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Imagining America

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# ia news

STRENGTHENING THE DEMOCRATIC PURPOSES OF THE HUMANITIES, ARTS, AND DESIGN

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*Imagining*  
**America**  
*Artists and Scholars in Public Life*

## Imagining the South

As we look toward the Imagining America National Conference in New Orleans this October, we shine a spotlight on the various ways engaged scholarship is manifested within our consortium in the south. In many ways, the experience of the southern United States is the contemporary American experience writ large. Its challenges—tensions between long-time residents and an ever-growing influx of migrant workers and ethnic minorities, and the continuing gap between the highest and lowest paid workers—reflect the challenges of the rest of the country, on a grand scale. According to Dudley Cocke, Imagining America board member and founder of Roadside Theater in the Eastern Kentucky coalfields of central Appalachia, the displacement of small, local businesses by national and transnational corporations has undermined residents' sense of place, which in turn has produced an evisceration of local culture and a diminishment of community spirit and sense of agency. "The South," says Cocke, "had always demonstrated a real acceptance of individual eccentricity, which came, I think, from people having a sense of place and community. People had deep roots, and folks were able to look at their neighbors through the prism of generations and time. But the corporate ethos of mobility and efficiency replaced the spirit of participation and tradition... The biggest ally of homogenization is mobility. When people aren't in a place long enough to put down roots, diversity and eccentricity start to wither away."

Statistically, the southern US, which includes sixteen states and the District of Columbia, counts nearly 112,000,000 people as residents, making it the largest region in the nation. The South was the country's only region

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## Transitions at the National Endowments for the Humanities and for the Arts

**Jan Cohen-Cruz**

While the future of the National Endowments for the Humanities and for the Arts is uncertain, the present is troubling. The humanities are under particular attack, having to make various cases for themselves, depending on the

source of the polemic. On one end are detractors who criticize the humanities as unproductive, for not leading students more deliberately to careers. On the other end are those who find any notion of applied humanities blasphemous, as if usefulness is necessarily a watering down of scholarship. Debates on the "usefulness" or "uselessness" of the humanities involve so many different meanings of "use"—from economic productivity or employability to the pragmatic notion of "public work" set forth by Harry Boyte, to debates about the difference between or complementary nature of "skills" and "knowledge"—that the 448 responses to Stanley Fish's "The Uses of the Humanities Part II" are absolutely dizzying. This issue features some of the ways the humanities are more fruitfully framed. After conversations with several IA leaders, I offer this column as a collective response to this critical moment of transition.

Although the new administration's conception of the role of artists and scholars in public life is as yet undefined, we were encouraged to see two accomplished leaders from IA member campuses direct the National Endowments' transition teams. Clement Price, who led the

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## Imagining the South

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to see its poverty rate increase between 2006 and 2007, from 14.9 million to 15.5 million people, both national highs. The real median income was the lowest in the country (\$46,186) compared to the Midwest (\$50,277), the Northeast (\$52,274), and the West (\$54,138). Residents in the South have the lowest rate of health insurance coverage in the country and infant mortality rates well above the national average in fourteen of its sixteen states. “As far back as statistical and narrative accounts have existed,” states one recent report, “poverty has affected the lives of a disproportionate number of families and children in the South. Child poverty is especially pronounced in southern Appalachia, the Black Belt, and the Delta areas of the South.” In the states hit by Hurricane Katrina, historically poor conditions have become desperate. Today, nearly 25 percent of all children in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama live in poverty, and if a child from the Gulf is black, his or her chances of growing up poor almost double. Between 42 and 44 percent of black children in the Gulf Coast states live in poverty, while the percentage of poor, white children is between 10 and 12 percent, consistent with national averages. Not surprisingly, the rates of poverty and infant mortality are directly related to the low educational attainment levels prevalent in the region. Residents of eleven southern states are below the national average for earning high school diplomas, and fourteen are below the national average in earning bachelor’s degrees. The only areas that defy the statistics are in the more economically prosperous Beltway—Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, DC.

Of course, the South is much more than the sum of such grim statistics. Despite its persistent, even historical, challenges (and perhaps, in some ways, because of them) many people in the southern United States have managed to maintain ties to local traditions. Their ancestors include Native Americans, English, French, Africans, Scots-Irish, and

West Indians, all of whom contributed to a rich gumbo of intellectual, cultural, artistic, and culinary legacies. But while the South is well known for its musical and gustatory pleasures, Cocke notes another Southern institution. “One of the great legacies of the South is its tremendous oral tradition. Southerners of all classes, from the slave to the plantation owner, were practiced in the art of storytelling. The oral legacy of the South should really be ranked alongside those of Ancient Greece, Africa, and India.” Many of the practices we spotlight below share an interest in the “voice,” whether by building oral histories in the local community, creating original theater in the Black Belt South to explore local issues, or helping students listen beyond historical facts to typically “unheard voices.” All of these snapshots underscore the reciprocity and dialogic practice common to scholarship that is committed to engaging and partnering with publics within and beyond the academy.

### Vanderbilt University

Vanderbilt University is a private research university in Nashville, Tennessee. It features a number of projects in tune with IA values. For the past ten years, associate professor of English Ifeoma C. K. Nwankwo has been developing “Voices from Our America” (VFOA), an initiative created to improve the quality and quantity of primary sources re-

garding neglected communities in the United States. A scholar of the African and British Caribbean Diaspora in the Atlantic World, Nwankwo noticed the lack of primary sources available to teachers in this area. Much of the research she came across focused on rhetoric and literary text. “I realized that there were narratives and experiences that were not covered in those print materials,” says Nwankwo. “I was curious about the stories and aspects of life experiences that were not yet captured in the existing literature... Our interactions are not always as enriching or as productive as they might be if we were armed with more knowledge about our own history and the histories of those with whom we are interacting.” Using semi-structured interviews in which “questions about identity and cultural memory” are asked, Nwankwo and her students gather information from local community members, document their findings, and share the resources with local teachers, scholars, and community members for educational use. Local teachers are also invited to participate in workshops where they can work with VFOA members to brainstorm ideas about how to utilize the resources in their classrooms.

The VFOA project aspires to link scholarly methods and approaches to information gathering with community partnership. Says Nwankwo: “What I see myself doing... is providing the tools and knowledge that I have



Voices from Our America team members, Veronica Forte (left) and Veronica Hidalgo, interview Rodolfo Desuze at Hotel Bahia in Colon, Panama.

Photo: Nyasia A. Warren

Photo: Tessa Farmer



Living Newspaper performance at the dedication of a statue of Cesar Chavez, UT Austin campus, October 2007.

about how to ask and formulate questions, so that my students can go out and seek knowledge on their own... And we make sure that it is a back and forth interaction—an engagement between communities and scholars based on the assumption that both sides have knowledge that can be beneficial.”

### The University of Texas at Austin

Living Newspaper, a theatrical form developed in the United States as part of the Works Progress Administration’s Federal Theater Project in the late 1930s, has found new life at The University of Texas at Austin. The Living Newspaper program is a collaboration between the Humanities Institute, the Bernard and Audre Rapoport Center for Human Rights and Justice, the Performance as Public Practice Program of UT’s Department of Theatre and Dance, and a local arts organization dedicated to social change, Theatre Action Project. Noting the need for a fresh take on civic education in Austin-area high schools, faculty and graduate students at UT Austin saw in the Living Newspaper an opportunity to explore current human rights issues through dramatization. “What we do... is train the graduate [students],” says program coordinator Tessa Farmer, “who then help middle and high school teachers of theater, language arts, and social studies in the South Texas area carry out Living Newspaper projects on human rights in their classrooms.” Each participating teacher receives the *Living Newspaper Resource Guide*, containing lesson plans, evaluative

tools, resources, “and the ongoing support of a program team comprised of subject specialists, UT Austin graduate and professional students, and UT Austin faculty.”

