

**The 2008 Obermann Graduate Institute on Engagement and the Academy**

**The University of Iowa  
Obermann Center for Advanced Studies  
The Graduate College**

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Associate Professor of English**

**David Redlawsk, Co-Director of the Institute  
Associate Professor of Political Science**

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# **The 2008 Obermann Graduate Institute on Engagement and the Academy**

## **Narrative Report**

### **Overview**

The week of January 15-19, 2008, the UI Obermann Center for Advanced Studies and the Graduate College hosted our second Graduate Institute on Engagement and the Academy, one of the few programs in the country that challenges graduate students to engage local, national, and international communities in their future teaching and research.

Directed by University of Iowa professors Teresa Mangum (English) and David Redlawsk (Political Science), the Institute provided fellowships for 15 competitively-selected UI graduate students from all disciplines and for one Senior Fellow from the 2007 Institute. The Fellows studied innovative theories of publicly engaged teaching and research and met with faculty members, community leaders, and graduate students with a proven track record of engaged teaching and research. The Institute not only welcomed local leaders into the classroom, but also took students out in the field to arts venues and social service agencies. To extend the reach of the Institute further into the community, the Obermann Center joined with other campus and civic organizations to host a public lecture and discussion on engagement. The culminating public event featured the students' presentation of the projects they had designed and set in motion during the Institute.

The Institute received generous financial support from groups on campus and in the community, including the Obermann Center and the C. Esco and Avalon L. Obermann Endowment, the Graduate College, the Roy J. Carver Charitable Trust, the Iowa City Noon Rotary, the City of Iowa City, the UI Women's Resource and Action Center, the UI Office of Civic Engagement, the UI Center for Teaching, and the Office of the Provost.

### **Mission**

The Obermann Graduate Institute was inspired by national calls for universities to engage in serious and sustained exchanges of knowledge, problem-solving, and educational and economic development with their communities. Public engagement unites knowledge and practice. Publicly engaged scholars, researchers, and artists join their pursuit of new ideas and discoveries with a commitment to contribute to the greater good. With community partners, publicly engaged university teachers create opportunities for students to serve local needs, recognizing that experience enriches students' learning. Through public engagement, university-based scholars work in their communities and with community partners to create a more open-minded, just, and generous world. Where better to foster public engagement than in graduate education—the springboard for future leaders in every arena.

## **2008 Fellows**

The 2008 Fellows represented five UI colleges. Participants from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences included Kirsten Beyer, Geography; Bridget Draxler, English; Megan Foley, Communication Studies; Emma Rainey, Nonfiction Writing/English; Jonathan Rattner, Cinema and Comparative Literature; Lindsey Row-Heyveld, English; Kenda Stewart, Anthropology; Shiori Yamazaki, Asian and Slavic Languages and Literatures; Jonathan Johnson and Megan Berner, Art and Art History. Jacqueline Leung-Heras and Mary White are in the Community and Behavioral Health program of the College of Public Health. The other Fellows were Kathryn Kauper, Educational Policy and Leadership Studies of the College of Education; Rene Lorence, Urban and Regional Planning in the Graduate College; and Bennett Postlethwaite, Management and Organizations in the Tippie College of Business. To see detailed biographies, visit the Obermann website: [www.uiowa.edu/~obermann/gradinstitute/2008bios.html](http://www.uiowa.edu/~obermann/gradinstitute/2008bios.html).

## **Models of University and Community Partners: Faculty and Community Participants**

Many community members and UI faculty generously donated their time to the Institute. They advised the co-directors and shared their knowledge and skills with the Fellows. And this year, representatives from the Iowa City Area Chamber of Commerce, the Iowa Noon Rotary, and the Cedar Rapids Gazette helped to review graduate student applications to participate in the Institute.

Most important, visitors reported on their community projects. One of the most ambitious examples of global engagement, the Xicotepec Project, sends members of the Iowa City International Rotary and UI faculty and students to work in Mexico where they have built new public water facilities and set up a community pharmacy. Describing the Project were Jean Florman of the UI Center for Teaching, Jim Peterson, local businessman and member of International Rotary, Hazel Seaba from the College of Pharmacy, and Craig Just in the College of Engineering.

