

**SPECIAL REPORT**  
of the  
**ACADEMIC PRIORITIES, PROGRAM AND BUDGET AND  
RESEARCH COUNCILS**

concerning an  
**INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES INSTITUTE**

Presented at the  
748<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate  
April 30, 2015

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**ACADEMIC PRIORITIES COUNCIL**

**At its meeting on April 25, 2013, the Academic Priorities Council unanimously endorsed the proposal for the establishment of the Interdisciplinary Studies Institute.**

**PROGRAM AND BUDGET COUNCIL**

**At its meeting on February 20, 2013, the Program and Budget Council endorsed this proposal for an Interdisciplinary Studies Institute.**

**RESEARCH COUNCIL**

**At its regular meeting on November 14th, 2014, the Research Council discussed the proposal for an Interdisciplinary Studies Institute. After substantial discussion, the Council voted to approve the proposal. Some members felt that the proposed institute's purpose and mission, as well as its name, were not as sharply defined as they would like to be, and were also concerned about the institute's future economic viability, but on balance felt it appropriate to give our approval to the formal establishment of the institute, in hope that approval would improve its opportunities to pursue a sustainable future.**

**MOVED: 30-15 That the Faculty Senate approve the Interdisciplinary Studies Institute, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 15-044.**

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
THE FACULTY SENATE

NEW INSTITUTES AND CENTERS APPROVAL FORM

35 COPIES REQUIRED

**PROPOSED TITLE OF INSTITUTE:** Interdisciplinary Studies Institute

**ORGANIZATIONAL LOCATION**

**SCHOOL/COLLEGE/MAJOR BUDGETARY UNIT:** Provost; College of Humanities and Fine Arts;  
College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

**NAME OF DIRECTOR:** Stephen Clingman

**MAILING ADDRESS:** Department of English, Bartlett Hall (clingman@english.umass.edu)

**TELEPHONE:** 545-3474; 413-687-7890 (cell)

**PROPOSED STARTING DATE:** Fall 2012 (Provost's interim approval received)

**I. DESCRIPTION**

**A. Brief description (60 words or less) of the proposed enterprise (name, basic mission, activity scope, clientele)**

The Interdisciplinary Studies Institute is a forum for faculty engagement across a wide range of fields and disciplines. Its annual faculty seminar brings colleagues together across colleges, disciplines and ranks, creating new intellectual collaborations. Other programs include an annual residency, lectures, seminars, colloquia, and co-sponsorships. ISI furthers university goals of fostering innovative interdisciplinary research, creative activity, and teaching.

**B. Rationale and Justification (mission, goals, objectives, relation to campus goals, needs addressed, population served, resources obtained)**

The Interdisciplinary Studies Institute (ISI) is a natural outgrowth of the Interdisciplinary Seminar in the Humanities and Fine Arts (ISHA), which has been active since 2001. Through the course of its existence, ISHA developed wide experience in interdisciplinary work, building up a series of networks across campus which added to its reach and recognition. ISHA was housed in CHFA, yet always extended outwards. Over the years, our annual seminar hosted more than 120 members of the faculty across colleges from HFA, to SBS, to the School of Education, to the current CNS and its predecessors. Our Annual ISHA Lecture featured leading figures in fields ranging from literature, history, law, and anthropology to astrophysics and biology. In 2010 we initiated a residency program with a highly successful visit by the eminent writer, Caryl

Phillips, featuring four major public events as well as six encounters of other kinds, including class visits and an interdisciplinary graduate seminar (perhaps the first of its nature on campus).

Now, drawing on this experience, we welcome the opportunity to become a fully-fledged institute. Instead of being based solely in CHFA, we will span both the College of Humanities and Fine Arts and the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Our Board, previously comprised of faculty from CHFA, has been expanded to incorporate members from CSBS. We will maintain many of our central operations, in particular the faculty seminar which has been so successful, as well as lectures, colloquia, and our residency program. Yet our new structure will both reflect and substantially enhance the interdisciplinary range and programs we already have in place because of our improved budget and standing. So, our faculty seminar will be more focused and selective; our events and co-sponsorships more ranging and broadly supportive; our prestigious residency, which brings major figures to campus, an annual rather than periodic event. In these and other ways our activities will foster a climate of interdisciplinary engagement and interaction on campus with implications for research, for teaching, and for our graduate and undergraduate students.

