



THE NEWSLETTER

INTEGRATIVE PATHWAYS

OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

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Cross-Pollination(s) 1 & 2

UIndy Goes Interdisciplinary

By Gerburg Garmann, Ph.D.

Professor, Dept. of Global Languages & Cross-Cultural Studies
Assistant Dean, Interdisciplinary Studies & Service Learning
Shaheen College of Arts and Sciences • University of Indianapolis

The First and Second Interdisciplinary Conferences at the University of Indianapolis, IN, were a huge success.

In 2014, Dr. Gerburg Garmann accepted the position of Assistant Dean of Interdisciplinary Programs & Service Learning at the University of Indianapolis, IN.

As part of her strategic plan to build a viable interdisciplinary studies area, she committed to guiding the University's interdisciplinary advisory council (INTERAC) in designing and hosting regular interdisciplinary conferences.

INTERAC agreed that – in the spirit of an intensive grassroots ap-

proach – the first two conferences, Cross-Pollination(s) 1 and 2, were to be conceived as internal conferences.

The first interdisciplinary conference – “Cross-Pollination(s) 1 - All That Jazz” – took its theme from jazz culture and showcased everything from its very own Cotton Club to New Orleans cuisine.

In addition to a variety of informative presentations by campus faculty (25 faculty co-presentations by 50+ faculty members), there were interactive, structural elements provided by UIndy's own Imagination Emporium (a student collaborative of UIndy's

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Photo provided by Gerburg Garmann

The recent interdisciplinary conference, hosted by the University of Indianapolis, featured more than 175 attendees in more than 60 sessions.

www.oakland.edu/ais

UIndy Hosts Conference

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Experience Design program), a presentation by Larry Strayhorn on the musical journey of his uncle, the great Billy Strayhorn, and a viewing of the film “Lush Life,” an award-winning documentary of his uncle’s life.

More than 400 faculty, students, and guests attended the conference in 2015.

“Cross-Pollination(s) 2 - Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Diversity” – on March 24, 2017, took a bit of a different approach.

With diversity issues having become a central discussion topic in higher education worldwide,



Photo provided by Gerburg Garmann.

Interdisciplinary specialists from across the world met in March to attend the 2nd Interdisciplinary Conference at the University of Indianapolis. More than 175 stakeholders presented in more than 60 sessions around the theme of “Cross-Pollination(s) 2: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Diversity.”

INTERAC agreed that its complexity could best be grasped at levels that defy disciplinary and presentational categorization.

Furthermore, with interdisciplinarity at its best including all stakeholders of an organization, “Cross-Pollination(s) 2” was intentional in inviting broad participation by students, faculty and staff. More than 175 stakeholders (co-) presented in more than 60 sessions.

For a quick look, please visit <http://uindy.edu/cross-pollination>.

The conference was structured around a series of “stream” narratives, each one focusing on a different topic relevant to diversity issues:

Stream A: Experiencing Diversity

Stream B: Building, Managing, and Sustaining Diversity

Stream C: Best Interdisciplinary Practices of Course Design on Diversity Issues

Stream D: The Power of Language in Shaping Social Change

Stream E: Performing Diversity

Stream F: Researching and As-

sessing Diversity

Stream G: What Now? Diversity in 2016 Post-Election America

One of the conference’s highlights was Dr. James Welch IV’s lively and provocative keynote “Cross-Pollination Stings! Finding Common Ground in the Midst of Division.” His talk was much appreciated and well received by the audience.

After a day of invigorating presentations, attendees joined for an interactive installation created by UIndy’s Imagination Emporium (“Rebuilding a Diverse Southside from the Ground Up”) and a communal dinner featuring an ethnic menu dedicated to representing the diversity of Indianapolis’ south side.

This choice was likewise intentional as it honored partnerships between the University and its neighbors whose anchor UIndy aims to be.

In August 2017, INTERAC will plan “Cross-Pollination(s) 3.”

We are currently exploring options to go national or collaborate with other interdisciplinary organizations. Please stay tuned!



The Second Interdisciplinary Conference, held at the University of Indianapolis in March 2017, featured speakers from many disciplines and the community.