The Living Newspaper at UT Austin is notable both for the strength of the relationship it has been able to forge between the University and the local community, and for the impressive way that so many differ-

ent on- and off-campus organizations came together to create and sustain it. “That is something unique about The University of Texas,” says Farmer, “that such a diverse group of people were able to create a program that’s now been going on for three or four years and is doing really quality work in the local community.”

Tiara Naputi is the first graduate student to create a bilingual Living Newspaper. “I was intrigued by the Living Newspaper program [at UT Austin]. After I went to a training session I thought it was a way to combine my interest in academic research with my desire to keep doing something that I’m excited about, which is theater and performance.” Naputi then worked with two teachers at a local high school, both of whom wanted to focus on human rights in Latin America. “The project was a mixture of text and research. Instead of simply repeating what the mainstream newspaper was saying about a particular dictatorship in Latin America, we tried to get the students to reveal something about particular people in specific situations.” Naputi and the teachers with whom she partnered encouraged

students to find photographs, read poetry, and to hear “not only the historical facts, but also the unheard voices.”

Living Newspaper plans to expand by branching out and working with Round Rock, a school district close to Austin. The goal is to create district level buy-in that will make it easier for teachers in a particular school to do cross-subject collaboration. “This will allow a theater teacher and a social studies teacher to be in the same classroom, having a conversation about how to do a project that’s relevant to both of their respective curricula,” says Farmer.

### Tulane, Xavier, and Dillard Universities

Imagining America’s upcoming national conference in New Orleans is being co-hosted by Tulane and Xavier universities, both of which, along with Dillard University, have partnered with local artist-activist John O’Neal to create the “FSTI”—Free Southern Theater Institute. The FSTI is a formal training program and cultural laboratory that is both a university-affiliated and community-based educational program. O’Neal is artistic director of the local theater company, Junebug Productions, and was co-founder in 1963 of the Free Southern Theater, a cultural arm of the southern Civil Rights Movement. The course is open to community residents, high school students, and college students from all three universities.

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Photo: Kiyoko McCreia

Students in FSTI’s class participate in story circles to generate original material to create theater about community. The class is open to community members, high-school students, and students from Xavier, Tulane, and Dillard universities.

## Imagining the South

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In the fall of 2006, as O’Neal considered stepping down from his leadership role at Junebug, he consulted the company’s informal advisory panel known as “The Phoenix Squad” to begin imagining ways to institutionalize the community-based performance methodology which had developed over the past forty-five years within the Free Southern Theater and then Junebug. “At the same time, we were sensing how important it was for university students to have opportunities for meaningful exchanges with local community members,” adds FSTI’s program director, Kiyoko McCrae. “The students benefit from the local community, and many stay [in New Orleans] after completing school. Our hope is that by engaging in this collaborative process with community members, students will learn to enter community responsibly.”

Junebug approached faculty at the three universities, who worked to secure funding and institutional support to develop an inno-

vatative, inter-campus course entitled “From Community to Stage: Introduction to Community Arts.” FSTI is currently conducting the second of three pilot courses, through which it is refining the program and codifying the curriculum. Throughout this pilot stage students from all three universities are receiving academic credit.

Participants in FSTI learn Junebug’s “story circle” methodology for creating original theater, basic theories of community-based art, movement, writing for performance, storyboarding, and performance techniques. “I joke that I’m a one-trick pony, and the story circle is my trick,” says O’Neal of his approach. “But story is better than argument because at the end of an argument you have winners and losers, rights and wrongs. At the end of a story, you have people who are in deeper, more empathetic relationships with one another. When you do this work with the kind of intergenerational, inter-racial classes we’ve attracted at the FSTI, you begin to advance, in a *de facto* way, the consciousness and capacity of people to live and function together in a community.”

In addition to the FSTI initiative, it is important to note that Tulane University is at the forefront of the service learning movement in the United States, an area related to IA’s praxis of publicly engaged scholarship. The Center for Public Service, led by executive director Vincent Ilustre, has been pivotal in the development of well over a hundred service learning courses in the two and one-half years since Hurricane Katrina.

### Kennesaw State University

In its recent study, “Stepping Forward as Stewards of Place,” the American Association of State Colleges and Universities named Kennesaw State University (KSU) one of the nation’s leading publicly engaged universities. Founded in 1963 and located in Kennesaw, Georgia, a northwest suburb of Atlanta, KSU is the third-largest university in the University System of Georgia.

The Kennesaw State University Dance Company visits middle schools and high schools in the area, providing a valuable cultural resource in the face of diminished arts classes in public schools. Assistant

