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Spring 2010

## Issue 14, Spring 2010

Imagining America

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### Recommended Citation

Imagining America, "Issue 14, Spring 2010" (2010). *Newsletters - Imagining America*. 3.  
[https://surface.syr.edu/ia\\_newsletter/3](https://surface.syr.edu/ia_newsletter/3)

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 The logo for 'ia news' features the letters 'ia' in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font, followed by 'news' in a larger, bold, red, lowercase, sans-serif font. The text is set against a black, irregular, brush-stroke-like background that extends to the left.
 

# 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 Pacific Northwest

### Kevin Bott

Each year, our spring newsletter provides an opportunity to turn our attention to the member institutions located in the region where we will convene our next national conference. Imagining America is thrilled that the University of Washington will host our September 23-25, 2010 gathering. The examples of interdisciplinary community-campus partnerships in Washington and Oregon described in this newsletter evidence the ever-expanding scope of publicly engaged scholarship and practice. UW has been an active and enthusiastic member institution since IA's inception; faculty and staff at both the Seattle and Bothell campuses have for several years been undertaking exciting and innovative collaborations in the areas of engaged scholarship and the digital humanities. Some of those projects are featured within the pages of this newsletter, and we expect many more to be in evidence at the conference.

### UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

The University of Washington continues to open new pathways for students and faculty to engage in public scholarship. The University's Simpson Center of the Humanities, under the direction of founding IA Advisory Board Chair Kathleen Woodward, has been at the forefront of thinking and innovation regarding public scholarship across the cultural disciplines.

In this spotlight on UW, we focus on two ways that the Seattle and Bothell campuses—sites of publicly-minded, interdisciplinary experimentation—have been working together to create an extensive faculty, student, staff, and community partner network, thereby deepening an already rich culture of engagement. Working with bold and forward thinking scholars and practitioners from both campuses, the Simpson

Center has helped to sponsor and launch a number of initiatives designed to broaden and deepen the many conversations regarding the praxes of engagement. Initiatives like the *Institute on the Public Humanities for Doctoral Students* and the *Cultural Studies Praxis Collective* (CSPC) laid the groundwork for the curricular and institutional innovations that are presently emerging at UW, where graduate education has become a special focus of transformation for students, faculty, and staff.

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### FROM THE DIRECTOR

## Imagining IA Networks of Translocal Communities of Practice

### Jan Cohen-Cruz



We often talk about public scholarship as having a clear local impact. But we less often talk about the ways in which the locations where public scholarship is enacted are shaped by translocal factors. In universities, this ten-

sion is heightened by the fact that tenure and promotion is held locally, even as it is judged nationally and internationally. For this reason, an inquiry into how public scholarship evolves across different scales and modalities of practice is a timely project for a consortium like ours. As we prepare for our fall 2010 conference, *Convergence Zones: Public Cultures and Translocal Practices*, I join the conference's national steering committee in considering the

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## Imagining the Pacific Northwest

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The Institute, co-directed for the past five years by UW Bothell Professor Bruce Burgett and Simpson Center Associate Director Miriam Bartha, began in 2003 as a week-long intensive fellowship program. It was dedicated to helping doctoral students interested in developing the public dimensions of their scholarship reimagine how community-based partnerships might reshape their scholarly ambitions and career trajectories. The CSPC, started in 2005 by Burgett and former IA faculty representative Kanta Kochhar-Lindgren, was an ambitious undertaking that convened faculty and staff across five regional campuses with a tripartite goal: to generate new research about cultural studies and public humanities; to develop innovative curricula and programming across campuses; and to develop forums and pathways for exploring public arts and humanities on and off-campus.

Speaking of the CSPC, Bartha explains, “Bruce and Kanta were asking how to build sustainable platforms for public scholarship. They were very strategic in thinking regionally and developing long-term initiatives that would bridge campuses.” Taking advantage of her dual role as both administrator and engaged scholar, Bartha was a crucial link between the CSPC and the Simpson Center. “Not only were we launching site-specific courses and developing curriculum, we were also training dozens of faculty and staff members to do this work. People were developing long-term relationships, building partnerships in the community, and co-developing and co-teaching courses in public scholarship.”

Two of the most exciting outcomes of the Institute and the CSPC are the community-based Master of Arts in Cultural Studies (MACS) program at UW Bothell, which graduates its first class in spring 2010; and the new graduate-level Certificate in Public Scholarship (CPS) at UW Seattle, which welcomes its first cohort in fall 2010.

The first sixteen students from the MACS program will present their capstone projects this spring, the totality of which provides an impressive overview of the many ways cultural work can be undertaken both within and outside of academia. Says MACS external relations coordinator Lisa Olason, who works with students on their capstone projects, “The breadth and depth of the scholarship is really quite impressive. I am amazed not only by the creativity of the

work but by the rigorous scholarship that master’s students are undertaking.” Topics of final projects range from an examination of sustainable development in India, to the analysis of a controversial piece of Brazilian legislation that would outlaw infanticide, to creative writing initiatives in Gay-Straight Alliances aimed at documenting knowledge creation within youth culture.

The 15-credit graduate Certificate in Public Scholarship program on the Seattle campus shares many elements of MACS, the two-year master’s program at UW Bothell that began in 2008. Both are portfolio-based programs that culminate in capstone projects. MACS’ faculty are affiliated with the Certificate as advisors and as steering committee members. And there will be ample opportunity for student cohorts in both programs to share their work and interests; much of MACS’ core curriculum will be open to CPS students as course electives.

Burgett, who has been instrumental in the development of both initiatives, explains that the new certificate program emerged out of a real concern that’s been voiced by doctoral students for the past decade: “Students from across the disciplines wanted a university-created space, within the curriculum, to do



interdisciplinary projects that are publicly meaningful. They also wanted a space to learn how to talk about the significance of those projects to academic and non-academic constituencies.” The creation of a certificate program—a curriculum—offered the opportunity for bringing both faculty and graduate students across departments into deeper, cross-disciplinary explorations of engaged scholarship’s modalities, implications, and outcomes.

Speaking to the reach of the program, Bartha notes that “The CPS is open to graduate students in any field of study at the UW, and is specifically designed for those engaging with and through cultural media and modalities. In other words, the program identifies with cultural *approaches* to engagement, rather than with the cultural disciplines, per se.” The self-directed and advising-intensive course of study and the less centralized nature of a cross-disciplinary program on the Seattle campus means that early cohorts will be small, consisting of 8-12 students. Yet initial responses suggest that the interests it represents and serves will be broad and diverse.

These programs evidence that after much preparation, the University of Washington, on both the Seattle and Bothell campuses,

Photo: Annol Garg



Former PAGE Fellow Amanda Soto (left) leading the 2008 UW Institute on the Public Humanities in an experimental music-making workshop she helped design for children.

has institutionalized the study and practice of public scholarship. “For years,” says Burgett, “there have been isolated classes or institutes that focused energy in the direction of formalizing the commitment to public scholarship, but they were an exception. What we are doing here is transforming an exception into a rule.”