39th Annual Conference

AIS Fall Meeting to be Baltimore Oct. 19-21

The Interdisciplinary Studies program at UMBC is pleased to bring the 39th annual Association for Interdisciplinary Studies conference to Baltimore Oct. 19-21.

The conference planning committee has organized a program around the theme: "Beyond Talking Heads: Applied and Experiential Learning through an Interdisciplinary Lens."

This theme is chosen to emphasize applications of interdisciplinary theory to ALL aspects of academic life including but not limited to pedagogy. We emphasize just as much how interdisciplinary thinking

influences thoughtful research, funding, campus administration/reorganization and holistic development of students,



faculty and staff.

There will be workshops, panels, presentations, and participatory art projects that challenge conference attendees to think broadly, inclusively and across disciplinary boundaries.

Sessions will explore how educators define, execute and assess project-based learning, how researchers add value to projects through the scholarship of interdisciplinarity, how the arts can be integrated into other disciplines and, institutionally, how universities can articulate the role of interdisciplinary studies programs.

24th Annual Conference

Association for Core Texts and Courses (ACTC)

Liberal Arts Institute at Concordia University • Irvine, CA

Thursday - Sunday • April 19 - 22, 2018
Sheraton Conference Center • Framingham, MA

Plenary speakers to be announced. • Sunday Business Meeting open to all.

For information:

Tara Flattley, Administrative Assistant, ACTC Liberal Arts Institute
Tara.Flattley@coretexts.org • (949) 214-3623

Sponsored by Assumption College
Co-Sponsored by Alliance for Liberal Learning (Villanova University)

Co-Hosted By Td-Net and Methods Centre

2017 International Conference in September at Leuphana University in Germany

The Network for Transdisciplinary Research, known as td-net, is co-hosting its 2017 international conference with Leuphana University, in the space of a newly designed building by Daniel Libeskind.

The conference is scheduled for Sept. 11-15 in Luneburg, Germany. The conference theme is “Transdisciplinary Research and Education: Intercultural Endeavors.”

The td-net is a Swiss-based forum for researchers and funders in the fields of inter- and transdisciplinary research and teaching.

Anchored in concepts of mutual learning and co-production of knowledge with stakeholders in society, the Network has been instrumental in fostering an expanded connotation of transdisciplinarity.

Td-net and host Methods Centre at Leuphana University are also partnering with the Eawag water research institute at the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology, the EU-funded

INTREPID/COST initiative on interdisciplinarity, the International Social Science Council, the Association for Interdisciplinary Studies, and networks for the Science of Team Science and for Integration and Implementation Sciences.

This year’s theme of intercultur-

will be hosting special meetings.

The INTREPID/COST Action network will present findings from projects exploring how interdisciplinarity is defined and managed by funding organizations in the 28 member countries of the EU.

Three former Presidents of the

Association for Interdisciplinary Studies (AIS), two of whom are also part of the conference’s strategic advisory board (Klein and Keestra), will describe the mission and major activities of AIS, online resources on its website, and past efforts to foster



A newly designed building by Daniel Libeskind will be the site of the 2017 International Conference on Interdisciplinarity co-hosted by the Network for Transdisciplinary Research (td-net) and Methods Centre at Leuphana University.

ality invites comparative exploration of research and education fostering transdisciplinary theory and practice across world regions, institutions, cultures, communities, and extra-academic stakeholders in the public and private spheres.

Panels, sessions, and keynotes will occur Monday evening through Thursday. Training, workshops, special meetings, and excursions will occur Monday and Friday.

On Monday two organizations

common interests across organizations devoted to enhancing both inter- and trans-disciplinary work. (See “AIS to Host Open Meeting,” page 5.)

For the tentative program, see: <http://www.transdisciplinarity.ch/en/td-net/Konferenzen/ITD-2017/Detailed-programme.html>.

For Registration, see: <http://www.transdisciplinarity.ch/td-net/Konferenzen/ITD-2017/Registration.html>.

td-net conference

AIS to Host Open Meeting in September at Leuphana University

Three former presidents of the Association for Interdisciplinary Studies (AIS) will host a two-part open meeting of AIS during the td-net conference at Leuphana University in Germany. "Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Connections and Collaborations" will be held 9:15-10:45 a.m. Monday, Sept. 11, 2017.

