Program Review Committee Report
Institute for the Study of Culture and Society

Review Process

The Institute for the Study of Culture and Society (ICS) prepared a self-study following program review guidelines. A two-person external review team reviewed the self-study document, visited the campus, interviewed unit personnel, ICS participants and university administrations, and submitted an external review report. The Program Review Committee (PRC) read the self-study and external review documents and a committee representative met with the Director of ICS. This document represents the PRC’s findings and recommendations.

Summary of the Self-Study

Historical Overview

At the request of then Vice President for Academic Affairs Eloise Clark, a founding committee for the Institute for the Study of Culture and Society was formed in 1995. In the fall of that year, the committee hired a part-time secretary for the Institute and began a search for a full-time Director. Karen Gould, then Associate Dean of the Graduate College, served as the first Acting Director of ICS. The current Director was chosen by the founding committee to become the first permanent Director and began her duties in May of 1996. At its inception ICS reported to the Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, but since May of 1999 has reported to the Vice Provost for Research.

Mission

The self-study document provides the following mission statement:

The Institute for the Study of Culture and Society has as its goal the production of scholarly and creative activity in the traditional humanities and arts disciplines as well as in cultural studies, feminist studies, ethnic studies, environmental studies and other interdisciplinary areas. Its primary purpose is to promote scholarly and creative projects in the arts and humanities, where external sources of funding are increasingly limited, as well as in related areas of humanistic inquiry in the social sciences and education. In particular, ICS stresses work of an interdisciplinary nature, is
dedicated to understanding cultural history, to assessing the impact of media on culture and society, and to providing a forum for fresh thinking about the humanities and the arts. We seek to create and facilitate a forum for this kind of work at the University and in the community at large.

In recent years this original mission has been expanded to include service to “interdisciplinary programs … and a commitment to interdisciplinary research; a commitment both to larger issues related to culture and society and to new and innovative research; [and] an ongoing commitment to create and facilitate a public forum at BGSU to share intellectual work.”

The self-study identifies eight specific program goals deriving from this mission:

- facilitate faculty development and retention among both junior and senior level faculty;
- provide “cutting edge” intellectual activities across a variety of departments, graduate programs and colleges, as well as in the general university community;
- provide leadership in the humanities, arts and interdisciplinary work in general;
- increase research productivity of faculty;
- enhance and support graduate student education and research;
- increase the visibility and prestige of ICS and BGSU at the local level;
- increase the visibility and prestige of ICS and BGSU at the national and international levels;
- contribute to the general goal of making BGSU a premiere learning community.

ICS Programs

ICS pursues its mission-driven goals through a variety of programs: (1) fellowships for advanced research and art-making; (2) a guest speaker program; (3) a provost lecture series; (4) a working papers series that publishes papers by ICS visiting scholars; (5) a writing and research group; (6) interdisciplinary research clusters for faculty and graduate students; and (7) the facilitation of opportunities for grant activity.

Scholars and Artists in Residence (Faculty Fellows). The ICS awards program annually selects four faculty to receive awards to pursue research/creative work for one semester. During the award period, institute scholars and artists are freed from teaching and committee responsibilities while they work in residence. They are required to participate in the Institute’s ongoing research meetings and seminars, to give a presentation in a public forum, and to participate in a community activity designed to share their research/creative work outside the University community.

The Guest Speaker Program (fall semester) consists of large talks, small workshops and seminars by ICS fellows and guests. Some of these programs are
coordinated by one of the interdisciplinary research clusters in accordance with its thematic focus.

The annual *Provost Lecture Series* (spring semester), each with a unique theme, is comprised of talks, guest seminars and community workshops by distinguished scholars.

ICS and the Ethnic Studies Department co-sponsor the *Working Papers on Cultures, Peoples and Historical Systems* series that publishes papers by ICS visiting scholars.

*The Professionally Young Faculty Writing and Research Group* provides an environment of dialogue, exchange and support beyond the individual departments of its participants. Faculty members use this venue to present their work to the group and to elicit feedback on conference papers, articles being readied for publication, book chapters and the like.

The *Interdisciplinary Research Clusters*, each with a unique theme, bring together faculty and graduate students from a variety of departments to explore the work and methods of disciplines other than their own, to provide an opportunity to conduct collaborative research with one another, to forge intellectual relationships beyond departmental boundaries, and to facilitate publishing opportunities.

