

48th Annual Conference of the Association for Interdisciplinary Studies



Translational Research and Teaching: Bridging Knowledge, Practice, and Community



Florida State University - Panama City, Florida

October 29-November 1, 2026

Sponsored in partnership by:



**THE UNIVERSITY OF
MISSISSIPPI**

Welcome to AIS 2026!



Welcome to the 48th annual conference of the Association for Interdisciplinary Studies.

This year's conference will celebrate the advancements of interdisciplinary research and teaching by sharing multi-level experiences of interdisciplinary scholars and administrators.

We pay specific attention to translational research and collaboration that bridges the gaps not only between academic disciplines, but also between universities, communities, policymakers, and industries. We will also broach critical conversations about the future of interdisciplinarity in the true spirit of collaboration and innovation.

All conference sessions will be held at the Florida State University satellite campus in Panama City, Florida.

You will find all meeting rooms in the main building:

Holley Academic Center

4750 Collegiate Drive, Panama City, Florida

AIS 2026 Conference Organizing Committee

Lisa Turner de Vera – Director of Interdisciplinary Social Science Program
Florida State University

Andrew Pfrenger – Director of Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Studies Programs
University of Mississippi

Merlin Langley – Director of the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies
Florida A&M University

Thursday, October 29th

2:00-5:00

Conference Check-In

Location: Holley Building Atrium

2:00-3:30

Pre-Conference Workshops

Locations and Details Forthcoming

4:00-5:00

Opening Reception and Welcome

Location: Main Lecture Hall

Opening Remarks from AIS 2026 Host Institutions, Conference Organizers, and AIS President

5:00-6:00

Keynote Address

From Narrative to Biomedicine and Back: An Interdisciplinary Journey through Translational Team Science

Bonnie Spring, PhD, ABPP



Intertwining personal and professional lifelines, this presentation traces Dr. Bonnie Spring's trajectory from urban poverty in New Jersey through international contexts to the Ivy League, examining the shifting epistemological and ontological assumptions encountered along the way. These diverse environments shaped an evolving worldview, exposing varying frameworks regarding the nature of reality, empirical inquiry, and human behavior. Drawing upon a career spanning more than 40 years as a federally funded researcher and professor, Dr. Spring reflects on her recent transition to the Florida State University College of Medicine. There, she leads programming on *Team Science in Translational Research: Bridging Disciplines to Impact Lives*. Her presentation will highlight how this interdisciplinary seminar served as a conceptual catalyst, directly inspiring two newly funded grants designed to advance whole-person health equity and chronic disease prevention in rural Florida.

6:00-8:00

Cocktails and Dinner on the Lawn

Friday, October 30th

Morning Sessions 8:30-10:00

8:00-8:30 **Coffee Service and Morning Snacks in Holley Atrium**

Session 101 *Workshop*

8:30-10:00 **Beyond Scaffolding: Integrating Translational Skills Within Interdisciplinary Courses to Address the “Know-Do” Gap**

J.R. “Jones” Estes – Portland State University

Session 102 *Organized Session*

8:30-10:00 **Managing Academic Integrity and Administrative Need in Creating Successful Interdisciplinary Programs**

Tami Carmichael – University of North Dakota

Rick Szostak – University of Alberta

Andrew Pfrenger – University of Mississippi

Session 103

8:30-10:00 **Reframing Student Agency**

103a. *Narrative as Method: Story as a Translational Tool for Interdisciplinary Integration*

Rhonda Davis – Northern Kentucky University

103b. *Rethinking Homework: Why Do We Assign It?*

Amanda Panico, Jaime Krause, and Laura Wright – Hunterdon Central Regional High School

103c. *From Imposters to Experts: Interdisciplinary Students as Critics*

Vineeta Singh and Zach Hilpert – Virginia Commonwealth University

Session 104

8:30-10:00 **Translational Pathways in the University**

104a. *Translational Knowledge in Equivalency-Credit Petitions by Nontraditional Adult Learners: A Case Study*

Nevena Stojanovic – West Virginia University

104b. *From Integration to Impact: Translational Interdisciplinary Learning in Honors Education*

Stacey Sinclair – San Diego State University

104c. ***A Case Study of the NEXUS Lab in Applied Liberal Studies***
Marvellous Oke – Morgan State University

