Building Campuswide Collaboration

The First Year

To paraphrase the National Academies of Science’s landmark 2004 report on facilitating interdisciplinary research, interdisciplinary scholarship brings together individuals from diverse fields to integrate their unique knowledge, perspectives, methodologies and tools “to advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline…” Engaging in interdisciplinary activities has long been core to UCLA’s mission, and while working at the intersections of current knowledge presents exciting opportunities for discovery, it also has been recognized that interdisciplinary efforts can be associated with unique intellectual and operational challenges as well. The Office of Interdisciplinary & Cross Campus Affairs was created in January 2013 to facilitate chances for faculty and students from different fields of inquiry to come together in productive ways to address some of society’s most pressing problems.

The focus is on enabling UCLA personnel to do what we do best—educate our students, conduct groundbreaking research, and serve our community—through finding better ways to collaborate throughout the Campus. These efforts may occur through well-established mechanisms such as organized research units or interdepartmental degree programs, or through new activities, such as support for interdisciplinary workshops described later in this report. Regardless of the approach undertaken, the goal remains helping schools, divisions, departments, faculty and students to create the environment where interesting questions are asked and important problems are solved.

While much of our work takes place behind the scenes, we are proud of what our campus partners have accomplished and are pleased to share some of those achievements with you in this report.

Initiatives

- 2013-14 Funding Competition
- Environment & Sustainability Initiative
- Global Health Initiative
Fall Funding Competition

In October 2013, ICCA hosted a funding competition for interdisciplinary workshops, planning meetings and symposia. Faculty campus-wide were invited to submit proposals for single events or lecture series that would bring together faculty and students from different schools within UCLA around an interdisciplinary issue.

Winning Proposals

The response to this funding opportunity was enthusiastic, and thirteen proposals covering such disparate topics as how can obesity stigma be reduced, to designing a new course on video gaming or sharing lessons learned from improving California’s air quality to assist in addressing China’s air pollution problem, were funded. To see the full list of funded proposals, please visit the ICCA website at www.icca.ucla.edu/2013-funding-competition-winners.

Looking Forward

The 2013-14 competition was so successful that ICCA is now hosting a 2014-15 competition as well. Winners will be announced in December. More information on the competition in may be found on the ICCA website at www.icca.ucla.edu/2013-funding-competition.

Events hosted by this year’s winners will be featured on the ICCA events page. Keep an eye out for upcoming workshops and symposia.

Winners Spotlight:

Marschak Colloquium

Named for Jacob Maschak, a Professor of Economics and Operations Research at UCLA from 1960-77, the Colloquium brings world-class speakers to UCLA to discuss research using mathematics and modeling to further their work in the behavioral sciences. For more about the 2014-15 lecture series, see http://marschak.ucla.edu/

Obesity Stigma

This symposium examined both causes and consequences of obesity stigma using an interdisciplinary lens, drawing from the fields of psychology, medicine, and sociology. A webcast of the symposium may be seen on the event website: http://www.dishlab.org/obesitystigmasymposium.php

Clean Air and Policy

This two-day workshop centered on lessons from California that can inform air quality policies in China, specifically how good science may be used to inform policy to produce sustainable solutions at the local, state, regional, and global level. For more information on the event, see: http://www.environment.ucla.edu/cleanair/workshop

(Photo Credit: Reed Hutchinson, 2010, for UCLA)
Undergraduate Video Game Design
Planning meeting to develop a new undergraduate course in video game design housed in Design Media Arts, with the longer-term objective of developing a broader undergraduate curriculum around video game history, theory and practice.

The Challenges of Big Data
Symposium bringing together experts from medicine, the physical and life sciences, computer science, and engineering to address the challenges presented by Big Data.

Mental Health through the Arts
Three-part lecture series, "Finding a Voice to Silence the Crowd: Mental Health through the Arts," exploring the application of creative arts practices to the treatment of mental illness, in collaboration with UCLArts and Healing, Creative Minds and UCLA Mind Well.

Art & Global Health
A 2013-14 Art & Global Health workshop/lecture series featuring training in arts-activism, arts-based health intervention methods, and behavior change communication.

Keys to Voice Studies
Interdisciplinary symposium, "Keys to Voice Studies: Concepts, Methods, and Questions from Across Disciplines," gathering artists and scholars in the arts, humanities, and sciences to share their work and collaborate toward a more complete understanding of voice.