Grant Opportunities: ICS, through its various programs, serves as a catalyst to spark interest in grant possibilities, provides new opportunities for grant writing, and works to facilitate new faculty configurations that result in grant submissions and funded projects.

**Facilities and Support Staff**

ICS is located in the College Park Office Building. Three offices are available for institute fellows and one each is earmarked for the Director, full-time secretary, and graduate research assistant. A workroom and meeting room fill out the complement of offices.

The Director maintains a two-thirds time commitment to ICS. Her duties include managing institute activities and programs, particularly the provost lecture series and writing group, and supervising office staff. To the extent that her institute responsibilities permit, she continues to pursue her research and teaching agenda.

In addition to routine office duties, the full-time secretary publicizes ICS events, manages guest speaker visits, organizes receptions, schedules board meetings, oversees the fellowship application process, manages the budget and aids the Director in the planning of institute programs and events.

The half-time research assistant works with the Director to organize and provide readings and materials for all research oriented meetings, including the
writing group, the research clusters, the provost lecture series and seminars, and fellow events. She helps develop text for posters and brochures, attends to guest speakers during their visits to BGSU, and assists the Director in producing memos and reports.

Three undergraduate assistants aid the secretary and Director.

The ICS Board, which is comprised of five to six department chairs and program directors, meets monthly during the academic year. The Director keeps the Board abreast of ICS events and programs, and solicits their input regarding activities and programs. Major board activities include working with the Director to prepare the annual executive summary of institute activities and accomplishments that is submitted to the Vice Provost for Research, and selecting, in consultation with the Director and external reviewer, ICS faculty fellows.

**Budget**

ICS receives 80 percent of the annual interest generated by an endowment fund created by the Vice President for Academic Affairs in 1995 at the inception of the Institute. The dollar amount accruing to the Institute varies annually, and has ranged from $72,000 to $82,000.

The total expenses are:
- $15,000 for the Director’s stipend and release time from the Department of English;
- $33,700 for secretarial salary and benefits;
- approximately $3,000 for undergraduate assistants;
- $20,000 for release time for four faculty fellows during the academic year;
- approximately $13,200 for equipment, supplies, postage, posters and brochures, reviewer stipends and staff and director travel;
- $17,500 for the provost lecture series, fall speaker, co-sponsorships, and three research clusters (@ $1,500 each).

The ICS budget is insufficient to fully fund its operations; the budget shortfall for the past year was in excess of $20,000. This budget shortfall was ameliorated by spending a one-time surplus in the interest account, via support from the Provost (approximately $3,000 for the provost lecture series) and Vice Provost for Research ($3,000 for the research clusters), cancellation of the travel budget (the Director raised travel funds internally) and fall speaker (replaced by a speaker funded by one of the research clusters), and internal fundraising by the Director to support other speakers.

**Assessment**

A variety of mechanisms are employed to assess ICS programs and accomplishments:
• Evaluation of the Director: the Director prepares an annual executive summary of the past year’s activities that is shared with the ICS Board and the Vice Provost for Research. Regular meetings between the Director and the Vice Provost occur on a monthly basis, and a targeted meeting for evaluation of the Director occurs annually.
• Letters solicited by the Director from faculty in the writing and research group detail their ICS experiences and address the extent to which the goals and benefits identified in the mission statement were facilitated by participation in the Institute’s programs.
• ICS fellows complete an evaluation form at the conclusion of their residency, and during the following fall semester provide an update of research/creative projects completed subsequent to and as outgrowths of their fellowship experience. They also are invited to report on teaching activities or community collaboration stemming from the fellowship.

Self-Identified Strengths.

The self-study identifies a number of strengths of ICS and its programs:

1. developing and sustaining an interdisciplinary environment at BGSU;
2. facilitating and enhancing faculty retention;
3. increasing research productivity;
4. stimulating intellectual activity at BGSU;
5. developing new opportunities for grants and new configurations among faculty for producing them;
6. creating extensive publicity for ICS events leading to very strong attendance;
7. developing ongoing collaborative relationships with the College of Arts and Sciences;
8. contributing to graduate education and providing students with opportunities to work with faculty and nationally recognized visitors;
9. generating two new ICS programs in 2000: the working papers and the interdisciplinary research clusters;
10. enhancing community activities for both fellows and guests;
11. developing the ICS Board as a strong resource; and
12. promoting diversity and global awareness.