Julie Thompson Klein, Rick Szostak, and Machiel Keestra will begin with brief introductions to the mission and resources of AIS, followed by a transition to joint discussion with the audience of ways to expand inter-organizational resource sharing and collaborative projects.

The introductions feature links on the AIS website (<https://oakland.edu/ais>), and the transition to discussion features two prior ef-

"Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Connections and Collaborations" will be held 9:15-10:45 a.m. Monday, Sept. 11, 2017.

forts to foster organizational cooperation (the International Network for Interdisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity known as INIT and a panel at the 2015 td-net conference presenting online resources of organizations that are advancing inter- and trans-disciplinarity).

After Keestra's opening remarks, Klein will describe AIS efforts over time. She will highlight activities aimed at promoting a professional community for interdisciplinary studies; advocating best-practices

for integration in teaching, curriculum development, and research; and sponsoring development of standards for program accreditation and tenure and promotion policies.

She will also point to annual conferences and communication forums including a quarterly newsletter, annual journal, and the website, plus directories of programs, model course syllabi, assessment instruments, and a student honor society.

Klein will also raise the question of how AIS now positions itself given new developments in transdisciplinary research and team science, including the premise interdisciplinarity is reliant on disciplines, focus on understanding versus application and implemen-

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Julie Thompson Klein is Professor of Humanities Emerita in the English Department at Wayne State University and Affiliate of the TdLab at the ETH-Zurich university for science and technology. Her books include *Interdisciplinarity* (1990), *Interdisciplinary Studies Today* (co-edited 1994), *Crossing Boundaries* (1996), *Transdisciplinarity* (co-edited 2001), *Interdisciplinary Education in K-12 and College* (edited 2002), *Humanities, Culture, and Interdisciplinarity* (2005), *Creating Interdisciplinary Campus Cultures* (2010), and *Interdisciplining Digital Humanities* (2015).

She is a past president of AIS and was also Associate Editor of *The Oxford Handbook on Interdisciplinarity* (2010, 2017). Klein has received numerous honors, including the Kenneth Boulding Award for outstanding scholarship on interdisciplinarity.

Rick Szostak is Professor and Chair of the Department of Economics at the University of Alberta. He was President of AIS 2011-14 and has served on the AIS Board of Directors for more than a decade.

He co-authored the third edition of *Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory* and the second edition of the *Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies*, both in 2017. He also co-authored *Interdisciplinary Knowledge Organization* in 2016. He has published several articles about interdisciplinary research, teaching, and program administration.

He has also taught courses on how to perform interdisciplinary research and served as a consultant to interdisciplinary research groups. And he has long sought to encourage international collaboration in the study of and support for interdisciplinarity.

Machiel Keestra is assistant professor of philosophy at the Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies of the University of Amsterdam, a researcher at the Institute for Logic, Language and Computation, and a member of the research group Neurocultures & Neuroaesthetics. He has published several articles and books chapters on the philosophy of interdisciplinary research and education, as well as *Sculpting the Space of Actions. Explaining Human Action by Integrating Intentions and Mechanisms* (2014), and the edited and coauthored books *Ten Western Philosophers* (2000), *Major Breakthroughs in Physics* (2001), *A Cultural History of Mathematics* (2006), and *An Introduction to Interdisciplinary Research: Theory and Practice* (2016). Keestra was convenor of the International Network for Interdisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity and is immediate past president of AIS as well as a continuing board member.

Between the Between: Entering Diversity

By Allison Upshaw

Black/Woman/Southern/Christian/Artist/Researcher/Teacher/Scholar
titles born

But not titles worn

Instead I wear the slash, marker of liminal places

Between the titled sectionality of my life spaces

So enter my diversity.