Session 105 ***Workshop***

8:30-10:00 **A Conversation about Neurodivergence and Interdisciplinarity**

Jessica Devin – Texas State University

Friday, October 30th

Morning Sessions 10:15-11:45

Session 201	<i>Workshop</i>
10:15-11:45	Scaling Transdisciplinary Initiatives: Practical Strategies and Lessons Learned from VCU's Convergence Mariah Crilley, Daniel Gutierrez, and Tim Luckeitz-Marquis – Virginia Commonwealth University
Session 202	<i>Organized Session</i>
10:15-11:45	Interdisciplinarity in the Age of Career Anxiety Jamie E Berthe – NYU Gallatin School of Individualized Study Ned Scott Laff – Governors State University Scott Carlson – The Chronicle of Higher Education Glenn Whitehouse and Patricia Rice – Florida Gulf Coast University
Session 203	
10:15-11:45	Translational Partnerships 203a. <i>The Idea of Civic Universities: Institutionalizing Transdisciplinary Co-production of Knowledge through Academia-Society Partnerships (Virtual)</i> Amar Nath – National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi, India 203b. <i>Interdisciplinary Capacity Building Across Campus</i> Rubie Ghazal – Middle Tennessee State University 203c. <i>Aligning Researchers and Communities for Mutual Benefit and Impact: A Roadmap for Translational Partnership (Virtual)</i> Nicole Wolfe, Mayla R. Boguslav, and Brian Do-Golden – University of Southern California
Session 204	
10:15-11:45	Translational Mindsets and Pedagogy 204a. <i>Translational Teaching and Translational Awareness: Examples from an Undergraduate Spanish Course</i> Chisu Teresa Ko – Ursinus College 204b. <i>From Discipline to Decision: Translational Pathways in Interdisciplinary Business Education through COI</i> Jennifer Cordon Thor – Oakland University Agarzelim Alvarez-Milan – Universidad de Monterrey

204c. *Empathy- and Project-Based Pedagogy for Collaborative Practice*

Jonathan Stitelman and Jennifer Harpring – Washington University in St. Louis

Session 205 *Roundtable*

10:15-11:45 *The Blessing and the Curse: The Challenges of Completers in IDS Programs*

Pauline Gagnon – University of West Georgia

David A. Hatch – Southern Utah University

Merlin Langley – Florida A&M University

Nevena Stojanovic – West Virginia University

12:00-1:00 *Lunch*

12:00-1:00 *Alpha Iota Sigma Interest Meeting*

Led by Sharon Woodill – University of Central Florida



Alpha Iota Sigma is an honor society dedicated to serving both undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in interdisciplinary academic programs at their University or College. Established in 2012, the mission of this honor society is to promote interdisciplinary collaboration, academic scholarship, and the benefits of interdisciplinary work.

Join us for an interest meeting in the conference room!

Visit aishonors.org for more information

Friday, October 30th

Afternoon Sessions 1:15-2:45

Session 301	Workshop
1:15-2:45	Designing Curriculum and Pedagogy to Build a Lifelong Commitment to Interdisciplinary Practice Jennifer Harpring and Jonathan Stitelman – Washington University in St. Louis
Session 302	Roundtable
1:15-2:45	Moving Between Silos: Strategies for Advising Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Students Andrew Pfrenger – University of Mississippi Catherine Jackson – Salisbury University LaNita M. Jones – Florida A&M University
Session 303	
1:15-2:45	Translational Arts and Performance
303a.	<i>Utopian Writing as a Site of Interdisciplinary Learning</i> Katharine Schaab, Ben Brooks, and Darrius Mathis – Kennesaw State University
303b.	<i>Practicing Knowledge: Performance as a Translational Model for Interdisciplinary Research</i> Experience Bryon – Norwich University of the Arts
303c.	<i>IMPULSE: Performing Digital Heritage in Mixed Realities (Virtual)</i> Adnan Hadziselimovic – University of Malta
Session 304	
1:15-2:45	Translating Research into Justice
304a.	<i>Biosolids Management in Florida: An Interdisciplinary Analysis of Regional Planning and Rural Environmental Justice</i> Elio Fernandez – Florida State University
304b.	<i>Racialized Privilege in Motion: Black American Migration and Belonging in Mérida, Mexico</i> Queenie Collins – Central Connecticut State University
304c.	<i>Translational Research on Restorative Justice in Florida and Strategies to Include Undergraduates on Research</i> Alexandra Cockerham and James Cockerham – Florida State University