Self-Identified Challenges and Areas for Improvement.

The self-study also identifies several areas in which additional work will be required if the Institute is to achieve its goals and move to higher levels of accomplishment:

1. increase fundraising and development;
2. increase the number of external grants submitted by ICS participants;
3. create an ongoing newsletter shared both locally and nationally;
4. increase local publicity for ICS and its contributions;
5. establish a research accomplishment reception including the President and Provost for all ICS participants;
6. increase the number of activities that connect previous fellows to the Institute in productive ways; and
7. further investigate the role of undergraduate research in relation to the humanities and arts.

Five-Year Plan

Since its founding in 1995, ICS has expanded its programs and activities but continues to operate under the constraints of a budget intended to fund the original, smaller range of activities. As a result, the self-study contends that ICS has had to spread its financial resources very thinly in order to support its new agenda. These financial constraints make it difficult to maintain current activities and programs, and they limit the pursuit of new opportunities.

The five-year plan presented in the self-study proposes a set of prioritized enhancements to facilitate the Institute’s ability to fulfill its mission. The plan concentrates on four areas: fundraising and development, grants, cluster group development, and faculty participation in the lecture series and conferences.

- **Fundraising and Development.** Increase fundraising and development efforts via “co-sponsored prioritizing” (with the Vice Provost for Research and the Dean of Arts and Sciences), named fellowships and lectures, an advisory committee of community and business people who can contribute to development activities, increased collaborative efforts with Arts and Sciences and other colleges across the University, and the nurturing of a group of “friends of the Institute” who can aid in development activities.

- **Grants.** Increase grant activity via a number of concrete initiatives: pursuit of an NEH Challenge grant as well as a larger Ohio Humanities Council program grant; reapplication for the Woodrow Wilson grant for post doctoral fellowships; and application for a three-year Rockefeller grant. The Institute will also explore how ICS can facilitate grant collaboration among faculty in the arts and humanities, and further develop the relationship between ICS and Sponsored Programs and Research.

- **Cluster Group Development.** The self-study notes that cluster groups should play a more central role in ICS programming. This can be accomplished via a national conference and/or by establishing a short-term (one week, for example) scholar in residence program tied to a specific cluster group. In addition, providing faculty who contribute to the cluster groups with release time will facilitate the long-term continuation of the clusters and increase the likelihood of such major activities as national conferences. An increase in the number of cluster groups will enhance interdisciplinarity, cooperation among programs and departments, opportunities for graduate education, knowledge production and research productivity. Because of their interdisciplinary nature and consequent attractiveness to funding agencies, cluster groups should become a major venue for external grant writing.
• **Increase Faculty Participation.** Increased faculty participation is important to the lecture series and conferences at ICS. Historically, the Director has played a central role in the lecture series, including identification of the yearly theme and selection of individual speakers. While faculty have begun to assist in these activities in recent years, the self-study notes that this process needs to be systematized. Facilitating increased involvement via cluster and other interdisciplinary groups is a reasonable way to encourage faculty and students to take responsibility for the planning of the lecture series and conferences. Alternatively, a faculty associate could work closely with the Director to organize these events.

Based on the goals identified in the five-year plan, the self-study proposes the following prioritized resources list:

• secretarial funding ($23,000);
• research assistant funding ($13,000);
• stable cluster funding for activities and release time for each leader ($15,000-$20,000);
• faculty associate funding ($10,000-$15,000 for release time);
• stable funding for the provost lecture series ($15,000-$20,000);
• additional research assistant for faculty fellows, cluster groups, etc. ($13,000); and
• a grant writer ($10,000).

The self-study concludes that an annual investment of $100,000 would allow ICS not only to maintain its current activities, but also to expand and develop in new directions.

