48th Annual Conference of the
Association for Interdisciplinary Studies

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

Florida State University - Panama City, Florida

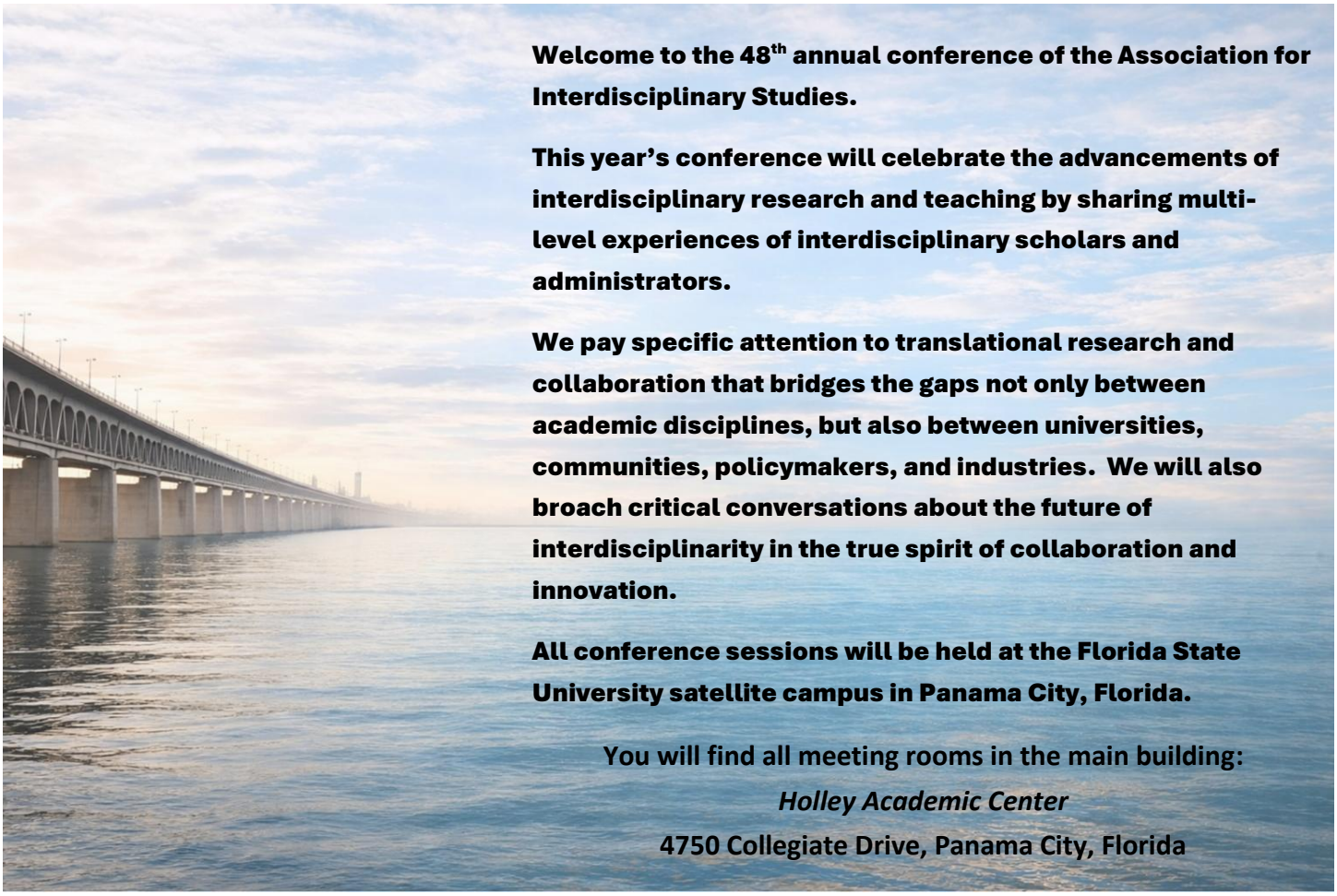
October 29-November 1, 2026

Sponsored in partnership by:

FSU FAMU FLORIDA AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL UNIVERSITY

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

Welcome to AIS 2026!



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

Remote Session Access Guide

Remote participation and presentations are organized by room numbers. Please use the designated Zoom link, Meeting ID, and Passcode corresponding to the assigned session room:

Room Name	Meeting ID	Passcode	Zoom Link
Lecture Hall	910-9546-4176	535387	Join Lecture Hall
Holley B302	969-9376-7308	831091	Join Holley B302
Holley B301	931-2289-8448 *(or 969-9376-7308)*		Join Holley B301
Holley B308	952-3902-8904	625043	Join Holley B308
Holley B312	941-0372-0262	350105	Join Holley B312
Dean's Conference Room	929-5939-8174	414550	Join Dean's Conf. Room

Quick Tips for Virtual Presenters

- **Join Early:** We recommend logging into your assigned Zoom room at least **10–15 minutes before** your session begins to test your microphone, camera, and screen sharing.
- **Identify Yourself:** When you enter the room, please rename your Zoom display to include your **First and Last Name** along with your institution or affiliation so the session moderator can easily introduce you.
- **Technical Support:** If you experience any technical difficulties, notify the room moderator via the Zoom chat function immediately.

Thursday, October 29th

2:00-5:00

Conference Check-In

Location: Holley Building Atrium

2:00-3:30

Pre-Conference Workshops

Nuts and Bolts - Interdisciplinary Program Assessment

Evan Widders and Khadijha Miller

Participants will learn how to evaluate the quality and impact of interdisciplinary programs through effective evaluator preparation and evidence-based assessment practices. The workshop will provide practical strategies for identifying program strengths, addressing opportunities for improvement, and measuring student learning, program effectiveness, and post-graduation success.

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**

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

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

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**
B302	**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**
B301	**Successful Interdisciplinary Programs**
	Tami Carmichael – University of North Dakota
	Rick Szostak – University of Alberta
	Evan Widders – West Virginia University
	Andrew Pfrenger – University of Mississippi
	Rubie Ghazal – Middle Tennessee State University
	Katharine Schaab – Kennesaw State University

Session 103	
8:30-10:00	**Reframing Student Agency**
B308	
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**
B312	
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**
Lecture Hall	
	Jessica Devin – Texas State University

Friday, October 30th

Morning Sessions 10:15-11:45

Session 201	***Workshop***
10:15-11:45 **B302**	**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	***Organized Session***
10:15-11:45 **B301**	**Interdisciplinarity in the Age of Career Anxiety**
	Jamie E Berthe – NYU Gallatin School of Individualized Study Scott Carlson – The Chronicle of Higher Education Glenn Whitehouse and Patricia Rice – Florida Gulf Coast University

Session 203	
10:15-11:45 **B308**	**Translational Partnerships**
203a.	***The Idea of Civic Universities: Institutionalizing Transdisciplinary Co-production of Knowledge through Academia-Society Partnerships (Virtual)*** Amar Nath – National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi, India
203b.	***Interdisciplinary Capacity Building Across Campus*** Rubie Ghazal – Middle Tennessee State University
203c.	***Aligning Researchers and Communities for Mutual Benefit and Impact: A Roadmap for Translational Partnership (Virtual)*** Nicole Wolfe, Mayla R. Boguslav, and Brian Do-Golde – University of Southern California

Session 204	
10:15-11:45 **B312**	**Translational Mindsets and Pedagogy**
204a.	***Translational Teaching and Translational Awareness: Examples from an Undergraduate Spanish Course*** Chisu Teresa Ko – Ursinus College
204b.	***From Discipline to Decision: Translational Pathways in Interdisciplinary Business Education through COI*** 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 **Dean's Conference Room**	**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 **Dean's Conference Room**

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 **B302**	**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 **Dean's Conference Room**	**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 **B301**	**Translational Arts and Performance**
303a.	***Utopian Writing as a Site of Interdisciplinary Learning*** Katharine Schaab and Ben Brooks – Kennesaw State University
303b.	***Practicing Knowledge: Performance as a Translational Model for Interdisciplinary Research*** Experience Bryon – Norwich University of the Arts
303c.	***IMPULSE: Performing Digital Heritage in Mixed Realities (Virtual)*** Adnan Hadziselimovic – University of Malta

Session 304	
1:15-2:45 **B312**	**Translating Research into Justice**
304a.	***Biosolids Management in Florida: An Interdisciplinary Analysis of Regional Planning and Rural Environmental Justice*** Elio Fernandez – Florida State University
304b.	***Racialized Privilege in Motion: Black American Migration and Belonging in Mérida, Mexico*** Queenie Collins – Central Connecticut State University
304c.	***Translational Research on Restorative Justice in Florida and Strategies to Include Undergraduates on Research*** Alexandra Cockerham and James Cockerham – Florida State University

Session 305	
3:00-4:30 **B308**	**Designing for Complexity**
305a.	***Combining Ethical Technology Use and Project-Based Learning to Support Ethically Grounded Interdisciplinary Research Practice in the Classroom*** Heather Listhartke – Winthrop University
305b.	***Designing for Complexity: Interdisciplinary Assessment in an AI-Saturated Classroom*** Whitney Mendoza – Southern Utah University
305c.	**The Poetry City Game: Instructional Design as Interdisciplinary Practice** Jennifer Dellner – Ocean County College

Friday, October 30th

Afternoon Sessions 3:00-4:30

Session 401	***Workshop***
3:00-4:30 **Dean's Conference Room**	**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 **B302**	**Addressing Industry Needs Through STEM**
402a.	***Deepening Dialogue Between Earth Ways and STEM Education (Virtual)*** Troy Shepherd – Salvia Group at York St. John University
402b.	***Mission-Driven Interdisciplinarity: Designing a Core That Connects Disciplines, Careers, and Aerospace Futures (Virtual)*** Joanne L. DeTore – Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
402c.	***Broadening the Bench: Valuing and Promoting Interdisciplinarity in the Energy Efficiency Workforce*** Chris Cardiel, Kirstin Moreno, and Austin Brown – Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance
Session 403	
3:00-4:30 **B301**	**Program Design for Belonging**
403a.	***Building Integrated Community through Interdisciplinary General Education Curriculum*** Dave Essinger and Sarah Fedirka – University of Findlay
403b.	***Balancing Skill, Inquiry, and Community in a Creative Interdisciplinary Program (Virtual)*** Tesa Morin, Minso Kim, and Christina Donaldson – University of North Texas
403c.	***Exploiting Liminal Spaces to Build Community in an (Online) Interdisciplinary Program*** David A. Hatch – Southern Utah University
Session 404	
3:00-4:30 **B308**	Navigating Institutional Complexity
404a.	***Measuring Complexity with a Ruler: Real Assessment Strategies for Interdisciplinary Learning*** 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

B312

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 Amaniel 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

Refreshments and Hors D'oeuvres on the Lawn

7:00-9:00

AIS Beach Party

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

FSU INTERDISCIPLINARY SOCIAL SCIENCE
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES & PUBLIC POLICY

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!

Saturday, October 31st

Morning Poster Sessions

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

Session 600

8:30-10:00 Atrium **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	***Workshop***
10:15-11:45 **B302**	**The Practice of the Practice: Embodied Methods for Translational Interdisciplinary Work**
	Experience Bryon – Norwich University of the Arts
Session 702	***Administrators' Roundtable***
10:15-11:45 **Dean's Conference Room**	**Non-Conformity: Unconventional Programs in Conventional Institutions**
	Lisa Turner de Vera and Elizabeth Foster – Florida State University
Session 703	
10:15-11:45 **B301**	**Integrating Knowledge through Partnerships**
703a.	***From the Super Bowl to Higher Education: Arts-Based Public Pedagogy Through the Lens of Community Learning Exchange Theory*** Valerie Zapien and Huma Roshan – Texas State University
703b.	***Translating Climate Knowledge Through Immersive Public Pedagogy: EcoFest as Interdisciplinary Scholarship (Virtual)*** Mina Zarfsaz – Rowan University, Institute for Innovative Material, Media and Design
703c.	***Fostering Change through Collaboration: Interdisciplinary Community-University Partnerships to Promote Breastfeeding Awareness, Maternal Well-being, and Reproductive Health Advocacy in Nigeria*** Joseph Olurotimi Ogunlade – Bamidele Olumilua University of Education Science and Technology, Ekiti State, Nigeria
Session 704	
10:15-11:45 **B308**	**AI in the Classroom**
~~***704a.***~~	~~***From Prohibition to Practice: Addressing Pedagogical Dissonance through AI Feasibility Simulations***~~ **withdrawn** ~~Allison Segal – University of Utah~~
704b.	***Interdisciplinary Literary Pedagogy in the Age of AI*** Michael Ka-chi Cheuk – Hong Kong Metropolitan University
704c.	***Prompt Engineering is a Writing Assignment: An Interdisciplinary Humanities Education in the Age of AI*** Gabrielle Bowden – University of Mississippi

Session 705	***Organized Session***
10:15-11:45 **B312**	**Guiding Research Together: A Multi-Perspective Panel on the Value of Community Advisory Boards Across Disciplines**
705a.	***Foundational Components of Community-Engaged Research Across Diverse Projects and Partners*** Kat Phelps – University of Wisconsin - Madison
705b.	***Leveraging Community Voices for Intervention Development: Designing Digital Tools for Addiction Recovery*** Claire Punturieri – University of Wisconsin - Madison
705c.	***From Advisory Groups to Adaptation: Co-designing a Physical Activity Intervention for First Episode Psychosis*** Kenzie Wilcox – University of Wisconsin - Madison

12:00-1:00	**Lunch**

Saturday, October 31st

Afternoon Sessions 1:15-2:45

Session 801	***Special Session***
1:15-2:45 **B302**	**New Voices in Interdisciplinary Studies**
801a.	***First Amendment Educational Resources in Florida's Civics Classrooms*** Maegan Smarkusky – Florida State University
801b.	***Degrees of Opportunity: Qualitative Perspectives of Faculty and Staff on Policies and Cultural Norms Affecting Justice-Impacted Students in Higher Education*** Eddie Fordham – Florida State University
801c.	***Curriculum as Preservation: Protecting Gullah Geechee Foodways as Intangible Cultural Heritage in the South Carolina Lowcountry*** Kayla Lowe – Coastal Carolina University
801d.	***Oracy and Dialogic Teaching: A Proposal for FSU's COSSPP*** Zane McGill and Nick Quinton – Florida State University
801e.	***A Methodological Blueprint on Decolonizing Research through Creative Translation and Artistic Practice*** Katia Destine – University of Maryland, College Park
Session 802	***Workshop***
1:15-2:45 **B301**	**Political Crossroads: Attacks, Defenses, and Counterstrikes**
	Elizabeth Smock and Patricia Carlton – University of Central Florida
Session 803	***Roundtable***
1:15-2:45 **Dean's Conference Room**	**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 **B308**	**Community Partnerships**
804a.	***Collaborative Governance during Armed Conflict*** 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 **B312**	**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	***Roundtable***
3:00-4:30 **Dean's Conference Room**	**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 **B301**	**Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Modern Labor and Welfare**
902a.	***Fostering Inequality: How Foster Care Privatization Shapes Educational and Employment Outcomes in Rural and Urban Communities in the U.S*** Jude Edelman – Florida State University
902b.	***The Hidden Cost of Illiteracy: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Literacy, Labor, and Inequality*** Breanna Humes – Texas Tech University
902c.	***The Pitted Floor, a Comparative Analysis on Geographically Tied Gig-Workers*** Bennett LaBree – Florida State University

Session 903	
3:00-4:30 **B308**	**Inclusive Pedagogy**
903a.	***Creating an Organic Reading Community*** Joshua Riley – Olivet Nazarene University
903b.	***SpectrumPlay: Supporting Accessibility in the Elementary Music Classroom*** Erin Collins – Kennesaw State University
903c.	***Creating Collaboratively Across Visual Abilities: Accessibility Through Interdisciplinarity (Virtual)*** Kristina A. Boylan – SUNY Polytechnic Institute

Session 904	
3:00-4:30 **B302**	**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

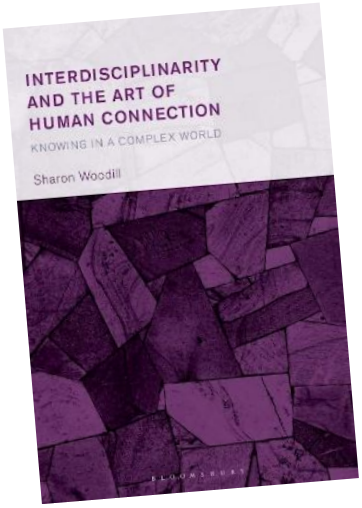
4:45-6:00 Main Lecture Hall

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

Sunday, November 1st

Morning Events in Main Lecture Hall

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

Program Annex

Additional Conference Information

Daily Yoga Sessions

Daily sunrise yoga on the beach. Sign up at conference registration desk.