### UNIVERSITY OF OREGON Sustainable Cities Initiative

“At most universities, it’s not unusual to have a class, possibly two or three, with a project, or one semester, focused on a city,” says Robert Young, assistant professor in the Department of Planning, Public Policy, and Management. “And that wouldn’t mean that you actually talked to anyone in the city. You know, you would do some work on demographics and then go down and make a presentation at the end of the semester to the city council or to a couple of administrators. What we’re doing at the University of Oregon is so far beyond that model that I can’t imagine there’s another university in the entire nation, maybe the world, public or otherwise, that has taken its existing assets, with no additional funding, and focused them in the way that we are.”

When the University of Oregon began to think about how it was branding itself, it grappled seriously with what it actually meant to be a public university. What does it mean to be a public institution today when tuition costs are making higher education less attainable, and when university culture begins to model a corporate ethos? How fully can a university realize its civic responsibility?

What emerged was the Sustainable Cities Initiative (SCI), one of five interdisciplinary faculty proposals chosen by the University to help reinvoke and reimagine its mission as a public university.

SCI, led by Young’s college, went to Gresham, Oregon’s fourth largest city. Says Young, “Gresham is a bedroom community that, because of its size, wanted to find its own identity, reinvent itself, but in a sustainable and green way. We went to the community and said, ‘What do you need in terms of study, or research, or capacity building that would allow you to make the next steps toward sustainability?’ Then the community itself generated a list. It wasn’t us saying, ‘Here’s what we have; what do you want?’ It was ‘What do you need? Let’s see what we can do.’”

Young’s team presented the list to University faculty and asked who was interested in steering their classes or capstone projects toward one of the projects. “We had an overwhelming response from the faculty. Twenty-five classes and over 250 students are now focused on Gresham.” Because the project is interdisciplinary, the breadth of what is being accomplished is astounding, from designing a new green city hall, to opening spaces for renewed civic engagement with the Latino and Eastern European communities that live in low income parts

of Gresham, but, according to Young, “don’t talk to each other much, and don’t talk to city hall either.

“And we’re able not only to *imagine* sustainable environmental design in the planning department, but we can call on other departments to complete the analysis. For example, my students developed a plan for a new extension of Gresham that will include 17,000 new residents. The city asked us to design the community’s public services, such as water treatment, using ecosystem services through green infrastructure. We produced some excellent designs that the city really got excited about, but the regulations weren’t in place to allow it. So next quarter, the University of Oregon’s Law School will be working with city attorneys to create boilerplate regulations so that we can implement it. Each quarter, research builds on what’s already happened in previous quarters.”

What’s more, the student body and faculty are all energized by the work. A kickoff ceremony at the start of the year brought residents and city administrators to campus from Gresham. “Our students were fired up,” says Young. “When the Gresham politicians saw the excitement and energy, I think they understood that this was an important mission for them. The students, too, felt like,

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One of several University of Oregon student designs for a newly proposed street in Gresham, “Rockwood Boulevard,” that seeks to address residents’ desire to have more free public spaces for events and recreation.



## Imagining the Pacific Northwest

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‘Gosh, I’m at the University of Oregon and this really means something. I’m involved in this huge undertaking.’ You have to see it to believe it; it’s literally hundreds of students working across disciplines on revitalizing a major city together, talking to each other about the different aspects of the sociological design, the ecological and economic aspects of the city design. We went up to Gresham and presented just the *initial* work—because this commitment is for 52 weeks—and the City Council was blown away by the quality. There were headlines in the local paper, *City Council Wowed by U of O Students’ Work.*”

Gresham was so impressed with the work that they are willing to enter into a contract for services with U of O. “By the end of the year,” says Young, “the University will actually have more money in its coffers than when we started. More than that, we have now seven cities, in and out of Oregon, that have submitted proposals to be the site of the next Sustainable City Year. The quality of their applications and the support they have from city administrators saying ‘make us the next city’ is clear evidence that this program is here to stay and will make a real contribution toward connecting interdisciplinary research to urban and community sustainability.

### SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

Southern Oregon University is engaging both campus and community by implementing a series of public events to explore the ideas of Alexis de Tocqueville and their implications for contemporary democracy. SOU’s Arts and Humanities Council, led by IA campus representative, Dan Morris, invited IA Director Jan Cohen-Cruz to campus in 2009 to speak about public scholarship. When, shortly thereafter, another council member returned from a stimulating NEH seminar on Tocqueville, the idea for *Tocqueville Imagining America* was born. With approval from the faculty senate, the University President, and the Provost, SOU implemented, for the

first time, a year-long initiative designed to engage the campus around a single theme, both in and beyond the classroom.

“At the same time,” says Morris, “a colleague and I proposed to the Oregon Humanities Council our idea to make presentations about Tocqueville at a number of Chautauquas, with the idea that we would deviate from the typical lecture format and instead, using Tocqueville’s ideas as the springboard, engage the audience in conversations about what it means to be a citizen in our democracy today.”

Since fall 2009, SOU has designed and carried out a lengthy series of events, within both the on- and off-campus communities, “to have discussions about democracy and to see how an understanding of Tocqueville can help us understand what’s happening in our country today. How might we be better participants in the democratic process?”

Morris and colleague Prakash Chenjeri kicked off the year by making presentations to faculty and new students around the Tocqueville theme. Since then they have convened students, faculty, and community members for three brown-bag lunch events during which people were invited to talk about different topics related to Tocqueville. Professor William Cook of the State University of New York, Geneseo, was brought to campus to give a number of related public lectures. The Arts and Humanities Council has organized several lectures at which two SOU scholars with contrasting views on a given topic speak for ten minutes each before opening the floor to a general discussion. Says Morris, “At the last one, about forty people showed up. This was at noon on a weekday and we still had forty people attend. It was a great mix of students, community members, and faculty.

“Now, we’re looking at ways to develop some articles and other artifacts to add a scholarship component to the project since we feel that our discussions and the things we’ve undertaken are quite scholarly in nature. But there is a challenging aspect in this kind of humanities work in the community. When a university takes on a project to upgrade a neighborhood, for example, you will see the physical change. But when we go into the community or involve community in intellectual discussion and debate, there’s no one really trying to evaluate its impact. When the goal is to have a discussion with a community, to explore how scholarship can directly inform how we think and live, it becomes a little more challenging to document and assess. But it’s clear that the Tocqueville theme has made an impact, both by stimulating a broad discussion about democracy, and by forging stronger connection between campus and community.

“In February, we did a number of Chautauqua events in the community. At our first, in Grant’s Pass, about 40 miles from campus, we had over 70 people in attendance. It was a tremendously successful event. We spoke for about 20 to 30 minutes and then opened the floor to a discussion, which lasted another 45 minutes. We had some very good discussion and participation from the group. The only complaint they had was they would have liked the discussion to last longer.”



Southern Oregon University professors Prakash Chenjeri (left) and Daniel Morris facilitate a discussion of Tocqueville at the Oregon Humanities Conversation project in Grant’s Pass, Oregon.

Photo: Lois Cowell

SOU is already making plans for next year's annual theme in hopes of continuing the dialogue created by *Tocqueville Imagining America*.

**PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Q:** How do you expand an MFA program without any space to expand?

**A:** Engaged Scholarship.

That's actually what happened in Portland State University's Master of Fine Arts in Contemporary Art Practice program. In 2007, faculty member Harrell Fletcher proposed a new concentration that, if accepted, would allow for an additional twelve students. The problem was that there was no more studio space to accommodate them. Instead of seeing crisis, he and colleague Jennifer Delos Reyes (who joined the faculty in 2008) saw opportunity. What happens, they asked, when working artists don't have a studio to retreat to, and instead have to become civically engaged? What emerged was the Art and Social Practice MFA concentration. While incoming students can still choose a studio pathway, those who choose the social pathway aren't given studio space and must design and implement their work and research in the world, engaging publics in ways students in conventional fine art programs are unaccustomed.

When asked what she likes about the new program, Reyes says it's the sense of integrity that pervades the program. She talks about looking again at the need for professionalization seminars: "I look at a seminar like 'professional practices' and I see that our students are out there, living in the world that professional artists live in. What's the point of that class when the art you want to create is pushing you to build professional relationships at the Portland Art Museum and at City Hall?"

The students have total license regarding their art and how they engage in the world. Sometimes the program itself is involved in large-scale projects in which all social practices students have the option of participating.



Portland State University MFA students in the Contemporary Art Practice on a class trip to the High Desert Test Sites Art Festival in Joshua Tree, California.

"Right now," says Reyes, "we're working with the Portland Art Museum again on *Shine a Light: A Night at the Museum*. The museum came to us because our approach tends to attract audiences who might not otherwise engage with art. Under the umbrella of that relationship, our students have implemented a number of different projects. One of my favorites involved a student, Hannah Jickling, who wanted to work with a group of orienteers."

Orienteering is a competitive sport, much like a scavenger hunt, in which teams are given topographical maps of unfamiliar terrain, usually in natural settings. The teams draw on their map-reading and navigational skills as well as their ability to work together, to find different checkpoints, called "controls."

"Jickling worked with a group of orienteers to create a topographical map of the Portland Art Museum. Then museum visitors were invited to go through the building in this completely different way. And they engaged with the art in such a fresh and surprising way. It was an incredible project.

"Former student Eric Steen is really interested in the culture of beer-making in Portland. He invited the master brewers from three local breweries to go through the Portland Art Museum's collection with him and to pick a work of art they really connected with. From there they brewed a new beer based on that work of art. At *Shine a Light*, those beers were unveiled, and there was this wonderful opportunity to talk about how art can engage us in different ways."

The program is also conscious of the theoretical and ethical issues that come to bear on engaged scholarship. Reyes and Fletcher organize an international conference on socially engaged art called *Open Engagement*, and this year ethics is a prominent theme.

"The students really understand the fine line between working with a community and exploiting it. We talk a lot about how one engages people that students want to work with, and we say that it's really just by being out in the world, just meeting people and talking to them and allowing things to develop. It doesn't have to be a really complicated process. It just has to be something both parties want to participate in." ■

To learn more, visit:  
<http://psusocialpractice.org/>

## From the Director

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concept of the translocal as one way to frame public scholarship and practice so that variations and linkages among related local practices may be forged and assessed.

An example of the local/translocal dynamic is evident in my own scholarship with Mady Schutzman, exploring what happened as the locally-grounded “theatre of the oppressed” techniques of Augusto Boal circulated beyond his home in Brazil. The techniques arose in a particular region and in relation to a particular set of struggles; but after he was exiled, in Europe, Boal rethought, revised, and expanded them, and others have continued to adapt them worldwide. Boal’s techniques are relocalized in each of their

*Boal’s techniques are relocalized in each of their enactments, and yet still refer back to a set of common principles and practices.*

enactments, and yet still refer back to a set of common principles and practices. Asking what can be learned across these localizations is part of the territory of the translocal, as is building the intellectual and practical collaborations that support these practices.

IA’s 2010 conference will provide multiple opportunities to reflect on the translocal. The keynote will be delivered by Diana Taylor, professor of Performance Studies and Spanish at New York University and founder of the Hemispheric Institute. The Hemispheric Institute is a multilingual and multinational consortium of artists, scholars, and activists that facilitates collaboration among researchers and practitioners through conference-festivals and web-mediated courses, archives, and public forums. Taylor’s own work on performance and politics across the Americas highlights the mediations involved in cross-cultural transmission and exchange. Another context for experiencing the translocal at the conference will be visits

to the sites of cultural projects that draw on the expertise of people within and outside of higher education in Seattle. Presentations rooted in each place will extend into dialogue among conference participants involved in similar initiatives outside the region, with a central goal of the conference being the creation of local and translocal communities of practice.

Miriam Bartha from the University of Washington (Seattle), conference co-host, gives this example of how the local and translocal can support one another:

Prior to coming to the University of Washington, two LA-based musicians, Martha Gonzalez and her husband, Quetzal Flores, studied *son jarocho* and the participatory *fandango* celebration in Veracruz, Mexico. That tradition uses music, singing, poetry, and dancing to generate a spirit of *convivencia*—living/being together. They also participated in a cross-border/transnational movement of artists and community organizers called *Fandango Sin Fronteras* (Fandango Without Borders). They sought to bring that movement with them to Seattle, catalyzing new community building in a context that has a much smaller Mexican heritage presence. With the support of faculty from ethnomusicology and grant underwriting from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, they taught a series of workshops preparing university and community members to participate and interact with a well-known visiting *son jarocho* ensemble.

That encounter revealed the possibilities of really vibrant translocal exchange, innovation, and development. One of the distinctive elements of *son jarocho* is foot percussion—women dance on a raised platform, the *tarima*, a “stomp-box” that acts as a drum. Youth elaborated on this and other elements like the versifying traditions that resonated with their urban hip-hop culture. In the process of give and take, of playing together, *son jarocho* also grows and is revived.

To hear some of what they created together, and learned from one another, out of the bringing together and renewal of both practices, take a listen at: <http://www.vimeo.com/8035621>.

The translocal suggests more than the simple transfer of a meaningful practice from one place to somewhere else. As Bartha explains,

These are cultural dialogues that transform cultural practices. On examination, these localized practices may well be accretions of translocal interactions, migrations, and exchanges. The *fandango* in Veracruz, for instance, is a mix of indigeneous, African, and Spanish influences; and Chican@s sense of linked but also separate cultural identity comes from sustained entanglements with dominant and minority cultures in the US. [The “@” in “Chican@s” signifies the masculine and feminine versions of the collective (Latino/a) simultaneously.] Culture circulates, in this specific project and elsewhere, through the movements of people and their cultural products.

In Seattle, Martha and Quetzal talked about *fandango* as a social justice and community capacity development project that moved through the participatory practices of music, song, and dance—not apart from Mexican heritage, but certainly not limited to it. The action research project asked the question, who was the “we” that *fandango* might engender? One of the very interesting and productive elements of the Fandango Project was that it opened a space for discussion of various differences and connections. For some graduate students it became a vehicle for speaking about parts of their racial and ethnic identities that were suppressed or unrecognized in the university. At the same time, the *fandango*’s multiple cultural origins and resonances engaged many participants who wouldn’t necessarily identify themselves as being of “Mexican heritage.”