Friday, October 30th

Afternoon Sessions 3:00-4:30

Session 401	<i>Workshop</i>
3:00-4:30	Funding the Bridges: How Can Internal Funding Mechanisms Be Used to Create More Conducive Conditions for Inter- and Trans-disciplinarity Within Institutions Anne Salmi, Heidi Peuraniemi, and Mirjami Jutila – University of Oulu
Session 402	
3:00-4:30	Addressing Industry Needs Through STEM
402a.	<i>Deepening Dialogue Between Earth Ways and STEM Education (Virtual)</i> Troy Shepherd – Salvia Group at York St. John University
402b.	<i>Mission-Driven Interdisciplinarity: Designing a Core That Connects Disciplines, Careers, and Aerospace Futures (Virtual)</i> Joanne L. DeTore – Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
402c.	<i>Broadening the Bench: Valuing and Promoting Interdisciplinarity in the Energy Efficiency Workforce</i> Chris Cardiel, Kirstin Moreno, and Austin Brown – Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance
Session 403	
3:00-4:30	Program Design for Belonging
403a.	<i>Building Integrated Community through Interdisciplinary General Education Curriculum</i> Dave Essinger and Sarah Fedirka – University of Findlay
403b.	<i>Balancing Skill, Inquiry, and Community in a Creative Interdisciplinary Program (Virtual)</i> Tesa Morin, Minso Kim, and Christina Donaldson – University of North Texas
403c.	<i>Exploiting Liminal Spaces to Build Community in an (Online) Interdisciplinary Program</i> David A. Hatch – Southern Utah University
Session 404	
3:00-4:30	Navigating Institutional Complexity
404a.	<i>Measuring Complexity with a Ruler: Real Assessment Strategies for Interdisciplinary Learning</i> Tami Carmichael – University of North Dakota Katharine Schaab – Kennesaw State University

404b. *Shelter from the Storm: Triaging Safety, Survival, Recovery, and Resilience in Higher Education*

Lynda Mercer – Northern Kentucky University

404c. *From Practice to Interdisciplinary Praxis*

John Lundy – Eastern Oregon University

Session 405

3:00-4:30 Mainstreaming Interdisciplinarity: Challenges and Opportunities

405a. *From Silos to Synthesis: Designing Doctoral Experiences for Interdisciplinary Research Frameworks*

Layton Graves, Mary Wegner, and John Monahan – University of Alaska Fairbanks

405b. *Citation Analysis in Interdisciplinary Studies*

Rick Szostak – University of Alberta

405c. *Interdisciplinarity in Action: Knowing as the Art of Human Connection in the C3 Lab*

Sharon Woodill with Igsia DeJesus, Alexis Posnanski, and Amanuel Marrero – University of Central Florida

Friday, October 30th

Plenary #1

4:45-6:00

Main Lecture Hall

Bench, Bedside, Bookshelf: Connective Tissue as a Model for Translational, Community-Building Work Across Disciplines

Renée Nicholson – West Virginia University

In this plenary session, Renée Nicholson presents a scalable framework for cross-disciplinary integration, using the *Connective Tissue* book series as a primary case study. By bringing together clinicians, artists, writers, and scholars, the series demonstrates how cross-sector engagement expands access to health humanities for patients, practitioners, and readers alike.



By reframing the concept of “translational research,” this session explores translation as a multidirectional exchange where humanistic and artistic mediums serve as primary tools for transferring clinical, critical, and lived experience across disciplinary boundaries. Attendees will gain actionable insights into identifying potential partners, leveraging distinct expertise, and establishing sustainable practices for collaborative work.

Connective Tissue: A Health Humanities and Narrative Medicine Series

Connective Tissue is a broad series exploring the human condition and its intersection with health, illness, and healing through the lens of the humanities and its methodologies, as well as through expressive creative works that illuminate people’s lived experience with health, illness, and medicine. This series seeks to publish books that cover innovative approaches to healthcare, integrating expressive arts and humanities practices into health settings, as well as books of creative writing that artfully render stories of illness, disability and healthcare.