Between microaggressions on gender and race,

Double-checking my blinkers now...just in case

While men my womb's power attempt to erase

Come enter my diversity

Between gender and geography

Lies an immovable choreography

Constantly tap dancing on the ceiling above

Perhaps this is the year I trade in my stilettos for boxing gloves

Knowing my home's in Alabama no matter where I lay head

And sweet tea is what runs when my veins are bled

You should enter my diversity

Between publicly integrated and privately segregated

Church on Sundays, forgiveness anticipated

Between sermons and shouts

My mind is riddled with doubts

Between madness and creativity

I follow my artistic abilities

Lead to sing Tosca on a stage

And dancing my inquiries onto the page

Why won't you enter my diversity

Studying myself in order to reach him, reach her

Studying myself to become a better teacher

Between bodies of knowledge lie the bridges of my art

Tread upon them gently, for their only foundation is my heart.

Respectfully enter my diversity

Entering Diversity

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I'm from between the between spaces of academia's interstitial places
 Between artist and scholar
 Between prima donna and fodder
 I'm from creative heart with unrecognized smarts
 I'm between here and there
 I'm from nowhere yet everywhere
 Always the same
 Outsider by name
Yes, enter my diversity

I'm from between the between spaces
 Between social constructs of race that we all know are false
 but continue to gloss... over our knowledge of the truth
 I'm from being the new kid on the block
 desperately working to reject lock...
 Step moves of Stepford thinkers.
Please, enter my diversity

AIS Meeting at Leuphana

Continued from page 5

tation, location in the academy versus the real world, and intellectual inquiry versus political and social activity.

Szostak will then talk about some of the current activities of the Association. He will address some of the resources available on the Association's website. In particular the "About Interdisciplinarity" set of webpages provides an overview of the dispersed literature on interdisciplinary research, teaching, and administration.

A more recent set of webpages

on "Interdisciplinary General Education" shows how interdisciplinarity can and should infuse a university curriculum. Szostak will also discuss several important AIS-related publications, and in particular a set of textbooks developed by various authors to facilitate interdisciplinary education. He will also join Klein in discussing AIS efforts to network with kindred organizations.

Finally, Keestra will review previous efforts to connect several organizations involved in inter- and trans-disciplinary research, education, and policy. AIS initiated INIT in 2009 to create a "network of networks." In addition, the current td-net and the former Center

for the Study of Interdisciplinarity aimed to facilitate communication and collaboration among different organizations and individuals. INIT aimed to mitigate confusion over conceptual and practical issues by exchanging insights and best practices while considering pros and cons of differences in approaches. It also hoped to participate consistently in national and international discussions and policy advice. This effort was not sustainable.

During the open meeting the speakers hope to discuss with the audience the value of and need to rekindle such efforts including ways of strengthening presentation of inter- and trans-disciplinarity to other parties and facilitating collaboration between colleagues.

Alabama's New College Fosters Meaningful Interdisciplinary Education

By John Miller

Assistant Director of New College • University of Alabama

The term “interdisciplinary” is now ubiquitous in academic circles. But as veterans of interdisciplinary education understand, it is one thing to bring together different disciplines; it is another to integrate those disciplines meaningfully. Window-dressing interdisciplinarity, as readers well know, only goes so far. And truly interdisciplinary education requires not just exposure to other disciplines, but also instruction on how to integrate methodologies from adjacent disciplines, as well as opportunities to deploy those methodologies.

In this piece, I will discuss how the University of Alabama's New College uses curriculum architecture to foster meaningfully interdisciplinary education. Specifically, I will recount lessons we have learned by layering aspects of students' educational experiences. We have found that

organizing our curriculum in tiers or layers with waypoints for reflection and further planning helps reinforce interdisciplinary methods and enables students to better integrate their studies overall. This curricular structure is built from:

- a gateway course,
- seminar requirements,
- regular one-on-one advising,
- a junior-level review, and
- a capstone experience.

Below, I will describe each element and the interactions between them; but first, I will describe the benefits derived from this structure. Then I will briefly describe New College for readers unfamiliar with our program.

Advising scholar Eric White describes developmental advising as giving students “the chance to craft their own educations, understand the paths they have chosen, and

use the skills and knowledge obtained, within work, civic and personal arenas for the rest of their lives.” In a student-choice driven program like New College, we like to think this is what we offer our students. But the question programs like ours face is “How?” How to provide this meaningful opportunity to shape academic experience? How to build space for reflection and planning? How to provide students with the kind of education that spans personal, professional, and civic life?

