



CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life Twelfth Annual National Conference

What Sustains Us?
**Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota
22-24 September 2011**

Imagining America (IA) invites higher education affiliates (faculty, students, staff, and administrators) and community partners (individuals and organizations) to participate in our twelfth annual national conference, September 22-24, 2011, in the [Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul](#), co-hosted by Macalester College and the University of Minnesota.

Conference Theme and Structure

Through the theme of this year's conference, "What Sustains Us?" we will convene conversations, collaborations, and actions about a central issue of our time – sustainability. Participants will engage a broad range of questions about sustainability: environmental concerns (in both campus and community contexts), our existential and vocational condition, our social and institutional relations regarding humanities and arts practices, as well as concerns of globalization and the often-invisible labor that supports us.

Conference sessions might engage such questions as:

- How can the increasing efforts to realize the democratic, public, and civic purposes of American higher education be sustained and forwarded? What sustains our engaged practices within a context of diminished resources and rapidly shifting cultures within higher education?
- How can engagement efforts contribute to sustained economic and cultural viability in urban and rural communities?
- In what ways can our work contribute to environmental sustainability and the responsible use of land, water, air, and other natural resources?
- What sustains stakeholders confronting challenges around power, race, class, and privilege?

Responders to the CFP may address this year's conference theme explicitly, or may propose sessions that more broadly explore topics of ongoing relevance to public scholarship and practice. These may include but are not limited to: foregrounding specific genealogies and histories of engaged art and scholarship;

presenting and discussing unique concerns around engagement with respect to various kinds of institutions (i.e., research universities, 4-year colleges, community colleges, land grants, etc.) and/or communities (urban, rural, etc.); discussing and critiquing theoretical, practical, or ethical perspectives that inform engagement; or building on conversations and themes from past Imagining America conferences and regional meetings.

IA's national conferences facilitate encounters with the political, social, cultural, and physical contexts, particular to the host city, that inform local engagement initiatives. The 2011 conference will include on-campus sessions and a day of visits to metropolitan and rural off-campus sites where transformative collaborations are forged between Minnesota's diverse higher education institutions and communities. Interactive conference sessions are intended to facilitate group deliberation about publicly active art and scholarship, on levels of scale ranging from the course to campus-wide initiatives and beyond; from local organizing to national policy and international exchange.

Conference Submissions and Criteria

Conference formats reflect Imagining America's commitment to convening sessions that allow for groups to work through, rather than simply present, issues central to engaged art and scholarship. IA prioritizes sessions that foreground active dialogue and creative collaboration between session presenters and attendees alike.

We encourage all prospective conference presenters to familiarize themselves with Imagining America's one page [Vision, Mission, Values, and Goals \(VMVG\) statement](#), and we ask that the dialogue that sessions initiate project the conversation toward the future, engaging questions of "What next?," "Where do we go from here?," or "How do we maintain the current momentum?"

Priority will be given to sessions that are cross-disciplinary, cross-institutional, include the direct participation of community partners, and/or explicitly engage a partnership between community and higher education. By request, Imagining America is happy to assist would-be proposers to identify individuals from other member campuses who share similar interests and who may want to collaborate. Contact Associate Director Kevin Bott at kbott@syr.edu. IA also invites prospective session proposers to participate in one of two conference calls with Dr. Bott. These calls are intended to familiarize new proposers with Imagining America and will include a brief overview of IA, discussion of conference goals and proposal formats, and Q&A. Calls are scheduled for 1pm EST on Friday, February 25, and 3pm EST on Wednesday, March 9. To participate, contact Vicky Del Prato at vadelpra@syr.edu.

To view suggested session formats, click [here](#).

To submit a proposal, click [here](#).

To learn more about the Twin Cities, click [here](#).

The [Imagining America National Conference](#) page will be frequently updated.

Submission deadline is Monday April 4, 2011.