have a deep engagement. I've been looking at the environment around Columbia University, which wants to be much more engaged with Harlem. Harlem is right now 40% Spanish speaking and many more people who "look black" speak Spanish. What does that mean? It means the ways we've usually cut up the world aren't reflective of reality. USC's engagement has been emphasized towards the African-American community after the Watts riots. Within a ten year span, the community flipped towards Latino. All of a sudden, the previous efforts towards engage-

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ment needed to be directed towards a new community and new leaders. We need people who can think clearly about engaging various publics, even within in a single community that may change dramatically while you are engaged with it.

The second trend is the relation between the local and the global. I'm very intrigued by community engagement that is global, created by linkages through study abroad, or through spring break trips to another country to do work. In traditional public scholarship, those kinds of projects aren't seen as having a local effect back home. But look at our student bodies—they are becoming more international. There has been a growth in the international faculty on our campus that at least equals the growth in black and Latino faculty. We are becoming, in small but significant ways, a more global university system. The community of Santa Ana in Orange County is deeply invested in small villages in Central Mexico. To have our students from UC-Irvine to engage in Santa Ana and at the same time to engage more deeply in Central Mexico means that they're working in the very same world as the university's public. It engages the full lives of people who cross borders all the time, people who exist in our local community but are deeply involved in the politics or economy or other issues abroad. This is not a surprise to people who study communication or the internet. But it's going to be very interesting when universities start talking about engagement that's not in its back yard but takes place abroad, may involve alumni groups abroad, may involve students from abroad who will return home, may involve the education of people who go to live abroad. Some of the issues of diversity that, say, Johannesburg faces post-apartheid are not all that different from what you see in Atlanta. Things can be learned in both directions.

What can ethnic studies do to foster public scholarship?

All the areas I've talked about are coming out of ethnic studies. Ethnic studies has advanced a lot of these areas, like globalism, diversity, and the breaking down of one-dimensional racial construction. What ethnic studies has not done successfully is to make the universities aware of the importance of this work, and that it is fundamental to ethnic studies. Ethnic studies has a different kind of trajectory than

that of your traditional English or history departments, where you work to convince more people to do it. For ethnic studies, people are often not thinking about the wider university missions, although they are thinking perhaps about the wider mission of ethnic studies. You see this in departments who have regularly done work with farm-worker communities in rural communities.

I think what needs to happen is a greater communication between those practitioners and the university as a whole. I've read universities' wider mission statements and the missions of the ethnic studies departments and they seem to be wanting to fulfill the same goals—but they don't acknowledge each other. Some might call this the mainstreaming of ethnic studies. But, ironically, what I would like to see in ethnic studies is an increase in community engagement tied to accessible scholarship. Ethnic scholars have worked with teachers or with these programs over time, but they have not necessarily reflected their work back to the community, or disseminated the work in ways that are accessible to it. You see people doing this once in a while, for example, in Johnella Butler's work up at the University of Washington. It's about changing our old approaches and developing new forms for scholarship.

We welcome our newest National Advisory Board members:

Sylvia Gale is Community Programs Coordinator at the University of Texas Humanities Institute and a Ph.D. student in Rhetoric. She implemented the "Writing Austin's Lives" and "Community Sabbatical" programs, and is currently developing a version of the national "Clemente Course in the Humanities." For the past two years, she has also served as the coordinator of Imagining America's P.A.G.E. (Publicly Active Graduate Education) initiative, and has organized efforts to bring graduate student fellows from around the country to Imagining America's national conference.

Cathryn Newton is Dean of The College of Arts and Sciences at Syracuse University. Dean Newton is responsible for all college functions, including the budget, academic staff and programs, and the administration of The College. Having served as founding chair of Syracuse University's Women in Science Programs in 1996, Dean Newton actively supports a Women in Science initiative at the University which includes pedagogical innovations, curricular transformation, and new collaborative learning opportunities.

National Advisory Board Chair

It is with deepest gratitude that we thank the luminous Kathleen Woodward, who has completed a three-year term as National Advisory Board Chair. Kathleen has guided Imagining America through its founding, growth and development with unusual wisdom and grace. She has given us her profound organizational experience and an inspired vision for what the cultural disciplines can do in society. Imagining America owes much of its current success to her leadership.

David Scobey, Director of the Harvard Center for Community Partnerships at Bates College, has assumed the position of Board Chair. David is a founding member of the National Advisory Board, and a nationally renowned scholar and practitioner of community engagement. We are delighted to have David in this role.

Imagining America National Advisory Board

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With appreciation for their outstanding service and contributions to the Imagining America National Advisory Board, we thank these outgoing board members, who have served since 2000:

Ken Fischer, President, University Musical Society, University of Michigan

Elizabeth Hollander, Executive Director, Campus Compact

Deba Patnaik, Former Director, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Rhode Island School of Design

Barry Qualls, Associate Dean for the Humanities, Rutgers University



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Foreseeable Futures #3:

Transforming America: The University as Public Good
by Nancy Cantor, with a response by Kristina Valaitis

In this essay, Nancy Cantor, Chancellor and President of Syracuse University, outlines a number of bold campus-community partnerships, many of which were integral to the *Brown v. Board of Education* Commemoration at the University of Illinois. She makes a passionate case for the arts as "a context for exchange" and "a medium for participation" in a society where "pervasive and longstanding racial divides" exist.

Kristina Valaitis is Director of the *Illinois Humanities Council*. In her response, she asks tough, affectionate questions of her university-based colleagues, and offers "suggestions for action," including some pointed advice on the tenure system.

Foreseeable Futures #4:

The Tangled Web of Diversity and Democracy
by George J. Sanchez, Professor of History and American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California

In this talk, George Sanchez sets forth an important argument about the two pathways to democracy in U.S. higher education: first, engagement by the university through connections of faculty, staff, and students with specific communities and publics, and, second, access to the university for members of all communities and publics through inclusive admissions and hiring policies. He challenges our understanding of how engagement and diversity are connected—and how, increasingly, they are becoming disconnected.

These reports can be ordered for distribution at conferences and meetings. Contact the Imagining America office at imaginingamerica@umich.edu or 734-615-8370.

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