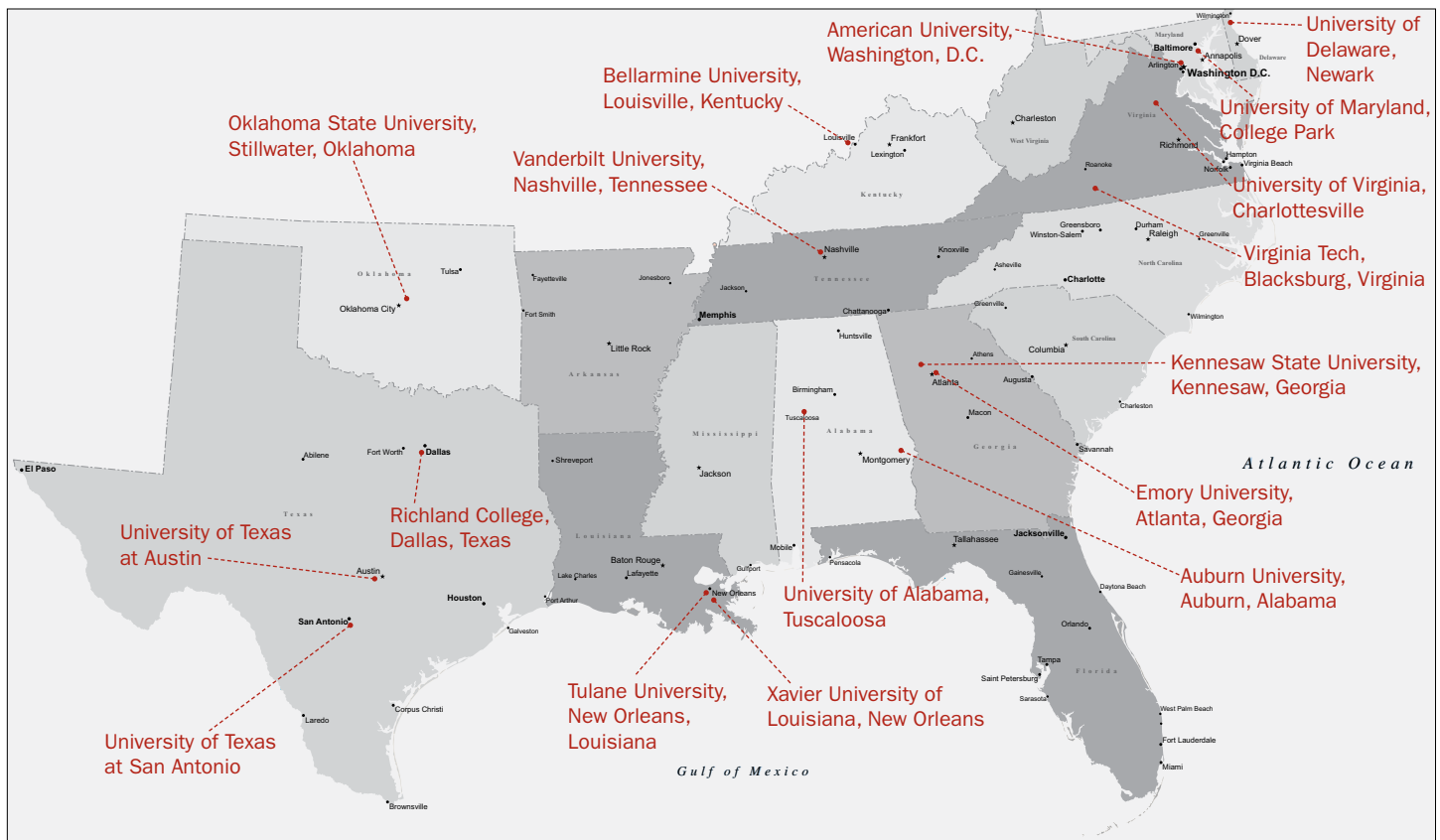


Photo: Ivan Pulinkala



The Kennesaw State University Dance Company provides a valuable cultural resource in the face of diminished arts within local schools.

professor and director of the dance program, Ivan Pulinkala, says that the number of schools his dancers are invited to each semester is expanding rapidly. “Most schools barely offer the mandated curriculum, so they are eager to enhance opportunities for their students.” One goal of the program is to introduce choreography and music to local school children that is more complex than the latest pop culture offerings. Each performance concludes with a Q & A during which audiences often come to discover the dance performance as a series of choices tailored to communicate certain themes and ideas. The KSU dancers share insights about their musical selections and their relationship to the various movements. At the same time, the university students gain insight by being in rapport with specific, local audiences. “We always take the audience into consideration,” says Pulinkala. “We ensure that the work is accessible, innovative, and diverse... The age of the audience is also an important consideration when determining programming, duration, and specific content.”

Similarly, the KSU Tellers are a group of students from the Department of Theatre & Performance. Following the great oral tradition of the South, students craft and perform stories taken from the world of mythology, legend, folk tales, history, and their own personal experiences. They are performing storytellers who travel to schools, civic

clubs, senior groups, arts organizations, and regional storytelling competitions.

### Emory University

Emory University rests on over 600 acres of sprawling Georgia real estate in Atlanta’s historic Druid Hills suburb. Today, Emory balances a commitment to teaching with its status as the largest recipient of research funds in Georgia.

Professors Ivan Karp and Corinne Kratz, co-directors of the Center for the Study of Public Scholarship, and Martine Brownley of the Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry, have collaborated on two initiatives that include aspects of publicly engaged scholarship. The Grant Writing Program helps graduate students in the humanities and social sciences develop the grant-writing skills they’ll need to procure funding for their dissertation research and for possible careers in academia or as public scholars working with arts, culture, or policy organizations. With the support of Dean Lisa Tedesco, the program has developed into an ongoing resource hosting a wide array of events that occur over the course of the entire academic year. “We’re trying to help students think through their projects, and to think about them early,” says Karp. “We hope that thinking about what their dissertation is going to be, what their research project is going to be, and how they’re going to do it, will inform the curriculum that they define for themselves.” Students are also encouraged to

think about how their research can engage and contribute to various constituencies and communities, and what that might entail. The Grant Writing Program seeks to help students become aware of the need to shape the research proposal based on their intended audience, whether public or traditionally academic.

Another project, *Artists & Critics: A Series of Creative Conversations in Public Scholarship and Public Humanities*, continues the work developed in a speaker series called *Imagining and Creating Just Societies: Perspectives from the Public Humanities*. It featured a number of public scholars such as editorial cartoonist Mike Luckovich, poet and columnist Katha Pollitt, and South African Constitutional Court Justice Albie Sachs.

The success of that program led to the organizers’ interest in creativity and society. “Rather than having an individual person speak, we brought together people working in the same domain of cultural production, but from different perspectives, so we could get a dialogue going between them,” said Kratz. These events featured topics considered staples of Southern culture—food and jazz—and included a notable Atlanta chef, trumpeter Terence Blanchard, and music critic for *The New Yorker* Alex Ross. By providing opportunities for graduate students to hear in-depth and intellectually engaging conversations, the series directors hope to show them a variety of ways to engage with and to produce public scholarship.



Photo: Melissa Gistrap

Professor Corinne Kratz works one-on-one with history student Durba Mitra during the 2008 Intensive Grant Writing Workshop, an annual three-day event held in the North Georgia Mountains to intensively develop up to ten students’ proposals.

## From the Director

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NEH transition, directs the Institute on Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience at Rutgers University-Newark and has a remarkable record in civil rights and civic engagement. Heading the transition team at the NEA, William Ivey has distinguished himself as former chair of that Endowment under President Clinton and as current director of the Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy at Vanderbilt University. Dr. Price and Mr. Ivey exemplify the best of the public humanities and arts. Their careers have been distinguished by effective alliances between higher education and public, nonprofit, and private cultural institutions. Both of them have helped to define an encouraging trend toward campus-community partnerships for the public good.

We've now moved on to the next phase of transition. President Obama has named Carole M. Watson, NEH's assistant chairman for partnership and national affairs, the Endowment's acting chair. She has been serving as liaison with the NEH state humanities councils, the National Trust for the Humanities, and other key institutions and organizations. Yet to be nominated is the permanent replacement for Bruce Cole, who resigned in January. That is a lengthy process involving careful vetting and Senate confirmation. Patrice Walker Powell, former director of the Expansion Arts Program at the NEA, has been named acting chair of that organization. Most recently, she was deputy chair for states, regions, and local arts agencies there. She will lead the agency until President Obama announces a permanent replacement for Dana Gioia, who resigned in January. As head of Expansion Arts (which concluded in 1995), Powell was responsible for oversight of NEA-funded programs in rural, inner-city, tribal, and ethnically diverse communities.

In the February 13, 2009 *Chronicle of Higher Education*, columnist David Glenn identified the following points of discussion at this time of transition:

- A stronger pipeline to the White House, e.g., the creation of a cabinet-level “czar” for the arts and humanities: Ivey is among those who favor the creation of such a position, to “establish a formal link with West Wing policy making.” Others, like David A. Smith of Baylor University, are concerned that such a position would create an unnecessary level of bureaucracy.
- Greater openness, advocated by those who would like the NEH to be more like the National Science Foundation, reporting to the President about its grant making patterns.
- A stronger peer review system, which has been compromised in recent years.
- Less emphasis on one large-scale project that reflects the priorities of a current chair, which critics see as detracting from the Endowments' core purposes.
- More money, especially given that, adjusting for inflation, the NEH's budget reached its peak in 1979.

*“We recognize the seminal role that the federal government can play by communicating the value of participation in an inclusive vision of the arts and culture in communities nationwide.”*

We would like to add our recommendations to these conversations, with particular attention to the role that colleges and universities can play in national cultural and civic life.

As concerns the NEH, we hope that the agenda of the next chair will be to fuse public engagement and excellent scholarship. It is time to overcome the “two-cultures” problem at the NEH—that is, the gap between scholarly research and the public humanities. We hope that the new chair will connect the major constituencies of the NEH in a powerful national conversation that explores effective models of public scholarship.