Friday, October 30th

Evening Events

6:00-7:00

Cocktails and Hors D'oeuvres on the Lawn

Sponsored by the University of Mississippi's
Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Studies Degree Programs



**THE UNIVERSITY OF
MISSISSIPPI**

7:30-9:30

AIS Beach Party

The AIS Beach Party is sponsored by
Florida State University's Interdisciplinary
Social Science Program



Unwind on the sand and connect with
colleagues as we close out the day at the AIS
Beach Party!

This event, hosted by *It's Lit*, includes luxury
beach seating, hand-crafted sand art, tiki
torches, and a roaring bonfire maintained by a
dedicated attendant. Enjoy some music, snack
on gourmet s'mores, and have a relaxed

conversation under the stars. Everything is taken care of by *It's Lit* and the AIS 2026
Organizing Committee. All you need to do is show up and enjoy!

Location: Public Beach Access 77 - (Map will be provided in registration packet)

Saturday, October 31st

Morning Poster Sessions

8:00-8:30 **Coffee Service and Morning Snacks in Holley Atrium**

Session 600

8:30-10:00 **Poster Presentations in Holley Atrium**

- 600a. ***Place-Based Storytelling in Inquiry and Design: Assessing an Interdisciplinary Approach to Qualitative Research Methods***
Eddie Boucher – Michigan State University
- 600b. ***Nature Journaling as Interdisciplinary Pedagogy***
Jessica Schreyer – University of Dubuque
- 600c. ***From Libraries to Industry: RFID Systems as Translational Pathways Between Knowledge Access and Automotive Practice***
Alfredo Gomez Alvarez – Oakland University
- 600d. ***Social Media, Stereotypes, and Male Radicalization in American Society***
Connor Carey – Florida State University
- 600e. ***Wellbeing and Nature-Connectedness for Customers at Mid-Michigan's Farmers Markets***
Taylor Quillinan – Michigan State University
- 600f. ***Break the Cycle: How an Understanding Between STEM and the Humanities Can Save Science Communication***
Thomas O'Halloran – Florida State University

Saturday, October 31st

Morning Sessions 10:15-11:45

Session 701	<i>Workshop</i>
10:15-11:45	The Practice of the Practice: Embodied Methods for Translational Interdisciplinary Work Experience Bryon – Norwich University of the Arts
Session 702	<i>Administrators' Roundtable</i>
10:15-11:45	Non-Conformity: Unconventional Programs in Conventional Institutions Lisa Turner de Vera and Elizabeth Foster – Florida State University
Session 703	
10:15-11:45	Integrating Knowledge through Partnerships
703a.	<i>From the Super Bowl to Higher Education: Arts-Based Public Pedagogy Through the Lens of Community Learning Exchange Theory</i> Valerie Zapien and Gabriela Velazquez – Texas State University
703b.	<i>Translating Climate Knowledge Through Immersive Public Pedagogy: EcoFest as Interdisciplinary Scholarship (Virtual)</i> Mina Zarfsaz – Rowan University, Institute for Innovative Material, Media and Design
703c.	<i>Fostering Change through Collaboration: Interdisciplinary Community-University Partnerships to Promote Breastfeeding Awareness, Maternal Well-being, and Reproductive Health Advocacy in Nigeria</i> Joseph Olurotimi Ogunlade – Bamidele Olumilua University of Education Science and Technology, Ekiti State, Nigeria
Session 704	
10:15-11:45	AI in the Classroom
704a.	<i>From Prohibition to Practice: Addressing Pedagogical Dissonance through AI Feasibility Simulations</i> Allison Segal – University of Utah
704b.	<i>Interdisciplinary Literary Pedagogy in the Age of AI</i> Michael Ka-chi Cheuk – Hong Kong Metropolitan University
704c.	<i>Prompt Engineering is a Writing Assignment: An Interdisciplinary Humanities Education in the Age of AI</i> Gabrielle Bowden – University of Mississippi

Session 705	<i>Organized Session</i>
10:15-11:45	Guiding Research Together: A Multi-Perspective Panel on the Value of Community Advisory Boards Across Disciplines
705a.	<i>Foundational Components of Community-Engaged Research Across Diverse Projects and Partners</i> Kat Phelps – University of Wisconsin - Madison
705b.	<i>Leveraging Community Voices for Intervention Development: Designing Digital Tools for Addiction Recovery</i> Claire Punturieri – University of Wisconsin - Madison
705c.	<i>From Advisory Groups to Adaptation: Co-designing a Physical Activity Intervention for First Episode Psychosis</i> Kenzie Wilcox – University of Wisconsin - Madison
12:00-1:00	Lunch