**Summary of the External Review**

The external review team of Robert R. Edwards of Pennsylvania State University and Jay Semel of the University of Iowa was impressed with ICS, describing it as “a vital, productive center for important work in the arts and humanities at Bowling Green.” They believe ICS is a valuable asset to the University, serves a broad range of faculty interests and needs, is instrumental in bringing new and stimulating work to the campus, offers invaluable support for research/creative work, and plays a critical role in faculty recruitment, development and retention. Although impressed with ICS’s current contributions, the review team believes these “can be dramatically increased by fine-tuning its mission, integrating its activities, and providing incremental funding increases over the next five years.” A major shortcoming is that the various programs “do not operate in a priority structure that determines what command they should have over budget or ICS and faculty manpower…. A major task facing the Institute is to decide which of these programs best advance its strategic goals and thus have a strong claim on resources, talent, and time.” With this general assessment as a backdrop, the review team offers the following recommendations:

1) **Five year plan:** The ICS Director ought to revise the 5-year plan in consultation with the ICS Advisory Board and key BGSU administrators. The Director also
may wish to consult with individuals representing ICS research fellows, research cluster groups and the writing group; the external reviewers stated their willingness to lend a hand in the development of that plan. The plan ought to present a clear picture of ICS key programs, its programmatic goals, organizational and financial steps necessary for achieving those goals and ways of measuring progress.

2) Mission: The Director ought to revise the ICS mission in consultation with the advisory board and the Vice-Provost for Research. The mission ought to reflect current and anticipated ICS and BGSU practices, needs, opportunities and strengths. Considering that the original reason for the establishment of ICS was to serve the research productivity of tenured faculty who had no ready access to external grants, the external review team thought the most exciting parts of ICS’s new mission would reflect ICS’s enormous potential for 1) advancing the new and important scholarship of both tenured and untenured faculty members, 2) creating communities of intellectual exchange and creating informal mentoring opportunities, and 3) positioning and encouraging faculty to seek out external grant opportunities to advance their research, teaching and service interests, and obligations.

3) Research fellowships: Set the minimum number of research fellowships at six and make some available for untenured faculty following their third-year review. The increase in number would allow for a critical mass of participating fellows at any one time, would increase the intensity and frequency of intellectual exchange, and would increase ICS visibility. Including some untenured faculty among the research fellows would address the issue of declining applications among tenured faculty, help to advance the scholarship of a huge cohort of untenured faculty at BGSU, lay the foundation for a much-needed bridge between tenured and untenured faculty, and possibly even lead to informal mentoring relationships.

4) Research clusters: Maintain funding for at least two research clusters. The clusters are providing an invaluable and unique forum for intellectual exchange at BGSU. Moreover, the clusters represent a seedbed for potential collaborative interdisciplinary scholarship and teaching projects: as such they have potential for the generation of project and curriculum ideas that may prove attractive for funding agencies. One of the research clusters could be invited to plan a future provost’s lecture series. The personal contacts made between BGSU faculty and the visitors of the lecture series may lead to some powerful networking relationships. Cluster directors might be given a modest honorarium or research stipend. A mechanism for systematically identifying, encouraging and supporting new research clusters is needed.

5) Writing group: Maintain funding for the writing group. Participants of the writing group have advised that it was the most important community for them at Bowling Green and the only venue for serious intellectual exchange.
6) Systematically gather, effectively report, display and publicize information about the activities of ICS and its participating faculty. Annually develop lists of ICS activities and participants, including current research fellows and their projects, research cluster participants and their papers, writing group participants, symposia, visiting speakers, and seminars. Annually, write to past ICS participants and request full citations for any publications, conference papers and external grants that grew out of their association with ICS programs. Format these lists so that ICS can print computer-generated reports of, for example, all ICS-related faculty publications reported to date or all external grants awarded to ICS faculty in 2000-2001. Use these materials to develop annual reports for wider dissemination. The lists and reports will serve as interesting accounts for those wanting to know about the activities and accomplishments of ICS; moreover, these accounts will fulfill ICS’s accountability obligations. Ask faculty authors to acknowledge support or funding from ICS in their publications and in their tenure and promotion reports. Display ICS-derived books and articles in ICS offices or the offices of a central administrator. At appropriate intervals, host ICS receptions in honor of faculty achievements, and display all relevant publications, conference brochures and grant proposals.

7) ICS facilities: Continue to assign to ICS its administrative offices and its conference room and also assign to ICS all of the faculty offices along the one wall of its wing in College Park. The administrative offices are obviously essential to the operation of ICS. The conference room has proved itself to be a much-used major hub of intellectual interchange. Assigning to ICS all of the offices along the one wall of the wing will provide a modest increase for space available for faculty members. This is important because it will allow more faculty to work at ICS and hence allow for more faculty interchange. Equally important, it will lend to ICS a spatial unity that will be a tangible reflection of ICS’s striving to become and present itself not as an aggregation of worthy but disparate activities but as a well-defined organization and a coherent driving force in the intellectual life of BGSU.