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## The 2010 Imagining America Conference: Seattle, Washington

Imagining America invites university affiliates and community partners to participate in our eleventh annual national conference, September 23-25, 2010, hosted by the University of Washington. This year's conference theme, *Convergence Zones: Public Cultures and Translocal Practices*, signals an exploration of how public scholarship creates new connections among disciplines, communities, and sectors. As our work shuttles across institutional, geographical, and professional boundaries, our projects become zones of convergence where social interests, cultural practices, and new and old media intersect. Animated by hybrid modes of participation and circulation, these convergence zones reshape our research, teaching, and engagement activities as they foster new projects, knowledge, and publics. Diana Taylor, professor of Performance Studies and Spanish at New York University and founder of the Hemispheric Institute, will deliver the keynote address.

### Seattle

Seattle is a unique city in many ways, with strong neighborhoods separated by hills and waterways, a history of labor migration that has produced hybrid and layered ethnic identities, and an economy made up of emerging and declining industries. Founded as a center for international trade and the exploitation of natural resources, Seattle is currently a hub of technological and media innovation, social justice activism, and radical environmentalism. Situated on the Pacific Rim, the city officially welcomes globalization, even as its residents have catalyzed fervent anti-globalization actions and demonstrations. As in other global cities of the 21st century, these tensions play out across digital divides, patterns of migration and settlement, and uneven processes of community development and gentrification.

### Local and Translocal Communities of Practice

Embedded in Seattle's regional history and geography, the 2010 conference will include both on-campus sessions and visits to off-campus sites where teaching and research-based collaborations are forged. The site visits will draw on the expertise of local, national, and international practitioners, and feature partnerships that engage through various modalities of practice: community arts and media; digital archives and pedagogies; participatory mapping and oral histories; environmental restorations and built environments; music and sound. Site visits will encourage dialogue among conference participants involved in similar initiatives outside the region, with one central goal of the conference being the creation of local and translocal communities of practice.

On Thursday, September 23, conference attendees will make their way from the elegant Hotel Deca to the beautiful Center for Urban Horticulture, part of the University of Washington's Botanic Gardens. There, morning activities include the annual Imagining America campus representatives meeting and the annual PAGE Summit, during which publicly active graduate students and early-career scholars from across the country will present their emerging scholarship, and engage one another in discussions about the practical and theoretical challenges and opportunities inherent in the pursuit of engaged practices.

Early Thursday afternoon offers a lineup of concurrent sessions highlighting innovative models of engagement. Director Jan Cohen-Cruz will officially launch IA's newest initiative: the Imagining America Research Fellows. This will be followed by a plenary discussion featuring Syracuse University Chancellor Nancy Cantor and AACU Senior Vice President Caryn McTighe Musil about the future of engaged scholarship in the cultural disciplines. The official day ends with a wine and hors d'oeuvre reception under the stars at the Botanic Gardens.

We will begin Friday at Kane Hall on the UW campus where attendees will enjoy a continental breakfast and mingle with colleagues while exploring the wide array of poster presentations on display. Conference-goers will also have the opportunity to purchase new and classic texts on public art and scholarship at the conference's one-day book sale. After breakfast, we will walk across the hall for Diana Taylor's keynote address on the digital humanities.

Immediately following the keynote, everyone picks up their pre-ordered brown-bag lunch and travels to the site of the campus-community partnership for which they preregistered. The University of Washington's rich history of engagement by students and faculty provides the opportunity to synchronize site visits with the engaged work that is actually taking place there, and to more intentionally include the voices and perspectives of community partners. Each site will host an all-afternoon workshop around a topic that aligns the activities of the site with the mutual interests of the participants. Conference attendees will be asked to preregister for these events and will be encouraged to take advantage of preparatory materials posted to IA's web site during the summer months. The hope is both to deepen the conversations that occur during the conference and to catalyze active translocal networks of theory and practice that will extend beyond the conference itself. Our local hosts have organized a broad range of sites that include, among others, the 911 Seattle Media Arts Center, the University of Washington Farm, the Center for Communication and Civic Engagement, and the Wing Luke Asian Museum.

Saturday morning finds us back on the UW campus for a hearty breakfast at the UW Club, a setting that, if the weather is cooperative, will offer panoramic views of Lake Washington and the Cascade Mountains. Here we'll invite participants to discuss with their tablemates the previous day's experiences in and around Seattle. The rest of the day—interrupted only by lunch back at the UW Club—will consist of three sets of concurrent sessions. As is customary, these sessions will include panels, workshops, and roundtables that balance presentation with dialogue, and that seek to continue expanding the horizons of campus-community partnerships in the cultural disciplines.

Please join us for what promises to be a particularly generative IA 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.



## Keyword: *Digital Humanities*

**Kevin Bott**

**Ron Krabill** is associate professor of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences at the University of Washington Bothell. He is currently one of three principal investigators for a new research cluster funded by the UW Simpson Center for the Humanities. Called, “Human Rights Public Culture: Toward a Translocal Digital Humanities Resource,” the project is organized to launch new collaborative work and web resource development in coordination with human rights advocates, community organizations, and scholars on and off campus. Krabill and editor Kevin Bott spoke by phone to discuss this edition of the IA newsletter’s keyword, *digital humanities*.

**Kevin:** Ron, it seems that the idea of the *digital humanities* is fast expanding—new classes, campus symposia, the emergence of the HASTAC consortium, the subject of the keynote at IA’s next national conference. When did you start thinking about the digital humanities?

**Ron:** My involvement came out of the University of Washington’s Cultural Studies Praxis Collective. I, along with Gray Kochhar-Lindgren, was asked to co-develop a new course called “Public Humanities and the Digital University.” It was part of an effort to start highlighting possible courses for what would eventually become the MACS (Master of Arts in Cultural Studies) program. So for me it grew out of the Collective.

**Kevin:** What’s your stake in the digital humanities? What’s interesting to you about it?

**Ron:** For me, it’s really in the title of that class. What happens when the digital comes together with the public? My stake is in thinking through media studies from a humanistic viewpoint, with an assumption of engagement in the issues of the world. My stake is in the idea of using digital technologies to build new publics around issues that matter, and around public conversations that matter.

**Kevin:** Can you give an example of a project where that dynamic is in play?

**Ron:** Sure. I’m developing a community media project called “My World Cup.” We’re training students here, and then we’re going to South Africa where those students will work with young South Africans to make videos of their experience of the World Cup in South Africa.

**Kevin:** Why?

**Ron:** Well, the idea is to use digital technology to tell stories that wouldn’t otherwise be told. So, for example, we want to hear stories from township kids, or a kid that gets displaced because the stadium was built, that sort of thing.

**Kevin:** Is there a kind of built-in criticality of what might be lost through digital humanities? I’m thinking about the kind of anonymity that seems pervasive in the digital commons. Is there any loss of personal responsibility when people are connecting primarily through digital media?

