

AIS 2016 Final Conference Report

Conference 2016 Overview

The University of Ottawa in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, hosted a successful 38th Annual Conference of the AIS October 27-29, 2016. The venue for all conference activities (plenaries, meetings, keynote speeches, meals, presentations, workshops and panels) was the Desmarais building, located on the University of Ottawa's main campus in downtown Ottawa.

Venue and Logistics

The conference hotels were the Embassy Hotel and Extended Stay Hotel Canada, located a 5-10 minute walk from the conference venue. Because inexpensive public transit and taxi options were available from the Ottawa International Airport to the venue and hotels, no special shuttles were arranged. There were a number of museums and other attractions nearby (including Canada's Parliament) and the committee provided tourist information in the delegate packages. However, no special excursions were planned by the conference committee. Dinner circles were arranged for a variety of restaurants along the lively Elgin Street, a block from the conference hotels. We were pleased that we could offer all conference activities in a single building — for the most part on 2 floors.

Planning Process

Planning for the 2016 conference began three years previously, when Angus McMurtry (at that time an AIS board member) in the Faculty of Education sought out partners to host the conference from other faculties within the University of Ottawa. In 2014, he was joined by Co-Chair Karen Phillips, Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies, Interdisciplinary School of Health Sciences. Later, they were united by conference committee members Eric Crighton, a Chair of the Department of Geography, Environment and Geomatics in the Faculty of Arts; Chad Hammond, a Postdoctoral fellow in the School of Rehabilitation Sciences; Alejandro Gomez Umana, Coordinator of the Centre for Research on Educational and Community Services (CRECS); and finally Kelly Kilgour, a PhD Candidate in the Faculty of Education's Health Professions Education program. In 2016, Kelly's responsibilities and role increased dramatically and she was appointed the Conference Coordinator. (Budgeting to have someone working full-time in this capacity, especially for the final six months leading up to a conference is one recommendation we would make to future conferences.) A large number (40) of graduate student volunteers also contributed during the week leading up to the conference and at the conference itself.

Planning duties were shared among the committee, with first Angus and Karen, and then Kelly acting as the lead coordinator. These duties included securing a venue and conference hotels, publicizing the conference and call, developing a website with both conference information and registration functionality, selecting a theme, contacting potential keynote speakers, reviewing and selecting proposals, and organizing rooms, meals and so forth. The theme of the conference — *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Health, Wellness and Sustainability* — was decided collectively by the committee, based on the interests of participating stakeholders, Ottawa's role as a healthcare centre, and the University of Ottawa's strengths as a healthcare partner and educator.

A limited amount of funding was received from the Faculty of Education (\$3000 CDN), the Faculty of Arts (\$3000 CDN), and the Interdisciplinary School of Health Sciences (\$1250 CDN). The Museum of Science and Technology provided \$1500 in-kind support related to curator David Pantalony's "Reading Artifacts" workshop. And the Centre for Research on Educational and Community Services (CRECS) contributed expertise and resources related to website development, registration, publicity and design. Further

funding opportunities were limited. The reason is that the federal granting council to which we would normally turn, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), refuses to consider applications dealing in any way with health, instead directing applicants to other research councils – councils that are notoriously unfriendly to social science and humanities activities.

An important international conference planning and registration consideration was taxation on conference registration fees. Canadians commonly pay additional taxes on all goods and services whereas previous AIS conference attendees never paid taxes on their conference registrations. After the committee's reviews of the Canadian tax policies and discussions with a financial representative, AIS 2016 was deemed an international foreign conference; therefore, it was exempt from common Canadian taxation. We thank the AIS board members for bringing this tax inconsistency to our attention and their patience while the conference payment website was modified.

Proposals and Programming

We received a total of 136 proposals by the extended deadline of May 2. Proposals were received from 10 different countries: Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Ghana, Indonesia, Netherlands, Taiwan, United Kingdom, and, naturally, United States of America. The proposals were evaluated by the conference committee, with holistic input by Dr. Roslyn Abt Schindler and specific input of Dr. Bill Newell of the AIS board, for both quality and adherence to the conference theme and interdisciplinary foci. Of these, 114 were accepted, including 15 presentations conditionally accepted if the presentation mode was modified. The total of presenters was 256 and some presentations had up to 6 co-presenters. The number of presentations in the final program, after several accepted presentations and presenters declined to attend or did not register, was 93 (this figure does not include Keynote Speakers). In total, there were 200 conference attendees including not only paid registrations, but also volunteers (40), Keynote Speakers (3), Conference committee members (6), and guests (5), such as Bill Newell's wife, and welcome plenary speakers.