Saturday, October 31st

Afternoon Sessions 1:15-2:45

Session 801	<i>Special Session</i>
1:15-2:45	New Voices in Interdisciplinary Studies
801a.	<i>First Amendment Educational Resources in Florida's Civics Classrooms</i> Maegan Smarkusky – Florida State University
801b.	<i>Degrees of Opportunity: Qualitative Perspectives of Faculty and Staff on Policies and Cultural Norms Affecting Justice-Impacted Students in Higher Education</i> Eddie Fordham – Florida State University
801c.	<i>Curriculum as Preservation: Protecting Gullah Geechee Foodways as Intangible Cultural Heritage in the South Carolina Lowcountry</i> Kayla Lowe – Coastal Carolina University
801d.	<i>Oracy and Dialogic Teaching: A Proposal for FSU's COSSPP</i> Zane McGill and Nick Quinton – Florida State University
801e.	<i>A Methodological Blueprint on Decolonizing Research through Creative Translation and Artistic Practice</i> Katia Destine – University of Maryland, College Park
Session 802	<i>Workshop</i>
1:15-2:45	Political Crossroads: Attacks, Defenses, and Counterstrikes
	Elizabeth Smock and Patricia Carlton – University of Central Florida
Session 803	<i>Roundtable</i>
1:15-2:45	Interdisciplinary Tenure and Promotion Guidelines Revisited
	Karen Moranski – San Francisco Bay Region Network, California State University Roslyn Schindler – Wayne State University Evan Widders – West Virginia University Khadijah Miller – Norfolk State University
Session 804	
1:15-2:45	Community Partnerships
804a.	<i>Collaborative Governance during Armed Conflict</i> Coreine Rainford – Florida State University

804b. ***Bridging Scholarship and Community: Transdisciplinary Student Initiatives (Virtual)***

Sheung Hei Tse – University of Hong Kong

804c. ***Cultivating Students' Translational Skills through Interdisciplinary, Community-Engaged University Courses***

Demian Papo and Hrvoje Potlimbrzović – Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Josip Juraj University in Osijek, Croatia

Session 805

1:15-2:45 **Scaffolding Student Success**

805a. ***Co-creating Meaning: A Hermeneutic Approach to Advising Interdisciplinary Learners***

Catherine Jackson – Salisbury University

805b. ***From Awareness to Enrollment: Improving Recruitment into an Undergraduate Multidisciplinary Studies Program***

Azhia Jones-Smothers – University of Mississippi

805c. ***Smash Requirements, Build a Degree: Finding Framing in the University Archive***

Dana Schumacher-Schmidt and Steven Plunkett – University of Michigan Ann Arbor

Saturday, October 31st

Afternoon Sessions 3:00-4:30

Session 901	<i>Roundtable</i>
3:00-4:30	One and Many Again: Revisiting the Philosophy of Interdisciplinarity
	Benjamin Bennett-Carpenter – Oakland University Rick Szostak – University of Alberta John Lundy – Eastern Oregon University Andrew Pfrenger – University of Mississippi
Session 902	
3:00-4:30	Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Modern Labor and Welfare
902a.	<i>Fostering Inequality: How Foster Care Privatization Shapes Educational and Employment Outcomes in Rural and Urban Communities in the U.S</i> Jude Edelman – Florida State University
902b.	<i>The Hidden Cost of Illiteracy: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Literacy, Labor, and Inequality</i> Breanna Humes – Texas Tech University
902c.	<i>The Pitted Floor, a Comparative Analysis on Geographically Tied Gig-Workers</i> Bennett LaBree – Florida State University
Session 903	
3:00-4:30	Inclusive Pedagogy
903a.	<i>Creating an Organic Reading Community</i> Joshua Riley – Olivet Nazarene University
903b.	<i>SpectrumPlay: Supporting Accessibility in the Elementary Music Classroom</i> Erin Collins – Kennesaw State University
903c.	<i>Creating Collaboratively Across Visual Abilities: Accessibility Through Interdisciplinarity (Virtual)</i> Kristina A. Boylan – SUNY Polytechnic Institute

