

# On Interdisciplinarity

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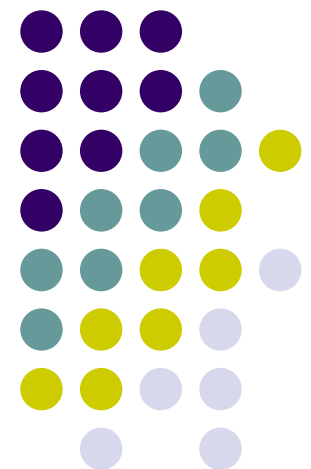
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# Resolution Concerning Fostering Multi-Unit Interdisciplinary Research



- “BE IT RESOLVED, that the following shall be a formal consideration in the evaluation of all academic administrators (e.g., Deans, Department Chairs): **evidence of initiating, fostering or supporting interdisciplinary activities involving their unit with other units across the university.**”

*Approved by Faculty Senate March 13, 2008  
Referenced a report from the National Academies*

# Interdisciplinary Humanities: Fostering Crossfertilization and Collaboration



- **Hiring and appointments**

- Institutionalize interdisciplinarity in the new hire process: ads, interviews, letters, contracts.

- **Tenure and promotion**

- For both new and old hires, include representation from each relevant unit on a pre-tenure and promotion committee (department, program, center).
- Take interdisciplinary activities into account in Chair's annual conference with faculty.

- **Stewardship, leadership, and advocacy**

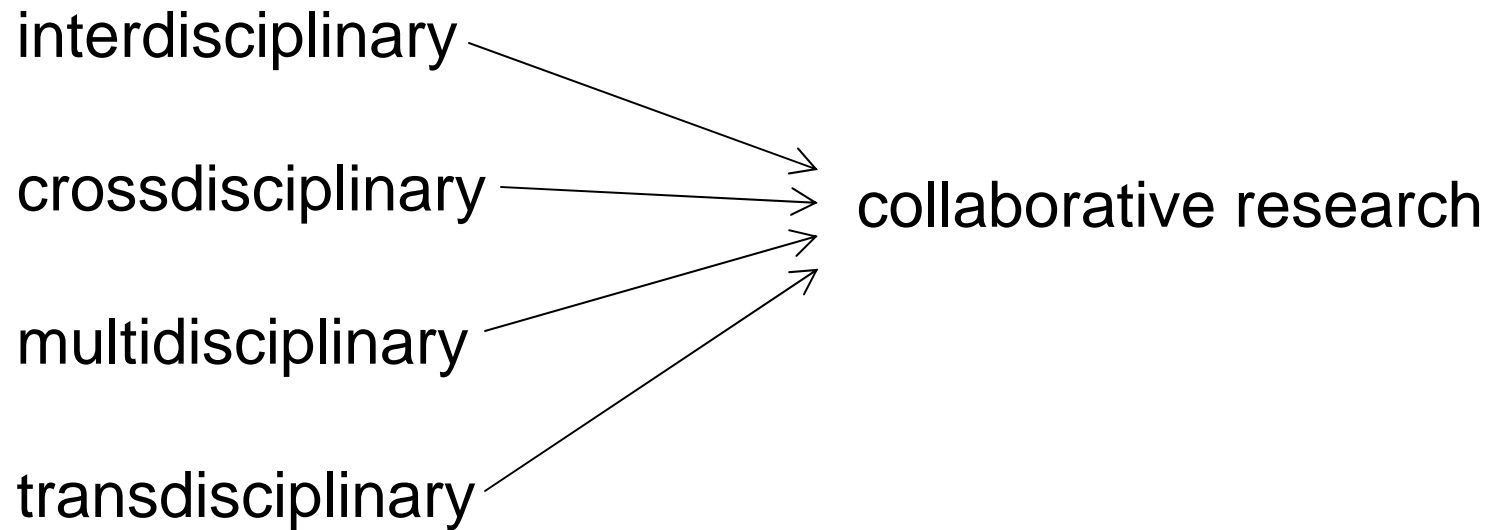
- Foster greater intellectual mobility of faculty over the course of their careers.
- Allow faculty to commit part of their appointment or move primary appointment to other units, including interdisciplinary initiatives.
- Encourage and reward collaborative research and teaching.