The Pheasant Ridge Neighborhood Center welcomed the group for an onsite visit where students learned about the Center's many programs for their diverse neighbors from Bosnia, Somalia, and Latin America.

## **The Institute Town Hall Event**

One of the features of the Institute is a town hall meeting at the Iowa City Public Library where students, faculty, university officials, and civic and community organizers discuss the challenges of town-gown engagement. Frank Gilliam, UCLA Associate Vice Chancellor for Community Partnerships and alumnus of the UI Political Science Department, spoke on "Civic Engagement and the Research University: Challenges and Opportunities." He then launched a discussion with the audience and with panelists: Regenia Bailey, Iowa City Mayor; Lola Lopes, UI Interim Executive Vice-president and

Provost; Tom Moore, Executive Director of the African-American Historical Museum and Cultural Center of Iowa; and Lyle Muller, an editor at the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*.

### **Progress toward Institute Goals**

In the second year, the Institute moved forward on our mission, guided by what we learned from the first year of the program. Most importantly, we learned

1) Broadly – many programs focus on immediate, limited, concrete local changes. The greatest contribution of this program is initiating long-term, profoundly transformative philosophical changes in the way future leaders, especially scholars and researchers, view the goals, responsibilities, and work of colleges and universities. The purpose of the Institute is to create leaders in higher education with the commitment and the tools to deepen relationships between colleges and universities and their local, national, and global communities.

2) Specifically – many graduate students and faculty first make these profound changes in the local, concrete setting of the classroom. They do this by experimenting with community-based learning models like service-learning. However, we see emerging evidence that a significant number of Institute graduates who *first* commit to publicly engaged teaching and learning *next* begin to invent genuinely innovative, academic culture-changing research projects. The confidence they gain in publicly engaged teaching is an important step toward publicly engaged scholarship and research.

Here are the ways we improved the Institute:

- Pursued and received applications from students in a wider range of disciplines.
- Encouraged participation of students and presenters who represented not only diverse disciplines but also diverse economic, ethnic, and national perspectives.
- Extended connections to a greater number of community groups, thereby encouraging a greater number of placements of graduate students and their projects.
- Invited a UI alumnus/ Iowa native to deliver the public talk and challenged him to connect his successful projects at the University of Southern California to the realities of the state of Iowa.
- Tied the public presentation to a panel of respondents including the Iowa City Mayor, the UI Provost, the Director of the African-American Historical Museum and Cultural Center, and a local newspaper editor to strengthen local impact.
- Refined readings and presentations.
- Encouraged students to examine opportunities to transform teaching practices and to explore the path from publicly engaging teaching to community-based research—both at the Institute and through follow-up contact and advice.
- Developed an advisory board composed of Institute graduates, faculty members, UI staff members from the Center for Teaching and the Civic Engagement Office, and community leaders from the United Way and Rotary. They will conduct a review of the past two years and offer recommendations for the future.

## APPENDIX

### 2008 FELLOWS' PROJECTS

**Megan Berner** Megan has experimented with art projects that involve experiential learning. In her research, she completed an article in conjunction with a graduate Public Art class that was a revision of the project she presented during the Institute. She conducted research on costs of a community art gardening project and proposed an interdisciplinary art class that would include the creation of a community garden and be fully integrated into the community surrounding the University. She is currently researching sites and hoping to propose a class based on her research to the University of Nevada Reno through the art department and agricultural extension.

**Kirsten Beyer** Kirsten's research interests include geographic information science, participatory research, health disparities, cancer prevention and control, environmental health, and intimate partner violence. Her dissertation will incorporate community participation in exploratory spatial analysis of colorectal cancer incidence, stage, screening and mortality data. She will invite residents of areas under study to help map the incidence of colon cancer in their own towns. Kirsten developed a research proposal for her dissertation based on the project she developed during the Institute. She was awarded a Seashore Dissertation Year Fellowship from the University of Iowa and a Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement grant from the National Science Foundation, as a Co-PI with her advisor, Dr. Gerard Rushton. The UI Prevention Research Center awarded her advisor a pilot grant to support Kirsten's research as well as that of another graduate student.