**Ron:** I think there is that danger, but I think that danger is often overstated in the sense that there is danger of anonymity in person-to-person contact, too, if that makes sense. Or in letters to the editor, for example. I would argue we often think that in *any* digital shift, any technological shift, we tend to overstate the rupture and understate the continuity. The rupture is overstated in both positive and negative ways. Sometimes people will say, “This is a brand new tool, and it democratizes knowledge, blah, blah, blah....” And then you have people on the other side who say, “No! It’s alienating us even further from ourselves and blah, blah, blah....”

**Kevin:** What do you see as the continuity with the more traditional humanities?

**Ron:** I think the continuity is in having meaningful conversations about issues that matter. And regardless of the media, it is very difficult to have those conversations in respectful ways. It’s very difficult to have



Ron Krabill

those conversations in constructive ways, and it’s very hard to have those conversations, frankly, without capital interests intervening. And I think that is as true of blogs as it was of what they used to call the “yellow press.”

**Kevin:** What’s the function of the moderator in digital humanities? Does the presence or absence of a moderator somehow facilitate more democratic conversations?

**Ron:** I do think that one of the qualitative shifts, for better or worse, is that it’s less moderated. There’s not the degree of gatekeeping that you once had. Now, whether that’s good or bad is another matter. But it does mean there is less centralized control of mass information. I think you could also argue that there’s a greater homogenization of micro-communication. So in the past you would have *The New York Times*, which would have a very strong gatekeeping function. But the vast majority of neighborhoods would have very little contact with the *Times*. Now you have YouTube, which is a much more disseminated mechanism. And while there’s still gatekeeping there, you are much more likely to find a young urban immigrant and a small town farmer’s kid getting their information from similar sources. That just wouldn’t have been true 100 years ago. In some ways word of mouth or personal connections are more likely filtered through that particular understanding of the world.

**Kevin:** Right. But whose understanding of the world? You know, I often find myself thinking about the gatekeeper. I mean, *someone* selected the stories or the documents that appear on a given web site. It doesn’t always seem participatory.

**Ron:** Exactly. That’s the difference between Web 1.0, which is simply a dissemination tool, and Web 2.0, which is a generation tool. It’s one of the big issues we’re thinking about in the Human Rights Public Culture group. We in the public humanities need to decide the degree to which digital humanities means participatory humanities. I mean the old model of public humanities may be participatory but one participates as an audience, right? And the idea of participating in the actual generation of the material has, I think, become something public humanities has to figure out in conjunction with the digital humanities. For me, those two things—digital and participatory—have to be in the same frame. Otherwise I lose interest really quickly. It’s just a newer version of the same old thing.

**Kevin:** How are the digital humanities evolving?

**Ron:** I think the demand of the field is pretty clear. There is a great deal of separation, in most cases, between people who are working on the technical aspects of digital worlds—whether that’s gaming, or web design, or GIS, or whatever—and people who are doing more, I guess you would say, more humanistic thinking about the impact of those technologies, whether that’s theoretical or philosophical or in terms of impact on social life. And I think that disconnect is a damaging one. I do think there is a *tendency* in digital humanities to move too quickly to the bright shiny things and to try to identify what’s brand new. So, in making the claim to have the technical folks and the humanistic folks working together, what tends to happen is a move in the direction of making the most cutting edge things technologically. But often the application of cutting edge technology is not what has the greatest social impact. It’s not the technology that’s most interesting to participatory and grassroots groups; it’s the impact, and that’s what often gets missed. ■

Visit the *Imagining America* web site to read a complementary *Keyword* discussion with *Evan Carton of UT at Austin on the public humanities. Issue No. 12, spring 2009.*

## From the Director

Continued from page 6

Bruce Burgett, conference co-chair, adds that Seattle, as a locality, has always served as a hub or intersection of translocal movements:

Labor migrations, capital flows, and resource markets have shaped the city—and continue to do so. In this sense, the local in Seattle cannot be engaged without an understanding of the translocal. The translocal references neither the global nor the nonlocal. Instead, it names the ways in which practices “in” Seattle and the Puget Sound region exist only through their connections to practices “outside” the city and region. The boundary between “inside” and “outside” is contested, conflicted, collaborative, and generative. The Fandango Project is only one example. Catalyzed by Diana Taylor’s keynote, the focus at the conference on various embodied and digital forms of mediation is intended to open a discussion within IA of how similar projects can be imagined as forging new connections across diverse scales and practices of location and translocation.

Not only cultural practices but also social practices, that respond to issues that play out in many locales, can be interrogated for

their translocal resonance. Urban revitalization, for example, is relevant in cities all across the US. Multimedia artist Barnaby Evans created *WaterFire*, an installation set in the three rivers of downtown Providence that draws thousands of visitors from Providence and beyond multiple times each year, contributing significantly to urban revitalization, community engagement, and the creative transformation of the city. While not every city has three rivers converging in their downtown to form the centerpiece of a recurring, participatory public ritual, there are principles to tease out from what Evans has accomplished that would be valuable for people working in their own locales to consider. The knowledge generated together by several local revitalization projects that integrate an element of art would be greater than the sum of the parts of the knowledge generated from each. That kind of knowledge is precisely what we hope to harvest at the site visits at the Seattle conference.

We invite you to collaborate in the development of local and translocal communities of practice through the IA consortium. I hope to see you in Seattle.

*Jan Cohen-Cruz*

Jan Cohen-Cruz

Director, Imagining America

## Launch: Imagining America Online News Page

In collaboration with the Community Arts Network, we recently created an IA News Page to enhance communication between and within IA member campuses and communities and to increase visibility for exemplar public scholarship and practice in the arts, humanities, and design. Follow the link to news on our home page, [www.imaginingamerica.org](http://www.imaginingamerica.org), to stay up-to-date on consortium and news from the field.

To feature news from your campuses and communities and to share your thoughts about the IA News Page, e-mail IA News Page Editor Jamie Haft at [jmhaft@syr.edu](mailto:jmhaft@syr.edu).



PAGE ON PAGE

## Aspirations and Decisions of Early Career Publicly Engaged Scholars and Artists in the Cultural Disciplines

**Staci Weber**

In October 2009, Imagining America's Research Director, Timothy Eatman, convened a task force to help design a study with two primary objectives: 1) to learn more about the career decisions and aspirations of publicly engaged professionals and practitioners; and 2) to discern the impact of IA's PAGE program. This research grows out of the Tenure Team Initiative on Public Scholarship (TTI) and its emphasis on "the pipeline," e.g., the pathways higher education does or does not provide to prepare students for professional careers upon graduation. The study, entitled *Aspirations and Decisions of Early Career Publicly Engaged Scholars and Artists in the Cultural Disciplines*, will help Imagining America, colleges and universities, and other associations and networks interested in publicly engaged scholarship to better understand how we can cultivate and support public scholars/ scholarship. A web-based survey, hosted by IA member University of Washington's Catalyst System, was launched in February 2010. We informed more than 1,000 graduate students, PAGE Fellows and applicants, and other publicly engaged scholars in the early stages of their professional careers about the survey. We communicated through the graduate student network of the International Association for Research on Service Learning and Civic Engagement (IARSLCE), Association of American Colleges and Universities, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching U.S. Professors of the Year, ASPECT graduate program at Virginia Tech, and NERCHE Next Generation Engagement. The questionnaire consists of 54 questions and takes participants an average of 20 minutes to complete. As of mid-March we have had approximately 275 respondents, and hope the number continues to increase in the coming weeks, providing us with a robust

sample for analysis. A research team of eight, including Syracuse University graduate students and Imagining America Assistant Director Robbin Goettel, are assisting by conducting interviews, analyzing data, and reporting findings. We are in the process of filling out CFP's for presentations at IARSLCE and AASCU American Democracy Project, IA's National Conference in September, and other national conferences. In what follows, lead research assistant, Staci Weber, a graduate student in SU's Department of Higher Education, interviews Dr. Eatman about the project.