Arriving Early or Staying Through Sunday?

Consider one of these recommended activities:

Gulf Coast Excursions

Snorkeling and Dolphin Tours

Island Time Sailing *(Rated number on in PCB) Reservation Required
https://islandtimesailing.com/shell-island-snorkel-sailing-cruise/
Departure Times: Duration: 3 hrs. Available Dates:
9:30am- Arrive by 9:00am
1:00pm – Arrive by 12:30pm
Cost: $49.00/ person

Paradise Adventure: https://paradiseadventurespcb.com/
Snorkel & Dolphin Sightseeing Aboard the Footloose Catamaran
Departure Times Duration: 3 hrs. Available Dates:
10:00am - Must arrive by: 9:30a October 29th, Oct 30th and Oct 31st
2:00pm – Must arrive by 1:30p Cost: $50.00/ person
*Not available on Nov 1st

Presentation Abstracts

All available abstracts are listed in program order by session and presentation number.

Session 101 (Workshop). Beyond Scaffolding: Integrating Translational Skills Within Interdisciplinary Courses to Address the "Know-Do" Gap

J.R. "Jones" Estes – Portland State University

Abstract: As the theory and practice of translational research and learning expand beyond applications in health, medical, and STEM education, definitions of these terms, and how to assess them, remain unsettled. Nevertheless, the skills necessary for translational research and learning match AAC&U's integrative learning VALUE rubric quite well (Mitchell, 2016; Huber, et al. 2005). And integrative curriculum design relies on scaffolding.

Whether conceptual, procedural, or strategic, scaffolded learning is often represented as a short staircase, upward steps along a linear path for the learner to follow to completion that is itself represented by the end product of test or assignment. However, limiting curricular design to hierarchical or linear conceptions of scaffolding skips the reiteration needed to establish and enhance integrative learning processes. Consequently illustrating the "know-do gap" (Bennett and Jessani, 2011) of faculty and thus ensuring a know-do gap for students.

The know-do gap "is that gap between research and practice that results when people with the ability and authority to use good information to design their action," don't (Mitchell, 2016, p. 5). As "neglected learners" (Rossing & Lavitt, 2016, p.1), faculty face challenges in designing, creating, and implementing curricula that integrates cognitive developmental processes with the science of learning and neuroeducation in order to introduce and strengthen student integrative learning.

Yet as circumstances (AI, climate change, CRISPR) make exceedingly clear, any path towards human flourishing, more than ever, requires graduates who understand the interconnected complexity of our systems and can engage them holistically. However, as frequent pieces in Higher Ed and The Chronicle of Higher Education illustrate, students are described as entering the university classroom with a suitcase of deficits (e.g., reading, writing, mental health, intolerance for risk and ambiguity, etcetera). While impassioned calls to emphasize integrative learning continue to grow (Gallagher, 2019; Blackshields et al., 2015).

Resourceful faculty can find learning outcomes, rubrics, and examples, but we face a significant know-do gap regarding how to design courses that balance content objectives with processes that facilitate student integrative learning. Designed for faculty, and those working in spaces of faculty development, seeking to increase, refine, or overhaul their curriculum to deepen and layer learning activities that

mutually reinforce the processes necessary to develop and adopt the practices and skills of an integrative learner, this workshop helps close that gap.

Session 102 (Organized Session). Managing Academic Integrity and Administrative Need in Creating Successful Interdisciplinary Programs

Author(s): Tami Carmichael – University of North Dakota; Rick Szostak – University of Alberta; Evan Widders – West Virginia University; Andrew Pfrenger – University of Mississippi; Rubie Ghazal – Middle Tennessee State University; Katharine Schaab – Kennesaw State University

Abstract: This session will feature presentations and discussions on the challenges and successes of balancing quality programming (i.e. teaching integration and other interdisciplinary skills) against an administrative incentive for cost-savings, tuition generation, and using exisiting non-integrative, non-interdisciplinary courses. The session leaders, Tami Carmichael and Rick Szostak, invite both theoretical and empirical examination of the issue, or thoughtful case studies of developments at particular institutions (with lessons for others). Audience participation and discussion will be encouraged.

Colleges and Universities increasingly face tension between pedagogical ideals and fiscal constraints. This session addresses the challenge of maintaining high-quality integrative and interdisciplinary programming while navigating administrative pressures for cost-effectiveness, enrollment generation, and reliance on existing course structures.

As faculty pursue integration—teaching students to synthesize knowledge across domains—and interdisciplinary approaches that break traditional departmental boundaries, they encounter institutional resistance rooted in economic realities. Existing course catalogs, faculty workload models, and budget structures often favor conventional, discipline-specific offerings over innovative integrative programs. Yet research suggests that integration and interdisciplinarity better prepare students for complex real-world challenges.

This interactive session prioritizes dialogue between presenters and attendees with the hope that attendees can participate in collaborative problem-solving, sharing strategies for advocating for quality programming, identifying creative compromises, and identifying convincing arguments that can motivate institutional decision makers.

Session 103 – Reframing Student Agency

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

Rhonda Davis – Northern Kentucky University

Abstract: This session positions narrative not as a means of communicating interdisciplinary work, but as a core methodology for integrating knowledge across domains. In the context of complex, “wicked”

problems, traditional approaches often struggle to connect scientific data, humanistic insight, and lived experience in ways that support meaningful action. Narrative offers a translational structure through which diverse forms of knowledge can be synthesized, made legible, and mobilized beyond the academy.

Drawing on examples from interdisciplinary teaching and research, this session introduces narrative as an integrative practice that bridges empirical evidence, ethical interpretation, and community knowledge. Participants will explore methods such as narrative inquiry, data-to-story translation, speculative futures storytelling, and multi-voiced narrative construction. These approaches enable students, researchers, and community partners to co-create knowledge that is both analytically rigorous and publicly meaningful.

Aligned with AIS's focus on translational research and teaching, this session demonstrates how narrative facilitates movement across disciplines and between academic and public contexts. By embedding complexity within story, narrative methods make interdisciplinary insights more accessible to policymakers, practitioners, and communities, while fostering empathy and ethical engagement.

Attendees will leave with adaptable strategies for incorporating narrative into interdisciplinary pedagogy and research. Ultimately, this session argues that narrative is not simply expressive, but infrastructural, a vital method for advancing translational interdisciplinarity.

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

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

Abstract: Many authors in the past few decades have discussed controversies and issues with homework practices in most disciplines. These controversies inspired the idea to begin an interdisciplinary group of teachers (Homework Think Tank) from five different academic departments within the same school. Thus far, each member of the Homework Think Tank has developed individual strategies to differentiate homework to best serve the needs of their students. Students have provided feedback on some of the strategies. The group is in the process of creating department-specific cohorts to build on these strategies, with the ultimate goal of analyzing how the strategies might traverse different disciplines and be more generally compatible among the various academic departments. These cohorts will pilot a number of evidence-based strategies in the 2026-2027 school year and report back to the Homework Think Tank to review, analyze, and refine their practices. The purpose of this presentation is to help participants facilitate reflections on homework practices, and to provide insight into strategies and practices for assigning homework that would benefit their student population.

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

Vineeta Singh and Zach Hilpert – Virginia Commonwealth University

Abstract: As junior scholars, undergraduate students can feel uncomfortable faced with tasks that ask them to critique the work of experts, or even their own classmates. Multiple factors contribute to this 'imposter syndrome' for students in interdisciplinary studies: low confidence in their own knowledge or training; confusion about the differences between criticism and critique; assumptions that only experts

can give useful feedback; etc. How can interdisciplinary educators help students grant themselves permission to challenge and critique individual experts as well as entire disciplines, especially on subjects that they are not well versed in? How do we help them see not just the limits of their own knowledge, but also the limitations of expertise and disciplinary perspectives more broadly?

In this presentation, we share the interdisciplinary theoretical underpinnings of our own approach to helping students take on the role of critic. Using the example of a Disciplinary Analysis assignment from our Intro to Theory & Practice course, we explain the application of that theoretical approach at the level of critiquing disciplines. This requires students to differentiate between finding shortcomings in quality (accuracy, precision, etc.) and identifying the inherent limitations of a particular discipline (phenomena, methods, etc. outside its scope). We then turn this lens to peer feedback in interdisciplinary settings, the importance of feedback as a transferable skill and metacognitive tool. Participants will be given a sample Feedback Portfolio assignment and encouraged to use this as a model to design or re-design a peer feedback activity they can use in their own courses.

Session 104 – Translational Pathways in the University

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

Author(s): Nevena Stojanovic – West Virginia University

Abstract: Since its establishment in 1975, The Regents Bachelor of Arts Program at West Virginia University and other institutions of higher learning in the state has helped numerous nontraditional students translate their knowledge and skills gained in the workforce, life, and military into college-equivalent credit. This credit conversion, or application of credit for prior learning, occurs in two ways: 1) through evaluation and articulation of student training completed for the purposes of licensure, certification, or military service, and 2) through assessment of equivalency-credit portfolios, which students create in our portfolio development courses, and which we release to designated reviewers from the fields/university departments where students want to petition for academic credit. This presentation focuses on the latter pathway, for portfolio development enables us to see knowledge translation through the woks included in student portfolios, from sophisticated narratives, in which students apply theories and concepts from the selected field to shed light on their prior learning, to diverse artifacts that testify to their skills required for a successful petition in that field. Portfolio development and assessment benefit not only the students, but the instructors and reviewers as well, enabling us to trace trajectories of knowledge translation. The presentation ultimately discusses a case of an exceptionally successful petition for credit in sociology, where the petitioner's portfolio resulted not only in credit articulation, but also in the reviewers' strong interest in the student's work, quickly leading to the student's application and admission to the Ph.D. Program in Sociology and engagement in community-based research and activism.

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

Stacey Sinclair – San Diego State University

Abstract: The increasing complexity of contemporary challenges, ranging from social inequities to global sustainability, demands graduates who can integrate knowledge across disciplines and apply it in uncertain, real-world contexts. As institutions place greater emphasis on impact-focused education, a central challenge is developing students' translational skills. At San Diego State University, the Weber Honors College addresses this need through a structured interdisciplinary minor that integrates pedagogy, curriculum design, and experiential learning to support applied, impact-oriented education.

This session explores how the Honors minor intentionally scaffolds students' development of translational skills. Central to this model is a required high-impact experience, in which students engage in either a semester-long internship, leadership, research, community service, or creative activity. These experiences are supported by two signature programs focused on community-engaged learning and research that serve as anchors for interdisciplinary practice. Both programs require students to translate across disciplinary frameworks, stakeholder needs, and real-world constraints. An integrative capstone experience further supports this process by requiring students to synthesize their interdisciplinary learning and apply it to their post-baccalaureate goals through structured reflection and intentional integration across experiences.

Through these initiatives, students collaborate with faculty and community partners to address complex challenges, reconciling differing disciplinary perspectives and developing shared solutions. The session will present a replicable model for designing interdisciplinary programs. Attendees will gain insight into program design, student-faculty partnership structures, and assessment of integrative learning outcomes.

Examples of student work and program outcomes will illustrate how interdisciplinary collaboration can transform student learning while strengthening institutional and community partnerships.

104c. A Case Study of the NEXUS Lab in Applied Liberal Studies

Marvellous Oke – Morgan State University

Abstract: What does it look like when students are taught not just to learn across disciplines, but to think and act through them? The Network for Experiential and Interdisciplinary Undergraduate Scholarship (NEXUS) Lab at Morgan State University's Applied Liberal Studies (APLS) program offers one answer. Morgan State University's Applied Liberal Studies (APLS) program is one of the institution's fastest-growing degrees, recognized for its flexible, multidisciplinary curriculum and emphasis on real-world learning experiences. This paper presents the NEXUS Lab as a case study in translational, interdisciplinary methodology; a structured learning model that bridges AI-focused research and liberal arts education to cultivate skills students can carry directly into practice. The NEXUS Lab employs a scaffolded, literature-driven approach in which students engage curated peer-reviewed research spanning social science, health, and technology, develop analytical synthesis skills, and translate findings

into real-world applications all without requiring advanced technical prerequisites such as coding. This deliberate emphasis on accessibility expands who can engage with emerging AI tools and broadens participation in interdisciplinary inquiry. The methodology fosters core translational competencies: evidence-based decision-making, cross-disciplinary communication, and the capacity to move integrated knowledge into action. Preliminary outcomes indicate meaningful gains in student confidence when engaging with complex research and a strengthened ability to connect academic theory to applied contexts. As a replicable model, the Lab offers practical insights for designing inclusive, high-impact interdisciplinary learning environments that effectively bridge academic inquiry and real-world application.

Session 105 (Workshop). A Conversation about Neurodivergence and Interdisciplinarity

Jessica Devin – Texas State University

Abstract: In what Guajardo et al. (2016) call a community learning exchange (CLE), we will sit in a circle and have a conversation about the necessity of interdisciplinarity for the neurodiverse mind.

As a student, I struggled through school. I was diagnosed with ADHD and learning disabilities when I was 12. I survived most classes, but there was one class, my senior year of high school, that I remember well. I was engaged, learning, and having fun. Looking back, I know this class was my best experience because it was an integrated learning experience - an interdisciplinary study where my brain could make connections across disciplines. Two teachers, an English teacher and a history teacher, collaborated meaningfully, and they loved what they were doing. This made sense to me.

During my PhD journey, I have discovered many things about myself. This reflection has helped me uncover parts of myself that I have been masking for much of my life, not understanding that there is wisdom and strength hidden from the world. For many years, I was told that I was too sensitive, that I needed to toughen up. That sensitivity, vulnerability, and authenticity are what I bring as a neurodiverse thinker who needs interdisciplinarity to make sense of the world.

In the CLE, two to three rounds of questions will be asked. Each person will have an opportunity to answer and be witnessed, contributing to the communal space that is created. The conversation will explore the magic of the intersection where the neurodivergent mind and interdisciplinarity work together naturally.

Session 201 (Workshop). Scaling Transdisciplinary Initiatives: Practical Strategies and Lessons Learned from VCU's Convergence

Mariah Crilley, Daniel Gutierrez, and Tim Luckeitz-Marquis – Virginia Commonwealth University

Abstract:

While most universities preach interdisciplinarity, the practical realities of RCM budget models, promotion policies, and disciplinary silos often render it "impossible" in practice. This is most acute in teaching and learning, where concerns over enrollment and revenue frequently stifle innovation. However, transdisciplinary curriculum is no longer a luxury. It is a necessity for student success in a world of "wicked problems."

This interactive workshop uses VCU Convergence as a living blueprint for operationalizing transdisciplinary work at scale. We move beyond theory to provide concrete strategies for building initiatives that span research, curriculum, and transformative learning: centering wicked problems, building on disciplinary expertise, surfacing disciplinary bias, and championing interdisciplinary expertise. Participants will learn how VCU navigates the "pain points" of cross-college collaboration, ensuring that interdisciplinary expertise is championed as a rigorous knowledge domain in its own right.

Using VCU's work on curriculum on AI and Neuroscience as a foundation, we lead participants through a four-part process for convening faculty and creating transdisciplinary initiatives:

Centering "Wicked Problems": Creating a shared ground to anchor teams across disciplinary homes.

Maintaining Rigor: Building on disciplinary expertise to ensure academic integrity.

Surfacing Bias: Naming gaps in expertise and making "invisible" disciplinary biases visible.

Valuing Integration: Championing interdisciplinary synthesis as a distinct, expert skill set through communications, professional development, and administrative infrastructure.