**Bridget Draxler** Bridget reports that the Institute gave her "the vocabulary, a toolbox, a network, and most of all a passion to pursue this type of scholarship." She designed a course that will address local issues (and the rhetoric surrounding these issues) and tested several projects, including a hybrid personal essay/research paper based on an issue relevant to the University of Iowa. Bridget has begun to translate her literary scholarship into a conversation with the public by curating an exhibit of images and manuscripts by and about 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>-century women writers for the UI Old Capitol Museum.

**Megan Foley**, a University of Iowa Presidential Graduate Fellow, is focusing on rhetoric and public advocacy in her dissertation. Megan has designed and taught an undergraduate service-learning course, "The Rhetoric of Intimate Partner Violence" that engages students in her dissertation research—surveying and interpreting data about public conceptions of domestic violence. Her students learn while serving the UI Women's Resource and Action Center's work.

**Jonathan Johnson and Jonathan Rattner** Using his training in filmmaking, **Jonathan Rattner** founded the Iowa City Senior Television Online and introduced "the linn street

collective." The Senior Center Television Crew and UI students create intergenerational programming for cable access. Now **Jonathan Rattner** (filmmaking) and **Jonathan Johnson** (media arts) have combined their projects. They will bring together Senior Center retirees with West High literature and language students to work on photo and video projects. Jonathan Rattner is taking the lead role since this project is directly related to his thesis.

**Kate Kauper** With two fellow graduate students, Kate developed and presented a curriculum for pre-service teachers, based on action research using a civic engagement component. The project focuses on three components of an action research cycle: reflexivity, civic engagement, and problem-posing. She uses components of this curriculum in the course "Human Relations for the Classroom Teacher." She will be working with the staff and children at the Pheasant Ridge Neighborhood Center, whom she met through the Institute. Kate presented her research on the project and the curriculum at the University of Illinois at Chicago for the 5th Annual International Conference on Teacher Education and Social Justice. She created CDs of the curriculum to distribute at the conference. Kate developed a project for high school teachers who attended the Human Rights and Global Climate Change Summer Institute hosted by UI's International Programs.

### **Emma Rainey**

After serving as a volunteer at the Four Oaks facility that houses homeless teens ages 11-17 in Iowa City, Emma decided to use her talents as a creative nonfiction writer to teach the students crucial skills they require for survival. She recruited six graduate students from the Nonfiction Writing Program, Theatre Arts, and the Writers Workshop) and worked with Four Oaks to develop and teach weekly creative writing and reading workshops, plays, and radio shows with the teens. The program was such a success that she is now working with the volunteer director at the Veterans Association in Iowa City to begin a similar writing group for veterans in 2008-09.

## **2007 FELLOWS' PROJECTS UPDATE**

**Joanne Janssen**, a PhD student in English and the returning Senior Obermann Graduate Fellow, developed a service-learning course in Rhetoric that was featured in the UI Alumni Magazine. This crucial General Education requirement allows freshmen to work with the Crisis Center and local soup kitchens, deepening their understanding of the issues of poverty they were discussing in their writing for the course. Joanne has now moved her research on nineteenth-century British writers into the public arena. She is working with graduate students and faculty members from Art and Art History, The School of Music, and Theatre Arts and with community partner, Prairie Lights Books. They are organizing a public reading and performance of the work of women writers and composers for Spring 2009.

**Anne Haydock**, an MFA in Cinema and Comparative turned a video art project she developed for one class of challenged high school students at the Iowa City Tate Alternative High School into a school-wide program that engages the students in hands-on writing and filming of video-autobiographies. Since her participation, she has recruited a number of fellow MFA students to share their expertise with the Tate students as the project continues to grow.

**Kate Karacay** is Co-Director of the Iowa United Nations Association, member of the Iowa City Human Rights Commission, treasurer of the UI chapter of Amnesty International, and founder and president of the Iowa Human Trafficking Awareness Project. She was awarded a UI Stanley Fellowship for Research Abroad to study trafficking in Turkey; received the Philip G. Hubbard Human Rights Award, and she was featured in the UI “Be Remarkable” campaign ([www.uiowa.edu/be-remarkable/portfolio/people/karacay-k.html](http://www.uiowa.edu/be-remarkable/portfolio/people/karacay-k.html)).