**Staci:** Before I ask you about the research project, I'm curious about where your own passion for exploring publicly engaged scholarship comes from.

**Tim:** My passion comes from the desire to make a difference with my work. This is something ingrained in me from my family. My parents, who are both educators, started a school in Harlem, New York, almost thirty years ago. It was established to provide educational opportunities to students not being well served by the established educational system. So I have seen up close, and at an early age, both the sacrifices and benefits inherent in public engagement. It can make a real difference in people's lives.

**Staci:** Can you talk about the direction of the current research project?



IA Research Director Tim Eatman

**Tim:** I really think of this as an extension of the Tenure Team Initiative (TTI). We do not know enough about the lives and work of graduate students, early career professionals, or anyone who identifies as a publicly engaged scholar, for that matter. Through this research, we are trying to find ways to support efforts to put in place a more appropriate reward system within the academy. This study is exploratory and will give us a better, richer sense of the profile of the publicly engaged scholar. Again, we know about the projects and the artifacts they create, but not enough about the people. This work will contribute to that.

**Staci:** What questions have arisen during the research process that have peaked your interest?

**Tim:** A number of questions have peaked my interest, but I have to allow myself to have a parking lot for my ideas so I can stay focused. But one of the things I think is really important is how much we do not know about this growing population within the academy that are resistant to traditional norms and knowledge. I just began some work with the New England Research Center for Higher Education (NERCHE) as a Visiting Fellow with a project called "Next Generation Engagement." Part of the effort is to better understand what this new generation of scholars looks like and what goals and priorities shape their work.

The other questions that peak my interest relate to reification of academic traditions of peer review and criteria for evaluating scholarship. Also, I hadn't really considered the importance of thinking about individuals with disabilities, which probably has a more prominent role in this work than I initially thought.

**Staci:** Why is publicly engaged scholarship important for graduate students and early career scholars?

**Tim:** I love this question and I hate this question, because it focuses on folks within the academy. What public scholarship lets me do is challenge the myth that knowledge production comes primarily from within

the academy. As scholars, whether new to the academy or long-tenured, we need to be more humble and cognizant of the fact that knowledge is socially generated. This reality seldom registers powerfully enough within academe.

**Staci:** How do you think the results of this research will help Imagining America and the field of public scholarship?

**Tim:** We are in a fortunate position as a consortium to be taken seriously within higher education. IA is comprised of scholars, artists, practitioners, and graduate students who are making meaningful contributions to social and academic life primarily through the arts, humanities, and design fields. Any research project we develop will carry with it the respect that the consortium enjoys. Therefore, continuing that respect, contributing to emerging issues, and pushing the agenda will help to sustain the intellectual integrity and value of the consortium.

I'll also say a word about the significance of the arts, humanities, and design fields, or what we sometimes call the cultural disciplines. These fields are very powerful in that they represent a language or languages that all humans can enter and be accepted without the limiting structures that we find dominating some other disciplines through the ways that we restrict and fragment them.

**Staci:** Looking down the road, what do you hope public scholarship will look like a generation from now?

**Tim:** The bottom line is I am interested in opening up our understandings about the variety of modes of knowledge creation. I want people to think beyond the campus in respectful ways and I think that is significant in the university of the 21st century. Down the road, I hope this work can help to diminish the academic prestige hierarchy. Those designations as they are currently used do not serve us very well. They are divisive. I hope this work contributes to diminishing some of that. ■

## Seventh Annual PAGE Summit

### *Speaking Within and Beyond the Academy*

### Call for 2010 Fellows

As public scholarship has grown as a viable form of knowledge-making within higher education over the past decade, many graduate students and early career scholars have sharpened the practical and theoretical tools with which they approach their own engaged teaching and research agendas. At the same time, the exciting possibilities offered by linking scholarly rigor with civic commitment increasingly attracts both new and established scholars to the field. Across such a broad spectrum of experience and knowledge, the questions and concerns of publicly active scholars range from the basic to the complex: What is publicly active scholarship? How does scholarship activate civic engagement, and vice versa? When theory and practice unite in community-based projects led by graduate students and new faculty, what are the implications—for graduate and early-career scholars, for the communities involved, and for academic professionalization? What are the implications for those making the leap into the professoriate? Have the artifacts of scholarship recognized within the academy expanded? How does one write for the broad publics that engaged scholarship addresses? What disciplinary and institutional obstacles do graduate students and untenured faculty continue to push against as they pursue engaged scholarship?

PAGE invites graduate students and early-career scholars with a demonstrated interest in public scholarship to apply for new and returning PAGE Fellowships in order to attend the 2010 Imagining America national conference in Seattle, Washington, 23-25 September. New fellows will receive \$500 and returning fellows will receive \$300 to attend the conference, and will have their conference registration fees waived. They will: participate in the day-long PAGE Summit on September 23, where they will be given ample time to discuss and receive feedback on their own emerging or established praxis; attend the general conference sessions; have an opportunity for individual mentorship with leaders in the field of public cultural practice; and be invited to contribute to the conference's poster session.

Graduate students at all stages of their MA/MFA/PhD programs, as well as early-career scholars within two years of graduation, are eligible to be PAGE Fellows. Cognizant of the diverse needs, experiences, and interests of our applicant pool, PAGE encourages applicants to specify their history in public scholarship, and some of the broad or specific issues and questions that they would be interesting in exploring as PAGE Fellows. **Applications are due June 1.** *Note: While the PAGE Summit is open to all, only students and faculty who are affiliated with Imagining America member institutions are eligible for this award.* A list of member institutions, and more information about Imagining America, can be found at: [www.imaginingamerica.org](http://www.imaginingamerica.org).

For more information about PAGE, and for application instructions, visit <http://pageia.com>.



## Regional Meetings Focus on TTI

Timothy K. Eatman

On February 19, 2009, Missouri State University (MSU) hosted the first in a series of regional working meetings extending the work of the Tenure Team Initiative on Public Scholarship (TTI). These meetings operationalized a concept strategy previously considered among IA leadership but refined by IA Director Jan Cohen-Cruz: to disseminate information about IA programs and activate current initiatives through strategically planned, face-to-face regional gatherings coordinated by key institutional representatives and the IA national office. Co-sponsoring the initial set of working meetings with Campus Compact (and with support from the New York Council for the Humanities for those meetings held in the state of New York), IA was able to share and discuss its work throughout the consortium between national meetings. These mutually beneficial relationships set the stage for substantive, impactful, and meaningful engagements.