Session 202 (Organized Session). Interdisciplinarity in the Age of Career Anxiety

Jamie E Berthe – NYU Gallatin School of Individualized Study; Scott Carlson – The Chronicle of Higher Education; Glenn Whitehouse and Patricia Rice – Florida Gulf Coast University

Abstract: As technological change, economic uncertainty, and shifting social expectations challenge traditional assumptions about undergraduate education, interdisciplinary programs are facing renewed pressure to articulate their value in vocational, not just intellectual, terms. This panel considers how interdisciplinary degrees are uniquely positioned to help students connect their intellectual and academic work through inquiries regarding purpose, vocation, and the futures they want to build.

Bringing together perspectives from individualized interdisciplinary education, liberal arts career initiatives, and the "field of study" framework advanced in Hacking College: Why the Major Doesn't Matter – and What Really Does, panelists suggest that both contemporary undergraduate education and the realities of rapid change in the workplace increasingly call for forms of learning that cross traditional disciplinary boundaries in search of more integrative and reflective work across multiple fields of study. For these reasons, interdisciplinarity should be the new norm.

The session offers both a conceptual vocabulary for understanding these new imperatives and two case studies. First, Hacking College co-authors, Ned Laff and Scott Carlson introduce the "field of study"

model where students design integrated curricular pathways around academic interests, vocational questions, and complex social problems that they hope to solve rather than solely relying on major requirements to achieve their academic and post-collegiate goals. Second, Jamie Berthe, from NYU Gallatin, discusses how Gallatin's individualized, interdisciplinary model fosters integrative learning through close faculty advising, experiential learning, and student-designed concentrations. This approach empowers students to connect intellectual inquiry to wide-ranging opportunities for civic, creative, and professional engagement. Third, Patricia Rice and Glenn Whitehouse from Florida Gulf Coast University describe their PAGES initiative, which embeds career-relevant curricular design into the liberal arts majors, including career inquiry projects, career touchpoint assignments embedded in liberal arts classes, and tracking transferable skill growth across the students' academic career.

Rather than separating academic ambitions and intellectual exploration from practical and vocational concerns, this panel considers how integrative, interdisciplinary learning sets students up to approach both with greater intentionality, focus, and, ideally, satisfaction.

Session 203 – Translational Partnerships

203a. The Idea of Civic Universities: Institutionalizing Transdisciplinary Co-production of Knowledge through Academia-Society Partnerships

Amar Nath – National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi, India

Abstract: This paper examines how academic and societal knowledge can be bridged to solve wicked, cross-cutting problems through transdisciplinary co-production. While the National Education Policy 2020 serves as a timely policy nudge for disciplinary integration, the majority of discourse remains limited to multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity, attempting the integration inside the academic sphere. However, the complexity of the real-world problems transcends the academic world, necessitating the unification of academic and societal knowledge. The paper proposes a bridge between institutional custodianship on knowledge production and knowledge creation in the community-led commons. The paper investigates the structural mechanisms that govern the exchange of knowledge between academia and society, arguing for successful transdisciplinary collaboration by acknowledging society as a legitimate knowledge partner rather than a mere recipient. By analyzing the opportunities and challenges of the transdisciplinary collaboration across academic and societal spheres, the study identifies strategies for aligning the institutional goals with societal cognitive aspirations. The study primarily contributes to the discourse on the idea of new civic universities, producing institutionally rooted and socially relevant knowledge through transdisciplinary knowledge co-production.

203b. Interdisciplinary Capacity Building Across Campus

Rubie Ghazal – Middle Tennessee State University

Abstract: This presentation provides an overview of a newly awarded grant sponsoring a multi-layered, interdisciplinary capacity-building initiative developed by the presenter and university partners.

Grounded in institutional values, this project aims to foster student flourishing through a holistic character education framework.

The initiative utilizes a three-pronged approach: faculty development, curriculum innovation, and student engagement. Faculty professional development is driven by a Faculty Learning Community (FLC). Through this cohort, a researcher from the College of Liberal Arts partners with a faculty member from the College of Education to deliver a series of interdisciplinary workshops focusing on character development. Simultaneously, another co-PI offers two book clubs—one in the fall and the other in the spring—designed to examine ethical leadership and civic responsibility through an interdisciplinary lens.

To weave these concepts directly into the campus culture, the initiative intentionally aligns with existing institutional frameworks, including the university's MT Engage student success initiative. Under this umbrella, students are invited to a series of dynamic fireside chats that explore character-focused topics across diverse disciplines. Finally, a guest lecture series featuring prominent voices on character education is scheduled to enrich campus-wide dialogue. Attendees will gain actionable insights into designing cross-disciplinary partnerships, navigating grant-funded implementation, and creating scalable programming that elevates interdisciplinarity and character as a core component of the undergraduate experience.

203c. Aligning Researchers and Communities for Mutual Benefit and Impact: A Roadmap for Translational Partnership

Nicole Wolfe, Mayla R. Boguslav, and Brian Do-Golde – University of Southern California

Abstract: Effective translational research relies on meaningful alignment between researchers and the communities they aim to benefit. However, community-engaged research often faces persistent challenges, including misaligned priorities, historical mistrust, and barriers to recruitment and retention. Informed by principles of community-engaged and translational research, our Community Engagement team at the Southern California Clinical and Translational Science Institute (SC CTSI) introduces a practical "roadmap to alignment."

Central to this approach is the intentional development of relationships with trusted community partners who can vouch for researchers' credibility and intentions. Over the last decade, we have engaged approximately 200 community partners and reached thousands of community members through sustained strategies that have established a foundation of trust that increases participation and enables more targeted, relevant, and impactful research. This work requires dedicated time, infrastructure, and personnel to build and sustain alignment.

We present a four-step model for aligning researchers and communities: (1) bidirectional listening and learning to identify shared priorities; (2) co-creation of research plans that reflect both scientific and community goals; (3) consistency, reliability, and accountability to move from trust to demonstrated trustworthiness; and (4) accessible, meaningful exchange of information, including returning findings and benefits to the community. We demonstrate how this model operationalizes these core principles

to improve recruitment, retention, and overall research relevance, and highlight the importance of a dedicated community engagement infrastructure.

This roadmap offers a replicable model and actionable strategies that can be adapted across institutional contexts to strengthen translational research and community impact.

Session 204 – Translational Mindsets and Pedagogy

204a. Translational Teaching and Translational Awareness: Examples from an Undergraduate Spanish Course

Chisu Teresa Ko – Ursinus College

Abstract: With increasing pressures on the humanities to demonstrate their relevance and economic value, educators face the challenges of not only developing interdisciplinary and translational approaches but also of helping students recognize the translational capacities they develop. This paper examines curricular interventions in undergraduate Spanish and humanities courses designed to make translational learning both active and visible to students. These include individualized learning dossiers that encourage students to research, document, and develop their own academic and professional interests, as well as a practicum experience with a community partner that requires them to navigate linguistic, cultural, interpersonal, and institutional boundaries while applying the knowledges they learned in class. Through these experiences, students engage in multiple forms of translation—not only linguistic and intercultural, but also in developing an awareness of how skills and knowledges rooted in the humanities are constantly applied and needed in real-world settings. The paper discusses both the achievements and limitations of these approaches. While students often develop stronger transferrable skills and greater ability in articulating the value of their studies beyond the classroom, not all forms of knowledge, skills, or intellectual growth are immediately applicable or visible. Efforts to highlight translation and applicability can help students bridge important gaps, but they also risk overvaluing knowledges and skills that lend themselves to immediate application while undermining those that are built through long-term and sustained intellectual engagement.

204b. From Discipline to Decision: Translational Pathways in Interdisciplinary Business Education through COI

Jennifer Cordon Thor – Oakland University; Agarzelim Alvarez-Milan – Universidad de Monterrey

Abstract: In the Fall 2025 semester, students from Oakland University (USA) and Universidad de Monterrey (Mexico) participated in an eight-week Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project. Combining Legal Environment of Business and Consumer Behavior courses, the initiative engaged students in exploring ethical decision-making through structured activities and a shared case analysis.

While interdisciplinary education is vital, business curricula often remain siloed, limiting students' ability to integrate legal, ethical, and consumer perspectives. This study examines how COIL serves as a

translational pathway to bridge this gap. The instructional design intentionally integrates distinct disciplinary perspectives through scaffolded activities, including intercultural dialogue, comparative analysis of ethical consumer practices, and a collaborative case study addressing strategic and ethical trade-offs.

Drawing on surveys, reflections, and faculty observations, this work-in-progress explores the shift from narrow disciplinary reasoning toward integrated, context-sensitive decision-making. Preliminary findings suggest that interdisciplinary learning requires more than just exposure to diverse views; it necessitates structured opportunities to reconcile conflicting disciplinary logics. Consequently, students began to frame ethical decisions as contingent on legal frameworks, consumer expectations, and cultural contexts rather than static principles.

This study contributes to interdisciplinary scholarship by demonstrating how COIL enables students to simultaneously evaluate legal constraints and ethical implications within a single framework. By fostering this integration, the project prepares future professionals for the complex, multi-dimensional challenges of the global business environment.

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

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

Abstract: The Beyond Boundaries Program provides a cohort of first year students from all four undergraduate colleges at our university with foundational skills for interdisciplinary practice. The program aims to provide skills and practice in interdisciplinary collaboration that students build upon while concurrently deepening their disciplinary expertise. The semester-long, group-based collaborative project described here uses an empathy-based design process to teach skills needed for interdisciplinary collaboration such as iteration, qualitative data collection, and navigating open-ended research.

Empathy is a critical tool for perspective-taking and a critical skill in interdisciplinary and collaborative practice. The seminar offers a systematic approach to integrating empathy into decisions, through the methods, processes, and approaches used in both design and social work. Students engage in empathy methods both within the collaboration of their group and by employing skills such as active listening, communication, facilitation, and questioning assumptions with external stakeholders.

Students learn to use these skills in a multi-step collaborative project. The faculty give lectures introducing each step of the of the design-research project and provide templates and frameworks for groups to work into. Students learn through direct experience to generate data (interviews, immersions, and observations), synthesize many forms of knowledge (design process), and to negotiate the direction of a project as conditions and formats change (prototyping and user testing). Empathy is enacted in this process by valuing lived experience in the design of solutions and within interdisciplinary work where students will synthesize knowledge from various disciplines through collaborative problem solving.

Session 205 (Roundtable). 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

Abstract: Many new BIS programs experience rapid growth when they prove attractive to what is often referred to as 'completers.' These might include populations like student athletes who have transferred with majors not available at their new institution, or adult learners taking advantage of 'Second Chance' programs designed to primarily support degree completion. While these types of students can significantly expand enrollments, each can potentially bring special problems to a curriculum designed for first year populations taking IDS Pathway or Track models aimed at sequencing specific interdisciplinary skills.

Based on my years as an IDS Consultant I have seen some programs struggle with designing course work and outcomes that can embrace these kinds of students without shifting away from delivering theory and content necessary for self-conscious and explicit IDS work.

I think there could be a wide interest in the discussion of these challenges, if only to identify the impact of completers in the classroom and best practices toward integration of diverse BIS populations.

I would also be interested in assisting with what use to be called the pre-conference or conference workshop known as "Nuts and Bolts"

Session 301 (Workshop). Designing Curriculum and Pedagogy to Build a Lifelong Commitment to Interdisciplinary Practice

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

Abstract: This session seeks to answer the question: What are the high impact educational practices for inculcating a interdisciplinary framework in undergraduate students? Capturing burgeoning practitioners at the beginning of their academic career has the potential for building a lifelong commitment to interdisciplinary problem solving to address complex interrelated challenges. Educating the next generation of interdisciplinary practitioners requires intentional curriculum and pedagogy. Using the Beyond Boundaries Program at Washington University in St. Louis as a case study, participants will engage in roundtable discussions to share practices and techniques for undergraduate interdisciplinary education.

The Beyond Boundaries Program identified key skills and competencies for interdisciplinary collaboration and developed a yearlong seminar class for program participants from myriad disciplines. Using team building, active learning, and group based interdisciplinary projects alongside traditional classroom learning, students are exposed to skill building including self-awareness, perspective talking, communication across disciplines, collaboration, adaptability, and conflict resolution. The learning objectives include:

Describe the value of interdisciplinary approaches in problem solving

Identify values, strengths, and skills and apply to them personal and professional growth

Apply disciplinary perspectives to interdisciplinary problem solving

Assemble interdisciplinary teams around a problem or subject

Design interventions/solutions based on interdisciplinary perspectives

Facilitate and organize collaborative teams

Cultivate a sense of curiosity, exploration, and serendipity

The workshop will provide opportunities for participants share reactions and their own educational practices with the aim of building a catalog of promising practices in interdisciplinary education.

Session 302 (Roundtable). 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

Abstract: Most interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary degree programs serve students at universities with rigid disciplinary structures with distinct departments, defined majors, and clear disciplinary tracks. Our students, and those who advise them, must navigate these rigid systems without a clearly defined disciplinary home. This often presents unique administrative, academic, and even identity challenges. That can include navigating degree audits, knowing what's possible within the university for a student based on their unique interests, and helping students synthesize the disparate fields in their plan into a coherent professional or academic narrative. It can be even more challenging when we find ourselves trying to balance serving both students who view the program as a convenient place to complete their degree more quickly and students who are high-achievers looking to make the most of their opportunity in the university.

However, advising these students also brings rich opportunities. Interdisciplinary thinkers are often remarkably driven, creative, and comfortable with complexity. They can be the most fun students to work with because of their ability to look at things from multiple perspectives. And helping a student who initially saw the program as a short-cut see the potential in themselves and the value of their education couldn't be more rewarding.

This roundtable is meant to explore both sides of the coin, acknowledging the challenges and the rewards involved in advising IDS and MDS students. It is also an opportunity to share practical strategies that support their academic success, personal/intellectual growth, and career readiness.

It’s a great place for anyone who advises interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary students to get together and share strategies!

Session 303 – Translational Arts and Performance

303a. Utopian Writing as a Site of Interdisciplinary Learning

Katharine Schaab and Ben Brooks – Kennesaw State University

Abstract: How do students engage creative thinking to demonstrate content knowledge acquisition and application? This paper examines a dataset of ~150 student-authored utopian societies (~1,000 pages produced across six classes over three years) to explore writing as a site of interdisciplinary intellectual synthesis. Situated within a course that integrates political philosophy and social theory, the assignment asks students to construct a society grounded in course readings, translating abstract arguments into systems of governance, law, and social organization.

Preliminary analysis suggests that students took advantage of creative storytelling strategies, including engaging archetypal narrative structures and character design, to foreground concepts such as justice and equality as foundational rights, while exploring character and societal development through revolution, heroic leadership, and moral transformation. At the same time, the reliance on archetypes in the submissions exposes unresolved tensions, particularly in the implementation of rights, the enforcement of fairness, and the balance between individual freedom and collective well-being.

By examining these texts as interdisciplinary artifacts, this IRB-approved study highlights how students adapt, integrate, and sometimes simplify ideas across domains. Rather than treating creative work as supplementary, the study positions it as a primary site of knowledge production. In doing so, it contributes to interdisciplinary studies by demonstrating how speculative, theory-informed assignments can reveal both the possibilities and limits of students’ integrative thinking across disciplines.

303b. Practicing Knowledge: Performance as a Translational Model for Interdisciplinary Research

Experience Bryon – Norwich University of the Arts

Abstract: In contemporary interdisciplinary research, the arts are frequently positioned as communicative or affective supplements to knowledge generated elsewhere, particularly within the sciences. This paper argues that such positioning reflects a deeper epistemological problem: a persistent privileging of knowledge as stable, measurable, and artifact-based, through which artistic practice is rendered insufficiently “serious.”

Building on my forthcoming monograph, 'Transdisciplinarity in Practice: Capturing and Experiencing Knowledge across Disciplinary Boundaries' (Jenny Stanford Publishing, 2026), described by Daniel Hall-Flavin (Professor of Psychiatry, Emeritus, Mayo Clinic) as a “canonical contribution in epistemology,” this paper reframes the problem through a reorientation from knowledge as object to knowledge as act. The issue is not what art produces, but how it knows.

