

BENTLEY HISTORICAL LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
1150 Beal Ave. Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2113



**Creator:** **Imagining America (Organization).**  
**Title:** **Imagining America records**  
**Inclusive dates:** **1999-2007**  
**Extent:** **3 linear feet**  
**Call number:** **2009047 Bimu 2**

**Language:** Material is in English  
**Acquisition:** The records were transferred from the Imagining America office in two accessions, the first in 2004 and the last in 2007 (donor number: 9479).  
**Accruals:** No further additions to the records are expected.  
**Access:** The records are open without restriction.  
**Digital Material:** One CD-ROM. in box 1.  
**Copyright:** Copyright is held by the Regents of the University of Michigan.  
**Processed By:** Philip Heslip in May 2008.

## Abstract

Imagining America is a national consortium of colleges and universities that encourage sustainable campus-community partnerships in the arts, humanities, and design. From 2000 to 2007 Imagining America was hosted by the University of Michigan and directed by professor Julie Ellison. Imagining America fostered programs designed to enrich the public life of communities. The program sponsored a website, newsletter and annual national and state conferences and various scholarly and creative works.

## History

Imagining America (IA) began in March 1999, as a partner of the White House Millennium Council. IA's inaugural White House conference produced collective support for a community of action made up of university presidents, faculty artists, scholars, and community cultural leaders. In 2001, IA became a consortium of colleges and universities that grew to 70 consortium members by 2007. IA was based at the University of Michigan from 2000 to 2007, where it reported to the Office of the Vice President of Research. The program was funded from three sources: fees paid by member colleges and universities; support from several offices at the University of Michigan, in the form of both recurring and one-time-only allotments; and external grants. During this time Julie Ellison, a faculty member of the University of Michigan, was the IA director. "The End of the Beginning" report outlines the first two years of IA's founding and growth. Since then the program has developed multiple projects and initiatives such as the "Tenure Team Initiative" the "Publicly Active Graduate Education" (PAGE) program and many others. As of July 1<sup>st</sup> 2007, IA moved to Syracuse University, its new host university.

Though the University of Michigan no longer supports the IA website, researchers can access many version of the site at the Internet Archive using the following URL: [http://web.archive.org/web/\\*/www.ia.umich.edu](http://web.archive.org/web/*/www.ia.umich.edu). The following link is the organization's current website: <http://www.imaginingamerica.org/>

## Scope and Content Note

The records of Imagining America (IA) were received in two accessions, in 2004 and 2007. In 2004, IA donated the "**2004 Review**" binders, which reviews the IA's history and accomplishments up to that point. In 2007, just before IA moved to its new host university of Syracuse, the IA donated a number of records that were organized into the following eight series: **Mission, Overview and Website; Governance; History; Grants; Projects; Membership and Recruitment; Publications; and National Conferences.**

The **2004 Review** is a comprehensive two-volume overview of the IA program. These binders compile documents from IA's conferences, projects, correspondence, participation lists and records, staff and faculty accomplishments, awards, publications, websites, and press material. As a primarily grant funded initiative, IA measured its accomplishments by the success of its projects. This Review was likely used as a reference source for the IA staff, as documentation of partnerships, and as evidence of accomplishments to show potential participants and funders. The contents of the review are as follows. Volume 1: Self Study, History, Consortium, Responses to the Work of IA,

Governance, Work of Faculty, Work of Colleges and Universities; Volume 2: Work of Language, IA at the University of Michigan, Funding, Staff, and Public Scholarship

Though some of the binders' contents is duplicated in the two auxiliary boxes (some of the early newsletters for example), the binder's order and integrity have been maintained to provide a snapshot of how the project functioned and how it viewed itself in 2004. Of particular interest is the "Imagining Michigan Conferences" section. It was an annual series of conferences between 2000 and 2004 that used the "Imagining Your State Tool Kit" to identify ways to bring universities and community institutions within Michigan together. Book 1 has a CD-ROM "Highlights from November 2002 Conference."

The **Mission, Overview and Website** files consist of an undated "Mission and Program Overview" document and a print-out of IA website screen shots from June 2007 prepared by their webmaster Chris Defay. The website print-out is not a full-text document of the site but a visual representation of the site's content including screen shots of main pages and PDF documents linked from the site. A more comprehensive record of the IA website can be found at the internet archive: [http://web.archive.org/web/\\*/www.ia.umich.edu](http://web.archive.org/web/*/www.ia.umich.edu)

The **Governance** records consist of National Advisory Board documents, such as meeting notes (2000-2002), correspondence (2000-2004), minutes (2000-2006), and an agenda from a 2005 transition meeting. Though there is a copy of the by-laws in the 2004 Review, the by-laws folder has drafts and amendments from 2003 to 2006. The Director's reports consist of both executive summaries and the full texts of annual reports from 2001-2006.

