

Editors' Introduction

It has been a banner year for interdisciplinary studies. New publications such as Julie Klein's *Humanities, Culture, and Interdisciplinarity: The Changing American Academy* (SUNY Press, 2005) and AIS's own teleconference/DVD initiative hosted by the University of South Carolina, "Interdisciplinary Studies: Where Are We Today?" celebrate the dynamic engagement of scholars with theory, practice, and application. The classroom has been enriched by the publication of some of the first interdisciplinary studies textbooks on the market, such as Allen Repko's *Interdisciplinary Practice: A Student Guide to Research and Writing* (Pearson Custom Publishing, 2005) and Tanya Augsburg's *Becoming Interdisciplinary: An Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies* (Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 2006). Scholars such as Elizabeth Creamer and Lisa Lattuca have added to the key resources available to new and continuing teachers joining interdisciplinary teams and projects in their volume for *New Directions in Teaching and Learning: Advancing Faculty Learning Through Interdisciplinary Collaboration* (Jossey-Bass, 2005).

A glimpse at *The Chronicle of Higher Education* reveals at least 25 references to interdisciplinarity since early 2005, from announcements of conferences, to addressing support for scholars doing interdisciplinary research (Stephanie Pfirman, et al, "Collaborative Efforts: Promoting Interdisciplinary Scholars," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 11, 2005, pp. B15-B16), to calls for building an academic culture that is hospitable to interdisciplinarity (Maria Tatar, "Resistance to 'Interdisciplinarity,'" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 14, 2005, p. B2).

And partnerships have extended the conversation across and within higher education associations. The Association for Integrative Studies' partnership with the Association for General and Liberal Studies, leading to the joint 2005 conference hosted by George Mason University was followed with another joint initiative with the Association of American Colleges and Universities at the Denver Network for Academic Renewal. That the AAC&U's widely disseminated and highly acclaimed contribution to higher education in the form of the New Academy features connected learning and integrative practice as primary goals and outcomes attests to the profound place of interdisciplinary and integrative themes in the 21st century vision of what is most needed in education. Similarly, a sampling of recently-instituted satellite programs such as the Integrated Studies Program at North Dakota

that includes students at the American College of Norway and of high profile interdisciplinary programs such as the University of Finland's ambitious sport and society program, highlight the newest phenomenon—the global reach of integrative, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary initiatives.

As the AIS organization fields a growing number of inquiries and proposals, including—even into the next decade—interest in hosting our annual conference and highlighting institutions' local programs, there is much to process and understand. Where interdisciplinary general education and advanced inquiry at the undergraduate and graduate levels have become the new “norm,” there is also shared responsibility, new learning, and assessment to be fostered.

Part of this spectrum of reflections on interdisciplinarity must also include recognition that this also has been a year of modest to dire challenge for selected programs and institutions. With all of the activity and interest in interdisciplinarity and the continuing advancement of theory and practice, still the organizational structure of interdisciplinary education has revealed itself to be vulnerable to environmental pressures in the academy. Stuart Henry, in his essay, “Disciplinary Hegemony: How Can Interdisciplinary/Integrative Studies Survive, and, If So, How?” based upon the roundtable he convened at the 2005 AIS/AGLS National Conference, foregrounds these pressures with particular attention given to the public university context. With programs experiencing disturbing changes, even as we bring this volume to publication, it seems appropriate to promote a wider conversation that can respond to Henry's concerns and invitation for strategic thinking. In that spirit we'll be devoting portions of the upcoming 2006 issue to responses to the Henry essay, incorporating discussants from the 2005 roundtable and welcoming additional perspectives. What issues resonate with your campuses? Where else are there insights that can pave the way for rich dialogue internal to campuses and across campuses regarding the negotiation between pragmatism and aspiration as interdisciplinary programs come of age? What are the consequences and possibilities for interdisciplinary and integrative programs caught in institutional problem solving in a resource-hungry era of competing needs? Let us know your thoughts, proposals, and projections. Check out the Editors' Preface to Stuart Henry's essay for additional information regarding the way in which the conversation will continue for *ISSUES* readers.