The aim of this conversation should be policies that further campus-community partnerships that link collaborative knowledge creation to the public good. Fine examples around the country include the Harriet Wilson Project in New Hampshire, Humanities Out There at the University of California, Irvine, the Cultures and Communities curriculum at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the programs of the Community College Humanities Association, and Keeping and Creating American Communities at Kennesaw State University.

We propose a three-part strategy for accomplishing this:

1. Launch an annual national convening on public scholarship that advances work at the intersection of the academic and public humanities. This should be co-sponsored by the Federation of State Humanities Councils, the National Humanities Alliance, the Smithsonian, the Library of Congress, the Institute for Museum and Library Services, universities, and interested disciplinary associations, as well as the NEH.
2. In partnership with the social science programs of the NSF, create a large interdisciplinary project grant category modeled on the Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) program of the Canadian Social Science and Humanities Research Council.
3. Link the Obama administration's commitment to community service by young people and for “public narrative” as a strategy for civic organizing to a new national humanities policy that rewards engagement. Build incentives for student and youth engagement into grant programs, including research grants. One model could be the highly successful Teaching American History grants that have reinvigorated engagement with K-12 instructors in US history. These incentives should encourage partnerships between universities, on the one hand, and K-12 schools, public libraries, public radio and TV stations, and historical societies and archives, on the other.

But in fact, the gap between scholarly research and the public humanities has been exacerbated. Some of the seminal programs grounded in such connections are seen as most expendable at this time of heavy budget cuts on the state level. And although Obama may be the president most supportive of the arts and humanities since Kennedy, proposed federal stimulus monies, especially in the humanities, suffered one cut after another in congressional battles.

As concerns the NEA, we add our voices to other organizations that support and expand upon President Obama's pre-election art platform. We recognize the seminal role that the federal government can play by communicating the value of participation in an inclusive vision of the arts and culture in communities nationwide.

The next chair of the NEA (as well as a national arts and cultural policy coordinator, if one is appointed) should be knowledgeable about the entire arts ecosystem. Colleges and universities are an increasingly significant part of this ecosystem. For example, 20 percent of all arts presenting takes place on college campuses.

We recommend that the new administration more deliberately consider the role of higher education in relationship to the NEA, and in public arts policy more generally. Specifically, we urge the new NEA chair to:

1. Support a vision of arts and culture that expands arts experiences beyond spectatorship by providing more funding opportunities for the general public to engage actively in arts and cultural activities in their own communities. College and university-based artists and arts students can participate with other artists in the leadership of these endeavors, at once providing skills and broadening their experience of what art can do in the world.

2. Create an ArtistCorps to connect artists, nonprofit arts organizations, volunteers, and college and university-based arts faculty with communities across the country, building on the fine work of numerous state arts councils, Americans for the Arts and its affiliated state advocacy groups, the

National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, and organizations that represent a full range of arts organizations geographically, ethnically, and aesthetically. This should include enhancing the arts as a subject and method within K-12 education. The sheer number of artists who could be employed through such an initiative would constitute a component of the new administration's job strategy. We join our voices to the many who are looking to government-supported arts under FDR as one source of inspiration for how the arts can contribute to the economic health of the country in hard times.

3. Strengthen cultural exchange programs. While we applaud President Obama's intention to bolster international cultural exchange in all the arts, we advocate enhancing local cultural exchange as well. Moreover, by increasing the integration of dialogue alongside performance and exhibitions, campus and community constituents learn from each other about important issues and ideas. We urge more collaboration between the NEA and NEH to this end.

4. Support curricular models in higher education that prepare arts students for expanded roles as artists in society and prepare students of all disciplines to appreciate the expressions of meaning from people of different cultures and skill levels.

US cultural life will be more robust when it integrates education, research, community development, and other policy areas. Many colleges and universities are eager and ready to contribute more fully to such an expansive national initiative. Imagining America has been deliberate in its conjoining of "humanities" and "arts" and "life." IA seeks to connect themes and critical practices that flow through many different arenas of cultural work: the arts, the humanities, design, and the cultural neighborhoods of professional fields (including health) and the social sciences. IA supports multiple expressions of the arts and humanities in partnerships that take place in the full scope of our geographical neighborhoods. We who are engaged in the humanities and arts in public life need to initiate ever more vigorous conversations on the subject so the debate is not framed by members of Congress in the context of highly politicized budgetary battles.

*Jan Cohen-Cruz*

Jan Cohen-Cruz

Director, Imagining America

## TTI Update

**Timothy K. Eatman**

Interest and energy around the **Tenure Team Initiative on Public Scholarship (TTI)** continues to abound. I published an article in the January '09 edition of *Diversity and Democracy*, a journal of The Association of American Colleges and Universities. In February, I gave a talk to provosts and chief academic officers at a meeting of the American Association for State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). This talk, entitled "Scholarship in Public: No Shortcuts to Tenure and Promotion for Engaged Faculty," foregrounded a common concern regarding P & T policy development: that rewarding publicly engaged scholars would diminish academic excellence. This plenary session was well received and furthered IA's goal of disseminating and discussing TTI findings. Several provosts in attendance expressed a desire to connect with this work further; two, in fact, sent teams to subsequent IA regional meetings. The IA web site <http://imaginingamerica.org/regionalMeetings.html> contains additional information about those meetings and particulars about arranging regional meetings on member campuses in 2009-10.



## The University of Alabama

### Kevin Bott

Last spring, this newsletter included an article on peer-reviewed journals dedicated to engaged scholarship. Just six months later, consortium member The University of Alabama produced Volume 1, Issue 1 of the *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship* (JCES), an initiative spearheaded by the Center for Community-Based Partnerships (CCBP), a unit within the Office of Community Affairs led by Vice President Samory T. Pruitt.

We spoke with retired UA dean and professor of journalism Ed Mullins, JCES production editor, now working in retirement as the associate director of communications for CCBP at UA, just after the editorial board had conducted its post-publication conference call.

**Kevin Bott:** The journal's introductory essays are clear about wanting this to be a different kind of journal, something at once rigorous in its scholarship and accessible to a wider audience. How well do you feel your first issue succeeded?

**Ed Mullins:** Well, the feedback has been tremendous. I was particularly pleased to receive a compliment from President and CEO of the Kettering Foundation, David Mathews, who has been quite critical of dead-end, ivory tower scholarship. And overall, I would say we moved in the right direction. The journal looks different. It has more accessible writing, more color. I think it's a little more like life than just research. It's exciting, too, that the highly respected University of Alabama Press felt so strongly about our initial offering that they've agreed to take on the marketing and distribution. UA Press's partnership with the marketing unit of the University of Chicago Press will widen our circulation, especially by getting JCES into libraries, and broaden the impact of the work that the journal features.

**KB:** Was it really accessible to people outside of the academy? Could community partners read it easily?

**EM:** It's a heavily edited journal, and the authors who commented on our editing thanked us for improving their articles. Our authors were wonderful but we had to send manuscripts back to some several times and ask them to make their writing clearer and more accessible, which in turn, I have to say, made it more accurate. A lot of traditional scholars are enamored of technical language, and few other than the gods of tenure and promotion understand it, and I am not always sure they do either. We found that even engagement scholars, who by definition work with community partners, still write for their peers and P&T committees. It's going to take some time to retrain ourselves.

**KB:** But doesn't that retraining also necessitate a retraining of those committees that hold the keys to tenure and promotion?