Tracing the historical separation of techne and episteme, the paper shows how the arts have been displaced from epistemological legitimacy, particularly under contemporary regimes of “robustness” and "impact". Within interdisciplinary contexts, this results in the arts occupying a peripheral role—often in the service of communicating or humanising science—while epistemological sovereignty remains with the originating discipline.

In contrast, the paper proposes performance practice—and specifically the “practice of the practice” formalised in my work in the critical framework of the "active aesthetic"—as a transdisciplinary model of knowledg(ing). Here, knowledge does not reside in outputs, disciplines, or methods, but emerges in the dynamic, embodied, and relational processes of doing. This shift foregrounds an articulated middle field of practice, where iteration, failure, adaptation, and experience generate knowledge as an active, unstable, and situated event.

From this perspective, the arts do not supplement knowledge production—they expose its conditions.

303c. IMPULSE: Performing Digital Heritage in Mixed Realities

Adnan Hadziselimovic – University of Malta

Abstract: This paper delves into the performing and exhibiting of digital heritage within immersive experiences, a transformative approach explored within the IMPULSE research project. IMPULSE investigates innovative methods for experiencing and interpreting digitised cultural heritage within immersive virtual environments, challenging conventional narratives through speculative and inclusive frameworks. By integrating emerging immersive technologies, the project re-imagines the role of digital heritage in contemporary cultural discourse.

At its core, IMPULSE employs artistic research methodologies to interrogate and expand the potential of digital heritage archives and assets. Through performances and exhibitions, the project creates dynamic, user-centered experiences that foster emotional and cognitive engagement. These speculative interpretations serve to question normative understandings of digital heritage archives and reshape their cultural significance. This approach highlights the capacity of immersive technologies to make digital heritage more accessible and inclusive while addressing critical challenges such as interoperability and design.

The paper also examines the role of artistic research in transforming digital heritage practices, emphasizing its power to unlock new layers of meaning in cultural artifacts. The IMPULSE research project transcends traditional boundaries, offering audiences an active role in the reinterpretation of heritage. The findings underscore the potential of immersive and performative methodologies to redefine the dissemination and experience of cultural heritage in the digital age.

The paper demonstrates how IMPULSE’s integration of technology, artistic research, and speculative design contributes to a more inclusive and dynamic cultural heritage landscape.

Session 304 – Translating Research into Justice

304a. Biosolids Management in Florida: An Interdisciplinary Analysis of Regional Planning and Rural Environmental Justice

Elio Fernandez – Florida State University

Abstract: This study applies an interdisciplinary approach to regional planning by examining the rural environmental justice implications of biosolids management in Florida. Biosolids, the solid byproduct of wastewater treatment, are often produced in urban areas and disposed of in rural agricultural lands for fertilizer purposes. While promoted as a sustainable resource, research highlights concerns related to environmental and public health risks and odors associated with land application of biosolids. Research also notes disruptions to daily activities and quality of life, and a lack of economic benefits for rural residents. Many rural residents have questioned the fairness of disposing urban waste in rural areas.

This raises important questions as to whether rural community concerns are integrated into regional planning for environmental sustainability. While sustainability frameworks emphasize ensuring a healthy environment for future populations, they also stress balancing social, political, and economic goals with environmental goals. The interdisciplinary nature of sustainability frameworks thus provides a holistic lens to examine biosolids management in Florida.

Building on environmental research on biosolids management, this study utilizes GIS, discourse analysis, and qualitative interviews alongside environmental justice and community capacity frameworks. Results indicate that low-income rural communities disproportionately receive biosolids, that rural concerns are largely excluded from regional planning – a form of nonrecognition in environmental justice terms – and that rural communities are developing their own resistance strategies. These findings highlight the limitations of sustainability planning that prioritizes environmental and technical outcomes while neglecting social, economic, and political dimensions, underscoring the need for more interdisciplinary approaches in regional planning.

304b. Racialized Privilege in Motion: Black American Migration and Belonging in Mérida, Mexico

Queenie Collins – Central Connecticut State University

Abstract: In recent years, a growing number of Black Americans have relocated to Mexico and other parts of the Global South in search of safety, affordability, rest, and belonging. Often discussed online through the language of “Blaxit,” this migration remains underexamined within interdisciplinary scholarship, particularly regarding how race, privilege, and mobility are negotiated across transnational contexts. This developing research project explores Black American migration to Mérida, Mexico through an interdisciplinary framework integrating anthropology, geography, digital ethnography, migration studies, and critical race theory.

The project introduces the concept of racialized privilege to examine how mobility advantages associated with U.S. citizenship and income remain unstable when mediated through local racial formations shaped by mestizaje and global Blackness. Rather than treating privilege as fixed, the study

approaches it as relational and continuously negotiated through language, embodiment, digital self-presentation, and everyday interaction.

Currently in the proposal and pilot research stage, the project combines preliminary digital ethnography of online expatriate communities with the development of a longer-term ethnographic fieldwork design centered in Mérida. The presentation reflects on the theoretical foundations, methodological design, and interdisciplinary challenges of studying digitally mediated migration and belonging across physical and virtual spaces.

By bridging digital and embodied forms of mobility, the project contributes to broader conversations about race, transnational migration, urban transformation, and the social consequences of contemporary lifestyle migration in the Global South.

304c. Translational Research on Restorative Justice in Florida and Strategies to Include Undergraduates on Research

Alexandra Cockerham and James Cockerham – Florida State University

Abstract: Over the last several years, we have been working on a project that examines the teen court landscape in both Florida and North Carolina. Throughout working on this project, we have made efforts to include undergraduate students, and this has been met with substantial interest from students from majors across the university. This presentation will discuss our interdisciplinary research on juvenile justice, the strategies that we have employed to include undergraduates in practical policy research, and the lessons that have been learned from the process. Teen courts are an alternative type of court thought to help reduce recidivism by connecting the youth more directly to their crime. Despite their common mandate, there is variance in the way the process is implemented across counties. This variance offers the opportunity to learn from restorative practices and procedures and the way that they are implemented. Across counties, teen court programs vary in the way that they structure their sessions, the involvement of parents in the process, the methods through which volunteers are recruited and trained, the extent of cross-sector collaboration between teen courts and other juvenile justice stakeholders, the types of sanctions typically handed out, the number of times a youth can be admitted for services, and the struggles that they face. We use an inductive approach to examine the effects of teen courts on recidivism by learning how restorative practices and procedures are implemented across teen courts. Over the last three years students have been invited to participate in our research including conducting site visits, synthesizing site visit observations across teen court sessions to help us recognize patterns and generate theory and reviewing survey results.

Session 305 – Designing for Complexity

305a. Combining Ethical Technology Use and Project-Based Learning to Support Ethically Grounded Interdisciplinary Research Practice in the Classroom

Heather Listhartke – Winthrop University

Abstract: This presentation reframes the "technology problem" in higher education as an interdisciplinary issue of ethical use, not simply tool adoption or restriction. Using project- and problem-based learning, students research complex topics through multiple disciplinary methods while developing habits of reflection, collaboration, and responsible decision-making around technology. Rather than positioning digital tools as distractions or threats, the session treats them as part of the research process and asks students to consider how technology shapes inquiry.

The session emphasizes how students can use digital tools ethically as they investigate real-world questions and work through authentic problems, drawing on diverse disciplinary perspectives and methodological approaches. The presentation offers adaptable assignment models and assessment strategies that support integrative learning, helping students connect inquiry, ethics, and method in ways that align with interdisciplinary studies while also developing career-ready skills in communication, collaboration, critical problem solving, and responsible digital citizenship.

Project-based learning invites both students and instructors to treat technology as a dynamic, context-sensitive resource rather than a fixed set of tools, encouraging ongoing experimentation, revision, and reflection within the learning process. For instructors, this approach supports more flexible, responsive teaching practices that attend to disciplinary difference and interdisciplinary integration while still nurturing students' autonomy, creativity, and critical engagement with digital environments instead of against them. Attendees will leave with concrete examples of how to embed ethical technology use into project- and problem-based assignments supporting integrative learning goals.

305b. Designing for Complexity: Interdisciplinary Assessment in an AI-Saturated Classroom

Whitney Mendoza – Southern Utah University

Abstract: Generative AI has unsettled traditional assessment models. This session explores how interdisciplinary curriculum design can produce AI-resilient assessments by centering complexity, context, and sustained meaning-making. Rather than restricting AI, the approach reframes assessment as integrative work, requiring students to maintain coherence across perspectives.

Drawing from a study abroad course on global and historic leadership, the session presents a narrative-based model in which students construct historically situated personas shaped by variables such as geography, social class, and belief systems. Students synthesize insights from multiple disciplines and iteratively reinterpret course content through this lens, producing reflections that emphasize positionally and adaptation.

305c. The Poetry City Game: Instructional Design as Interdisciplinary Practice

Jennifer Dellner – Ocean County College

Abstract: This paper examines the result of a collaboration between a faculty member, myself, and an instructional designer to build a small, pedagogical, game for a hybrid class, i.e., one that meets in a

classroom and also entails significant asynchronous work. Using the Szostak-Repko framework along with several others, it analyzes the process of creating the game as an emerging interdisciplinary practice. The typical paradigm of such work is binary and limiting, with a SME (subject matter expert) working with an Instructional Designer to create course modules, assignments, etc. This quickly became unsatisfactory, and this paper suggests that 'translating' our work as interdisciplinary work became key to building and deploying the game in the course.

The goal of "The Poetry City Game" itself was to use the game to increase the dynamic between the asynchronous and classroom work; a double play of environments that usually do not integrate well. The paper, then: 1) introduces the context for the game's creation; 2) discusses the difference in the iterative processes of rapid prototyping and the ADDIE framework that suggested interdisciplinary theory could guide our emergent practice; and 3) explores the relationship of hybridity and interdisciplinarity in both an academic-creative collaboration and its product.

Session 401 (Workshop). 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

Abstract: This workshop explores how universities can design internal funding and incentive systems that meaningfully promote ITD collaboration. Participants are invited to share and examine their own institutional models—such as internal allocation strategies, collaborative seed grant schemes, and structured support for ITD proposal development. As emphasized in the Action Guide, internal funding should not be reserved "only for ITD projects, but also for project preparation phases" and collaboration should be promoted over competition. Attention should also be put to the flexibility of allocated resources as well as to ensuring the accountability of the funded projects through mechanisms that enable assessing the integrative efforts of the projects already while they are ongoing. (Dettwiler, D., Deutsch, L. and Hoffmann, S. 2024. Action Guide. Strategies to strengthen inter- and transdisciplinarity in your research organization. Eawag, Dübendorf).

The following guiding questions for analyzing the operational model and boundary conditions can be considered: • What kind of internal funding mechanisms could incentivize and catalyze ITD? • What principles ensure transparency, fairness, and adaptability, allowing decisions to remain broadly accepted while still responsive to changing global conditions and funding needs? • Who decides which themes are prioritized and which proposals receive funding—academic leadership, mixed committees, or representative community-based panels? • How is community acceptance and legitimacy for the choice of themes achieved, and what forms of facilitation, consultation, or co-design are needed? • How can the timing and rhythm (annual cycle) of internal funding mechanism calls and their annual evaluations be aligned with institutional planning and external funding landscapes?

Building on the University of Oulu's ongoing institutional redesign—where multiple thematic centres are being reorganized into a single coordinating structure for strategic ITD research programmes, seed

funding, and education—the workshop invites participants to analyse concrete cases of internal funding models and possible pathways for transformation. The Oulu example illustrates how funding mechanisms may catalyse systemic change, strengthen academic culture, and create critical mass for high-impact ITD research (Boix Mansilla, V., Lamont, M., & Sato, K., 2016. Shared Cognitive-Emotional-Interactional Platforms: Markers and Conditions for Successful Interdisciplinary Collaborations. Science, Technology, & Human Values, 41(4), 571–612).

Through applied group exercises, participants will map and discuss internal funding pathways—including seed funding, exploratory calls, and ideation-driven team formation—and consider how these mechanisms enable or constrain ITD collaboration. The workshop also addresses the need for recognized integrator roles in designing these pathways and in supporting team development (Hoffmann, S., Deutsch, L., Klein, J.T. et al., 2022. Integrate the integrators! A call for establishing academic careers for integration experts. Humanit Soc Sci Commun 9, 147).

Session 402 – Addressing Industry Needs Through STEM

402a. Deepening Dialogue Between Earth Ways and STEM Education

Troy Shepherd – Salvia Group at York St. John University

Abstract: Contemporary STEM education often privileges reductionist, materialist frameworks that can marginalize holistic and Indigenous ways of knowing. This presentation introduces Axiometaphorical Thinking (AMT) as a rigorous, interdisciplinary framework designed to create structural coherence between scientific reasoning and African Indigenous epistemologies.

AMT is grounded in the insight that axioms in mathematics and metaphors in cultural knowledge systems share a common formal structure: both function as foundational meaning-making units. By making this shared structure explicit, AMT offers educators a method for integrating symbolic, relational, and spiritually grounded knowledge into STEM without compromising academic rigor.

Drawing on examples from African Indigenous knowledge systems—where relationships, pattern, and interconnectedness are central—this session demonstrates how concepts typically framed as abstract or purely quantitative (e.g., energy, systems, transformation) can be recontextualized through culturally resonant metaphors that preserve both scientific integrity and epistemic diversity.

Participants will explore practical applications for curriculum design, including strategies for fostering epistemic inclusion, enhancing student engagement in complex domains. The session positions AMT as a bridge framework: not a replacement for STEM, but a structural expansion that allows multiple knowledge systems to coexist coherently.

This work contributes to ongoing interdisciplinary efforts to decolonize education by offering a replicable, theoretically grounded approach to integrating Indigenous and scientific ways of knowing in higher education contexts.

402b. Mission-Driven Interdisciplinarity: Designing a Core That Connects Disciplines, Careers, and Aerospace Futures

Joanne L. DeTore – Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

Abstract: At a specialized aerospace university, students whose interests, transfer credits, or career aspirations fall outside traditional disciplinary structures are often left without clear academic pathways. This presentation examines the development of an interdisciplinary studies curriculum intentionally designed to function both as a student retention initiative and as a destination program for students seeking greater academic flexibility, professional adaptability, and intellectual integration. Developed in alignment with institutional strategic goals and informed by employer and alumni feedback, the program emphasizes interdisciplinary coherence rather than disconnected electives.

Built upon a general education foundation, interdisciplinary core, and three minors or two minors paired with a breadth area, the curriculum encourages students to become critical thinkers who understand the intersection of technology and the humanities. The program serves diverse student populations, including transfer students, student-athletes, and students whose interests intersect multiple fields not represented by existing degree programs. Through the breadth area, students create thematic concentrations by combining coursework across both STEM and liberal arts courses.

The interdisciplinary core integrates enhanced communication coursework, global focus courses emphasizing cultural competence, philosophical perspectives emphasizing ethical reasoning, cooperative education experiences, and a senior thesis designed to prepare students for graduate study and professional advancement. The program also emphasizes customizable pathways, faculty mentorship, internships, research opportunities, and strong industry partnerships. Graduates have pursued careers with organizations such as NASA, Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Amazon, and American Airlines, while others have continued into highly selective graduate and law programs.

402c. Broadening the Bench: Valuing and Promoting Interdisciplinarity in the Energy Efficiency Workforce

Author(s): Chris Cardiel, Kirstin Moreno, and Austin Brown – Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance

Abstract: Over the past decade, substantial scholarship has been dedicated to building and sustaining multidisciplinary workforces (Cooper & Stoflet, 2004; Henriksen et al., 2023; Miniard et al., 2023; Pearson et al., 2024; Truitt et al., 2022). These studies support the value of heterogeneous knowledge bases and skillsets in providing a foundation for innovation, creativity, and collaboration but have stopped short of an inductive assessment of opportunities and challenges associated with fostering an interdisciplinary workforce (i.e., one demonstrating true integration across disciplinary backgrounds). Offering an initial step down this path, this paper presents findings from an in-progress exploratory research project focusing on the inter- and intrapersonal experiences of professionals active in the field of energy efficiency (EE).