New College was founded in 1971 as an experimental unit at the University of Alabama. And true to our roots, we strive to fare better. As we continue to experiment with and refine aspects of the program, we have capitalized on the program's structure to build waypoints into our students' experiences. These waypoints foster understanding of paths students choose and the knowledge and skills that accrue as a consequence. In addition, we have deliberately stacked or layered these waypoints with curricular elements to amplify the potential

New College uses three integrative thematic areas so that students are exposed to interdisciplinarity in Creativity and Culture . . . Environment, Sustainability, and Conservation . . . and Social Problems and Social Change.

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Integrating Disciplines

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depth of that understanding.

New College, a department in the University of Alabama’s College of Arts & Sciences, houses the University’s Interdisciplinary Studies degree. All graduates create student-designed majors in consultation with faculty advisors.

Students admitted to the University may apply for admission to New College via an application process designed to identify students whose interests cannot be served by traditional departments. As part of that application, students must provide at least a rough outline of what disciplines and types of courses they would combine to create a self-designed major, which we call a Depth Study.

After admission or during its pendency, students articulate a more refined plan for their Depth Study in a required gateway course, Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies. Students read both textbook materials on interdisciplinary scholarship and texts that em-

Two key products of the capstone course are the project itself and a short presentation at the end-of-term.

Students are given wide latitude to execute projects in ways that best fit with content and subject. Nevertheless, instructors encourage students to create something that can bolster applications to professional or graduate school – or that provide evidence of relevant skills or knowledge to potential employers.

body integrated approaches to knowledge. Further, course assignments may include a mapping exercise where students integrate approaches to the issue or issues at the core of their Depth Study in multiple configurations.

In addition, over the course of a semester, two cohorts of faculty deliver brief presentations on the interdisciplinarity of their scholarly practice.

And finally, gateway students attend presentations required of senior level students in a capstone course (described below). These senior project presentations are assessed, in part, on how well students address the integration of fields of study their projects engaged.

In addition to the gateway course, students must complete five seminar classes that demonstrate integrated approaches to knowledge. New College uses three integrative thematic areas so that students are exposed to interdiscipli-

narity in:

Creativity and Culture: seminars that explore human thought and expressive practice. They interrogate beliefs, values, and dispositions that comprise culture, and focus on essential questions about what it means to be human.

Environment, Sustainability, and Conservation: seminars that explore the physical world, especially relations among elements of the natural world, and focus on relationships between humans and their environment.

Social Problems and Social Change: seminars that explore the social world, the problems societies confront and the ways human groups cause and respond to social change.

To the extent that a student’s seminar choices align with their proposed Depth Studies, they may count seminars toward their individualized degrees. But pedagogically, the purpose of the seminar requirement is to model interdisciplinary approaches to areas of inquiry.

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Integrating Disciplines

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Navigating the New College curriculum and responsibly using the freedom the program affords students requires robust advising. Consequently, each faculty member in New College is also an academic advisor. And when admitted to our program, students are paired with an advisor whose interests are germane to their proposed major.

Formal in-person advising occurs at least once a semester to plan courses for the upcoming academic term (although many students meet with their advisors more frequently). A recent refinement to this process is that students are required to complete an advising worksheet prior to advising. The form is designed both to track progress toward requirements and to prompt students to consider each term how the classes they have completed and those they plan to take constitute an integrated course of study.

Another tier of New College’s curricular architecture is the Third-Year Review. This is an extended advising session (in addition to regular academ-

ic advising) that brings together junior-level New College students with their academic advisor, and a faculty member or other outside expert in the field of the student’s Depth Study (typically someone they have met while pursuing their Depth Study).

We have found substantial benefits from this review process: first, outside experts help students put finishing touches

Navigating the New College curriculum and responsibly using the freedom the program affords students requires robust advising. Consequently, each faculty member in New College is also an academic advisor. And when admitted to our program, students are paired with an advisor whose interests are germane to their proposed major.

on the Depth Study and make plans for life after graduation. And second, the review marks the first time that students articulate proposals for their senior project, which all New College students must complete in either the Spring or Fall term of their final year.