**Kate Henderson**, who graduated with a Ph.D. in English in 2008, designed an oral history project for a General Education literature class. Her students interviewed family members to uncover oral histories related to class. Her course was so successful that she was asked to present the project to 40 teaching assistants. She coordinated a community project for all sections of Gen Ed literature, which included visits to a museum exhibition of author Marilynne Robinson’s manuscripts, Robinson’s reading and discussing her work with over 100 students.

**Elizabeth Sutton**, a Ph.D. in the School of Art and Art History, designed a service-learning course that asks students to examine personal assumptions and stereotypes by relating history to personal experiences. The course led to research on seventeenth-century images as catalysts for examining experiences with groups who face stereotypes and assumptions in today’s society. She participated in a panel session on service-learning at the national College Art Association and presented research she conducted during the Institute in a paper, “Art History and Public Engagement: Arts Advocacy through Relevant Practice,” at the Iowa Campus Compact conference.

## **COMMUNITY AND UNIVERSITY SPEAKERS AND CONSULTANTS**

**Regenia Bailey** is Mayor Pro Tem and City Councilor in Iowa City. She is Consultant and Coach for Bailey Leadership Initiatives.

**Kenneth G. Brown** is UI Huneke Faculty Research Fellow and Associate Professor of Business. Professor Brown conducts research on learning and motivation and their relationships to needs assessment and evaluation practices. His research on employee learning through Internet technology has won awards from the American Society of

Training and Development and the Society of Human Resource Management. His undergraduates consult with the Johnson County Crisis Center, the Retired Seniors Volunteer Program, the Englert Theatre, the Iowa Children's Museum, and the Iowa Valley Habitat for Humanity ReStore.

**Barbara Eckstein** is UI Interim Associate Provost for Academic Administration and Professor of English. Her scholarship is on the role of literature and other storytelling in the production of space. This interest foregrounds questions of human impact on the world we co-inhabit with all other living and nonliving matter and looks to models of sustainability for answers. She directs the project “An Endangered River Runs through Us: Three Iowa River Journeys.” Each is a guided tour of a portion of the river with site-visits combined with talks and readings by experts and writers.

**Katherine Eberle** is Professor of Voice in the UI School of Music. She specializes in oratorio, chamber music, art song, and opera, and she has performed in many U.S. and international professional and collegiate engagements. She has expanded the boundaries of vocal performance – staging seldom-heard works and those of lesser-known composers and developing unconventional repertoire for voice and solo instrument. Eberle researched and assembled an unusual collection of art songs by women composers and produced a CD of several of these works, *From a Woman's Perspective*.

**Jean Florman** is Associate Director of the UI Center for Teaching. She has taught nature and science writing and has worked as a writer and public radio producer. Her work has appeared in national magazines and newspapers, on KUNI Public Radio, and in McGraw-Hill publications. She has published two books and has degrees in anthropology and law.

**Eric Gidal** is UI Associate Professor of English. His teaching and scholarship focus on English romanticism, especially the relationship between literature and the visual arts in the emergence of the aesthetic as a secular category of ethical experience and communal identification. His book, *Poetic Exhibitions: Romantic Aesthetics and the Pleasures of the British Museum*, studies the British Museum during its first century (1753-1856) as a focal point of contemporary aesthetics and ideological debates. He is co-curator of the exhibition, “William Blake at 250.”

**Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr.** is Associate Vice Chancellor for Community Partnerships, Professor of Political Science, and Director of the Center for Communications and Community at the University of California, Los Angeles. He is the author of the *Farther to Go: Reading and Cases in African-American Politics* and co-author of the forthcoming *Race, Television News, and American Politics: Script-based Reasoning about Crime and Welfare*. He is a political analyst for KCAL-TV and national newspapers.

**John E. Grant** is UI Emeritus Professor of English. He is co-editor of *Blake's Visionary Forms Dramatic* and *William Blake's Designs for Young's Night Thoughts*, co-curator of the exhibition “William Blake at 250.”

**Ann Haydock** is Iowa Arts Fellow and MFA candidate in Film and Video Production. She has screened documentary, experimental, and hybrid works at festivals and curated events in the U.S and abroad. Her creative and research interests include early documentary forms and theory, transgendered images of femininity, steganography, and dead and dying mediums.

**Mary Lynn Johnson (Grant)** is co-author of *Blake's 'Four Zoas': The Design of a Dream* has contributed essays to *Historicising Blake*, *The Cambridge Companion to William Blake*, and *Women Reading William Blake*. She is a co-curator of the exhibition “William Blake at 250.”