**EM:** It does, certainly, and that will take time. But you know, the standards of good scholarship and creativity don't change just because the prose (or poetry) and supporting material do; the work still has to be based on accurate observation and the concepts, principles, and ideas of the discipline or creative area one is working in. It can be quantitative, qualitative, artistic, or all of these in combination, but the explanation of these observations, statistics, art—the narrative and the narrative voice—can still be improved upon. We know that research can be written up in such a way that any person with a reasonable reading ability can understand and appreciate it, and most of all, benefit from or at least be challenged by it. There's nothing wrong with research that's fun to read, that's making a serious point but does so in an interesting, accessible, and creative way. I think you see glimmers of that creativity in this journal, and when we're finally online, you'll see more of it by way of access to photo galleries and videos that complement the written work. With luck and

enough time, we may just find a Kurt Lewin (the founder of modern social psychology), who can communicate like E.B. White and Steven Spielberg.

**KB:** What is the role of creativity in engaged scholarship?

**EM:** Oh, it's tremendous. It takes an enormous amount of creativity, energy, and resourcefulness just to think of ways to engage in this kind of scholarship, requiring, as it does, working with students at all levels and communities. Students coming into the university now want to do more than sit in a classroom and learn the same old stuff, as important as the "old stuff" is. They want to be out there in the world, doing something, creating things. There's a lesson for the academy. My top students want to do engaged research. I have freshmen working in our center who came to us because they want to field test what they are learning, and because their professors are telling them, "OK, now if you really want to learn this stuff, go get dirty." Fact is, I think you need to be a little bit of a rebel against the status quo to do engagement scholarship, and I think that might just be an energizing force behind the public scholarship of some of our young scholars. Keep in mind, though, there are strong forces satisfied with replicating the scholarship of the 1960s. In terms of creativity, let me just turn it around for a minute. What we really need to look at is how we in the academy can share our insight and creativity with the community, so that in turn our communities can reveal their insights and creativity to us. That's why today you will find on this campus some of our best students and most creative faculty doing research with partners in such diverse places as inner-city Birmingham, South America, and Sumter, Hale, and Greene counties in Alabama's Black Belt.

*For more information about the Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship, visit [www.jces.ua.edu](http://www.jces.ua.edu) or contact Jessica Averitt at [jces@ua.edu](mailto:jces@ua.edu).*

## The 2009 Imagining America Conference: New Orleans, Louisiana

Imagining America invites faculty, students, administrators, and community partners to participate in our 2009 National Conference, October 1-3, in New Orleans, hosted by Tulane and Xavier universities. The conference theme is “Culture, Crisis, and Recovery,” which invokes the current economic crisis, the city of New Orleans’ ongoing experiences after Hurricane Katrina, and the part that engaged scholarship and practice through the arts, humanities, and design take in recovery efforts of all kinds across the United States.

The vigorous response to Hurricanes Rita and Katrina by faculty, students, and cultural workers from across the nation is a seminal case study of public scholarship in action. The experiences of these scholars and artists at work in the Gulf Coast offer us important lessons and models for how the cultural disciplines, broadly defined, can respond to daunting challenges in our own communities and further afield. Each day of the conference will provide opportunities to engage in dialogue regarding engagement across the following three broad topics:

### Public Scholarship and the Economic Crisis

During this period of economic crisis, public scholars and artists must effectively make the case that their work is a core function of higher education. How can we expand the place for public scholarship within institutions already scaling back? How does the economic crisis shape the relevance of public scholarship to the public and its universities, and how does it affect its components and desired outcomes? How might the current economy be seen as an opportunity to rethink the traditionally vertical structure of higher education, and to create more reciprocal, horizontal relationships with its communities?

### Culture and Partnership in Post-Katrina New Orleans

Many models of community partnerships arose in response to specific situations in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, some more successful than others. What was learned? What dynamics particular to the Gulf Coast mattered to the role of culture in response to the crisis?

### Responding to Crisis in Our Own Backyards

Universities and colleges often rise and fall with the fortunes of their hometowns. In rust-belt cities working to create a post-industrial economy, in rural areas strategizing to keep their new college graduates at work at home, and in the areas in between, how do faculty and students use the arts, humanities, and design to help revive their localities? What approaches have met with success, towards economic revitalization or towards meeting different challenges? What has not worked, and what lessons can we take away?

Of course, New Orleans is much more than a city defined by crisis. Its unique history produced a diverse and broad American culture that predates the United States, making it a rewarding site for engaged research and practice. Throughout the conference, we will engage with the city and its people.

On Thursday, October 1st, conference attendees will be invited to kick-start their conference experience by attending workshops designed to provide in-depth exploration of recent interventions incorporating the arts, humanities, and design in response to crises. Meanwhile, PAGE will hold its annual summit, during which publicly active graduate students from across the country will discuss their own work and engage with one another about the practical and theoretical challenges involved in pursuing public scholarship. In the evening, we hope everyone will take the opportunity to relax

and unwind by walking out the front door of the beautiful Omni Hotel and right onto the streets of the French Quarter, where they can enjoy the cuisine, the music, and the people of this great city. A plethora of pleasures will be just a short stroll away.

After breakfast at the Omni on Friday morning, concurrent sessions will be held in the hotel. As always, these sessions will include panels, workshops, roundtables, and seminars, and will continue to expand the borders of campus-community partnerships in the arts, humanities, and design. The ten PAGE Fellowship winners will meet one-on-one with their faculty mentors to present their work, receive feedback, and ask questions about making the leap from graduate school to the professoriate. On Friday evening, we’ll head out to a reception, where we’ll eat, drink, and celebrate **Imagining America’s 10th Anniversary!**

On Saturday, October 3rd, everyone will board a bus or put on their walking shoes to go over to New Orleans’ 7th Ward, where concurrent sessions will be held at several historic and culturally significant sites. These include St. Anna’s Episcopal Church, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, St. Augustine’s Catholic Church, the Backstreet Cultural Museum, The Porch Cultural Center, and the New Orleans African American Museum of Art, Culture and History. After lunch, conference attendees can either walk or ride the bus to one of the other sites for the afternoon session. There will be morning and afternoon bus tours of New Orleans. At the end of the day, everyone will be invited to The Porch, where we will bid our farewells and celebrate our time together while enjoying the wonderful live music provided by one of New Orleans’ famed second line bands.

Please join us for this exciting event. Registration information is available online at [www.imaginingamerica.org](http://www.imaginingamerica.org). For more information about the conference, contact Kevin Bott at [kbott@syr.edu](mailto:kbott@syr.edu) or at 315-443-8590.

## Pathways to Public Scholarship: Faith

**Jamie Haft**

As a follow-up to “Motivations for Civic Engagement” (Newsletter #11), in this issue we explore the role of faith in public scholarship and practice. Religious belief, and its influences on one’s teaching and research, is not often discussed outside of faith-based institutions or associations. Faith does, however, motivate public scholars within secular universities and colleges, too, and can be a powerful force shaping intellectual interests and academic careers.

To investigate the way faith motivates some of our own members, I spoke individually with: Carol Muller, Ph.D., Professor of Ethnomusicology, University of Pennsylvania, affiliated with the Netter Center for Community Partnerships; Mary Beckman, Ph.D., Associate Director, University of Notre Dame’s Center for Social Concerns; Donald Miller, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Center for Religion and Civic Culture, University of Southern California; and Letitia Campbell, M.Div., currently a Ph.D. student in Emory University’s Graduate Division of Religion. Their remarks are organized around three topics: The Secular Academy, Opening Up, and Public Scholarship.

### THE SECULAR ACADEMY

*What’s the nature of doing faith-based work in higher education?*

**Carol Muller:** The academy prides itself on being a secular place, and I think I’ve had to suppress the spiritual dimension of myself quite a lot. Maybe the community work I do has given me a space to find some balance between the two—between the spiritual and the rational parts of myself. I am not sure it completely resolves things, but at least it allows both parts of oneself to coexist.

**Mary Beckman:** While at a secular liberal arts college, I certainly found people who shared my social justice commitments and my academic activism, but they were scattered. We had to figure out how to bring

ourselves together, which seldom happened. There was pervasive alienation.

**Don Miller:** Among the USC Center’s staff, there are some with personal religious commitments, and some without who find religion to be an incredibly important institution within society, and also one that is making positive social change, so they end up being fascinated with religion. Being on a secular campus, we are afforded the opportunity to be multi-faith in our approach, in terms of our research and even in terms of our staff. We make a great effort to be pluralistic.

**Letitia Campbell:** There is a cringe factor at the thought of bringing religion into the academy. I think it reflects a general discomfort we have in a pluralistic society with public conversation about religion. But the fact is, a lot of people in the United States bring their religious ideas with them when they act in their capacity as citizens, when they vote, debate, protest. This is the reality. The question isn’t whether religion is going to be part of democratic life, but how is it going to be a part of democratic life?

**Carol Muller:** Some of the students have struggled with working in faith communities, especially in Christian communities. When we’ve done this work in the African American Islamic Community, which is so fundamentally different from what Penn students know, there’s very little tension. But there is tension when you go into a Baptist church, when there’s familiarity.

**Don Miller:** There are faculty members with a moral bent to their research. For example, one faculty member at USC is an advocate for immigrant rights. For a while, she had ignored the role religion played in the lives of immigrants in the United States. An agnostic, she came from a Marxist sociology background where religion is considered the opiate. She was shocked to discover that the most outspoken human rights groups impacting policy were faith-based! So now her research has a faith element to it, though she herself is not religious, which I think

actually makes her work all the more credible. Because of stereotypes faculty have about religion, some shy away from even studying it, even though it’s highly important to their research area.

### OPENING UP

*Why talk about faith at Imagining America?*

**Mary Beckman:** Before I came to Notre Dame, I didn’t need to talk about my faith. I still don’t need to talk about it—I would rather just do it. But I think a lifting out of motivations can enrich the work. Notre Dame’s mission speaks of putting learning at the service of justice. There are faculty who take jobs here precisely because of that mission, and there are whole offices that focus on expressing it. There is a sense of community, of shared discourse around social improvement that I didn’t find at a secular school. It energizes the work. An organization like Imagining America could expand this powerful discourse and in so doing provide support for many at secular institutions who are motivated by faith, but isolated.

**Letitia Campbell:** We need to give people of faith a space to think critically about the tradition they’ve been inculcated into: to ask questions, to evaluate those beliefs and identities, to reconsider them. I think people of faith need to be able to articulate how their religious commitment informs their commitment to democracy. It’s valuable to all of us if even the people we disagree with can articulate their beliefs clearly.

**Carol Muller:** I think we need to open up how faith can push people to the extremes that it does, which for us in contemporary society, of course, has political implications. I think there is a place at Imagining America for opening up this conversation. Let’s debate it. Let’s debate the good and bad of it.

**Letitia Campbell:** What kind of education can help shape a debate that is generous and critical, that takes both religious commitment and religious difference seriously? If we want to prepare our students and ourselves to be agents of democratic renewal—to use Imagining America’s language—

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## Keyword: *Public Humanities*

**Kevin Bott**

The humanities have had to assume a defensive crouch lately. At best, their value is being questioned, as Patricia Cohen does in her February 25th *New York Times* piece, “In Tough Times, the Humanities Must Justify Their Worth.” At worst, the “life of the mind” is declared to have lost the battle with the ethos of utilitarianism that permeates modern campuses. (See Donoghue, F. [2008]. *Last Professors: The Corporate University and the Fate of the Humanities*. New York: Fordham University Press.) Says John Sperling, founder of Phoenix (Online) University, “[C]oming here is not a rite of passage. We are not trying to develop value systems or go in for that ‘expand their minds’ nonsense” (Fish, S. [2009, January 18]. “The Last Professor,” *The New York Times Online*.) Imagining America believes that the expansion of minds need not be separate from utility, and that the arts, humanities, and design have roles to play in the development and support of a thriving democratic society, both intellectually and practically.



Dr. Evan Carton

To help articulate this engaged conception of the humanities, we chose the phrase “*public humanities*” for this issue’s keyword, and spoke with Dr. Evan Carton, professor of English at UT at

Austin. Dr. Carton is founder and director of the University of Texas Humanities Institute, which fosters collaborations between the university and local communities via public programs such as the Mayor’s Book Club, Writing Austin’s Lives, Living Newspapers, Free Minds Project, and the Community Sabbatical program for non-profit professionals. Evan currently holds the Joan Negley Kelleher Centennial Professorship in Rhetoric and Composition, and is the author of two books on 19th century American

literature, one on the history of 20th century literary criticism and theory, and a narrative non-fiction work entitled *Patriotic Treason: John Brown and the Soul of America* (Free Press, 2006).

**Kevin Bott:** *The phrase “public humanities” is a relatively new one. What genealogy do you trace in your own work with regard to the term?*

**Evan Carton:** Let me get back to the genealogy question in a minute. First I want to say that there’s some interesting work to do—and thinking to do—about the intersection of *public* and *humanities*, especially

for those of us who work inside of academic institutions and are trying to make those institutions more accessible and responsive to larger constituencies. I think that the tension inherent within the term “public humanities”—one that needs to be resolved in our public humanities practice—begins with the fact that the word *humanities* has very little *public* traction, little clear definition outside of an academic context. It’s a word that one typically hears within very institutional, academic frames, referring to a range of disciplines that are set off from other

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### Humanities Indicators Prototype

On January 7th, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences unveiled the Humanities Indicators, a prototype set of statistical data about the humanities in the United States. Organized in collaboration with a consortium of national humanities organizations, the Humanities Indicators are the first effort to provide scholars, policymakers, and the public with a comprehensive picture of the state of the humanities, from primary to higher education to public humanities activities. The collection of empirical data is modeled after the National Science Board’s Science and Engineering Indicators and creates reliable benchmarks to guide future analysis of the state of the humanities. “The humanities community has suffered from a protracted case of data deprivation, especially in comparison with science and engineering,” said Francis Oakley, co-chair of the Academy’s Initiative for the Humanities and Culture and President Emeritus of Williams College. “We know that public support of the humanities depends on accurate data. The Indicators prototype is the start of an infrastructure that will broadly support policy research in the humanities.”

According to Leslie Berlowitz, chief executive officer of the American Academy and project co-director, “We need more reliable empirical data about what is being taught in the humanities, how they

are funded, the size of the workforce, and public attitudes toward the field. The Humanities Indicators are an important step in closing that fundamental knowledge gap. They will help researchers and policymakers, universities, foundations, museums, libraries, humanities councils, and others answer basic questions about the humanities, track trends, diagnose problems, and formulate appropriate interventions.”

The Academy project collected and analyzed data from existing sources to compile a prototype set of 74 indicators and more than 200 tables and charts, accompanied by interpretive essays covering five broad subject areas: Primary and Secondary Education in the Humanities; Undergraduate and Graduate Education in the Humanities; The Humanities Workforce; Humanities Funding and Research; and The Humanities in American Life. The analytical essay accompanying this last category is entitled “This American Life: How Are the Humanities Public?” and was written by Dr. Julie Ellison, Imagining America’s Director Emerita.