Session 904

3:00-4:30 **Designing for Complexity**

- 904a.** ***Combining Ethical Technology Use and Project-Based Learning to Support Ethically Grounded Interdisciplinary Research Practice in the Classroom***
Heather Listhartke – Winthrop University
- 904b.** ***Designing for Complexity: Interdisciplinary Assessment in an AI-Saturated Classroom***
Whitney Mendoza – Southern Utah University

Session 905

3:00-4:30 **Capstones and Career Readiness**

- 905a.** ***Interdisciplinary Capstone in the Integrated Studies Program at Florida State: A Collaborative Endeavor***
Amit Anshumali, Emelie Griffin, and Renata Schama – Integrated Studies Program, Florida State University
- 905b.** ***Integrating Experiential Learning Through Reflective ePortfolios: A Capstone Model for Interdisciplinary and Career Readiness***
Kristene McClure, Kristie Walsdorf, and Karen Perell-Gerson – Georgia Gwinnett College
- 905c.** ***Interdisciplinary Faculty Collaboration to Advance Students' Academic Success and Career Readiness in the 21st Century***
Abdullah Khan and Kamal Chowdhury – Claflin University

Saturday, October 31st

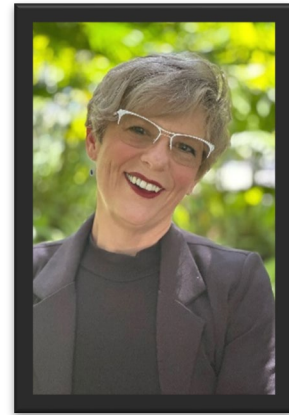
Plenary #2

4:45-6:00

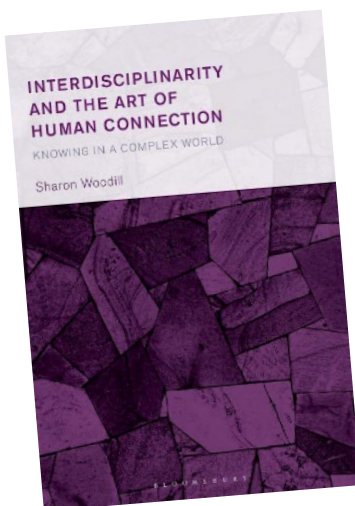
Knowing Differently in the Age of Complexity

Sharon Woodill – University of Central Florida

Access to information and knowledge have never been greater, yet complex issues like climate change and polarization persist, and many are getting worse. If access to research, data, and knowledge is no longer the problem it once was, then perhaps we should reexamine our approach, specifically the “capture-and-control” mindset that seeks to master and simplify complex systems from the outside.



In this plenary session, Dr. Sharon Woodill explores how complexity theory offers a transformative alternative for interdisciplinary work. By recognizing that we are embedded within the systems we study, this approach shifts the focus from accumulating data to cultivating a relational, pluralistic way of knowing, one where the skills of inquiry mirror the skills of human connection. Moving beyond theory into application, the presentation demonstrates how moving from “knowing more” to “knowing differently” equips researchers and practitioners to navigate multi-faceted real-world challenges.



This plenary draws on the central themes of Dr. Woodill's recent book, Interdisciplinarity and the Art of Human Connection: Knowing in a Complex World, which re-imagines interdisciplinary integration through an “epistemology of connection.”

[Available now from Bloomsbury](#)

Saturday, October 31st

Dinner Circles

6:30+

Dinner Circles are a traditional part of AIS Conferences, offering a chance for networking and sharing a meal with other conference participants. Please note that the Dinner Circles are at the participant's own cost.

Sign up for dinner circles at the registration desk.

[Captain Anderson's Restaurant](#)

5551 N. Lagoon Drive

[The Grand Marlin](#)

5323 N. Lagoon Drive

[Uncle Ernie's](#)

1151 Bayview Avenue

[The Back Porch Seafood and Oyster House](#)

16220 Front Beach Road

[Steam on 5](#)

7 Harrison Avenue

[Runaway Island](#)

14521 Front Beach Road

[McGuire's Irish Pub](#)

17290 Front Beach Road

[Atelier](#)

100 Harrison Avenue



Sunday, November 1st

Morning Events

9:00-10:00

Breakfast

10:00-11:00

Reflections on the State of the Field of Interdisciplinary Studies

Dr. Rick Szostak – University of Alberta

11:00-11:30

Closing Remarks from the AIS Board and Conference Organizers

End of Conference