The work of EE has grown increasingly complex in recent years as straightforward efficiency opportunities dwindle and systemic solutions are necessary to meet growing energy demand, including

but not limited to that arising from new AI data center construction and consumer cooling needs. This narrative-analysis study specifically assesses the opportunities and challenges associated with fostering interdisciplinarity in the EE workforce from the perspectives both of individuals whose professional and academic backgrounds led naturally to a position within EE and those who found their way to EE following academic and/or professional preparation in other fields. Through analysis of in-depth interviews across multiple EE organizations, the research team will generate and present findings intended to advance session attendees' readiness to leverage the wealth of innovative potential that may be offered by intentionally elevating interdisciplinary mindsets and practices.

Session 403 – Program Design for Belonging

403a. Building Integrated Community through Interdisciplinary General Education Curriculum

Dave Essinger and Sarah Fedirka – University of Findlay

Abstract: At the University of Findlay, we have been working to implement more meaningful interdisciplinary General Education coursework for all students, as well as build curriculum for the new transdisciplinary, cohort-based Watterson Center for Ethical Leadership. We will share curriculum-building approaches that have worked at Findlay, including methods of encouraging grassroots buy-in from faculty across various disciplines, recruiting professionally-focused students to interdisciplinary coursework that they recognize as meaningful and relevant to their own goals, and making room for service and reflection within already heavily-scheduled majors. Ensuing questions and further discussion will be welcomed on the challenges and opportunities of program-building and implementing productive interdisciplinary pathways within entrenched academic thinking and established curriculum.

403b. Balancing Skill, Inquiry, and Community in a Creative Interdisciplinary Program

Tesa Morin, Minso Kim, and Christina Donaldson – University of North Texas

Abstract: Beginning with a brief history of the emergence of an interdisciplinary creative program at a Texas university, this presentation considers how such programs can support students whose work does not fit within a single discipline.

Creative interdisciplinary programs are often operationalized through individualized pathways, allowing students to move across creative practices and fields of inquiry. This flexibility allows graduates to be equipped for a variety of employment and postgraduate educational trajectories. At the same time, such flexibility produces practical tensions within traditional institutional demands.

In this presentation we ask, how do interdisciplinary faculty and students find shared language, legitimacy, and community within contemporary disciplinary institutions? How do we equip students to work in the wider community in a degree program without specialization? Given all these variables, how do we best create connections and challenge learners in a variety of modalities to suit today's students?

By presenting its curriculum development, ranging from digital technological skills and design research to creative scenario writing, grant proposal development, and collaborative projects with local businesses, three faculty will demonstrate how their program has evolved into one of the fastest-growing majors, attracting increasing numbers of transfer students.

403c. Exploiting Liminal Spaces to Build Community in an (Online) Interdisciplinary Program

David A. Hatch – Southern Utah University

Abstract: Several of the elements of an interdisciplinary degree that excite us and generate value also create problems. We value the diversity of disciplines students combine, for example, but we often struggle to integrate these disciplines in meaningful ways. Programs offer a range of course options but may have difficulty meeting enrollment and personnel requirements. Finally, many of us offer online learning options, which provide access to a wide range of students, yet students can often feel isolated, even lonely, in these programs.

As is often the case, the tools we use for an online course can enhance and expand the learning experience in face-to-face courses.

With these considerations in mind, this presentation surveys the challenges of building community in a diverse interdisciplinary program with particular emphasis on the online environment, shares assessment data related to these challenges, and offers specific suggestions for program design, assignment creation, and development of departmental culture.

Session 404 – Navigating Institutional Complexity

404a. Measuring Complexity with a Ruler: Real Assessment Strategies for Interdisciplinary Learning

Tami Carmichael – University of North Dakota; Katharine Schaab – Kennesaw State University

Abstract: Let's be honest — most assessment of interdisciplinary learning exists because someone in an office somewhere required it. A question gets tucked onto an exam, a box gets checked, and everyone moves on. Mission accomplished. Or is it?

This session, led by facilitators who have studied, applied, and been frustrated by assessing interdisciplinary learning for years, is less a presentation and more a structured conversation: We'll start from a shared frustration: traditional assessment frameworks that were built for disciplinary learning — capturing what a student knows at a fixed point in time, reducing the messy, beautiful complexity of integrated learning to a set of discrete, measurable outcomes. Interdisciplinary learning is developmental and non-linear. Squeezing that kind of growth into a content-recall rubric is like measuring complexity with a ruler — you'll get a number, but it won't tell you much.

Together, we'll dig into questions like: What does meaningful assessment of interdisciplinary learning look like? What have you tried that worked — or spectacularly didn't? And how do we build assessment processes that can illuminate and reflect the developmental, integrative learning process?

And here's where it gets translational: if we can't articulate what interdisciplinary learning looks like, how do we make the case for it to administrators, policymakers, and the broader public? Assessment isn't just internal housekeeping — it's the language we use to translate the value of our work to the world outside our programs. Getting it right is more than good pedagogy. It's advocacy. And that's a conversation worth having together.

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

Lynda Mercer – Northern Kentucky University

Abstract: This presentation utilizes a disaster studies framework to explore new perspectives for interpreting the nature of the destructive rhetorics that have permeated discourses around higher education in the United States since the 20th century. Situating the current condition of higher education in the United States as a disaster zone (while maintaining a critically grounded understanding of disaster and trauma as multi-dimensional concepts), this presentation considers how such a reframing could open new perspectives on real-world conditions to which higher education has already been actively committed: safety, vulnerability, power, governance, and resilience, among others.

Incorporating a discussion of exceptional/interim states and the state of emergency as relevant touchpoints for this discussion, this work is focused on the potential for reimagining educational spaces as highly responsive, adaptive networks that can serve as spaces of shelter and safety in the face of ongoing threats to the critical resources upon which our future relies. Viewing the classroom through the lens of disaster and resilience offers opportunities to translate theoretical notions of 'safety' into concrete pedagogical practices that protect intellectual inquiry during periods of institutional crisis and existential threats.

404c. From Practice to Interdisciplinary Praxis

John Lundy – Eastern Oregon University

Abstract: Aristotle was the first to assign “praxis” a technical meaning related to the activities characteristic of human ethical/political life, contrasting it with both pure contemplation and productive activity. The idea was revived in the 1840s when it took on a central significance for the young, leftist Hegelians. Its use here remained somewhat vague until Marx picked up the term giving it a systematic new formulation and a central place in his philosophy. At root, it was understood as the free and theoretically informed activity essential to human life.

I unpack an account of the relationship between theory and practice by tracing the development of praxis, focusing particularly on how it’s Aristotelian and Marxian dimensions were taken up and developed in three interdisciplinary humanist traditions, 1) the Yugoslavian Praxis School philosophers

(i.e. Gajo Petrović, Mihailo Marković) 2) Critical Pedagogy, and most particularly, 3) the critical theory of the Frankfurt School.

I develop an account of praxis drawing on these traditions, as well as Foucault's and Deleuze's take on theory and practice. I suggest that the relationship between theory and practice is not an identity but a unity, bound by a powerful nexus. Within this concept of praxis, practice is understood as a set of relays from one theoretical point to another, while theory is a relay from one practice to another. Here, theory and practice are simply understood as action—either theoretical action or practical action—which form a system of relays with a multiplicity of theoretical/practical parts.

Session 405 – 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

Abstract: Doctoral students pursuing interdisciplinary research often find themselves navigating an institutional no-man's-land — expected to synthesize knowledge across disciplines while receiving mentorship and support from within a single department. This presentation examines how faculty and program directors at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) are rethinking doctoral program design to meet the real needs of interdisciplinary scholars.

Drawing on program development work at UAF, this session explores three interconnected strategies: building an intentional community of learning among doctoral students who might otherwise work in isolation; creating structured support mechanisms that bridge the gap between academic departments; and leveraging existing university resources to provide students with the scholarly, professional, and personal scaffolding they need to thrive.

We share a coherent model that integrates three key elements: (1) interactive synchronous coursework focused on synthesis, conceptual frameworks, and methodological alignment; (2) a cohort structure that fosters sustained cross-disciplinary dialogue and sensemaking; and (3) an in-person residency that accelerates identity development as interdisciplinary researchers. Together, these elements function as a learning ecosystem that supports both the cognitive and social dimensions of interdisciplinary inquiry.

This presentation is relevant to faculty, graduate program coordinators, and academic administrators, drawing on examples of specific instructional practices and the ways these practices are reinforced across program structures.

405b. Citation Analysis in Interdisciplinary Studies

Rick Szostak – University of Alberta

Abstract: At the 2025 AIS conference in Oulu, we presented an analysis of co-citation patterns from two volumes, The Encyclopedia of Interdisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity, and the Handbook of

Interdisciplinary Teaching and Research. We have since taken the list of most-cited authors from that research and explored co-citation patterns in the broader literature using both the Web of Science and Scopus databases. We find clear evidence of a shared global conversation around interdisciplinarity, but also of "invisible colleges" associated with both different organizations and topics (such as creativity). We are also able to identify the most cited journals and collected volumes in the field.

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

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

Abstract: The C3 Lab is an interdisciplinary research incubator grounded in complexity theory as the foundation for human-connection knowledge practices. Rather than viewing disciplines as separate systems to be combined, complexity compels an understanding of interdisciplinary integration as emergence: new understanding arises through relational interaction, perspective-plurality, and attunement across difference. Within this framework, self as method is a key translational practice—scholars develop capacity to leverage their positionality and embodied presence as a foundational way of knowing.

The lab's approach emphasizes relationality, emergence, adaptive systems, and wholeness. new insights emerge when scholars with different perspectives, training, and ways of knowing genuinely attune to one another. Scholars develop awareness of how disciplinary training, identity, and embodied experience shape their perspectives. This reflexivity becomes a tool for authentic bridging across ways of knowing and for community-engaged, translational work.

Three scholars will demonstrate how self as method develops within complexity-based interdisciplinarity. An environmental scholar brings ecological knowledge systems and commitments into dialogue with Western environmental ethics. A technologist leverages lived disability experience to bridge digital design, embodied justice, and access advocacy. A math educator brings contemplative practice, spiritual inquiry, and academic rigor to examine teaching and learning in a complex world.

Attendees will witness interdisciplinarity in action through lab members' voices, understanding how complexity theory enables genuine integration and how self as method functions as a translational competency for moving knowledge into community-engaged practice.

Session 600 – 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

Abstract: In this poster session, we will highlight and assess a unique workshop we developed in collaboration with our institutional partners at an Institute of Design in India. Our plan was to design and facilitate a workshop where we introduced qualitative interdisciplinary research methods to students in

a typical design program in the effort to gain new insights through the collaboration. In the workshop, the facilitators organized the participating students into groups and tasked them with conducting qualitative fieldwork in the topical module areas of a) ethics in design, b) experience design, c) nostalgia, and d) IDS systems thinking.

For each one of these modules, the student groups conducted careful place-based observations of and interactions with material cultural items, socio-cultural processes, and people in the Jaipur region. The final workshop task for the groups was to create a digital quilt, as both a metaphor and a method for our participating students to uniquely organize and articulate their complex and interrelated research findings associated with the module topic areas. The culminating digital quilts were then presented to the public at the end of the workshop in a casual and discussion friendly showcase.

Through this program assessment we hope to a) identify areas for improvement in our curricular design and facilitation for future iterations of our workshop, and b) to provide a model that could be adapted by other interdisciplinary educators who wish to deliberately engage and integrate varied perspectives and methods in search of new knowledge on complex topics.

600b. Nature Journaling as Interdisciplinary Pedagogy

Jessica Schreyer – University of Dubuque

Abstract: This presentation describes a collaborative curriculum project in which faculty from philosophy, English, and the natural sciences co-designed a nature journaling assignment that was aimed at developing students' observational, analytical, and expressive capacities simultaneously. Nature journaling serves as an generative pedagogical site because it crosses disciplines and requires a variety of skills and ways of thinking. For instance, to journal well in nature is to observe carefully, to reflect critically, and to consider rhetorical situation and style.

The project invited students to move among multiple ways of engaging with the environment and information. They posed questions, observed their environments, and crafted responses that incorporated those observations and their reading. Assignments were scaffolded collaboratively, with faculty modeling cross-disciplinary conversation in the classroom itself.

This project transformed faculty practice. Co-teaching across departments allow faculty to discuss how they approach knowledge in their discipline. Faculty were able to consider their own approach to teaching about nature and their own approach to curriculum design. This poster presentation invites participants to consider interdisciplinary pedagogy like nature journaling as a translational pedagogical model that helps knowledge be built across disciplinary and experiential boundaries.

600c. From Libraries to Industry: RFID Systems as Translational Pathways Between Knowledge Access and Automotive Practice

Alfredo Gomez Alvarez – Oakland University

Abstract: While radio-frequency identification (RFID) systems have been widely studied as technical tools for tracking and inventory management, less attention has been given to how these systems shape

real access to knowledge. This gap is specifically relevant in academic environments where the availability of information depends not only on intellectual organization but also on the physical systems that enable access. This suggests that access to knowledge is not only a cognitive or informational issue but also an infrastructural one.

This work-in-progress study asks: How do RFID-based tracking systems influence real access to physical resources and what can this reveal across academic and industrial contexts? Focusing on a university library setting, the project examines how RFID tagging supports tracking, reduces loss and increases the likelihood that materials are available when people need them.

Based on firsthand experience, this study analyzes how these systems directly affect accessibility and use of knowledge resources. While libraries are often understood as spaces of intellectual organization, this research reframes RFID systems not merely as technical tools but as infrastructures that shape how knowledge is accessed, used and made actionable.

The study then connects these insights to applications in automotive manufacturing and supply chain systems where similar tracking technologies are widely used to manage parts and optimize logistics. This comparison reveals that similar infrastructural logics shape both knowledge access in academic settings and resource availability in industrial systems.

This research contributes to interdisciplinary discussions on translational pathways by showing how physical systems influence access to knowledge and how these principles operate across and connect academic and professional environments.

600d. Social Media, Stereotypes, and Male Radicalization in American Society

Connor Carey – Florida State University

Abstract: Scholarly research documents a significant rise in young men joining extremist online communities collectively known as the manosphere. These digital spaces radicalize young men through extremist ideologies built on traditional gender roles that expect men to be the primary financial provider, cultivating resentment towards any adoption of more flexible roles. At the same time, economists document how deindustrialization, wage stagnation, and the collapse of middle-skill employment have disproportionately displaced young men, stripping them of the provider identity they were socialized to fulfill. This economic displacement creates psychological vulnerability that manosphere communities exploit by offering simple explanations, such as scapegoating, to reduce the complexity of this structural issue so displaced men can rationalize it. The consequences extend beyond individual male radicalization, influencing family structures, civic trust, and workplace dynamics.

Understanding this crisis requires an interdisciplinary framework, as no single discipline provides it. Sociological analysis explains how shifting gender role expectations and the erosion of social capital create conditions that extremist groups deliberately exploit. Economics demonstrates how reduced upward mobility prevents men from fulfilling their presumed societal roles. Psychology then connects these structural forces to the individual, explaining how unfulfilled roles create identity threat and shame, making men susceptible to movements that promise restored status and simple explanations.

This interdisciplinary framework demonstrates that male radicalization emerges from the interaction of structural, psychological, and economic forces rather than a single cause. This presentation will explore how economic displacement and social gender roles interact to create a psychological vulnerability to radicalization in young men.

600e. Wellbeing and Nature-Connectedness for Customers at Mid-Michigan's Farmers Markets

Taylor Quillinan – Michigan State University

Abstract: Farmer's markets provide myriad benefits, including access to fresh produce, community building, opportunities for emotional exchange, and knowledge sharing (Alia et al., 2014; Joseph & Seguin, 2023; Warsaw et al., 2021). They can also provide an accessible entrance to the natural world by providing opportunities to interact with seasonal produce, land workers, and even plant and animal life (Dowler et al., 2009; Morales, 2011). Moreover, the experience of being outdoors and shopping in a more leisurely manner can contribute to eudemonia and improved psychological health for some consumers (Joseph & Seguin, 2023; Russomanno & Jabson Tree, 2021). Independently, these outcomes are all worthwhile contributions to human health and wellbeing. But recent literature suggests that farmer's markets might also contribute to a more holistic kind wellbeing, which honors the mutual flourishing between humans and the natural world. Tied to nature connectedness and rooted in the innate human desire to connect with nonhuman nature (Capizzi & Kempton, 2023; Kellert & Wilson, 1994; Wilson, 1983), this social-ecological approach to wellbeing is a foundation of sustainability attitudes and action. But little empirical work has explored the intersection of wellbeing and nature-connectedness at farmer's markets.