The **History** Series contains an early mission statement (1999) and records from the University of Michigan Faculty Advisory Committee including a list of deans and sample letters requesting recommendations for faculty committee members, correspondence with the deans, the advisory committee contact list, advisory meeting agendas, and minutes and a strategic planning survey given to all possible consortium members.

The sub-series Imagining America History, contains a folder of recruitment material for the IA President's council. This includes the official president's statement on the creation of IA, a sample letter from University of Michigan President Lee Bollinger to other university presidents, and a "Presidents' Checklist: 15 Steps to a Public Mission in the Arts, Humanities and Design." The UM Proposal is a program description and press release from the Woodrow Wilson Newsroom describing the initiative. The IA Consortium folder is a program description with a focus on how IA will help the University of Michigan.

The Imagining America Transition sub-series documents the IA transition from the University of Michigan to its new hosting site Syracuse University and the search for a new program director. Included are guidelines, mailings and applications to become the next host site, a new director job description, and PR outreach to Syracuse University.

The Imagining America Correspondence folder contains letters to, from, and copied to IA director Julie Ellison between 1999 and 2003. Most correspondences are with other higher education professionals. The Association of Performing artist Presenters folder contains material used for the Arts Presenter's 2004 Annual Members Conference including drafts of Julie Ellison's keynote address, handouts, agendas and "No Subject Left Behind" a guide to arts education opportunities. Of special interest are two poems

by Julie Ellison: “Looking Backward” and “The Detroit Observatory 1999.” Imagining Michigan Awards contain award publicity, descriptions, information on the nominating committee, submissions, winner’s announcement (Homeland Project in 2004 and Michigan Story Festival in 2005) and thank you letters. Also of special interest is a binder labeled Statewide Initiatives, which consist of a bio and newspaper clippings of Michigan community artist Mary Wright of Marquette Michigan, who was active in engaging IA with Upper Peninsula universities.

The **Grants** series contains a list of all of the IA grants awarded between 1999 and 2007. The National Rockefeller Proposal is the application material for the grant and the acceptance letter to fund the IA national conference. The University of Michigan Diverse Democracy Funding Opportunities consists of an award letter, award guidelines and budget for a course on Scholarship and Citizenship taught by Julie Ellison. The course syllabus is also included. The Critical Exchange Grant was awarded in 2007 to five member institutions. This folder documents a summary of each award.

The **Projects** Series consists of four subseries: the Tenure Team Initiative (TTI), Sekou Sundiata Residency, the Katrina Project and Best Practices website. According to the IA website, the TTI seeks to articulate and support the adventurous work of publicly engaged scholars and artists. The TTI material includes a white paper, a 2006 initiative background study written by Julie Ellison, and other background and reports. The Sekou Sundiata sub-series documents Sundiata’s University of Michigan residency and involvement in the 2006 national conference. The Katrina Project Web Resource is a print-out of IA’s web content surrounding its Hurricane Katrina project. Included are compiled responses from higher education institutions, primary/secondary level educators, faith-based groups, National Organizations and Associations, State and Regional organizations and associations, community groups, and analysis, effects and rebuilding efforts.

The **Membership and Recruitment** series begins with a list of the college and university members from 2002 to 2007. The next folder is a collection of recruitment materials from 2007. The original donation contained recruitment materials from 2002-2007 and the 2007 folder was chosen as an example files because it was the most recent record and because it held the most comprehensive range of recruitment materials.

The **Publications** series includes the first eight newsletters (2000-2007), which contain news updates, press releases, announcements, a state organization focus, web resources, and even haikus. The six “Foreseeable Futures” pamphlets are individually bound position papers. The Kellogg Report is a 2005 progress report funded by the Kellogg Foundation. The Imagining America Brochures folder consists of 5 brief publications including the original 2000 IA brochure and a 2007 mailing announcing the move to Syracuse University. Most of these pre-2005 publications are also held in the 2004 Review Binders.

The **National Conferences** series consists of six subseries of IA National Conference documents from the years 2000, 2002-2006. Included in these folders are save-the-date mailers, invitee letters, participation lists, demonstrations, keynote speeches, evaluations, proposals, grant recipients, reports, and sample conference folders. There is a CD-ROM and brochure from the 2002 National Conference in volume 1 of the 2004 Review Binder.