8) Sponsored research: Develop strategies to position faculty members to be more aware of, comfortable with, and competitive for grant possibilities that advance their own work. While it is not feasible nor even desirable for ICS to become a research center, largely funded by its own grants and contracts, it is both feasible and desirable to have ICS position faculty to be more aware of grant possibilities. Submission of proposals is almost as important as the funding; proposals seen by review panels and program officers will give visibility to faculty and their ideas. Moreover, reviewer comments—whether positive or negative—may prove valuable in helping scholars shape their work. Where appropriate, volunteer modest no-cost support (use of a seminar room or secretarial service) from ICS to help the project and give visibility to ICS. To encourage submissions, make grants personnel and grant material a familiar element of ICS life: invite
agency and foundation officers to speak about their programs, give grant workshops or speak at symposia or conferences; develop forums for BGSU grant winners and grant administrators to discuss strategies; discuss grant proposals as appropriate at meetings of the writing group and of the research clusters; keep copies of successful proposals on file at ICS.

9) Fund-raising: Develop steps in an ICS fund-raising plan, making an NEH Challenge Grant the centerpiece of the plan. Because ICS is an actual place that accommodates groups of scholars engaged in intellectual exchange, it can give tangibility to the humanities, and hence can become a powerful fund-raising device. Potential donors can visit the Institute and can actually sit down among the participants of the research clusters or the writing group. That is to say, it may be easier to raise funds for the humanities through centers than through individual departments. In turn, all challenge grants (one can consider their effectiveness in National Public Radio appeals) have proven themselves to be magnets for wide appeals. And, more specifically, NEH Challenge Grants have an impressive record of helping humanities centers build endowments and increase donor pools. ICS programs will naturally lend themselves to naming opportunities for larger donations: the Smith Brothers Institute for the Study of Culture and Society, the Ellen Johnson Memorial Research Fellowship (or, optimally, the Ellen Johnson Research Fellowship Program, the Exxon Writing Cluster, the Owens Research Cluster).

10) Personnel: Provide funding for the ICS Director, full-time secretary, and graduate research assistant, and seek ways for the Director to share or delegate duties. Every effective interdisciplinary center owes its success to its director. ICS’s impact on so many BGSU faculty members owes everything to the Director and the BGSU offices and ICS staff that support and fund her efforts. The Director has had to be extraordinarily resourceful and clever and has had to expend heroic energies in order to assure ICS’s success. As ICS now moves toward becoming an established organization, it is important that ICS have an adequate and capable core staff, careful programming, thoughtful delegation of duties, and a stable budget, so that more of the Director’s time and energies can be directed toward prudent growth and toward exploring interesting opportunities. Thus, built into the routine ought to be ways to accommodate the Director’s own sabbaticals by identifying a former research fellow to serve as acting director for a semester; as a further benefit, ICS may one day be able to look toward those who have served as acting director to fill the slot of the next director or associate director.

Concerning delegation, the Director might consider the following: identify a tenured faculty member (perhaps a grateful research fellow) who could convene the writing group; offer major planning responsibilities for the provost’s lecture series to members of the research clusters or to the research fellows. Most important, use the ICS Board not
just to evaluate proposals for research fellowships but to assist with planning, programming decisions, and drafting announcements and reports. Convene current and former research fellows to offer advice about and help recruit research fellowship applications.

11) The ICS Board: Re-configure the ICS Board to include not only members who are department chairs but also faculty members who represent key ICS programs (i.e., research fellows, research clusters, and writing group), give ex officio membership to the Dean of Arts and Sciences and the Vice-Provost for Research, and invite the full participation of the Board in ICS planning and evaluation processes. We judge that a more inclusive and powerful board will help ICS integrate its several functions, provide more substantive assistance to the Director, and serve as a more powerful voice to BGSU decision-makers.