In the Third-Year Review, students must articulate how their project will be interdisciplinary and consider what disciplinary approaches or out-of-class experiences will inform their work.

The final tier of New College’s curricular architecture is the Senior Project. Housed in a capstone course, this ex-

perience provides students the opportunity to integrate their Depth Study in a project that draws together disciplines they have engaged.

Students must create a pre-proposal for the project at the start of the term, which must be signed off on by their academic advisor.

In most cases, this pre-proposal is a more developed version of the idea articulated in the Third-Year Review; but since students sometimes change their plans, the advisor is in the best position to square those plans to the student’s self-designed

major. Subsequently, students tender a formal proposal to the capstone course professor for feedback and then submit periodic work demonstrating progress toward the project’s completion.

Two key products of the capstone course are the project itself and a short presentation at the end-of-term. Students are given wide latitude to execute projects in ways that best fit with content and subject. Nevertheless, instructors encourage students to create something that can bolster applications to professional or

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Integrating Disciplines

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graduate school – or that provide evidence of relevant skills or knowledge to potential employers.

The presentation component requires students describe the disciplines integrated in their projects and the way those disciplines are combined. And in the best cases, presenters discuss the fit of their interdisciplinary approach to the subject matter of the project.

Another vital aspect of the capstone experience is interaction between senior-level students and pupils in the gateway course. As noted above, gateway students attend seniors' presentations, which gives new or incoming students valuable lessons on how to craft their educations.

Other examples of capstone/gateway interactions include panels of senior-level students presenting on building a depth study, as well as out-of-class learning opportunities. And in informal exer-

Another vital aspect of the capstone experience is interaction between senior-level students and pupils in the gateway course.



John Miller is Assistant Director of New College at the University of Alabama, where he also serves as an assistant professor. Professor Miller teaches interdisciplinary courses on Creativity, Legal Studies, and Humanities. His poetry chapbook, Heat Lightning, was published this summer by Paper Nautilus Press.

cises, groups of gateway and capstone students with similar interests discuss how they bring together components of their studies.

Finally, capstone students assist with interviews of incoming students, some of whom are in the gateway class.

Many programs that offer integrative studies or other innovative modes of learning are. Consequently, what works for New College might not translate elsewhere. But stakeholders in similar environments likely can find aspects of their programs' structures that could better align with outcomes or reinforce curricular goals.

Recognizing these as opportunities to intentionally layer or tier curriculum with those features can amplify the integration within students' undergraduate educations.

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INTEGRATIVE PATHWAYS

2nd Dutch National Interdisciplinary Education Conference Set for 2018

The second Dutch National Interdisciplinary Education conference will be held Jan. 30, 2018, at Eindhoven Technical University, hosted by the Centre for Engineering Education of the 4 Technical Universities in the Netherlands (4TU.CEE).

Like the first successful conference organized in Amsterdam this year, this “national” conference will be bilingual with many – and plenary – presentations in English.

Planners say they hope to see even more colleagues from neighbouring countries in 2018 than last time, especially as they are building networks towards 2019 when the Association for Interdisciplinary Studies will meet in Amsterdam.

For more information, see <https://www.nie-conference.nl/>

About AIS

The Association for Interdisciplinary Studies is the U.S.-based international professional association devoted to interdisciplinary teaching (including service learning), research, program administration, and public policy. Interdisciplinarity integrates the insights of knowledge domains to produce a more comprehensive understanding of complex problems, issues, or questions. AIS serves as an organized professional voice and source of information on interdisciplinary approaches and the integration of insights from diverse communities to address complex problems in education and research. Founded in 1979, it is incorporated as a non-profit 501(c)3 educational association in the state of Ohio.

ON THE WEB:

www.oakland.edu/ais

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Find the latest news about the Association and interdisciplinary studies.
- **CONFERENCES**
The 39th annual AIS Conference will be held at the University of Maryland-Baltimore County campus Oct. 19-21.
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- **RESOURCES**
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- **MEMBERSHIPS**
It's time to renew your membership for 2017-18.