**Box No. Description**

---

**2004 Review Binders**

**Box 1**

2004 Review Binders (2 volumes) (Includes a CD-ROM of 2002 Conference highlight in Binder 1)

**Mission, Overview and Website**

**Box 2**

Imagining America: Mission and Program Overview  
Imagining America Website Printout June 2007

**Governance**

National Advisory Board  
National Advisory Board Meeting Notes  
National Advisory Board Correspondence  
National Advisory Board Minutes  
Transition – Chicago Meeting  
By-Laws & Annual Reports  
Imagining America By-Laws  
Director's Reports

**Imagining America History**

1999 Mission Statement  
University of Michigan Faculty Advisory Committee agendas, minutes and notes  
Imagining America History  
2000 Imagining America Recruitment President's Council  
University of Michigan Proposal – Imagining America UM Proposal  
Establishment March: 1999  
Imagining America Consortium University of Michigan Planning  
Imagining America Transition  
Applications  
Transition RFP (Specifications for Host Campus)  
President's Mailing  
Transition Director's Search  
Syracuse P.R.  
Imagining America Correspondence  
Association of Performing Artist Presenters  
Imagine Michigan Awards 2004  
Imagine Michigan Awards 2005  
Statewide Initiatives: Mary Wright Artist Binder of Clippings

**Grants**

Imagining America Approved Grants 1999-2006  
Woodrow Wilson Public Scholarship Grants 1999-2004  
2002 National Conference – Rockefeller Proposal  
University of Michigan Diverse Democracy Funding Opportunities, 2002  
Michigan Humanities Council Quick Grant Proposal – 5/2004  
ACLS/ Imagining America Survey, 2004  
Kellogg 2004  
AASCU/Wingspread Proposal, 2005  
Critical Exchange Grants

**Box No. Description**

---

**Projects**

**Box 2 (cont.)**

Tenure Team Initiative  
 White Paper/Background Study  
 First Year Report  
 Background Study and Preliminary Recommendations  
 Prospectus  
 May 2005 Prospectus  
 Knowledge Base  
 Press  
 Team Consulting Scholars  
 Welcome/Invitation Letters  
 Conference Sessions/Materials 2006  
 Sekou Sundiata National Conference Panel and UM Residency  
 The American Project Press, 2006  
 2006-07 Sekou Sundiata Timeline - Imagining America Conference  
 Panel/Residency  
 2007 Sekou Sundiata Residency Arts of Citizenship Conference  
 Program  
 Katrina Project Web Print-out  
 Graduate Student Projects  
 School of Information Internship Information April 2001  
 Graduate Certificate Research Project – Summer 2002  
 Film Your Issue  
 Web Project

**Membership & Recruitment**

**Box 3**

Membership History: Cohort List 2002-2007  
 2007 Recruitment  
 Member Designated Rep List  
 Member Agreement and Benefits  
 New Welcome Letter  
 How to be an Imagining America Representative  
 Renewal Letters Spreadsheet  
 Continuance Recruitment Letters  
 Special Text Recruitment Letters  
 General Text Recruitment Letters Spreadsheet  
 Recruitment Sample (letters and mailings)

**Publications**

Newsletters 1-8, Fall 2000-Spring 2007  
 Foreseeable Futures 1, Richard Frank  
 Foreseeable Futures 2, Mary Schmidt Campbell  
 Foreseeable Futures 3, Nancy Cantor  
 Foreseeable Futures 4, George J. Sanchez  
 Foreseeable Futures 5, John Kuo Wei Tchen  
 Foreseeable Futures 6, Scott Peters  
 Kellogg Report  
 Imagining America Brochures

**Box No. Description**

---

**National Conferences**

2000 Imagining America National Conference

**Box 3 (cont.)**

Imagining America National Conference Save the Date Flyers

Imagining America National Conference Invites

Imagining America National Conference Participant List

Imagining America National Conference Demonstration

Imagining America National Conference Keynote

Imagining America National Conference Evaluations

Imagining America National Conference 2000 Folder

2002 Imagining America National Conference

Imagining America National Conference Invites

Imagining America National Conference Keynote

Imagining America National Conference Participant List

Imagining America National Conference Evaluations

Imagining America National Conference 2002 Folder

2003 Imagining America National Conference

Imagining America National Conference Save the Date Flyers

Imagining America National Conference Invites

Imagining America National Conference Keynote

Imagining America National Conference Participant List

Imagining America National Conference Woodrow Wilson Grant

Recipients

Imagining America National Conference Evaluations

Imagining America National Conference 2003 Folder

Imagining America National Conference PAGE Fellows

2004 Imagining America National Conference

Imagining America National Conference Save the Date Flyers

Imagining America National Conference Invites

Imagining America National Conference Keynote

Imagining America National Conference Evaluations

Imagining America National Conference Participant List

Imagining America National Conference 2004 Folder

Imagining America National Conference PAGE Fellows

2005 Imagining America National Conference

Imagining America National Call for Proposals

Imagining America National Conference Save the Date Flyers

Imagining America National Conference Invites

Imagining America National Conference Participant List

Imagining America National Conference Evaluations

Imagining America National Conference 2005 Folder

Imagining America National Conference PAGE Fellows

2006 Imagining America National Conference

Imagining America National Call for Proposals

Imagining America National Conference Save-the-Date Flyers

Imagining America National Conference Invites

Imagining America National Conference Participant List

Imagining America National Conference Demonstration

Imagining America National Conference 2006 Folder

Imagining America National Conference PAGE Fellows