12) Budget and finances: Stabilize the annual continuing budget and provide a term increment.
   a) Use the annual interest on the endowment to support the Director’s released time ($15,000), the full-time secretary ($34,000), all operating expenses ($13,000), and four of six release-time research fellowships at $5,000 ($20,000) for a total of $82,000.
   b) The Vice Provost for Research should continue to fund two research clusters at $1500 ($3,000) and a half-time graduate research assistant ($13,000) for a total of $16,000, to be committed for a 3-year or 5-year term, and then reviewed.
   c) The Provost should continue to support the provost’s lecture series ($10,000) and, most important, support two additional $5000 research fellowships ($10,000), for a total of $20,000 annually to be provided for a 3-year or 5-year term, and then reviewed.

This stable and adequate budget will allow the ICS Director—working closely with deans, central administrators and development officers—to prepare a proposal for an NEH Challenge Grant, which the external reviewers see as the keystone in ICS’s role in the forthcoming BGSU capital campaign.

Program Review Committee Findings

ICS offers an ambitious array of programs and activities, the staff is committed and hard-working, and program participants are enthusiastic, productive and appreciative of all that ICS has to offer. The PRC has identified several areas of particular strength:

1. ICS’s original mission—to promote scholarly and creative projects in the arts and humanities, areas for which external sources of funding are limited—continues to be the centerpiece of the Institute, and is perhaps its strongest feature.
2. ICS has made substantial progress in facilitating interaction and fostering a sense of intellectual community among the scholars participating in its programs. ICS recognizes that this goal is as important as is support for faculty research/creative projects, and has made a firm commitment to advance even further in this direction.

3. The Director has enormous energy, a strong commitment to ICS and its programs, and the ability to successfully maintain the Institute’s programs and activities on a limited budget. She plays a significant role in the mentoring of the junior faculty participating in ICS programs, and has been instrumental in establishing and sustaining the vital catalytic role of ICS for scholarship in the arts and humanities at BGSU.

4. ICS has developed an impressive lecture series that makes a significant contribution to the university community. In many cases, nationally and internationally known speakers and artists bring cutting-edge material to the BGSU campus, and ICS gives faculty and students the opportunity to interact with these visitors in a variety of venues, including small group and one-on-one situations.

5. Participants in the research and writing group report that it is the most important intellectual community for them at BGSU, noting that it provides an unparalleled opportunity for professional development, interaction and collaboration with faculty from other departments and programs.

6. The fellowship program is one of the few remaining BGSU programs that provide reassigned time. Consequently, it is highly valued by faculty because of this, as well as for the financial support it offers and the opportunities for intellectual interaction it facilitates.

7. ICS serves as an organizing hub for scholars from a variety of departments and programs to share ideas and to embark on collaborative and interdisciplinary projects. Such large-scale collaboration would be difficult at best in the absence of the ICS programs.

8. ICS has a strong commitment to integrating students, particularly graduate students, into its programs. Students clearly benefit from their interaction with other students, faculty and visiting scholars in the ICS programs.

9. ICS plays a significant role in faculty recruitment, development and retention. This is especially important during this period of history of the University, a period characterized by a dramatic increase in the number of junior faculty.

Although ICS is clearly a valuable asset to the University, the PRC has identified several areas of concern:

1. It is not clear which of the several programs are most central to the ICS mission. Although all of the individual programs are noteworthy, the relatively equal effort expended on each has spread the Director’s efforts so thinly that
she has not been able to focus on the one or two that could, if given greater attention, become truly exceptional in nature.

2. The visibility of ICS is low. Many faculty and students—and even more community residents—are not aware of its existence or have limited knowledge or distorted perceptions about its programs and activities.

3. The Director believes that her two-thirds time commitment to ICS is insufficient to meet all of the program demands. Her work ethic, accomplishments and enthusiasm are impressive, but the PRC believes she has taken on too heavy an individual burden and has not sufficiently delegated the workload. Some of the duties currently assumed by the Director can logically and effectively be assigned to the ICS Board, cluster groups and the research and writing group.

4. The annual lecture series has been well received and it has enlivened the intellectual environment of the University. However, the PRC believes that a more diverse pool of speakers and topics would attract a broader range of the University community.

5. The recent decease in the number of applications for the faculty fellowship program is of concern. This decline is in part a result of the large number of faculty retirements in recent years, as well as the restriction of the program to tenured faculty. It could also be the case that some faculty are reluctant to apply for the fellowship program because of their belief that they are not doing the type of research/artistic activity that would be supported by ICS.

6. