



IMAGINING AMERICA
artists + scholars in public life

2022-2023 Annual Report

June 30, 2023

CONNECTING AND ENGAGING IN 2022-2023

This was a busy year in the Imagining America (IA) national consortium. Our growing network of artists, scholars, students, and cultural organizers welcomed eleven new member institutions to the national consortium ranging from liberal arts colleges to research universities, state colleges, and regional land grant campuses. Current and new members joined together in a diverse array of programs, events, and learning opportunities.



Images from sessions at the 2022 IA National Gathering

The [2022 IA National Gathering](#), “Rituals of Repair and Renewal,” was organized in partnership with IA member Tulane University and Ashé Cultural Arts Center and enacted rituals of repair, renewal, wellness, and imagination in the city of New Orleans, LA. This first in-person National Gathering since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic brought together over 440 students, faculty, staff, cultural producers, and national campus leaders and featured over 100 sessions. The three day event was an inspirational demonstration of IA’s mission, vision, and values, full of opportunities for members to come together, learn from one another, and dream up shared hopes and goals for the future. Following the National Gathering, over 60 IA members registered to participate in IA’s [Mail Art Project](#) and engaged with rituals of repair and renewal through creative art making and reflection.

2022-2023 was also an active year for IA online programming. Over 1,100 students, faculty, staff, and cultural leaders registered for and engaged in these free virtual learning opportunities.

The Teaching and Learning Circle (TLC) webinar series focused on sharing findings from IA's [Leading and Learning Initiative \(LLI\)](#), a national action research project funded by the Mellon Foundation to better understand how to shift institutional culture in higher education to more fully support public and activist scholarship. This series included a jointly hosted IA/a2ru event, Artists and Scholars Changing Culture, Creating Change: Findings from an Imagining America Research Initiative where IA Faculty Director Erica Kohl-Arenas and National Advisory Board chair Kal Alston discussed findings from the [LLI research report](#) and [Stories of Change](#) case studies of exemplary demonstrations of campus culture change and public scholarship using art, humanities, and design methodologies.



IA Leading and Learning Initiative Research Team (left to right): Lizbeth De La Cruz Santana, D. Romo, Erica Kohl-Arenas, Kal Alston, Gale Greenlee, Christina Preston, and Alana Haynes-Stein, with UC Davis Provost Mary Croughan (second from left).

Another LLI related webinar, Graduate Education Counterspaces: Imagining America and Publicly Active Graduate Education (PAGE), featured lessons from IA's Publicly Active Graduate Education (PAGE) program, including new national research on the challenges and opportunities to building supportive academic cultures for engaged graduate scholars conducted by both PAGE alumni (D. Romo and Gale Greenlee) and Membership Director Trina Van Schyndel.

Additional online programming included virtual member meetings and orientations, Meet IA webinars orienting prospective and current members to the IA network, and a new collaboration with IARSLCE and LEAD California - Dissertation Dish. Dissertation Dish is a co-organized, bi-monthly webinar series which highlights quality emerging research in the field of service learning and community engagement. This past year Dissertation Dish featured:

- Community-Engaged Practitioner-Scholar Professional Identity Development Through Participation In A Community Engagement Association's Graduate Student Fellowship,
- "When There's Good, There's Good. When There's Harm, There's Harm": Diverse Voices on Community Engagement,
- Organization Development for an Engaged Campus: Assessing Narratives and Architecture to Direct Future Change,
- Evaluating Engaged Research in Promotion and Tenure: Not Everything that Counts Can Be Counted,
- On Becoming a People's College: An Appreciative Inquiry,
- Engaging Sameness: A Phenomenological Study of The Community Engagement Experiences of Latinx Students At A Hispanic Serving Institution, and
- Engaging Feminism, Transforming Institutions: How Community Engagement Professionals Employ Critical Feminist Praxis to Re-Imagine and Re-Shape the Public Purpose of Higher Education.