While there are a number of institutes and centers on this campus, some of an interdisciplinary nature, most if not all of them cohere around particular ensembles of topic or field. ISI, however, is distinctive because it makes no presuppositions about field, discipline, or topic: our projects and networks can range widely, our connections can be innovative and imaginative. What is true of the campus is true in a national context more broadly, where most institutes and centers are housed in particular domains—e.g., in either the humanities or social sciences. We, however, engage with both, and we do not limit our reach even to the generous borders of these two areas. Our intention is to be a distinctive and pathbreaking forum promoting interdisciplinary research and discussion through a continually evolving set of priorities and explorations.

In these respects, ISI responds to stated campus goals, as outlined, for instance, in the 2009 Framework for Excellence. Both directly and indirectly, its programs have a bearing on various objectives: the concentration on interdisciplinarity and collaborative work, whether in research, creative activity, or teaching; raising the profile and quality of our graduate programs; community and outreach work; development opportunities; and, because of the innovative nature of ISI, university visibility and public relations.

Our resources are described in greater detail below (see III. F, Budget), but in brief our funding is secured through three major sources: Office of the Provost (\$50,000 p.a.); Dean of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts (\$25,000 p.a.); Dean of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences (\$25,000 p.a.). We also have an agreement with the Dean of the College of Natural Sciences that he will provide up to \$7,000 funding for seminar Fellows selected from CNS. Our major funding provides a firm foundation for our programs, including the residency; and it also gives us the basis for development and fundraising opportunities in years ahead to enhance and supplement those programs.

**C. Specific Activities planned as an on-going part of the enterprise (types, quantities of activities, meetings, publications, seminars, research)**

Our programs and activities will include the following:

1. Faculty Seminar: This is the core activity of ISI. Based on previous models in ISHA, each year we announce a theme of an interdisciplinary nature. ISI themes will whenever possible be problem-based, in order to facilitate focus and outcomes, while also being carefully framed to encourage proposals from as broad an array of disciplines and backgrounds as possible, making for the most enriching set of interactions. Fellows are selected by the ISI Board, and meet at regular intervals

through the year, taking it in turns to present their projects. Each is provided with a research allowance to use in their work, and they have obligations to ISI which are directed towards outcomes, including some combination of the following: a report at the end of the year; capstone public panels among the group; web presentations or other publications. Where possible, depending on the theme and the seminar group, we will explore thematic publications, whether online or in book form. We also expect crossover benefits from the seminar for teaching and pedagogy, whether in forging new collaborations among seminar participants or in integrative experience courses. The aim here is for the benefits of the seminar to proceed from the group outwards to campus and other communities. All publications emerging from the seminar should carry acknowledgement to ISI and UMass. Fellows and other participants in ISI activities should receive due recognition in tenure and promotion reviews, and we hope to have formal recognition of our seminar in regular campus ceremonies—e.g., the celebration of teaching and research. For a full list of seminars since 2001 (including the current ISI seminar, ‘Engagement: The Challenge of Public Scholarship’), see Appendix B. For a list of the current ISI Fellows, which will give a sense of our interdisciplinary range, see Appendix C.

2. Residency: The ISI Residency also builds on our experience in ISHA. Here we host national or international figures with a broad appeal both on academic and public topics for stays (depending on budget and available time) from 1 week to 4 weeks or more. Each residency is related to the ISI theme for the year, and events are directed to the larger purposes of ISI and its various constituencies, including public lectures and/or performances; interdisciplinary graduate seminars; class visits; outreach and/or community dimensions where possible. The ISI residency serves as a point of focus for the campus community as a whole—faculty and students, both graduate and undergraduate—and brings positive publicity and visibility to the university. As an example of the nature of the program, and indication of its range across our constituencies, our first ISI residency, with Professors Jean and John Comaroff of Harvard University, involved two public lectures, two departmental graduate seminars (Anthropology), one interdisciplinary graduate seminar, one undergraduate class visit (History), one departmental meeting with faculty and students (WEB Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies), and a meeting with the ISI Fellows. Reports on the residency were wholly positive (see Appendix D).
3. Symposia/Colloquia/Lectures: ISI hosts and/or sponsors symposia, colloquia and lectures when these have a bearing on interdisciplinary work; these may occur at both the faculty and graduate student level. Our program for 2012-13 includes a lecture by Professor Martha Biondi (Northwestern), on ‘Engagement: The Challenge of Public Scholarship.’
4. Co-sponsorships and Collaborations: Part of our ambit is to facilitate promising work by others and create linkages on campus where these might not otherwise exist. ISI is therefore eager to work with other bodies and groups in organizing events of broad interest, and to provide co-sponsorship where appropriate. In this way, ISI is also a conduit for funding and consolidation across the campus, supplementing and complementing other sources. Among our projects for 2012-13 was major funding in the Fall for the highly successful World Studies Interdisciplinary Project. In the Spring we are co-sponsoring the Magnet Theatre Residency hosted by the Theater Department, as well as the Center for Heritage and Society’s conference on ‘The Past for Sale: The Economic Entanglements of Cultural Heritage.’ Heading forward into 2013-14, we will be collaborating closely with the University Museum of Contemporary Art’s ambitious and exciting ‘Du Bois in our Time’ project.
5. Web Portal: The ISI website will serve as a central web portal for interdisciplinary work on our campus. We aim to make it energetic, interactive, and useful, serving not only as a reporting mechanism for ISI and its activities but also as a key component of those activities, creating a venue