This project investigates the impact of the farmers market experience related to nature- connectedness and eudemonia- which describes the ways humans flourish (Jenkins et al., 2022) at three farmers markets in the greater Lansing area: The Allen Farmer's Market, Abbott Park Farmer's Market, and Meridian Market. Using interviews and observations, this study investigates: (1) the impact of the market experience on customer connections to the food system, nature, and/ or the community; (2) customer perceptions about the relationship between their market attendance and personal wellbeing; (3) the intersection between nature- connectedness and wellbeing at the farmer's markets. This project contributes to scholarly dialogue about nature-connectedness and well-being related to farmer's market attendance.

600f. Break the Cycle: How an Understanding Between STEM and the Humanities Can Save Science Communication

Thomas O'Halloran – Florida State University

Abstract: Both casual observation and academic literature demonstrate that the public's scientific literacy is in decline. Misinformation surrounding vaccines, for example, has led to the measured resurgence of diseases that were once extinguished. Such misinformation and institutional distrust makes it very difficult for scientists to accurately communicate the results of their research and the ethos of their fields.

The breadth and depth of this issue means that collaborative attitudes between disciplines are needed to ameliorate what is quickly becoming a full-blown crisis. Simply debunking misinformation is not enough. The Humanities need to work in tandem with the Sciences to create works that inspire tangible change.

Academic research shows that the arts can enhance science pedagogy and communication. Functionally, creating a service that acts as a forum and vetting process for artists who care about science and scientists with important discoveries would allow for the creation of consistently impactful art and ensure that those making crucial discoveries in fields as diverse as astronomy, medicine, and physics are being properly represented. Artists would be able to access a database of scientists that can assist them with properly representing sciences in their art, and scientists would be able to easily find journalists, visual artists, writers, and directors that they know can properly represent their findings.

The evolution of this discourse community would result in works spanning film, installation art, journal articles, music, and everything in between that stand on their own as pieces of art while also properly communicating science to the public.

Session 701 (Workshop). The Practice of the Practice: Embodied Methods for Translational Interdisciplinary Work

Experience Bryon – Norwich University of the Arts

Abstract: This workshop offers an embodied, practice-led enquiry into how knowledge is generated, experienced, and translated across disciplinary boundaries. Drawing on my forthcoming monograph, 'Transdisciplinarity in Practice: Capturing and Experiencing Knowledge across Disciplinary Boundaries' (Jenny Stanford Publishing, 2026), it introduces participants to a performance-based approach to research grounded in the “practice of the practice,” formalised as the critical framework of the active aesthetic.

Rather than focusing on outcomes or disciplinary content, the workshop centres on the ways in which participants engage their own practices. Through a series of structured, iterative exercises, participants enter a dynamic middle field of doing—where attention, embodiment, environment, and interaction shape the emergence of knowledge. Emphasis is placed on witnessing and refining these processes in action, allowing participants to identify how knowledge is activated, rather than assuming where it resides.

Participants will work both individually and collectively, encountering the habits, assumptions, and limits of their own disciplinary training while engaging with others. The workshop creates conditions for moving beyond multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary exchange toward a genuinely transdisciplinary space, where knowledge is not owned by a discipline but arises through relational, situated practice.

Led by Experience Bryon, PhD—Professor of Interdisciplinary Performance and Senior Research Fellow at Norwich University of the Arts, and pioneer of Integrative Performance Practice—the session draws on decades of work across performance and science. It offers a rigorous yet accessible framework

applicable to research, pedagogy, and collaborative contexts seeking new modes of knowledge production.

Develop an enhanced capacity to identify and articulate the “practice of their practice” within their own disciplinary work

Gain practical tools for witnessing and working within the middle field where knowledge is actively generated

Experience how shifts in attention, embodiment, and iteration affect the emergence of knowledge

Acquire strategies for engaging across disciplines without defaulting to epistemological hierarchy

Build confidence in applying embodied, practice-led approaches to research, teaching, and collaborative contexts

Session 702 (Administrators’ Roundtable). Non-Conformity: Unconventional Programs in Conventional Institutions

Lisa Turner de Vera and Elizabeth Foster – Florida State University

Abstract: No abstract available for this session.

Session 703 – Integrating Knowledge through Partnerships

703a. From the Super Bowl to Higher Education: Arts-Based Public Pedagogy Through the Lens of Community Learning Exchange Theory

Valerie Zapien and Huma Roshan – Texas State University

Abstract: This paper examines arts-based public pedagogy as a site of cross-generational, cross-disciplinary knowledge co-production, grounded in the Community Learning Exchange (CLE) Theory of Change. Drawing on the RASPPA model, Relationships, Assets, Stories, Place, Politics, and Action, the study brings together higher education faculty (Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials) and undergraduate Fine Arts and Education students (Generation Z) to collaboratively examine how arts-based public pedagogy can advance linguistic equity, cultural identity, and social cohesion in contexts shaped by English-only schooling norms and the marginalization of Spanish-speaking communities.

The paper centers Bad Bunny's 2025 Super Bowl halftime performance as a generative pedagogical text, using it as an entry point for critical dialogue across generations and disciplines on Puerto Rican identity, colonialism, and the power of popular culture as a form of public protest. Participant voices, including an educational leadership professor and a musical theatre undergraduate, ground the analysis in lived experience, illustrating how arts-based encounters activate cultural memory, affirm bilingual identity, and disrupt deficit narratives embedded in formal schooling.

Situating the work within a hybrid conceptual framework of public pedagogy and CLE theory, the paper argues that arts-based pedagogies, including theater, music, oral storytelling, and popular media, function not merely as instructional strategies but as relational and political acts that honor students' languages and cultural practices as sources of knowledge, power, and community. Implications for higher education pedagogy and teacher preparation are discussed.

703b. Translating Climate Knowledge Through Immersive Public Pedagogy: EcoFest as Interdisciplinary Scholarship

Mina Zarfsaz – Rowan University, Institute for Innovative Material, Media and Design

Abstract: This presentation examines EcoFest at Rowan University as a model of translational interdisciplinary scholarship that connects environmental research, design education, immersive media, and public climate engagement. Developed through collaborations among art, design, animation, environmental studies, geography, sustainability, and the Edelman Planetarium, EcoFest uses creative production as a method for translating climate knowledge into public-facing forms. Rather than treating student work as a classroom endpoint, the project positions design and media-making as tools for public interpretation, ecological attention, and community education.

The presentation focuses on how EcoFest transforms campus-based learning into a public climate forum. Student animations, visual narratives, and immersive media works are developed through research on environmental issues such as pollution, consumer waste, planetary health, and ecological precarity, then presented to broader audiences through planetarium screenings and public programming. In this structure, the classroom becomes one stage in a larger translational pathway: research is interpreted through creative practice, creative practice is adapted for immersive exhibition, and public presentation becomes a site of dialogue, reflection, and environmental communication.

By examining EcoFest as both a pedagogical initiative and a public scholarship platform, this presentation argues that interdisciplinary climate education gains scholarly force when it produces public-facing knowledge, not only internal classroom outcomes. The project offers a replicable model for integrating design pedagogy, sustainability research, immersive technologies, and community engagement. It also raises larger questions about how creative academic labor is categorized, evaluated, and validated when it operates across teaching, research, public engagement, and artistic practice.

703c. Fostering Change through Collaboration: Interdisciplinary Community-University Partnerships to Promote Breastfeeding Awareness, Maternal Well-being, and Reproductive Health Advocacy in Nigeria

Joseph Olurotimi Ogunlade – Bamidele Olumilua University of Education Science and Technology, Ekiti State, Nigeria

Abstract: Breastfeeding is widely recognized as one of the most effective evidence-based strategies for improving maternal and child health outcomes. However, many nursing mothers in Nigeria continue to experience socio-cultural, psychological, educational, and structural barriers that hinder optimal breastfeeding practices. Existing public health interventions often emphasize clinical education while

overlooking the emotional, counseling, behavioral, and community dimensions that significantly influence maternal well-being and breastfeeding decisions. This paper explores how interdisciplinary community-university partnerships can serve as transformative models for promoting breastfeeding awareness, maternal well-being, and reproductive health advocacy in Nigeria. Drawing from counseling, public health, psychology, education, and community development, the study argues that universities can function as important agents of social change by connecting academic research with sustainable community practices. Particular attention is given to the role of professional counselors in addressing maternal anxiety, postpartum stress, cultural misconceptions, low self-efficacy, and inadequate social support associated with breastfeeding. The paper emphasizes collaborative engagement among universities, healthcare professionals, women's groups, community leaders, policymakers, and local health workers in developing culturally responsive maternal health interventions. Using a conceptual community-based advocacy framework, the presentation proposes practical strategies including counseling-centered outreach programs, peer-support initiatives, interdisciplinary health education campaigns, and participatory reproductive health advocacy. The study concludes that sustainable improvements in breastfeeding practices and maternal well-being require inclusive, participatory, and impact-driven partnerships that effectively translate interdisciplinary research into meaningful community action and sustainable development in Nigeria.

Session 704 – AI in the Classroom

704a. From Prohibition to Practice: Addressing Pedagogical Dissonance through AI Feasibility Simulations

Allison Segal – University of Utah

Abstract: As higher education institutions increasingly embrace artificial intelligence, a palpable pedagogical dissonance has emerged. Educators warn students about AI's ethical dangers while simultaneously relying heavily on AI-driven evaluative tools like plagiarism detection software. This contradictory "do as I say, not as I do" standard undermines authentic digital literacy. How do we move beyond mere warnings to equip students with the translational skills necessary to navigate real-world AI usage?

To bridge this gap, this paper introduces a two-part curriculum centered on an experiential feasibility simulation designed for undergraduate general education writing courses. The activity moves beyond the binary of AI-ban versus AI-integration by positioning students as active evaluators who must translate ethical considerations into technological application. Students use AI to create an activity and then participate in the AI-generated task. Afterwards, the curriculum culminates in students writing a feasibility report. In this report, students practice professional literacy by critically analyzing the effectiveness of the AI based on their direct, hands-on experience.

Directly aligning with the goal of developing translational skills in our students, this activity transforms AI from an abstract policy debate into a tangible site for applied critical thinking. By transitioning students from standard academic reflections to a professional evaluation framework, this curriculum bridges

academic theory and workplace practice. Thus, this paper details the curricular framework and discusses how feasibility activities empower students to navigate the ethical dilemmas of the modern AI landscape as adaptable, critical evaluators rather than passive recipients of technology.

704b. Interdisciplinary Literary Pedagogy in the Age of AI

Michael Ka-chi Cheuk – Hong Kong Metropolitan University

Abstract: This paper examines how generative AI (GenAI) raises new questions about the pedagogical translation of disciplinary knowledge into interdisciplinary literary teaching. Literary studies has long depended on interdisciplinary interpretation, since literary texts require readers to move among historical, aesthetic, social, scientific, technological, and political contexts. Yet disciplinary knowledge is shaped by specialized vocabularies, methods, standards of intelligibility, institutional boundaries, and forms of professional authority. As such, the challenge of interdisciplinary literary teaching is not simply to introduce students to multiple contexts. The greater obstacle for instructors is to make specialized disciplinary knowledge accessible without oversimplifying it or hiding the forms of authority that shape it.

The rapid integration of GenAI into higher education makes this translational challenge more urgent. Large language models (LLMs) can rapidly summarize, reorganize, and translate disciplinary material, but they cannot independently determine what knowledge is pedagogically meaningful, appropriately sequenced, interpretively nuanced, or ethically responsible for a given learning context. Considering the speed and scale at which GenAI processes and reorganizes knowledge, this paper asks: How can instructors use GenAI to support interdisciplinary literary pedagogy without surrendering disciplinary judgment? How can AI-assisted teaching materials be evaluated for interpretive nuance, pedagogical clarity, and disciplinary grounding? What forms of human oversight are necessary to prevent AI-generated synthesis from producing superficial interdisciplinarity rather than genuine understanding?

Overall, this paper contributes to translational teaching by framing these questions as central pedagogical, epistemological, and ethical problems for interdisciplinary literary studies in the age of GenAI.

704c. Prompt Engineering is a Writing Assignment: An Interdisciplinary Humanities Education in the Age of AI

Gabrielle Bowden – University of Mississippi

Abstract: In June 2026, The New York Times published an article titled “Who Will Actually Thrive in the Hybrid A.I.-Human Work Force,” in which Foundation for American Innovation senior fellow Dean Ball argues that “curious generalists” who can “step back and think broadly” will be particularly well-positioned in a new AI-mediated environment. Far from signaling the demise of humanities disciplines like English, History, Philosophy, and the Arts, collaboration with artificial intelligence will instead cause an increase in demand for the broad interpretive and communicative capacities cultivated by the humanities.

While we cannot fully predict the total or long-term impacts of artificial intelligence on education and employment opportunities, current AI systems are fundamentally language-based. Vibe-coding a website, generating images and slideshows, and even automating an email response all depend upon the effective use of language; successful use of AI frequently requires evaluating generated content for coherence, accuracy, persuasiveness, and style. In this sense, "prompt engineering" constitutes a new form of rhetorical composition, while the evaluation of AI outputs resembles practices long familiar to humanities classrooms.

Rather than treating AI as a challenge to the humanities, this paper examines how longstanding cross-disciplinary pedagogical practices—including essay writing, peer review, think-pair-share, and Socratic seminar—prepare students for the interpretive, evaluative, and communicative demands of human-AI collaboration. By connecting traditional humanities pedagogy to emerging forms of AI literacy, the paper argues that humanities pedagogy remains uniquely positioned to cultivate the habits of inquiry and critical judgment increasingly necessary in an AI-saturated world.

Session 705 – Guiding Research Together: A Multi-Perspective Panel on the Value of Community Advisory Boards Across Disciplines

Panel abstract: Translational science depends on processes that accelerate the movement of knowledge into real world impact while remaining responsive to the needs, values, and contexts of communities. This panel examines Community Advisory Boards (CABs) as a core translational mechanism, supporting relevance, adoption, and sustainability of research across multiple disciplines, including biomedical, behavioral, social, and applied sciences. Panelists will share complementary perspectives on how CABs function throughout the research lifecycle—from shaping research questions and study design to interpreting findings and supporting dissemination and implementation. Academic staff will discuss the often invisible coordination work required to build trust, support equitable participation, and navigate institutional structures. Researchers will reflect on how CAB guidance challenges assumptions, improves methodological choices, and leads to more meaningful and actionable outcomes. Community advisors will speak to the value of contributing lived experience, cultural knowledge, and community priorities, as well as what makes engagement authentic rather than extractive. Together, the panel will highlight practical models for sustaining CABs, addressing power dynamics, compensating community expertise, and incorporating foundational principles of bidirectional learning and shared governance. By centering multiple roles and voices in the same conversation, this session positions CABs not as peripheral consultative bodies, but as essential partners in knowledge production. Attendees will leave with concrete insights for forming, supporting, and learning from diverse Community Advisory Boards in their own research settings.

This session includes the following presentations:

705a. Foundational Components of Community-Engaged Research Across Diverse Projects and Partners

Kat Phelps – University of Wisconsin - Madison

705b. Leveraging Community Voices for Intervention Development: Designing Digital Tools for Addiction Recovery

Claire Punturieri – University of Wisconsin - Madison

705c. From Advisory Groups to Adaptation: Co-designing a Physical Activity Intervention for First Episode Psychosis

Kenzie Wilcox – University of Wisconsin - Madison

Session 801 – New Voices in Interdisciplinary Studies

801a. First Amendment Educational Resources in Florida's Civics Classrooms

Maegan Smarkusky – Florida State University

Abstract: Florida's seventh-grade Civics students lack foundational knowledge about the First Amendment and general constitutional principles. Florida established its Civics course requirement to inculcate students with a deeper appreciation for America's founding principles — namely self-governance. Without an understanding of the First Amendment's purpose, students cannot understand America's founding, and therefore, the Civics course fails to fulfill its legislative purpose.