IA's open access, multimedia, interdisciplinary arts, design, and humanities journal, [PUBLIC](#), published volume 7, "The Shape of Us: Water Ways and Movements" which explored the transformative power of water through 17 pieces of creative scholarly work from members and non-members.



*Bulbancha (Green Silence), 2019, by Athena LaTocha
Shellac ink, Mississippi River mud, Spanish moss on paper
featured in PUBLIC Vol. 7*

Locally, IA Happenings supported regional campus and community engagement through a poetry reading with Victor Hernandez Cruz, a graduate student workshop co-led by LLI researchers Lizbeth De La Cruz Santana and Alana Haynes-Stein on Navigating Graduate School as a Public Scholar While Building Supportive Structures and Culture, and a co-sponsored national encuentro Salt of the Earth: Cultivating Climate, Food, and Land Justice with the Pan Valley Institute.



Carlton Turner, Myrna Martinez Nateras, and other participants at the Salt of Earth national encuentro in Madera, CA

The [Equitable Food Futures](#) (EFF) participatory action research project, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is a demonstration project in partnership with Sipp Culture to support the long-haul vision for locally driven and owned creative community development in Utica, Mississippi. The research team presented findings from the research and shared the innovated integrated approach to (agri)cultural community development at the National Gathering and additional conferences and venues, as well as submitted a draft book chapter to a Routledge handbook on Trauma Informed Creative Placemaking, forthcoming in 2024.

Further, IA's research collaboratives continued opportunities for member participation and engagement. [Assessing the Practices of Public Scholarship \(APPS\)](#) held a session at the National Gathering, presented at Meet IA sessions, and supported evaluation efforts of IA members and LLI action research.

The [Collective of Publicly Engaged Designers \(CoPED\)](#) also held a session at the National Gathering, presented at Meet IA sessions, supported the LLI through student-led design work on new tools, and published a new interactive map featuring national leaders in publicly engaged design.

IA is especially proud to grow our membership in 2022-2023.

Please join us in celebrating these **new members to the IA consortium**:

- Bergen Community College
- California State University, Fullerton
- College Unbound
- Reed College
- Towson University
- University of Cincinnati
- University of Illinois, Chicago
- University of Montana
- University of North Carolina, Asheville
- University of Texas, Austin
- Utah Valley University

IA member stories and successes were uplifted through member spotlights in our monthly newsletter and social media. Faculty, staff, students, and community and cultural leaders from across our network stayed up to date on the latest news and offerings from IA by [subscribing to our mailing list](#). Never hesitate to send us names of new students and colleagues who would benefit from receiving news from IA.

IA LEADERSHIP

This year we welcomed new members of our **National Advisory Board (NAB)** and wished fond farewells to others. IA is excited to welcome Carlos Jackson (University of Michigan), Lizzy Cooper Davis (Emerson College), Sylvia Gale (University of Richmond), Sylvia Spears (College Unbound), Darby Ray (Bates College), and Rebecca Castillo (Los Angeles Times) as new members for 2023-2024.

NAB leaders transitioning off this year include Amy Howard (University of Richmond), Rowena Tomaneng (San Jose City College), Laura Harjo (University of Oklahoma), Michael Rios (University of California, Davis), Caroline Cheung (PAGE representative), and Board Chair Kal Alston (Syracuse University). We thank them for their service and sustained commitment to IA.

We thank our current board members for their ongoing and deep engagement with IA and look forward to all we will accomplish in 2023-2024: Chair Paul Schadewald (Bringing Theory to Practice), Vice-Chair Milmon Harrison (University of California, Davis), Sophia Acord (University of Florida), Mari Castañeda (University of Massachusetts, Amherst), Frederick "Wood" Delahoussaye (Ashé Cultural Arts Center), Liya Escalera (University of Massachusetts, Boston), Denise Frazier (Tulane University), Kayhan Irani (Artivista Productions), Robyn Rodriguez (University of California, Davis), Winoka Yepa (Native Americans in Philanthropy), and Carol Zou (Independent Artist, Teacher, Strategist).