At the same time that programs are receiving more scrutiny, refinements in pedagogical theory and practice are producing insights that coincide with thinking about best practices in teaching and learning generally. In this volume

two essays set the bar high for achieving outcomes of integration. Tami S. Carmichael and University of North Dakota colleagues Steven Finney and Mark Magness, in “An International Learning Community: Cultural Studies and Study Abroad in an Integrated Studies Program,” describe strategies they used to internationalize the Integrated Studies Program at their university by building on an existing study-abroad program—and extending the interdisciplinary program to students in Norway. They describe the benefits to both ISP and to the program at the American College of Norway at the same time they explore planning and implementation processes that are portable to other campuses.

Brian McCormack’s “Making Interdisciplinarity Work Through Translation and Analogical Thinking,” performs a similar service by challenging scholars and teachers of interdisciplinary studies, including himself, to achieve an even higher level of refinement and precision in the classroom. McCormack explores a range of pedagogical initiatives that aim to engage students in the most theoretically rich and purposeful inquiries associated with interdisciplinary inquiry. In the process he uncovers a still deeper level of possibility that could reframe classroom practice and promote a conceptual framework for teaching that more closely approximates the vision and multi-dimensionality of interdisciplinary theory.

Our issue would not be complete without attention to the arena of interdisciplinary scholarship, increasingly the product of interdisciplinary partnerships, funding initiatives, and professional activity both within and outside the academy. Donald N. Mager, of Johnson C. Smith University, offers an application of interdisciplinary research and writing to the subject of Russian poet Anna Akhmatova, integrating history, literature, translation, and theory to examine textual revision and the arts as they pertain to the remarkable achievement of Akhmatova under Stalin. His close reading of variant texts is complemented and deepened by methodological insights and cross-disciplinary acts of reading and interpretation. Where do interdisciplinary writing and research thrive? Where are the models of interdisciplinary inquiry to which our students can aspire? *ISSUES* offers one home for such boundary work.

Lastly, we are pleased to complete our volume with the 2005 Association for Integrative Studies/Association for General and Liberal Studies National Conference keynote presentation of the distinguished scholar of teaching and learning, Professor Randy Bass of Georgetown University. Bass, Assistant Provost for Teaching and Learning, Executive Director of Georgetown University’s Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship, and

Director of the Visible Knowledge Project across some 20 campuses, has graciously assisted us in bringing his deeply interactive multi-media conference presentation to the print journal readership. In so doing he reminds us of the impact of interactive technologies on interdisciplinary process and education and affirms the final and perhaps most important ingredient in the interdisciplinary and integrative enterprise at the center of higher education—the student. Bass takes us full circle to capture the power of the integrative teaching and learning experience to enrich student lives and to inform the trajectories that will be at the heart of their encounter with local, national, and global communities in the next decades. What has the Georgetown project revealed about active learning? Where does learning occur, and how does it get communicated to others? With what urgency must we attend to educational reform? His is a call to action that commands our attention.

We hope you will find that the 2005 volume of *ISSUES IN INTEGRATIVE STUDIES* proves as stimulating as it was for us to engage the ideas and research practice of our interdisciplinary colleagues. As our ever-widening circle of reviewers, authors, and readers remind us, there is keen interest in building upon the foundation of core interdisciplinary texts and in focusing the most intense habits of observation, research, and rigorous exploration on why, how, and to what end interdisciplinary inquiry can serve students, scholars, institutions, and communities in confronting the complex and pressing problems of the present. We hope that you will join in that effort. Please email Joan Fiscella and Fran Navakas at jbf@uic.edu and fnavakas@noctrl.edu with your submissions, questions, and proposals. Consult the AIS Web site at <http://www.muohio.edu/ais> for our author guidelines, electronic archives of early volumes of *ISSUES*, and our Call for Papers. Should you wish to respond informally, don't hesitate to draw upon the INTERDIS listserv at INTERDIS@listserv.muohio.edu.

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