Although keynote, paper, workshop and panel presentations dealt with a wide range of interdisciplinary themes, focal themes this year included health (in a very broad sense) aging, indigenous research, interprofessional education, innovative interdisciplinary pedagogies, and philosophy. We thoroughly attempted to cluster these themes sequentially on particular days and in specific rooms; for example, Friday, October 28 had a keynote speaker focused on indigenous health geography and there were a number of indigenous-related presentations in the morning and afternoon in the same room.

Additionally, presentations focusing on interdisciplinary education were primarily allocated in room 1120, while Arts & Humanities presentations, on the one hand, and Theory, Philosophy and Religion presentations, on the other, alternated within room 1150. All concurrent sessions were set in 75 minute blocks. Workshops and panels were allocated the full 75 minutes. Paper presentations were clustered into groups of three. Whenever a paper presentation was cancelled, we were mindful to offer presenters additional time in shared concurrent sessions for their presentations. If two out of the three presentations were cancelled, the unexpectedly solo paper presentations were allocated to a new sessional time. Some presenters were unexpectedly unable to travel to Ottawa and attend the conference in person; we offered them remote Skype presentations to accommodate their circumstances.

The foci of the keynote speeches were on interdisciplinary approaches to aging, indigenous health research and reading museum artifacts. Effort was made to ensure that speakers linked their discussions to interdisciplinarity in AIS literature. All three speakers were very well received and conference

attendees appeared to be both engaged and inspired. Concurrent sessions appeared to be well attended, with groups ranging from 10 to 40 – although several had as few as 3 to 5 people, in spite of our efforts.

Of the total of 196 participants, 104 came from the United States, 9 from the Netherlands, 4 from Denmark, 2 from Germany, and 1 each from the United Kingdom and Australia. Canada provided 75 people, including 27 regular conference attendees, 40 volunteers, 6 committee members and 2 keynote speakers. 29 people participated in the two pre-conference workshops. For more details on registrants, see the attached document: “***AIS 2016 Registration Tally Final***”.

Conference evaluation

See attached: “***AIS 2016 Conference Feedback with graphics***”

Budget

Revenue and grants:

Total Grants from participating faculties: \$7250
Total conference Revenue, as of end of Oct: \$52,706
= \$ 59,956 [CDN]

Note: Canadian currency

Coordinator salary	\$12,000
CRECS (website design and maintenance including various registration sites, conference feedback, proposal submission, proposal evaluation, as well as support for our conference planning and coordination of conference promotional materials, merchandise and program booklets	\$ 7,000
Translation (call, registration, certain abstracts) 610.78 [only one invoice found]	\$ 610.78
Conference liaison: pre-conference visit (Travel) from Cincinnati	\$ 690.31
Keynote speaker 1: Travel from London ON and hotel accommodation	\$ 1009.11
Keynote speaker 2: Travel from Portland OR and hotel accommodation	\$ 1588.71
Globe expenses: Artwork, namebadges, tablecloth	\$ 666.70
Globe expenses: Volunteer shirts, convention bags & metal water bottles	\$ 2057.48
Docucentre expenses: Publicity [banners, program booklets, name tag strings]	\$ 1467.80
Transportation & storage of conference equipment & materials [Van rental, parking and gas]	\$ 456.67
Miscellaneous [decoration, gifts for keynotes, extra snacks, committee member expenses receipts, food for meetings and volunteers] Kelly Kilgour [547.61], Karen Phillips [79.20], Chad Hammond [180.85] Angus [410.26]	\$ 1,217.92
AIS for memberships and workshops: \$5507 [-709.15 for banner and table covers]	\$ 4797.85
Food, Space Rental, Audiovisual and Technical Support	\$ 21,900.37
Dissemination assistance	\$ 2730
Total [CDN]	\$58,193.7
Overage [CDN]	\$ 1762.3