IA STUDENT FELLOWS

IA supported the professional development of emerging publicly engaged scholars and practitioners by welcoming new cohorts of eight undergraduate student [Joy of Giving Something Fellows](#) and eight graduate student [Publicly Active Graduate Education Fellows](#) to the IA network. IA also continued to offer an internship program through our host campus, the University of California, Davis, and mentored four undergraduate students this past year.



JGS Fellows at the 2022 IA National Gathering

JGS FELLOWS

- Aniqah Ahmed, University of Florida
- Sherley Arias-Pimentel, University of Richmond
- Jose Cuevas-Lopez, UW Bothell
- Angelica Flores Valdivia, UC Irvine
- Jayonna Johnson, University of Dayton
- Deborah Olatunji, University of Pennsylvania
- Tyler Sanchez, Macalester College
- Kalsang Tsering, Bunker Hill Community College

PAGE FELLOWS

- Antonia (Ant) Lorenzo, UC Santa Cruz
- Blya Krouba, University of Houston
- Brittany Daniels, CSU Dominguez Hills
- Cristovão Nwachukwu, University of Florida
- Fernando David Márquez Duarte, UC Riverside
- Marisa Raya, UC Davis
- Nathaly Ortiz, UC Riverside
- Rashmeet Kaur, Drexel University

MEMBER BENEFITS IN 2023-2024



We look forward to continued partnership with our members in the year ahead.

The [2023 IA National Gathering](#) will take place October 20-22, 2023 in Providence, RI. Organized with IA member College Unbound, AS220 arts, and the City of Providence, Radical Reckoning: Invoking the Elements for Collective Change will convene our national consortium for three days of learning, creation, and inquiry on the radical work of reckoning with the past to create a future of collective liberation.

As a member benefit, IA member institutions can access one free registration and [reduced registration rates](#).

Other benefits of IA membership in 2023-2024 include:

Publicly Active Graduate Education (PAGE) Fellowship. The PAGE Fellowship is a national, interdisciplinary community of publicly-engaged graduate students interested in the humanities, arts, and design. PAGE enhances the practice and pedagogy of public scholarship and provides peer support, career networking, and opportunities for collaborative knowledge production. Graduate students from member campuses are eligible to apply for the PAGE Fellowship on an annual basis.

Joy of Giving Something (JGS) Fellowship. The JGS Fellowship aims to elevate photography and digital media as pathways for undergraduate students to pursue their careers and to make a difference in their communities. JGS fellows commit to a year-long learning exchange that includes tuition support, financial support for a community project, and opportunities for professional development. Undergraduate students from member campuses are eligible to apply for the JGS Fellowship on an annual basis.

Research Initiatives and Collaboratories. IA's action research portfolio includes Equitable Food Futures (EFF) with Sipp Culture and the Leading and Learning Initiative (LLI), which documents challenges and successful practices to shift campus culture in support of public and activist scholarship. Member engagement opportunities include virtual study groups on select topics related to the IA action research agenda and opportunities to use IA materials to advance your own campus culture change efforts. Members are also invited to participate in IA's research collaboratories. Assessing the Practices of Public Scholarship (APPS) works to build values-based evaluation frameworks for assessing the impact, process, and relationships of public scholarship and campus-community engagement projects, and the Collective of Publicly Engaged Designers (CoPED) convenes leading design thinkers and doers to reflect upon and assert the importance of design in developing innovative strategies for public engagement.

Webinars and Virtual Convenings. IA regularly organizes virtual convenings to provide accessible, year-round networking and learning opportunities. The Teaching and Learning Circle (TLC) webinar series facilitates peer-led conversations, learning, and resource sharing on critical topics within the IA consortium. The Dissertation Dish webinar series curates quality emerging research in the field of service learning and community engagement. Meet IA sessions help orient prospective, new, or current members to the IA network, and other information sessions provide insight into specific IA programs and initiatives. Webinars are free for members, and we welcome member proposals for future topics.