**Susan R. Johnson** is UI Associate Provost for Faculty and Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology and of Epidemiology. Her clinical and research interests are in menopausal health issues, particularly the use of hormones and other drugs for prevention in post menopausal women, and premenstrual syndromes. She is currently the Study Chair for the NIH sponsored observational study of the menopause transition, Study of Women Across the Nation (SWAN).

**Craig Just** is a UI Associate Research Engineer at IIHR – Hydroscience and Engineering. He is Vice President for Research and Development at Ecolotree®, Inc. His research interests are at the interface of environmental analytical chemistry and applied engineering, and include: phytoremediation of explosives; water quality and cyberinfrastructure; fate determination of contaminants during wastewater treatment; and poverty reduction and community building in Guatemala, Mexico and Haiti.

**Lola Lopes** is the Interim Executive Vice President and Provost of the University of Iowa. She formerly served as Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, following her career as a professor in the College of Business. Her areas of research and teaching include judgment and decision-making, organizational behavior, and cognition and management.

**Tom Moore** is the Executive Director of the African American Historical Museum and Cultural Center of Iowa.

**Lyle Muller** is the Iowa City editor for the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*.

**Jim Peterson** has owned or worked for various telephone, cable TV and data network operators as General Manager, VP of Operations, President, and Owner, working in Iowa, Africa, the Philippines, the Caribbean, Latin America and Europe. He developed commercial and residential rental properties in partnership and is President of Eastern Iowa Angel Investors, LC. He is active in Rotary projects in Mexico and Central America, and serves as coordinator for the Xicotepec, Mexico Project.

**Gregory Prickman** is Special Collections Librarian at the UI Main Library. He is coordinator of the “William Blake at 250” exhibition.

**Tom W. Rice** is UI Professor and Chairman of Political Science. His fields include comparative politics, American politics, political behavior, culture and politics. He has recently published articles in the *Journal of Urban Affairs*, the *Journal of Politics*, and the *American Political Science Review*.

**Hazel H. Seaba** is the UI Assistant Dean for Assessment and Curriculum and Clinical Professor of College of Pharmacy. She directed the UI Division of Drug Information Service, publisher of the *Iowa Drug Information Service (IDIS)*. She developed the Iowa Drug Information Network and implemented a customized drug information training program for international pharmacists. She has authored several book chapters on drug information.

**Joanna Schoen** is UI Professor of History. She studies the history of women and medicine, the history of reproductive rights, and the history of sexuality. Her recent book, *Choice and Coercion: Birth Control, Sterilization, and Abortion in Public Health and Welfare*, examines the role which birth control, sterilization, and abortion played in public health debates and public welfare policy between the 1920s and the 1970s. The *Winston Salem Journal* ran a series of articles based on her research on the history of eugenic sterilization in North Carolina, which resulted in an official apology by the governor and the appointment of a commission that recommended reparations to those sterilized.

**Elithet “Eli” Silva-Martínez** has a master’s degree from the University of Puerto Rico and is a PhD candidate in the UI School of Social Work. She collaborates with the Women’s Resource and Action Center and the Domestic Violence Intervention Program in the Dating Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking Project, and works with community groups on immigrant rights. In her research, she examines help-seeking behaviors of battered Spanish-speaking immigrant Latinas in eastern Iowa.

**Yolanda Villalvazo** participated in the UI Medical Education Community Orientation summer program, working with the Migrant Health Program run by Proteus, after joining the UI's Mobile Clinic and taking the Community Health Outreach elective course in her first year of medical school. She initiated collaboration between Proteus and the Mobile Clinic that resulted in a joint clinic held at the Williamsburg Migrant Worker Camp.

**Jon Winet** is Associate Professor and Director of the Intermedia in the UI School of Art and Art History. He directs the Virtual Writing University Experimental Wing. He produces collaborative projects involving politics, art, language and image in the Information Age. He is currently producing and directing "The Electoral College," a hybrid new-media art/journalism project exploring the 2008 U.S. presidential election and democratic practice in America. He received the UI President's Award for State Outreach and Public Engagement for his practice-based seminar placing art students in Iowa City non-profit organizations as interns.