FSU's Integrated Studies major required me to pursue coursework in two core subject areas: social sciences and humanities. Beyond my major requirements, advisors like Dr. Amit Anshumali encouraged me to identify real-world issues that could be addressed with interdisciplinary problem solving. This problem requires an interdisciplinary solution because of the diversity of stakeholders involved -- educators, legislators, and students. I used my social science background to inform my understanding of Florida educational legislation and civic education benchmarks; I used my humanities education to inform my understanding of First Amendment principles.

To address this issue, I developed a First Amendment educational resource with FSU's First Amendment Clinic for Civics classes. The first step in creating this resource was collecting survey data from Florida's Civics teachers and students. From that data, I worked with the Clinic to create resources that targeted misunderstandings. This resource has the capability to expand its reach to high school seniors and elderly citizen groups. Beyond educating middle schoolers on constitutional foundations, this resource could grow its content to include more specific constitutional ideas. The resource could also be used as an asset on the Civic Literacy Exam for high schoolers.

801b. Degrees of Opportunity: Qualitative Perspectives of Faculty and Staff on Policies and Cultural Norms Affecting Justice-Impacted Students in Higher Education

Eddie Fordham – Florida State University

Abstract: This initial undergraduate honors thesis explored the barriers facing justice-impacted students in accessing and persisting within higher education. Utilizing Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) as defined by Braun and Clarke with interviews of university faculty and staff "gatekeepers," the research

identifies systemic obstacles and cultural barriers that affected access to higher education for formerly incarcerated or justice-impacted students. The expertise of university faculty and staff helped generate five patterns of shared meaning, or overarching themes of actual, structural roadblocks to college access, enrollment persistence, and degree completion, which are:

1. Clashing Bureaucratic Timelines and Enrollment Hurdles
2. The Pre-Enrollment Academic Chasm
3. The Invisible Weight of Carceral Identity and Compounding Stress
4. The Gap Between University Credentials and Job-Market Reality
5. Systemic Funding and Resource Constraints

Through the lens of Labeling Theory the author argues that mandatory criminal history disclosures act as a procedural filter pushing away justice-impacted applicants and keeps them on the margins of higher education.

Ultimately, the paper proposes an applied Well-Being Development Model and "brave spaces" to shift university culture from a deficit-based approach to a strength-based framework that fosters student persistence and supports an individual's capacity to thrive.

801c. Curriculum as Preservation: Protecting Gullah Geechee Foodways as Intangible Cultural Heritage in the South Carolina Lowcountry

Kayla Lowe – Coastal Carolina University

Abstract: Historic preservation has long centered on protecting physical structures, yet cultural practices, including foodways, oral tradition, and language, constitute equally significant forms of heritage. This project translates interdisciplinary scholarship from historic preservation, public history, and cultural heritage studies into a concrete preservation intervention: a structured educational curriculum that documents and transmits Gullah Geechee foodways as intangible cultural heritage in South Carolina's Lowcountry. The Gullah Geechee people, descendants of enslaved Africans from rice-cultivating regions of West and Central Africa, have sustained distinctive cultural traditions across the coastal Southeast for centuries. Their foodways, including red rice, okra-based dishes, and Sea Island seafood preparations, serve as living archives that carry historical memory, ecological knowledge, and community identity. Coastal development, gentrification, land displacement, and persistent gaps in formal education have accelerated the erosion of these traditions, making preservation intervention both urgent and necessary. Drawing on preservation theory, archival research, and public history methodology, this project moves integrated knowledge into practice by developing a curriculum designed to document cultural knowledge, support intergenerational transmission, and strengthen public understanding of Gullah Geechee history and identity. The curriculum bridges academic research and community-centered heritage practice, demonstrating that education is a viable means of safeguarding what physical sites alone cannot preserve. This work advances a broader argument for

expanding preservation practice to account for living cultural traditions and the communities that carry them.

801d. Oracy and Dialogic Teaching: A Proposal for FSU's COSSPP

Zane McGill and Nick Quinton – Florida State University

Abstract: Over the past few years, national headlines have brought attention to an alarming literacy crisis in both youth and adults. However, evidence suggests there is a simultaneous, ongoing collapse in oral communication skills, or “oracy.” That term, coined in 1965 by Andrew Wilkinson to elevate spoken language in education policy, has recently gained skyrocketing attention and, since 2023, legislative backing in the UK. Advocates argue that oracy supports social mobility, works symbiotically with literacy, bolsters social skills, and improves employment outcomes.

The United States, however, has not caught up in giving oracy its due attention. FSU stands ahead of other Florida universities via its Oral Communication Competency Requirement (OCCR), yet there remains room for improvement—particularly through the implementation of strategies collectively referred to as “dialogic teaching,” which Robin Alexander describes as the purposeful harnessing of classroom talk to stimulate student thinking through searching, reciprocal inquiry—quite distinct from standard question-answer routines.

Moving away from traditional presentation-focused perspectives, we seek to highlight the power of dialogic talk in boosting oracy, critical thinking, academic confidence, and personal development. We hope to encourage faculty to integrate dialogic aspects into their courses. We will share proven strategies to equitably engage hesitant students, drawing on the literature, as well as institutional insights from New College of Florida, Mahidol University, and Dr. Quinton’s career in community involvement. Ultimately, we demonstrate how creating a "dialogic space" for collective inquiry prepares students to tackle complex, interdisciplinary problems.

801e. A Methodological Blueprint on Decolonizing Research through Creative Translation and Artistic Practice

Katia Destine – University of Maryland, College Park

Abstract: The production of sociological knowledge has historically functioned as a top-down enterprise, where data is extracted from marginalized communities and interpreted through dominant academic frameworks. This structure often perpetuates "majoritarian stories,” or narratives that privilege Western epistemologies while obscuring the nuanced lived experiences of the Global South. This study seeks to disrupt this hierarchy by examining the production of knowledge through the lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Black Feminist Thought. Specifically, it focuses on the power of self-definition and counter-storytelling in the dissemination of scientific findings. This research builds upon the JAMO project, an NIH-funded longitudinal study examining the relationships among kinship support, union formalization, and infant/child development. The JAMO project collected survey data over three years (six waves) from 1,203 mothers (aged 18–29) in Korogocho and Viwandani, two informal settlements in Nairobi, Kenya. With data collection complete, the project is now in the post-production stage of

analysis and distribution. This research outlines a collaborative initiative to engage local youth groups in Nairobi to translate these extensive datasets into creative dissemination products for community members, government stakeholders, and the broader research community. The primary scholarly contribution of this project is an ethnography of the research translation process. I worked alongside youth groups, field interviewers, and community members, not as a passive observer, but as a learner within the community. Guided by the central research question—"How is research knowledge understood, contested, and conveyed at the community level?"

Session 802 (Workshop). Political Crossroads: Attacks, Defenses, and Counterstrikes

Elizabeth Smock and Patricia Carlton – University of Central Florida

Abstract: Educators in interdisciplinary and liberal arts programs face a compounding paradox: trained as critical thinkers who value intellectual diversity and rigor, they now work in an environment where those very commitments are politically targeted. For program administrators, the consequences are not abstract — they arrive as hiring freezes, enrollment pressure, funding cuts, compliance mandates, and the slow erosion of institutional will to defend what we do.For faculty, the repercussions of such targeting include constraints on academic freedom, curricular design, and possibly dismissal.This workshop proceeds from the conviction that naming the problem clearly is the first act of resistance, and that faculty and administrators need both a map of the landscape and a practical toolkit for navigating it.

The session is structured in three movements — Attacks, Defenses, and Counterstrikes — with facilitator-led framing alternating with structured participant activity throughout.

Opening: Attacks (approximately 20 minutes) The workshop opens with a brief facilitated landscape-mapping. Drawing on current research and policy tracking, we identify the most significant vectors of attack on interdisciplinary programs: state-level legislation, executive orders affecting curriculum and hiring, DEI office eliminations, and the chilling effect of compliance uncertainty. Participants contribute to a live word cloud in response to the prompt: "What word or phrase best describes how interdisciplinary education equips students to engage with complex information?" This surfaces the shared vocabulary of our field — and sets up the next phase.

Middle: Defenses and the language problem (approximately 30 minutes) We turn to a set of terms — equity, diversity, critical thinking, social justice, and others — that political pressure has attempted to render professionally dangerous. Small groups work to generate working redefinitions: what do these terms actually mean in the context of your program, and how might you articulate that meaning without surrendering the substance? After groups share out, we offer Stacey Patton's curated list of reclaimed definitions as a resource and provocation, inviting comparison and discussion. This activity builds directly applicable language practice while surfacing the difference between strategic reframing and capitulation.

Close: Counterstrikes (approximately 30 minutes) The final segment addresses active resistance. Drawing on the OSS Simple Sabotage Field Manual, Ari Gotlieb's "How Not to Obey," Mycielski's "Authoritarian Regime's Survival Guide," and Green Dot bystander intervention training, we introduce a framework of counterstrikes — small, principled acts of institutional resistance available to faculty and administrators at different levels of risk tolerance. Small groups work through scenarios drawn from real campus situations, identifying which counterstrikes are available to them, what documentation and coalition-building practices support those choices, and where their own threshold lies on the intervention continuum. Groups report out and we close with a facilitated discussion of collective strategy.

Closing (approximately 10 minutes) Participants leave with a one-page resource synthesizing the defensive language strategies, counterstrike options, and key readings from the session.

Faculty and administrators will learn about the political environment for higher education and a practical toolkit for navigating it.

Session 803 (Roundtable). 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

Abstract: In March 2016, Julie Thompson Klein, Karen Moranski, and Roslyn Schindler disseminated Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion for Interdisciplinary Faculty through the AIS website. For several years before the Guidelines were completed, our group crowdsourced AIS members at previous conferences via preparatory sessions that sought to engage our members in providing input to the guidelines. Now, ten years later, in loving memory of Julie Thompson Klein, the guiding star in the original process, Karen Moranski and Roslyn Schindler seek to revisit and revise the Guidelines, in keeping with current best practices across the country and in recognition that much has changed over the last decade in higher education. As Klein noted in her 2021 monograph, Beyond Interdisciplinarity, one of the barriers that remains for the work of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary scholars is the recognition and reward structure, which includes the "lack of support at department, college, and/or university levels" for boundary crossing and the "lack of appropriate criteria in [the] tenure and promotion system." Furthermore, in national and international contexts, scholars who work at the crossroads of disciplines may face the undermining of traditional tenure systems, loss of funding for research, doubts about the value of a college degree, and the continued “dominant system of disciplinarity (Klein)." To that end, we believe that a round table discussion, including AIS Board members and conference participants, will contribute to our goal of addressing the university reward and recognition system for the benefit of current and future inter- and transdisciplinary faculty.

In loving memory of Julie Thompson Klein, who was always seeking and finding best practices in teaching, research, policies, and administering assessment—she was our guiding star in the original process of developing the Tenure and Promotion Guidelines.

Roslyn Schindler, Associate Professor Emerita, Wayne State University, rozschind@aol.com will be my co-host for the roundtable. Other members of the roundtable will be drawn from Board members and other AIS members who have interest in this topic.

AIS Board members have already agreed to participate in the roundtable, and we can supply names and contact information if the roundtable is approved.

Session 804 – Community Partnerships

804a. Collaborative Governance during Armed Conflict

Coreine Rainford – Florida State University

Abstract: The rapid influx of migrants coming into the U.S. has exacerbated the housing precarity faced by the country. Haitian refugees and asylum seekers are among the numbers, fleeing armed conflict in Haiti. Between 2022 and 2024, the number of Haitian immigrants in the country moved from 731,000 to 850,000, with 550,000 residing in Florida alone. The top four counties in Florida hosting Haitian immigrants since 2022 are Broward, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, and Orange counties, with Miami-Dade containing 112,804 Haitian residents as of 2025. In response to this, cities have become focal points for developing collaborative solutions.

Within the Miami-Dade area lies the community of Little Haiti, housing a high concentration of Haitian refugees and asylum seekers. Collaboration within this community for refugees and asylum seekers has been ad hoc, witnessing the lack of communication between federal, state, and local actors. Premised on such, this presentation aims to propose a collaborative governance framework that can assist in enabling key stakeholders to plan for Haitian refugees and asylum seekers to access proper, affordable housing. Using Deliberative Mini-Publics (DMPs) to provide structured forums designed to facilitate public deliberation on policy issues or community concerns, this framework will aim to bring together a diverse group of citizens, often selected randomly, to engage in discussions, reflect on various perspectives, and make informed recommendations or decisions regarding refugees and asylum seekers in Little Haiti.

804b. Bridging Scholarship and Community: Transdisciplinary Student Initiatives

Sheung Hei Tse – University of Hong Kong

Abstract: Transdisciplinary student initiatives bridge faculty and students in Hong Kong University settings, fostering leadership exchanges, knowledge co-creation, and translational dissemination. Exploring student-organised practices, this proposal addresses the following research question: How do student initiatives adapt to and co-create transdisciplinary scholarship? As one of the convenors, I am going to share an experience report on two student initiatives to discuss their operations and

implications. The two initiatives are the Transdisciplinary Academic Conference for Emerging Scholars 2025 and Mongolian Critical Zones: Experiential Learning in the Winter Steppes (Transdisciplinary Initiative for Talents and Innovators, 2026).

For both initiatives, transdisciplinarity draws conceptually on Latour's (2014) critical zones, wherein human and non-human elements are recognised as interdependent in the pursuit of nuanced discernment. For the conference, we substantiate the term "transdisciplinarity" into a concept more approachable yet not restrained, diverging into three themes—discourse and humanity, saga and statecraft, and mind and innovation—to categorise submissions, culminating in the first undergraduate-level publication pertinent to transdisciplinarity (Tse & Ng, 2025a, 2025b). For the fieldtrip, student participants investigate survival challenges in Mongolia—carbon monoxide poisoning and hypothermia—via qualitative interviews with Ger residents, bridging community voices with academic inquiry. The post-trip research posters showcase the interconnections between environment, health, and cultural heritage.

Together, these initiatives demonstrate how students actively translate research into community engagement, publication, and experiential learning. I propose a model with students as initiators to substantiate, co-create, and apply transdisciplinary knowledge, calling for faculty support for student initiatives in transdisciplinary curricula.

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

Abstract: Recognizing that contemporary higher education must offer students more than theoretical instruction alone, we have developed two new courses at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Osijek (Croatia), designed to connect interdisciplinary learning with civil engagement and societal impact.

The first course, "Interdisciplinarity: Theoretical and Practical Insights", is offered at the undergraduate level across the University of Osijek and introduces students to key theoretical approaches to interdisciplinarity, as well as to the conceptual features, methods, and practical implementation of interdisciplinary research. Students apply this knowledge in collaborative mini-projects addressing socially relevant issues by integrating perspectives from the humanities and social sciences and proposing actionable solutions.

The second course, "Philosophy of Activism", will be offered at the graduate level, examines philosophical ideas underpinning social movements and activist initiatives while connecting them to contemporary civil society practices. Students engage directly with civil organizations in Croatia, where they may begin volunteering or develop future career paths, and design small-scale projects contributing to ongoing initiatives.

Together, these courses aim to bridge the gap between theory and practice by fostering students' ability to translate academic knowledge into socially engaged action, hence linking classroom learning with community needs and public impact. In this presentation, we use these cases to reflect on how interdisciplinary education can cultivate such translational skills across domains. We argue that impact-oriented teaching provides a transferable model for integrating interdisciplinary learning with civil engagement in diverse institutional and disciplinary contexts.