*Handout from Julie Klein (Professor of Humanities, Wayne State University)  
Lecture at the University of Washington Graduate School, November 30, 2006*



## What Is Interdisciplinarity?

- Multiple modes:



# Two Emerging Forms of Research and Scholarship



- Digital Scholarship
  - “Even more troubling is that state of evaluation for digital scholarship, now an extensively used resource for scholars across the humanities: 40.8% of departments in doctorate-granting institutions report no experience evaluating refereed articles in electronic format, and 65% report no experience in evaluating monographs in electronic format” (5).

*Excerpt from the Modern Language Association Task Force on Evaluating Scholarship for Tenure and Promotion Report, 2006.*

# Two Emerging Forms of Research and Scholarship (continued)



- Public Scholarship
  - Understood as existing on a continuum with traditional scholarship.
  - Defined as scholarly “activity integral to a faculty member’s academic area. It encompasses different forms of making knowledge about, for, and with diverse publics and communities. Through a coherent, purposeful sequence of activities, it contributes to the public good and yields artifacts of public and intellectual value” (9).
  - Often takes the form of projects that combine research, teaching, and creative activity as well as publication, and the report recommends the use of a portfolio in the tenure dossier which might include writing for a non-academic audience, policy reports, and oral histories, among other things.


*See the report by Julie Ellison and Timothy K. Eatman, Scholarship in Public: Knowledge Creation and Theory Policy in the Engaged University, A Resource on Promotion and Tenure in the Arts, Humanities, and Design (Syracuse University: Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life, forthcoming).*




# An Example

- Jim Gregory (History)  
*Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project*

## Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project




Home  
About the Project  
Segregated Seattle  
Civil Rights Groups  
Seattle's Ethnic Press  
Research Reports  
Films & Slide Shows


Special Sections: 

African Americans  
Asian Americans  
Latinos  
Urban Indians

For Teachers  
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DR. SIDNEY GALLEGOS  
MEXICAN ACTIVIST, DENTIST

 Activist Oral Histories

### Seattle has a unique civil rights history

that challenges the way we think about race, civil rights, and the Pacific Northwest. Civil rights movements in Seattle started well before the celebrated struggles in the South in the 1950s and 1960s, and they relied not just on African American activists but also on Filipino Americans, Japanese Americans, Chinese Americans, Jews, Latinos, and Native Americans. They also depended upon the support of some elements of the region's labor movement. From the 1910s through the 1970s, labor and civil rights were linked in complicated ways, with some unions and radical organizations providing critical support to struggles for racial justice, while others stood in the way.

This multi-media web site brings the vital history of Seattle's civil rights movements to life with dozens of video oral histories, hundreds of rare photographs, documents, movement histories, and personal biographies. Based at the University of Washington, the Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project is a collaboration between community groups and UW faculty and students. Here is more [About the Project](#).

### Tour the Project

**Activist Oral Histories** We have interviewed more than 70 civil rights activists. You can watch video excerpts and read short biographies.


**Films & Slide Shows** Here are short films and powerpoint slide shows that introduce special themes of the Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project.

**Research Reports** These in-depth historical essays explore fascinating issues, incidents, and people. Each is fully illustrated with photos and newspaper articles.

**Segregated Seattle** Learn about the history of racial segregation in Seattle and check to see whether property in your neighborhood includes restrictive covenants. See [What's In Your Deed?](#)

### Segregated Seattle


For most of its history Seattle was a segregated city, as committed to white supremacy as any location in America. People of color were excluded from most jobs, most neighborhoods, and many stores, restaurants, and other commercial establishments. [\[more\]](#)



### Special Sections:


#### Chicano/a Movement in Washington State History Project

The Chicano movement in Washington emerged in two locales: in the Yakima Valley, which was home to most of the state's Latinos, and in Seattle and especially the University of Washington, where Chicano students launched many new initiatives. In this special section we have video interviews with movement veterans and hundreds of photographs, newspaper articles, documents. [\[more\]](#)



#### Seattle Black Panther Party History and Memory Project

The Black Panther Party made a major impact on Seattle. With their trademark black berets and leather jackets and their commitment to armed self defense, the Panthers became role models to





## Who Can Evaluate This Work?

- Going to conferences is cited as one of the most important professional activities that aids advancement, particularly for faculty members who are doing interdisciplinary work.
  - *See the Modern Language Association's Report from the Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession on "The Associate Professor Survey" (forthcoming 2008).*
- Take advantage of national consortia such as the Humanities, Arts, Sciences, and Technology Advanced Collaboratory (HASTAC) and Imagining America (IA) and send people to conferences to present work and network.