The humanities indicators prototype reports and analytical commentaries can be found at: <http://www.humanitiesindicators.org/humanitiesData.aspx> and [www.humanitiesindicators.org](http://www.humanitiesindicators.org).

*This article was adapted from the HIP official press release, with permission.*

**Keyword: *Public Humanities***

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disciplines within an academic economy. When you pair that with the word *public*, which suggests something extra-institutional, there's a tension. It's a tension that I feel is at the heart of humanities itself. On the one hand you might say that when humanities disciplines justify themselves on the grounds of common cultural experiences—on the structures, explanations, and explorations of those experiences—they justify themselves in terms that are very broad and “humanistic” and in some ways anti-technological and anti-disciplinary. But as those disciplines have been encompassed within the institutional economy of the academy, they've become specialized like every other discipline and have had to circumscribe the circle of who and what counts. On the one hand, practitioners understand what they do as not being encompassed within, or principally responsible to, a specific trade or specialized academic community. But on the other hand, in order to advance disciplinarily or within their institutions, they are forced to circumscribe and defend their disciplines within those academic structures. So of course that's where the Tenure Team Initiative and the whole *raison d'être* of Imagining America comes about. But I don't think that we've fully explored that paradox yet as an organization.

**KB:** *How does this tension play in your own academic life?*

**EC:** Yes, now I'll try to get at my own genealogy and how I think about these issues.

I'm teaching a course right now called “American Lives of the Word,” which is really a story I'm trying to tell about the early to mid-19th century. It focuses on the origins of three different intellectual and activist vocations in the United States that emerged from common sources but which follow very different trajectories. These vocations are the vocation of *secular intellectual*, the vocation of *evangelical religious leader*, and

the vocation of *radical political activist*. I'm organizing the course around three contemporary charismatic figures who share certain genealogical circumstances themselves and who each formed a cult of one kind or another around himself. Today these vocations occupy very different places within the American cultural imaginary. They've given rise to very different ways of thinking about the life of the mind, the life of the spirit, and the life of radical political activists. The three figures are [Ralph Waldo] Emerson, Joseph Smith, and John Brown. I think of this course as a sort of segue into the question of genealogy, because in each case, each of these figures was working within certain kinds of institutional discourses which he felt needed to be broken out of in order for the spirit—or the energy, or vitality—of the work that he wanted to do to be realized.

**KB:** *Are any of these figures more important to you than the others?*

**EC:** Emerson would be my genealogical choice for the development of the vocation of *public intellectual* in an early American context. And of course the humanities disciplines, especially literary studies, come in part out of a kind of ministerial or pastoral aspiration. There's a kind of romantic response by Emerson and others to what was an increasingly fragmented society. They were attempting to find some sort of vocabulary and form for a sphere of action—sometimes cultural, sometimes political—to reunify and restore a sense of the human in its full capacity. Emerson is important to my own development as a scholar, of course, but also as someone who moved in his own career from a more conventional institutional focus into the hope of being involved in larger conversations. Emerson's example figures in my own professional choices to help shape and be responsible for larger communities. That tension in the humanities is the tension between institutional practices on the one hand and, on the other hand, the sense of the humanities as encompassing all those forms of intellectual inquiry, artistic creation, and everyday life through which people

explore the challenges and meanings of being human. I'm interested in looking at this relation between the circle of an institutional community that also lies within the circle of larger communities. I want to explore how to make those boundaries permeable.

It seems to me that publics can be thought of in a variety of different ways. I think of potential intellectual communities that are latent but that can be crystallized or brought into active being through a crisis or through an issue that generates and demands communication across various sorts of class or vocational or regional lines. I think that the philosophy that might underpin this is recognition of all of the particularities—cultural, ethnic, religious—as they shape perspective and experience and community. In less abstract terms, my work in various kinds of community partnership programs attempts to be both intellectually engaged and also to have some sort of a social thrust. Many people don't feel that they have these kinds of opportunities to honor, recognize, cultivate, and share their explorations of the big questions that the humanities address.

Public humanities is about finding both practical and conceptual locations, spaces, and translations between the various kinds of humanities work that people are doing privately, publicly, in groups, in families, in religious communities—as well as in universities. We have to see that people across all kinds of specific kinds of identity categories participate in the life of the mind in many different ways.

## PAGE ON PAGE

## PAGE Partners with Mellon Foundation

With generous support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Syracuse University Humanities Center, PAGE recently hosted graduate student forums at the three institutions that constitute the Central New York Humanities Corridor—Syracuse and Cornell universities and the University of Rochester. According to the web site (<http://thecollege.syr.edu/mellon/overview.htm>), the CNY Humanities Corridor was designed to “enhance the academic profile of humanities in the region by connecting the teaching and research strengths of scholars at the three AAU-member universities through inter-institutional partnerships. The initiative builds on existing partnerships that have been created and fostered in the past and facilitates new ones, which will promote research done by scholars and enhance graduate programs at the three schools...” The PAGE meetings brought together nearly three dozen masters and doctoral students pursuing research “about, for, and with” diverse publics and communities, and opened space for them to share their work, discuss disciplinary and institutional obstacles impeding their individual research agendas, and make plans for creating ongoing working-groups and events supportive of publicly engaged graduate research at their respective institutions.

The Humanities Corridor is now under the direction of Dr. Gregg Lambert, director of the Syracuse University Humanities Center. Some of Lambert’s research questions are directed toward understanding how public scholarship is emerging in and across various disciplines. What does engaged scholarship look like in, say, Religious Studies or American Studies? What kinds of projects are scholars undertaking? What obstacles impede research progress?

The goal of these convenings was twofold. First, students were able to speak about their work and the challenges they face, specifically in regard to their pursuit of

non-traditional, engaged research. Second, because the aims of this initiative extend beyond a single meeting, PAGE and the Humanities Center had students work in small groups to brainstorm ideas for creating and instituting semi-regular events or working-groups that would be useful to their engaged research and dissertation process.

The work of these students was thoughtful and inspiring. From the Ph.D. candidate in counseling who is studying gay/straight alliances in local high schools, to the social studies doctoral student looking at the Afro-Ecuadorian environmental movement through a feminist lens, each student articulated how their work was at once contributing to knowledge in their field and making an impact with various non-institutional publics. Students also gave voice to typical concerns. One said that while his interests as a design student were in creating work for the public good, this was not considered “part of his degree,” according to his advisors. Another complained that his work was often labeled “anti-intellectual” despite the solid theoretical frame he had constructed for his engaged research. Others spoke of frustrations with the IRB, scant funding and publishing opportunities, and few faculty mentors who understood the nature of their interests.

Participants expressed interest in having a once-per-semester colloquium where they could share and receive feedback on their work, and where faculty experienced in public scholarship could offer guidance about methods, funding, the ethics of building relationship in communities, getting through IRB, “selling it” to faculty, and identifying resources.

Finally, following each gathering, participants were emailed surveys designed to collect information specifically related to doctoral student research. We plan to include these data in our next issue and look forward to continued collaboration with the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Syracuse University Humanities Center.

*Please visit the new PAGE web site at [pageia.com](http://pageia.com).*

## Call for Applications: 2009 PAGE Fellows and Returning PAGE Fellows

Imagining America invites graduate students in the arts, humanities, and design with a demonstrated interest in public engagement to apply to be PAGE (Publicly Active Graduate Education) Fellows at Imagining America’s 2009 National Conference in New Orleans. First-time Fellows will receive a \$600 stipend to attend the conference; attend the day-long, pre-conference “PAGE Summit” on Thursday, October 1, devoted to building the theoretical and practical language with which to articulate their own public scholarship; attend the general conference sessions; be individually mentored by leaders in the field of public cultural practice; and be invited to participate in the conference’s poster session on Friday, October 2. Returning Fellows will receive a \$300 stipend.