Session 805 – Scaffolding Student Success

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

Catherine Jackson – Salisbury University

Abstract: Interdisciplinary studies students often design individualized curricula, yet traditional advising models—structured as prescriptive checklists—struggle to support this complexity. When advising becomes transactional, students risk experiencing their education as a fragmented "cafeteria approach," lacking coherence or personal meaning. This presentation introduces a hermeneutic approach to advising that reframes the advisor–student relationship as a dialogic process of interpretation and meaning-making rather than a mere exchange of information.

Grounded in the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer, Martin Heidegger, and Paul Ricoeur, this approach positions advising as an interpretive practice. Central to the model is the hermeneutic circle, which helps students move intentionally between the parts (individual courses and experiences) and the whole (their degree, values, and aspirations). Through this iterative process, advisors guide students in discerning the "logic of the curriculum," enabling them to integrate diverse elements into a coherent educational narrative.

The presentation also explores how a hermeneutic stance humanizes advising by shifting from explanation—a deficit-oriented, technical mode—to understanding, which recognizes students as complex "beings-in-the-world." Through Gadamer's fusion of horizons, advisors bridge institutional requirements with students' lived experiences, generating shared understanding rather than imposing authority.

Finally, drawing on Ricoeur's concept of narrative identity, the session demonstrates how advising conversations become spaces for students to "re-story" their academic lives. Attendees will leave with practical strategies for facilitating these conversations, moving advising beyond compliance toward the co-creation of meaning.

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

Azhia Jones-Smothers – University of Mississippi

Abstract: Undergraduate multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary programs often face challenges related to student awareness, perceived academic legitimacy, and recruitment effectiveness despite offering flexible pathways aligned with diverse student interests and career goals. This presentation shares findings from an applied mixed-methods capstone study examining recruitment into the Multidisciplinary Studies program at the University of Mississippi. Guided by Expectancy-value theory, the study investigates how students interpret recruitment messaging, advising interactions, program flexibility, and perceived career utility when making enrollment decisions.

The study employs a mixed-methods design consisting of semi-structured interviews with currently enrolled MDS students, a Likert-scale survey administered to additional MDS students, and qualitative document analysis of recruitment and informational materials. Data collection examines students' awareness of the program, factors influencing enrollment, perceptions of institutional messaging, and barriers to understanding the program. Findings are expected to identify opportunities to strengthen communication strategies, increase program visibility, and improve students' understanding of the value and flexibility of multidisciplinary education.

This presentation contributes to broader conversations about recruitment and assessment in interdisciplinary education by demonstrating how institutions can use student feedback and program artifacts to inform evidence-based recruitment strategies. Implications for practice include recommendations for advising, recruitment communication, student ambassador engagement, and the institutional positioning of multidisciplinary pathways for exploratory and first-year students.

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

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

Abstract: The Bachelor in General Studies degree at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor gives students almost total freedom (and corresponding responsibility) to design their own curriculum. While the amorphous nature of the program opens up endless possibilities, allowing students to shape it into whatever they need it to be, it also presents challenges to staff and students alike. How do we conceptualize a deliberately unstructured academic program in order to create a coherent foundation for program administration? How do we provide ways into the degree for students who find it to be entirely unfamiliar?

We've found a powerful framework by looking back to our program's origins. The BGS degree emerged in April 1969 from tension between student activists demanding greater autonomy and faculty who were largely unwilling to cede control over curriculum and decision-making. This year, we've been delving into our university's archives to better understand how these groups negotiated different visions of what a degree could be and how we might draw from this process to keep BGS a student-driven degree now. Understanding BGS's formlessness as a function of the circumstances of its creation empowers us in the present to embrace its inherent ambiguity–even messiness–and provides empowering framing for students in approaching the degree.

As we share how we've been able to use our program's history to gain perspective on administrative and pedagogical questions, we hope to spark conversation about how we all find and create meaningful

frameworks for our work in undergraduate interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary programs. We invite you to bring your own ideas and experiences to the session to engage in what these questions look like for you.

Session 901 (Roundtable). 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

Abstract: Is there a shared philosophical understanding of interdisciplinarity? How may the complex, diverse, international community of scholars, scientists, and practitioners across domains cooperate with one another? A recent special issue of Issues in Interdisciplinary Studies raised important philosophical issues regarding interdisciplinary thought and practice, including the crucial issues of "pluralism, reflexivity, and critique". However, as absolutely essential as these aspects are to the ongoing discussion, we suggest an overly exclusive focus on plurality may be misguided, and it may overlook other critical values such as understanding, cooperation, and integration that must be included in any sound, inclusive interdisciplinarity.

Session 902 – Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Modern Labor and Welfare

902a. Fostering Inequality: How Foster Care Privatization Shapes Educational and Employment Outcomes in Rural and Urban Communities in the U.S

Jude Edelman – Florida State University

Abstract: Researchers disagree on the extent to which privatization of the U.S. foster care system benefits the long-term outcomes of young adults aging out of the system, as some states increasingly embrace private models while others retreat towards public systems. However, the effects are likely not uniform across place. The effects of privatization may vary across rural and urban areas as rural foster care systems face geographic barriers, provider shortages, and a lack of integrated care networks. In contrast, urban providers are burdened by high volume, leading to service and placement delays. In this study, I examine how privatization differentially impacts youth across the rural-urban continuum, with particular attention towards implications for educational equity. Using merged cross-sectional and longitudinal National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) data from 2020-2024, I test the extent to which state privatization status impacts post-secondary educational enrollment and employment status among rural and urban youth who recently aged out of the foster care system. Preliminary analyses show that privatization is significantly associated with improved rural employment outcomes, yet worse post-secondary enrollment compared to their urban counterparts. These findings suggest that by integrating research in organizational sociology, social work, and market-based governance, foster care has the potential to serve as a critical intervention in rural regions. However, privatization may also perpetuate rural educational trends, perpetuate service deserts, and cultivate

geographic dependencies that lead to service displacements. Findings also highlight the diversity of needs among youth in the foster care system, providing evidence regarding the drawbacks of states assuming a one-size-fits-all model. Future analyses will explore the moderating factor of vocational tracking and control for additional state effects.I intend on discussing the implications of these findings across multiple areas including public policy, sociology, economics, and social work.

902b. The Hidden Cost of Illiteracy: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Literacy, Labor, and Inequality

Breanna Humes – Texas Tech University

Abstract: Adult literacy in the United States is often framed as an educational issue, yet its impacts extend far beyond the classroom. This project uses an interdisciplinary framework drawing from education, economics, sociology, and public policy to examine adult literacy as a systemic force shaping workforce participation, economic mobility, and social equity. National data indicate that more than half of U.S. adults read below a sixth-grade level, limiting access to stable employment, digital systems, and civic engagement.

Central to this analysis is the concept of the Literacy–Socioeconomic Status (SES) Feedback Loop, which demonstrates how early educational inequities, limited resource access, and structural disparities compound over time. Low literacy contributes to reduced income potential and workforce instability, while low socioeconomic status restricts access to high-quality education, reinforcing intergenerational cycles of disadvantage.

The project further examines the economic consequences of low literacy, including an estimated $2.2 trillion annual cost to the U.S. economy through reduced productivity, increased healthcare expenses, and reliance on social services. As labor markets become increasingly technology-driven, literacy and digital communication skills are essential for participation in modern work environments.

By integrating multiple disciplinary perspectives, this research reframes literacy as essential national infrastructure rather than an isolated educational concern. The project concludes by proposing multi-level solutions, including early childhood investment, equitable school funding, expanded adult education programs, and policy reform. Addressing adult literacy is not only an educational priority but a necessary step toward economic stability and more equitable social futures.

902c. The Pitted Floor, a Comparative Analysis on Geographically Tied Gig-Workers

Bennett LaBree – Florida State University

Abstract: The emergence of app-based gig work has fundamentally altered labor relations through the implementation of algorithmic management systems that both control and obscure worker conditions. Utilizing labor process theory, contested terrain frameworks, and critical race scholarship, this study examines how platform-based algorithmic control functions differently for rideshare and food delivery workers, two geographically-tied and often conflated forms of gig labor.

Over 30 semi-structured interviews were conducted, split between Tallahassee, Florida and Ann Arbor, Michigan, to distinguish differential identity management behaviors and labor resistance practices among local platform workers. Adopting theoretical perspectives on racialized space and spatial inequality, we aim to characterize the experiences of workers in a traditionally segregated Southern city as well as a northern Midwest college environment.

Using fundamental differences in the ways platform companies store and prioritize socially mediated evaluative data across different types of workers (which has been underexplored in the literature), we analyze the effects of instantaneous task distribution and ambiguous quantified evaluative metrics on workers. Highlighting the compounded imbalance of power in the techno-isolationist gig infrastructure, we intend to expose new mechanisms of meaning creation, agentic frames, and freedom within restrictive platform contexts.

Racial and gendered inequities are also critical to understanding how these workers navigate the platform paradox and personal agency. Vulnerabilities of marginalized gig workers mirror greater issues of Western technocultural frames and wealth disparity. We evaluate the impacts of bodily movement through high SES space and the interactive effects and dangers of this work.

Session 903 – Inclusive Pedagogy

903a. Creating an Organic Reading Community

Joshua Riley – Olivet Nazarene University

Abstract: Over the past 3 years, I created a new course, developed a special collection in our library, installed an art exhibit, developed a museum-style touchscreen kiosk, given numerous intrainstitution presentations, solicited volunteer participation by staff and faculty all in service of helping our students to foster a love of reading in a general and interdisciplinary way. The course developed from a neeed to help grow reading speed and comprehension that could be viewed as transfer level credit at our institution as well as fill out a slate of new offerings in our department that used to be remedial or non-transfer level classes. Reading Strategies is the first of a series of classes that will address reading as a general skill that can be influenced by the various disciplines that the students bring into the class. In the first class, the students select a book from the collection, they read over the course fo the semester with myself or a list of other professors and staff, and then select or generate an image that will be placed beside a collage of other images that are displayed on campus. Their work on this text is uploaded to an app that is displayed on a screen that accompanies the collage. This is the starting point of their reading endeavor on campus, they can continue to add images, add books to the database, as well as add to the works that they can be a reading mentor to other students as well.

903b. SpectrumPlay: Supporting Accessibility in the Elementary Music Classroom

Erin Collins – Kennesaw State University

Abstract: Autoethnography is research designed to analyze the personal experience of the researcher, as it relates to the research literature, with the goal of revealing the culture of the research context to

those outside of it (Ellis et al., 2011). This particular study outlines the experiences of one elementary music teacher/researcher as she collaboratively designs and implements a learning technology with an outside technology researcher to support accessibility for students with disabilities in the elementary music classroom. Tensions between policy and accepted educational practice are explored, as well as the differences between music therapy and music education research. Early findings from the Spring 2026 implementation of the learning tool reveal the complexities of special education in the music classroom, with design implications, and resulting changes in the researcher's own teaching practice.

903c. Creating Collaboratively Across Visual Abilities: Accessibility Through Interdisciplinarity

Kristina A. Boylan – SUNY Polytechnic Institute

Abstract: We are public-school educators with interests in visual art and design practices, social history, and engineering, as well as a commitment to involving students in co-creating and sharing knowledge via research fairs and exhibits. CCAVA's mission is to develop methods for identifying and connecting existing free-of-cost or low-cost technologies that can be used as accessibility enhancements at visually-oriented educational and aesthetic displays and in other visually-oriented composition projects. We argue that exhibit curators and contributors, both students and professionals, should be asked to practice inclusive design, and that genuinely inclusive composition and creation formats should be made available for authorial and artistic collaboration.

Here, CCAVA offers preliminary contributions to expanding those possibilities by sharing its theoretical and scholarly underpinnings, as well as examples of projects the team has engaged in to expand accessibility in SUNY Polytechnic Institute's Gannett Gallery and other settings. These projects necessitate grounding in interdisciplinary approaches and applications to succeed. For example, effective audio enhancement for an exhibit results from: combinations of discussion of multisensory experiences of aesthetic works; compositional considerations and practice; selection, application, testing, and refining of lower-cost tools to make that material available (website with audio and text files; 3D printing of tactile maps); and collaborative, iterative work processes.

The goal of the CCAVA project is to make available effective, affordable techniques for expanding access in open-access publication venues. Toward that end we welcome audience feedback and suggestions as part of this presentation.

Session 904 – 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

Abstract: This panel focuses on the design and teaching of an interdisciplinary capstone course developed collaboratively by faculty in Humanities, STEM, and Social Sciences in the Integrated Studies Program at Florida State. Many students arrive at the capstone having taken courses across several fields, but they still need explicit support in moving from disciplinary accumulation to genuine interdisciplinary integration. The course asks students to bring together different ways of knowing, methods of inquiry, and forms of communication as they complete a research paper connected to their academic interests and, in many cases, to real-world questions or problems. We view the course as a space where students practice integrating knowledge across fields: explaining disciplinary concepts to non-specialists, choosing methods that fit complex questions, and making connections between academic learning and broader communities or contexts.

The panel's central claim is that the design of an interdisciplinary capstone course requires an intentional focus at those points where students struggle most: framing research questions, negotiating methodological differences across fields, and communicating findings to audiences beyond their home disciplines. Drawing on anonymized student projects and assessment practices, we offer a transferable model for mentoring and evaluating integrative work. By sharing both the strengths and challenges of this project, the panel offers a practical example of curriculum design for interdisciplinary programs seeking to connect knowledge, practice, and communication.

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

Abstract: This project examines the implementation of a scaffolded ePortfolio within a Bachelor of Science in Integrative Studies (BSIS) capstone course. Grounded in the institution's Quality Enhancement Plan focused on experiential learning and critical thinking, the ePortfolio requires students to engage in structured, integrative reflection across multiple areas of study, work or internship experiences, and career readiness activities. Through a sequence of aligned assignments, students compile and analyze artifacts, map disciplinary and transferable skills to job descriptions, and articulate their learning using four core critical thinking domains: effective communication, evaluation and interpretation of information, problem solving, and analysis of alternative assumptions.

Over two semesters, approximately 30 students completed the BSIS capstone ePortfolio, which was assessed using a five dimension integrative learning rubric. Analysis of student work suggests that intentional ePortfolio design promotes deeper synthesis of interdisciplinary learning and strengthens students' ability to translate academic and experiential knowledge into professional narratives. In the high-impact ePortfolio practice, students demonstrated capacity to connect coursework and experiential activities to career goals, providing evidence of learning transfer and reflective growth.

This project contributes to scholarship in interdisciplinary studies by illustrating how ePortfolios can function simultaneously as reflective learning spaces, assessment tools, and recognition mechanisms within an institution wide experiential learning initiative. Findings underscore the value of scaffolded

reflection in capstone coursework and offer a transferable model for faculty seeking to enhance integrative learning and career preparation in interdisciplinary studies programs.

905c. Interdisciplinary Faculty Collaboration to Advance Students' Academic Success and Career Readiness in the 21st Century

Abdullah Khan and Kamal Chowdhury – Claflin University

Abstract: Based on our own interdisciplinary faculty collaboration initiatives and insights from extant literature, this study explores impacts of such collaborations on pedagogical development, and students' readiness for workforce and collegiate studies. In the era of Industry 5.0, interdisciplinary and integrative education is essential to equip learners with the ability to synthesize technological expertise, human-centered design, and sustainability principles in tackling complex, real-world challenges. Collaborative research and training foster adaptability, critical thinking, and innovation. These capabilities are needed to thrive in today's academic and employment landscape marked by emerging technologies, and with a renewed focus on ethical perspectives, sustainability, and community well-being. Interdisciplinary faculty collaboration equips students with the ability to integrate knowledge across fields, strengthening critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills essential for academic success. It also fosters adaptability, communication, and teamwork, preparing students to thrive in the dynamic and collaborative environments of the 21st-century workplace. When faculty engage in research, they bring knowledge and application insights into the classroom and embolden evidence-based learning and intellectual rigor. Collaborative research transcends disciplines that accelerate not only knowledge creation but also helps to find solutions to complex real-life problems that are often interdisciplinary in nature. Such faculty collaborations for production and dissemination of integrative knowledge can help shape team-based teaching pedagogy and can help students connect theory with real-world applications. As a result, students become more engaged and intellectually curious. This paper will also share participant-insights and feedback received during a recently held interdisciplinary faculty collaboration workshop that the co-presenters organized.