



Association for Interdisciplinary Studies *Virtual* Mini-Conference Letter of Invitation

In the face of fires and pandemics, Sonoma State University is working hard to demonstrate the flexibility, perseverance, and out-of-the-box thinking that is typical of interdisciplinarity and the Association for Interdisciplinary Studies. Sonoma State, along with the rest of the California State University system, is moving to mostly virtual instruction for Fall 2020 to maintain the health and safety of our campus and regional community.

While this means we will not be able to host the 42nd AIS Annual Conference on our campus in November 2020 as we had planned, we are prepared and excited to use our new virtual space to bring our *global*, interdisciplinary community closer together. To that end, SSU is pleased to invite you to participate in the Association for Interdisciplinary Studies' *Virtual* Mini-Conference on November 6, 2020.

The theme of this mini-conference is ***Interdisciplinary Responses to the Pandemic: An International Forum***. We hope that this virtual event will spark conversation and collaboration leading to research and thought pieces that we can follow up on in person in November 2022, when SSU plans to host its full ***Wicked Problems*** Conference that was originally planned for November 2020.

This mini-conference theme focuses on the recurring dilemmas faced by university communities who find themselves facing unexpected crises resulting from local to global acts of nature, including wildfires, flooding, and pandemics. What is the role of universities and interdisciplinary scholars and teachers in leading during these challenges? Topics for this theme could include:

- How can interdisciplinarity help us in the “zombie apocalypse” solutions room (or the COVID-19 solutions room)? How can we interdisciplinarians lead our communities and universities to seize the opportunities of the post apocalypse?
- How do we leverage interdisciplinarity in managing emergency operations and supporting continuity of learning?
- How do we support equitable digital access and inclusive online or hybrid learning environments (interdiversities), particularly when transition to a virtual classroom might be swift? How can interdisciplinarians keep the focus on inclusive excellence?
- How do we best communicate, across disciplines and across university units, to adequately manage safety, self-care, and learning during times of crisis and what can interdisciplinary studies teach us about those communication and wellness pathways?
- How do we incorporate real-time “wicked problems” into our interdisciplinary classes so that students learn from these dynamic experiences? And how might interdisciplinary learning help our students and communities prepare for a world of rapid change, isolation, flexibility, and a different kind of learning?
- How can universities partner with local organizations and move from theory to practice to support community rebuilding?

The AIS Virtual Mini-Conference invites proposals in a variety of collaborative formats and welcomes senior scholars, early career academics, student support staff, undergraduate and graduate students, and professionals in local, regional, and international communities to contribute to these discussions.

Conference proposals are due by **July 15, 2020**. Explore the Call for Proposals on our website (<http://ais2020.sonoma.edu>) to be found on the AIS website (www.interdisciplinarystudies.org). Join us in finding out how the future is interdisciplinary!

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