for thought-pieces, blogs, links, and audio and visual material. Such material might come not only from seminar fellows but also others on campus with something to contribute by way of interdisciplinary contemplations or contributions. Fellows will be encouraged to use the website to disseminate news and perspectives on their projects, of value both in itself and in foregrounding the public dimensions of ISI more generally. We are currently restructuring the ISI website based on the Drupal platform, which should make it eminently flexible and dynamic.

6. Structural/Programmatic Collaborations: Where possible, ISI will forge connections and collaborations with other bodies, centers and institutes on campus: e.g., Center for Teaching, BDIC, Commonwealth Honors College, ISSR, CRF, CPPA, Psychology of Peace and Violence Program, Institute for Holocaust, Genocide and Memory Studies. There are also options for collaboration beyond our campus, in the UMass system, in the Five Colleges, and in local/regional communities.
7. Future Programs and Activities: As ISI progresses, we project other activities, much of which will depend on fundraising, and/or development to finance them, though some programs would also be revenue raising (see specific items below). These include the following:
  - a. Grant disbursement: In order to promote interdisciplinary work, and depending on available funds, ISI will dispense grants for research and/or travel. There will be application cycles twice a year, with selections to be made by the ISI Board. Here our focus will for the most part be on graduate students, as a way of helping to raise the profile of our graduate programs and providing students with funding that is generally hard to come by.
  - b. Graduate Seminar: As counterpart to the faculty seminar, organized around the same theme, with interactive dimensions between the two groups.
  - c. Summer Institutes: Featuring faculty connected with ISI, institutes on particular themes, topics, or problems, fee-based and revenue-raising.
  - d. Lecture Series: For local communities, fee-based and revenue-raising.
  - e. Exchanges and Hosting: In collaboration with other universities nationally and internationally. Dependent on available funds, collaboration opportunities, and fundraising.

**D. How does this enterprise differ from other offices or activities on campus with similar names, missions, interests?**

As suggested above, while there are a number of institutes and centers on this campus, some of an interdisciplinary nature, most if not all of them cohere around particular ensembles of topic or field. For instance, in CHFA there is the Massachusetts Center for Interdisciplinary Renaissance Studies. In CSBS there is the Institute for Social Science Research. Yet these, while both eminent and admirable, are firmly focused by period (Renaissance) or approach (social scientific). Other such centers and institutes include the Center for Research on Families, the Psychology of Peace and Violence Program, the Institute for Holocaust, Genocide and Memory Studies, DEFA, the Center for Public Policy and Administration. Yet in this context what is notable about ISI is that it (a) crosses disciplines and colleges, in that it is based both in CHFA and CSBS, and reaches out as well to other colleges such as CNS and ISOM; and (b) that it is not limited by approach, period, topic, or indeed in any other way. In other words it can be interdisciplinary across some of the normal confines of the interdisciplinary itself. This makes ISI distinctive not only on the UMass campus but also in the national context, where such bodies are rare. Its mission is not only flexible at any given time,

but the ISI also has the capacity for that mission to unfold over time as interdisciplinary fields themselves develop. On campus ISI has the capacity, without co-opting the specific ambit of any other center or institute, to help coordinate and focus interdisciplinary activities more generally.

As a way of mapping how this will work, ISI will organize activities on topics of an interdisciplinary nature that do not fit into existing Centers and Institutes; and it will also be able to work with existing Centers and Institutes (as well as Departments) on topics of mutual or overlapping interest. By way of example, our 2012-13 faculty seminar on 'Engagement: The Challenge of Public Scholarship' cuts across a wide departmental and disciplinary range (see Appendix C), thereby resonating with much other work on this campus. At the same time our residency with Professors Jean and John Comaroff involved work with both the Anthropology Department (CSBS) and the Department of Afro-American Studies (CHFA), while our collaborations and co-sponsorships involved (among others) the World Studies Interdisciplinary Project and the Center for Heritage and Society.