Graduate students at all stages of their M.A./M.F.A./Ph.D. programs and up to two years after they have received their degree are eligible to be PAGE Fellows. For more information about the Fellows program and for application instructions, please visit <http://pageia.com>. The deadline for new and returning Fellow applications is June 5, 2009. Please contact Robin Goettel, assistant director, Imagining America at [rjgoette@syr.edu](mailto:rjgoette@syr.edu) with any questions.

If you would like to be added to the PAGE listserve or have questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact PAGE director Kevin Bott at [kbott@syr.edu](mailto:kbott@syr.edu).

## 2009 Critical Exchange Grant Recipients

Imagining America is proud to announce the recipients of the 2009 Critical Exchange Grants. These grants support visits between Imagining America member institutions, and are intended to enhance the exchange of knowledge and ideas between IA campuses, and to nourish the development of new partnerships and programs in keeping with IA's mission and research initiatives.

The following six institutions were awarded Critical Exchange Grants, ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,500:

**Columbia College Chicago.** The Center for Community Arts Partnerships will use its Critical Exchange grant to enhance an IA Midwest Regional Meeting focused on the issues of tenure and promotion, using the TTI report as the basis for a panel and discussion. The grant will provide four Midwest Exchange Fellowships to support the travel of Imagining America member institution faculty who might otherwise not be able to travel to Chicago for the meeting.

**The Pennsylvania State University.** Penn State has invited the leadership of the S.I. Newhouse School of Journalism at Syracuse University to address a colloquium on the future of arts journalism at Penn State. This colloquium is part of the Arts in Public Life Project, and forms a node of a larger curricular effort to develop the critical, creative, and writing skills necessary to write about the arts in a rapidly changing media environment. The visit is also intended to provide the basis for future faculty exchanges between Penn State and Syracuse University.

**Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.** The School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences at RPI is working to establish a group of faculty and students that are testing the disciplinary boundaries between the humanities, arts, and social sciences by exploring the relationships between communication, technology, and activism. To help inform this new research group, RPI has proposed a workshop with the Institute on Critical Climate Change (IC3), a joint project of the University of Albany and the University of Buffalo, which works across disciplines on climate change in social, political, philosophical, and aesthetic realms. The grant will be spent on bringing the leaders of the IC3 to RPI for a workshop focused on establishing vocabularies for cross-disciplinary exchange, the potential output of such research, and the role of this research within academic institutions.

**University of California, Davis.** The Art of Regional Change initiative at UC Davis is launching a community-focused artist-in-residence program in the fall of 2010. Their Critical Exchange Grant will be used to convene IA colleagues from five Northern California and Pacific Northwest institutions with backgrounds in artist-in-residence programs. They will also be joined by the leadership of the California Council of Humanities. The meeting is intended to generate a framework that will lay the groundwork for the UC Davis initiative and inform a similar project in the works at the University of Washington, Seattle.

**The University of Washington, Seattle,** and the **University of Washington, Bothell.** Faculty from these two institutions will use their grant to support the continued development of regional collaborations through the "West by Northwest" Imagining America region. A two-day meeting will be held to continue the work begun at a 2008 convening and continued during the IA National Conference. The primary goal is to develop practices and paradigms to help understand a continuum of scholarship that encompasses curriculum, research, and creative work productive of public goods and debates. In order to accomplish this as a network, participants will explore the mechanisms and structures of "open source" development, with the goal of generating a new method of working with each other and tangible artifacts that can be returned to each respective campus and reported on at the IA National Conference.

**Virginia Tech.** Virginia Tech is hosting an IA Regional Meeting on the Tenure Team Initiative on Public Scholarship (TTI). The funds will be used to assist regional member teams in attending the meeting, and to support graduate students who will help produce a post-meeting report, arrange follow-up with member institutions, and assist with ongoing tenure and promotion work on the Virginia Tech campus.

We wish to thank Kim Yasuda, University of California, Santa Barbara, and Rick Livingston, The Ohio State University, for serving on the Selection Committee for the Critical Exchange Grants. The awards will be offered again next year, with the Call for Proposals issued in October and an application deadline in December. Independent of this grant program, all member campuses continue to be eligible for site visits from Imagining America leadership and for participation in regional meetings. For more information about the Critical Exchange Grant program, please contact Juliet Feibel at [jufeibel@syr.edu](mailto:jufeibel@syr.edu) or 315-416-2929.

## Pathways

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we need to figure out together how to talk about religion.

**Mary Beckman:** There is a national conversation happening about the role of faith in engaged work, but it centers on service and service learning. I don't think the conversation has really begun in the area of the role of faith in engaged scholarship, yet it seems to me it's in the air. Why is it important? Scholarship gives teeth to the academic interface with social challenges. For those who are motivated by faith, or for institutions that have a faith identity, if they really want to address pressing social issues, and get their students to do so, they'll have to bring in various modes of investigation, the various ways scholarship is understood in their fields.

### PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

*Has faith shaped your approach to engaged scholarship and pedagogy?*

**Carol Muller:** I was born in South Africa, so I'm committed to reconciling difference, not getting rid of difference. Growing up in the church, I'm more sensitive to what mission history has done, both the good and bad of it. I don't like the notion that we are there to help others. I think we are there to communicate and be in dialogue with others, but we're not there to lift them up. There's not a social uplift dimension to what I do. I like the democratic sensibility that comes into the context in which I work.

**Mary Beckman:** Inspired by Notre Dame's mission, we define community-based research as investigations in communities off-campus that have three features: one, the inquiry is initiated by a community group off-campus; two, the process of investigation is collaborative, valuing community knowledge; and three, the end product must be useful for the community group that needed the research in the first place. Community-based research often takes place within academic coursework, with a strong emphasis on reflection.

**Letitia Campbell:** I do think that there's kinship between the arts and humanities and religion. They're all areas of inquiry. They are all parts of human life that deal with meaning.

**Carol Muller:** When you look back to indigenous or first peoples, the articulation of the belief system is through vocal expression, through the voice, which was sacred, though we've lost that sense of sacredness now. You can't look at music without looking at faith.

**Mary Beckman:** We see our Center's approach to scholarship as emerging out of a body of understanding from Catholic tradition. For example, two important principles are the common good and human dignity. Our understanding is that we are to participate in this world and help establish structures, systems, and policies that allow for all people to have human dignity. Therefore, to ground the practice of scholarship in pursuit of the common good, we address local social challenges, and we put our resources in support of human dignity. Recently, in South Bend, Indiana, we've investigated the access to fresh produce in the poorest neighborhoods, the effects of predatory lending practices locally, and the economic impact of undocumented workers in our region.

**Letitia Campbell:** Personally, I always had this idea that what I was studying related to how I lived. In my own Christian tradition, education is understood to be in the service of the common good, never just an act unto itself. When we go out into the community and encounter powerful things, it challenges deeply held beliefs that we have, beliefs about the world and about ourselves. For students, these encounters can be moments of crisis. They can be moments of conversion—and I don't mean conversion to a religion in a traditional sense. I mean being converted to the other, to the needs of a community, converted to a new kind of commitment. That's a dynamic of faith.

*To delve deeper into this topic or to suggest other Pathways to Public Scholarship, please contact [jmhaft@syr.edu](mailto:jmhaft@syr.edu).*

## Imagining America National Advisory Board

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