Economic Status, Health & Well-being

Technology & HIV/AIDS
Conference titled, "Innovative Use of Technology for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care: Evidence, Challenges, and the Way Forward," to bring together faculty, students, outside experts, representatives of technology companies, public policy makers and members of the HIV/AIDS community to share research findings and real-world application of social media and web-based and mobile technologies for HIV prevention and care.

Corpus Linguistics
Planning meeting with the goal of developing a cross-campus research program in "Integrating Corpus Linguistics with Cultural Psychology and Sociodemographic Analysis to Understand the Nature and Causes of Long-Term Cultural Change: Interdisciplinary Approach to Analyzing Big Data."

UCLA Blum Center
Second Annual UCLA Blum Center Spring Symposium, which aims to: seek and facilitate collaborations by inviting experts to offer multi-disciplinary perspectives in creating responses to improve health services and outcomes among Latin American populations, and deliver a scientific program to faculty, researchers, students, health care professionals and community members working to improve health among Latin American populations.
Environment & Sustainability Activity Survey

As part of the Strategic Task Force on Environment & Sustainability’s draft report, ICCA and the Institute of Environment & Sustainability (IoES) conducted a campus survey of existing sustainability education and research activities. Using a team of ten students, IoES put together a list of current activities across UCLA’s schools.

The survey found that UCLA has a wealth of expertise, research, education, and program efforts. It identified 407 individual faculty members, as well as nearly 600 courses and 32 centers working on issues pertaining to the environment and sustainability.

These activities are spread across every school, from the David Geffen School of Medicine to the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies.

The Task Force is now developing a strategy to build upon current efforts to make UCLA a globally recognized leader in environment and sustainability programs.

Strategic Task Force on Environment & Sustainability

In 2013, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Waugh convened the Strategic Task Force on Environment & Sustainability, chaired by Vice Provost Brewer. Throughout 2013-14, ICCA has worked with the Task Force to review existing activity and develop recommendations to better organize, promote, and advance the Campus’ contributions.

In October 2014, the Task Force released its draft report, in which it set the goal of making UCLA a globally recognized leader and a premier research university in the area of environment and sustainability by 2019.

ICCA and the Task Force are now soliciting feedback on the draft report, which is posted on the ICCA website: http://ucla.in/1nccX8x

Did We Miss Anything?

The Task Force and the Institute of Environment & Sustainability conducted a wide-ranging survey of sustainability activity, but UCLA is an enormous, active place. If you know of a related activity or course we missed, please let us know!
Global Health Initiative

Global Health is one of the fastest growing areas of interdisciplinary activity, both at UCLA and around the world. Last year saw the reemergence Global Health Initiative Committee at UCLA, bringing together experts and leaders from across disciplines to plan for increased cross campus work to tackle some of the most pressing health problems around the globe.

Global Health Planning Day

In collaboration with the UCLA Global Health Initiative Committee, ICCA hosted a one-day campus-wide Interdisciplinary Global Health Planning Day in February 2014 to learn more about other universities’ experiences building global health programs and refine potential opportunities for interdisciplinary and cross campus global health investment. In addition to presentations from faculty across UCLA, speakers included:

- Judy Wasserheit, University of Washington
- Heather Wipfli & Sophia Gruskin, University of Southern California
- Gary Bennet, Duke University

The Year Ahead

The Office of Interdisciplinary and Cross Campus Affairs has only begun its mission to support faculty and schools in the development and delivery of collaborative educational, research, and service activities that span multiple disciplines.

The coming year will see a renewed focus on improving communications between disciplines, including the arrival of a new Program Communications Officer in ICCA. We will also continue our work with Environment & Sustainability and Global Health, while reaching out to new areas of potential collaboration.

We Want to Hear from You

In keeping with its mission, core values, and collegial spirit, the Office of Interdisciplinary & Cross-Campus Affairs welcomes ideas for collaborative education, research, and service programs designed to build on UCLA’s success, and increase our capacity for interdisciplinary research, teaching and learning.

Global Health Website Launch

Want to know where UCLA global health researchers are working? Now you can see it all on one map: https://globalhealth.ucla.edu/

The 2013-14 academic year saw the launch of the Global Health Website, an online resource bringing together work being done across the campus in this area. The website includes project listings, researcher information, and a map of UCLA’s work around the world.

If you have a project or initiative you would like to add to the website, please let us know.

Contact Us

For more information about interdisciplinary activities at UCLA, contact our Program Communications Officer.

Office of Interdisciplinary & Cross-Campus Affairs

Laurel Grzesik
2206 Murphy Hall
(310) 825-3340
Lgrzesik@conet.ucla.edu
Visit us on the web at www.icca.ucla.edu