### SCOPE AND STRUCTURE

One indicator of the importance of the regional meetings is made manifest by participation. Among the seven regional meetings held during this initial series, forty-nine institutions participated, including an average of thirty individuals and significantly larger groups where format and space allowed. Taken together, the regional meetings convened nearly 300 people—levels similar to those seen at the national conference.

Number of individuals reached is certainly an important dimension upon which to assess impact, but it can only serve as a small indicator of richness, which in this case grew out of the generative relationships that were developed throughout the meetings' organization and execution. A full listing of regions, participating institutions, coordinators, teams, and some outcomes (including document downloads of panelists' remarks, campus action plans, and audio files, etc.)

is available on IA's web site under "Conference." The coordinators warrant special note here because of the critical role they played in working with IA staff to frame the experience, identify and engage the participants, and garner the necessary resources to conduct the meetings and post-meeting follow-ups.

Not included in the list above, but certainly worthy of note, is the Northern New England Campus Compact-sponsored *New Paradigms for Faculty Rewards: An Action Planning Workshop to Support Engaged Scholarship*, coordinated by Maine Campus Compact State Director Liz McCabe Park. David Scobey, Cathy Burak, and I served as facilitators for this two-day meeting, which was both influenced by and had a marked influence upon our model.

### MODEL AND IMPACT

Through this series of regional meetings, we set out to carry forward recommendations from the TTI report. More importantly, we shared strategies and best practices for institutional change toward the appropriate and much needed acknowledgement of publicly engaged scholarship in the faculty rewards system.

Regional meeting coordinators worked with the IA central office to implement a model that pivoted on Campus Team Leaders (CTL) selected from participating institutions. These individuals agreed to serve three primary roles: 1) identify a team of up to three members of their campus community to

attend the meeting; 2) write a brief statement of the current institutional stance regarding P & T policy regarding publicly engaged scholarship to be posted to the IA web pages prior to the meeting; and 3) offer suggestions of potential panelists and workshop themes.

In addition to welcoming remarks by the coordinators and key individuals from the hosting campus (in several cases the provost, vice president for engagement, a dean, or center director), and orientating information for the participants, the morning session gave me an opportunity to outline key themes from the TTI report and frame the day. Then each CTL presented highlights regarding the status of P & T policy at their institution.

Taken together, the statements share a range of challenges and accomplishments, including strategies for instigating and coalescing groups on campus, professional development program models, insights into overcoming barriers, and building collective knowledge. Peppering with the key elements of strategy they raise questions about self-assessment, progress tracking, reconnaissance (what other institutions are doing, and how others are framing arguments), timelines, benchmarks, and methods for drawing key stakeholders into timely conversations.

The next panel reflected on the TTI report. The ideal mix of panelists included a combination of assistant and associate professors, provosts, vice presidents for engagement, dean or center/institute directors, and graduate students. This served as an opportunity for a kind of collective reading of the report and a drawing of attention to the salience of particular recommendations through a

| Region              | Hosting Institution       | Coordinators                      |
|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Missouri/Oklahoma   | Missouri State University | Elizabeth Burton and Melissa Mace |
| Downstate New York  | New York University       | Randy Martin and Jim Heffernan    |
| Virginia/Kentucky   | Virginia Tech             | Anne Kilkelly and Gail Hillecke   |
| Minnesota/Wisconsin | Macalester College        | Paul Schadewald                   |
| Chicago             | Columbia College          | Paul Teruel and Kathleen Engelken |
| Central New York    | Colgate University        | Ellen Kraly and Jim Heffernan     |
| Indiana             | Purdue University         | Joann Miller                      |

variety of perspectives. The panel spilled over into a large group discussion which concluded the morning session.

The afternoon began with facilitated working groups, the themes of which varied according to region. These were followed by sessions in which campus teams worked together, reflecting on the day and planning next steps. For this task, Strength Weaknesses Opportunities and Treat (SWOT) analysis tools and action-planning templates were provided. The day concluded with brief reports back to the whole group.

### NEXT STEPS

Overall, participant evaluations for all of the meetings were quite positive, with respondents giving the highest ratings to the afternoon campus team meetings and the regional meeting model overall. Some participants expressed the desire to have less seat time and more interaction. Going forward we have adapted the model in response to this important feedback. We are pleased that campuses continue to express an interest in hosting regional meetings, with one scheduled for April 6-8, 2010, at Michigan State University. Another, planned for Spring 2011 at Vanderbilt University, will be devoted to PAGE (Publicly Active Graduate Education).

Perhaps the continued success of the regional meeting model will hinge on our ability to integrate overlapping dimensions of IA programs within the regional meeting model. We anticipate that future meetings will focus on the Assessing the Practices of Public Scholarship Initiative and the current national study on the aspirations and decisions of publicly engaged graduate students and early career scholars. Please be in touch with our office to discuss hosting a regional meeting at your campus! ■

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*Review: Civic Engagement in the Wake of Katrina,*  
Amy Koritz and George J. Sanchez, eds.  
(Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009)

**Catherine Michna, Boston College**

As the first publication in the University of Michigan's New Public Scholarship series, *Civic Engagement in the Wake of Katrina* persuasively illustrates how thoughtful and grounded civic engagement partnerships between universities and communities can mobilize and expand community assets even when those assets are greatly endangered. This marvelous collection documents how the unique context of post-Katrina New Orleans—both as a city whose greatest cultural richness inheres in its African American working-class neighborhoods and as a city in crisis—provided an opportunity for artists, teachers, and scholars to generate new frameworks for democratic discourse that promoted racial equity and racial healing as central parts of the city's rebuilding process. *Civic Engagement in the Wake of Katrina* is thus a story of a range of one city's civic engagement partnerships in their moments of greatest hope and greatest difficulty.

The collection's three sections, "Coping with Disaster," "New Beginnings," and "Interconnections" echo the flux and flow of longings, frustrations, struggles, and insight that New Orleanians experienced in their common efforts to rebuild their city. "Coping with Disaster" begins with Tulane University geographer Richard Campanella's description of the post-Katrina "hunger" for information in the city. As Campanella explains, this hunger helped generate new social networks, real and virtual, that expanded the public sphere and helped transform the city's initial mayoral commission-based planning methods into a broad-based democratic planning discourse. But, as Pat Evans and Sarah Lewis go on to document in another essay, residents' desires to understand and participate in the planning process did not at first translate into more university or private funding for grassroots community planning projects.