## **II. INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND GOVERNANCE**

### **A. List all University units involved and describe administrative arrangements with them, if any.**

Through our various programs (faculty seminar, residency, lectures, co-sponsorships and collaborations, symposia, etc), ISI will potentially link with each and every department and program in both CHFA and CSBS (it seems redundant to list them each by name). Beyond that, we expect to sustain and develop links with faculty and departments in CNS, ISOM, and the School of Education. Natural allies and collaborators in other programs, centers, and institutes include the following: Public History; European Studies; Film Studies; Massachusetts International Film Festival; Native American Studies; University Museum of Contemporary Art; Psychology of Peace and Violence Studies; Religious Studies; Center for Heritage and Society; Center for Public Policy and Administration; Du Bois Homesite; University Library; Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino Studies; Center for Research on Families; Digital Humanities Initiative; Translation Center. While we have no administrative arrangements with any of these, we do have a record of cooperation and collaboration with a number of them.

### **B. Describe any organizational relationships (as distinct from funding sources) with other agencies, public or private, outside the University.**

We have or are exploring affiliations with aligned bodies and groups in the Five College System, in the UMass System, and in broader national and international arenas. In the Five College arena we have natural alliances with organizations such as the Five College African Studies Council, with which we have collaborated in the past, as well as Crossroads in the Study of the Americas (CISA); there are also brother/sister institutes on Five College campuses, such as the Kahn Liberal Arts Institute (Smith). We also hope to explore options in the UMass system more broadly, for instance the Inter-college Seminar in the Humanities and Sciences at UMass Boston (originally based on ISHA). In the national/international setting we are considering affiliations with organizations such as the Association for Interdisciplinary Studies, the International Network for Interdisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity, and the Philosophy of/as Interdisciplinary Network. More generally, our programs have the potential to develop promising connections. For instance, hosting Jean and John Comaroff for our inaugural ISI residency in Fall 2012 has produced links with the Department of Afro-American and African Studies at Harvard University, where the

Comaroffs are based. During their visit we had active discussions about pursuing and developing those links—a rare private-public collaboration in Massachusetts higher education. We expect to develop more such links in the future.

**C. Describe the organization’s advisory board or other governance group.**

ISI governance is comprised of the Director of the Institute, together with the ISI Advisory Board.

The Director is a member of the faculty in CHFA or CSBS, and is appointed for a three-year term (renewable) by the Provost. Among the Director’s duties are the following: liaising with the ISI Board; organizing and participating in the faculty seminar; organizing the ISI Residency and liaising with relevant departments for events, seminars, class visits, etc; supervising the ISI Graduate Assistants; arranging publicity and public relations efforts; supervising the ISI website; overseeing funding and disbursements; liaising with development officers and pursuing fundraising opportunities; liaising with, and reporting to, the Provost and Deans of CHFA and CSBS. There is an expectation of rotation in the Directorship between faculty members in CHFA and CSBS. The founding Director of ISI is Stephen Clingman, Department of English.

The Advisory Board is comprised of members of the faculty in CHFA and CSBS, representing a range of scholarly and creative disciplines and fields. Among the duties of the Board are the following: working with the ISI Director on policy and project matters; developing and approving annual seminar themes; selecting faculty fellows to the seminar; selecting/approving Residency candidates; approving cosponsorships, lectures and colloquia; approving major disbursements. During the transition from ISHA to ISI there are twelve members of the Board, though the aim is to bring this down to ten members, equally balanced between the two colleges; it is possible there will be one additional member from CNS. Terms will be for three years, with a suitable rotation scheme to provide both continuity and new membership. The founding members of the ISI board are the following:

Lee Badgett, Center for Public Policy and Administration  
James Boyce, Department of Economics  
Janice Irvine, Department of Sociology  
John Kingston, Department of Linguistics  
Randall Knoper, Department of English  
Laetitia La Follette, Department of Art, Architecture, and Art History (Art History)  
Kathleen Lugosch, Department of Art, Architecture, and Art History (Architecture)  
Patrick Mensah, Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures (French)  
Eileen O’Neill, Department of Philosophy  
Robert Paynter, Department of Anthropology  
Manisha Sinha, W.E.B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies  
Banu Subramaniam, Department of Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies

**D. Will this be an institute—an independent organizational unit, acting as a department for purposes of non faculty personnel actions and appointments, able to solicit its own funds without departmental head approval?**

The ISI will be an institute as described here. It reports to the Provost, with subsidiary reporting to the Deans

of CHFA and CSBS. It will make a small number of non-faculty appointments, and will be able to solicit funds without departmental head approval.