Mail Art Project. The Mail Art Project is an annual opportunity for IA members to engage in important topics and issues through shared creative art making and reflection. Themes are drawn from IA's National Gatherings and include waterways and movements, rituals of repair and renewal, and radical reckoning for collective change. This is a free, members-only program.

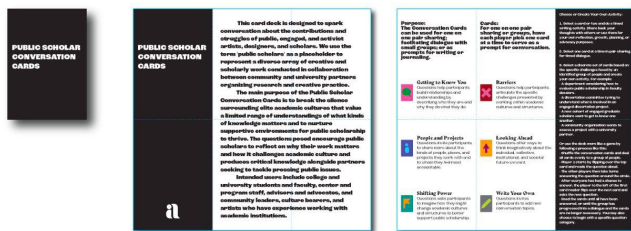
Member and Regional Organizing. Supported by IA staff and the IA National Advisory Board, member and regional events offer scholars, students, artists, designers, and community organizers opportunities to explore the theory and practice of public scholarship and cultural organizing, discuss pressing issues impacting member campuses and regions, and foster a peer support network. Members have access to resources to support organizing on their own campus, as well as organizing multi-campus IA networks in their regions.

National Spotlight. IA promotes public scholarship, cultural organizing, and campus change by lifting up the stories of our members through a number of platforms, including: the IAStoryShare podcast and featured member spotlights in our monthly newsletters and social media. Members are invited to submit news, job postings, and other stories.

New! Peer Learning Tools. Inspired by the findings of the LLI research, two new pedagogic tools are available at no cost to IA members and will be shared in the Member Session at the 2023 National Gathering:

The **Public Scholar Conversation Cards** are designed to spark conversation and deepen understanding about the contributions and struggles of public, engaged, and activist artists, designers, and scholars.

The **Public Scholar Imagination Guide** is an interactive workbook that provides reflection, action, and imagination tools for anyone trying to make the university a more hospitable, caring, and creative place to nurture public, engaged, and activist scholarship, art, and design.

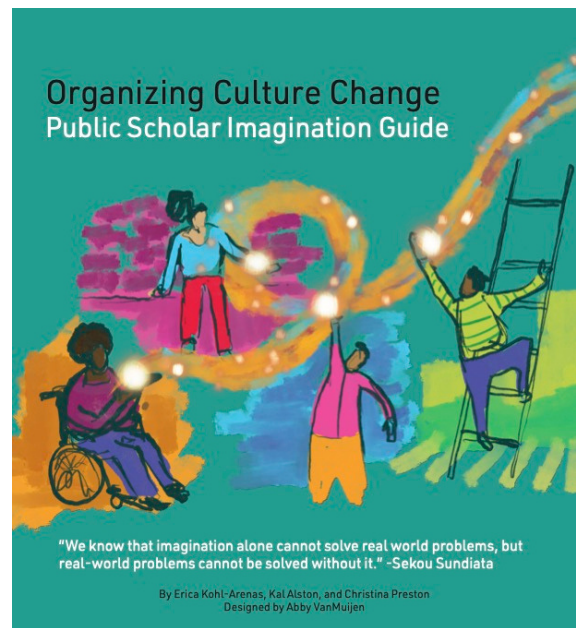


instructions



cards

Public Scholar Conversation Card designs by Brett Snyder, Emily Sobolik, Guadalupe Alvarez, and Langston Hay



Public Scholar Imagination Guide concept draft from artist Abby VanMuijen

IA staff thanks you for a year of important and meaningful engagement and we look forward to the year ahead!

- Erica Kohl-Arenas, Faculty Director
- Stephanie Maroney, Managing Director
- Erin Syoen, Operations & Events Manager
- Trina Van Schyndel, Membership Director
- Danniele Biala, Communications Specialist
- Matt Foster, Financial Analyst

Stay connected with IA throughout the year @imaginingamerica



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