The civic engagement projects and partnerships that "New Beginnings" describes analyze how teachers, artists, scholars, and community members worked together in the months and years following Katrina to devise new pathways for active listening between privileged and underprivileged residents and public institutions, private funders, and policy makers. For example, as Michael Mizell-Nelson explains, universities supported a rising "documentary impulse" in the city that gathered and publicized myriad storm and neighborhood stories and helped generate the feeling of a "new common ground" that gave many residents a reason to return and remain home. Similarly, Jan Cohen-Cruz's essay on "Home: New Orleans"—which is an ongoing partnership between local cultural workers and Dillard, Tulane, and Xavier Universities—explores how committed artists and professors worked together to harness the resources of the city's cultural communities and its universities to generate new, sustainable forms of creative civic discourse. Cohen-Cruz situates her reflections on this project's accomplishments within a dialogue between its university-based leaders about the challenges of creating civic engagement programs that begin with the needs of the surrounding community *rather* than the needs of the university. Her essay thus echoes Koritz and Sanchez's argument in their introduction (drawing on the work of John Dewey) that education is the "midwife of democracy." They, like many of the collection's authors, insist on discovering how universities can reorganize themselves so that higher education-based forms of knowledge production, expertise, and funding become shaped by and directly meet the needs of surrounding communities.

Pedagogy emerges in this collection as one of the key means by which this institutional reorganization can take place. Essays by Kyshun Webster and D. Hamilton Simons-Jones, and by Mat Scwarzman, reflect

insightfully on how crucial democratic, civically engaged pedagogy is to the goal of creating education programs that enable young people in a vulnerable place like New Orleans to hone their intellectual and artistic strengths and empower others to do the same. This approach positions youth as subjects, not objects of a researcher's theory or a service program's "project." The hopefulness of these success stories feels paradoxical to the sadness underlying Rebecca Mark's poetic "Another Evacuation Story." Once Mark, a literary scholar and higher education administrator, had used her position to speak for and with the city's disprivileged youth. Far from home during the evacuation she can only imagine these same young people "floating facedown in the water." For Mark and for many others, returning home will require a refusal to give up hope that New Orleans can emerge from the storm's waters as a healed and socially equitable place. But as Carol Bebel's essay shows, this hope hinges on residents' commitments to civic engagement projects grounded in open and often uncomfortable dialogues about the role of race and racism in determining how the public values culture.

Julie Ellison's afterward reminds readers that as the accepted producers of authoritative knowledge, universities often determine how the speech, culture, and art of different social groups become legitimized and valued. Civic engagement projects such as those highlighted in this collection function like a hearing aid, allowing our sometimes staid and stiff institutions of higher learning to be better listeners and, in turn, shift how social, financial, and cultural capital are distributed. The collection's hopeful vision amplifies the promise that lies within community/university civic engagement initiatives. Yet, its authors' optimism cannot drown out their shared attunement to the challenges that remain to be solved as we go forward to transform the distribution table and create and justify new civic engagement initiatives in communities across the US. ■

## Critical Exchange Grant Awards Announced

Imagining America is proud to announce the recipients of the 2010 Critical Exchange Grants, the fourth round of these awards. 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.

This year, a strong environmental theme ran through the proposals we received. Indeed, while these grants have supported a wide range of projects and visits, inquiry into environmental and sustainability studies have been a hallmark. For example, one of the first Critical Exchange Grants was given in 2007 to the University at Albany (SUNY) for its work with the University at Buffalo to develop the Institute for Critical Climate Change in the Humanities. This institute was later used in a 2008 Critical Exchange Grant by Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute to develop a cross-disciplinary faculty group in its School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences. In this way, the grants provide a window into early stages of intellectual interest at our member campuses, and help develop projects that will later form institutional infrastructure.

In 2010, the following five collaborations were awarded Critical Exchange Grants, ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,500:

- Allegheny College and Bates College: Through exchanging visits with lead faculty, Allegheny College hopes to reposition community engagement more deeply into its academic curriculum, while Bates College wishes to advance interdisciplinary collaborations that link environmental studies, the arts, and civic engagement.
- Portland State University, Arizona State University, Clark University, and Winona State University: Portland State will host faculty leaders at an "Environment in the Humanities" Summit, part of the Center for Public Humanities' international "Understanding Sustainability" conference in May 2010. The participants specifically seek dialogue and debate over the place of humanities and the arts in developing new green frameworks for environmental thought and practice.
- The University of Oregon and the University of Michigan: The Sustainable Cities Initiative (SCI) will host Jonathan Levine, professor and chair of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Michigan. Professor Levine will deliver public lectures at the Eugene and Portland campuses of the University of Oregon, meet with staff and faculty of the Oregon Transportation Research and Education Consortium, and elected officials from the cities of Eugene, Springfield, Gresham, and Portland. He will also present his work in an architectural studio working with sustainable redevelopment in Gresham.
- Nassau Community College and the lead institutions on IA's Assessment of the Practices of Public Scholarship (APPS) initiative: Nassau Community College will use its Critical Exchange Grant to support the travel necessary to its leadership role in the APPS initiative. Working with Drew University, Syracuse University, University of Washington Bothell, and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Nassau Community College will use its participation in this initiative on its own campus to accelerate the transformation of its curriculum through public scholarship.
- Vanderbilt University: Vanderbilt University and the University of Iowa propose to develop a new partnership through exchange visits by faculty and students. Both universities wish to develop a long-term, lasting collaboration of engaged scholarship and research that will result in new, related courses and programs at their respective institutions. Their visits will be shared virtually through a wiki-based web site, guided by the participating faculty and managed by graduate students. This multimedia hypertext format will serve as a model for building and connecting civically-engaged projects on campus nationwide.

We wish to thank Paul Schadewald, associate director of the Civic Engagement Institute at Macalester College, and Janet Hethorn, professor and chair of the Department of Art at the University of Delaware, for their service as members of the Selection Committee.

Another round of Critical Exchange Grants will be offered in the fall of 2010. Applicants must be from current member institutions of Imagining America to be eligible for these funds. Independent of this grant program, all member campuses continue to be eligible for site visits from Imagining America leadership and staff. For more information on the Critical Exchange Grants or on other Imagining America member benefits, contact Imagining America at [imaginingamerica@syr.edu](mailto:imaginingamerica@syr.edu).





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Michigan State University  
Missouri State University  
Nassau Community College  
New York University  
Northeastern University  
North Carolina State University  
Occidental College  
Ohio State University  
Oklahoma State University  
Pennsylvania State University  
Portland State University  
Purdue University  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute  
Richland College  
Rutgers University  
Southern Oregon University  
Syracuse University  
Tulane University  
University at Albany, SUNY  
University at Buffalo, SUNY  
University of Alabama,  
Tuscaloosa  
University of California, Davis  
University of California,  
Los Angeles  
University of California,  
Santa Barbara  
University of Delaware  
University of Florida  
University of Illinois at  
Urbana- Champaign  
University of Iowa  
University of Michigan  
University of Minnesota  
University of New Mexico  
University of Notre Dame  
University of Oregon  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Puerto Rico,  
Humacao  
University of Southern  
California  
University of Texas at Austin  
University of Texas at  
San Antonio  
University of Virginia  
University of Washington,  
Bothell  
University of Washington,  
Seattle  
University of Wisconsin,  
Madison  
University of Wisconsin,  
Milwaukee  
Vanderbilt University  
Virginia Tech  
Wagner College  
Wesleyan University  
Western Kentucky University  
Winona State University  
Xavier University of Louisiana