**E. If a center, describe the relationship within the department to which this organization is subordinate.**

N/A.

**F. Describe arrangements for any patent rights, copyrights, or other ownership components of activities, and any restrictions on access to research information.**

Given ISI's base in CHFA and CSBS there is no expectation of any issues pertaining to patent rights. We are more likely to encounter issues pertaining to copyright with regard to (a) the work of seminar fellows, and (b) the work and public presentations of speakers and ISI Residents.

With regard to (a), fellows will retain copyright in any and all work they produce, though their non-remunerated permission will be sought for dissemination of papers and/or other short pieces or creative works on the Internet. Where books are produced, emerging from seminars, these will be covered by the normal copyright arrangements between publishers and authors/creative artists.

With regard to (b), speakers and ISI residents will retain copyright in their work and/or presentations, though again we will seek permission to disseminate their material and/or recordings of their presentations on the Internet. Our aim will be to make research information and creative contributions as widely available as possible while observing the rights of authors and creators.

## **II. RESOURCES**

**A. Describe the space available for use by the organization. (If this is not a permanent location, indicate other space arrangements that are to be made in the future, if known.)**

At present, ISI is housed in the Director's office in the English Department. Seminars are held in the conference room in Draper Hall, courtesy of the Dean of CSBS. Lectures and presentations are held in suitable rooms and venues on campus. These arrangements can be sustained for the foreseeable future, though the longer-term aim for the Institute is to have its own location, conference room, facilities, etc.

**B. Describe any requests for space that have been made.**

No specific requests have been made.

**C. Describe any repairs, renovations, major equipment needed to make the space you have useful to the organization.**

No major repairs, renovations, or major equipment is required. ISI already possesses its key equipment (computer, digital projector, speakers, recording devices), and replacement can be sustained out of normal budget funding and/or fundraising in future.

**D. If any non-University employees or students are or will be using space, describe the arrangement.**

No non-University employees or students will be using current ISI space. Non-university students, together with general members of the public, are welcome at our public events, but these are held in a variety of campus venues. As/when ISI gains access to its own more permanent space, these same conditions will apply.

**E. Staffing (when operation is fully developed):**

The Institute is staffed in the following ways:

1. **Non-faculty (provide rank or grade, student status, working title, FTE, source of funding).**
  - a. Two graduate student assistants, each on a half-RA appointment, from regular ISI budget. Graduate students in CHFA and CSBS are eligible, with some rotation expected. Working title: ISI Graduate Assistant.
2. **Faculty involved (provide name, department, extent involved, release time arrangement, if any).**
  - a. Director: Stephen Clingman, Department of English. Two-course teaching release.
  - b. ISI Board Members: For full list, see Advisory Board, above. No release time from teaching.
  - c. Seminar Fellows: Ten to twelve faculty fellows per year; no release time from teaching.
3. **Describe how the Center or Institute may impact existing teaching responsibilities of participating faculty members through “buy-out” arrangements, reduced teaching loads, or other provisions, and how such impacts will be resolved.**
  - a. Director’s course releases: With the Director’s course releases from a regular 2-2 load, Stephen Clingman teaches two courses in the English Department, undergraduate (every year) and graduate (every second year). One course release is reimbursed from the ISI budget at the standard rate to the English Department; one release is matched by the Department to the ISI.
  - b. ISI Board Members: No release time from teaching.
  - c. Seminar Fellows: No release time from teaching.

**F. Attach a detailed budget showing sources of funding, full-year basic operation costs and anticipated expenditures. (This should show programmatic expenditure descriptions, kinds of funding accounts and amounts by subsidiary accounts as well as alternative funding arrangements or programmatic adjustments to be made if funding sources fail.)**

For a detailed budget, see Appendix A. With regard to alternative funding arrangements and/or programmatic adjustments, please note the following:

1. At present, all ISI programs take place within our current operating budget as provided by the Provost and the Deans of CHFA and CSBS.
2. Should on-campus funding fail or be curtailed, the working assumption is that all programs are subject to budgetary constraints and may be modified accordingly.
3. This budget may in future be supplemented by fundraising and/or development efforts which will allow us to expand and enhance our operations, both current and projected. Such efforts will be part of our undertakings as we go forward.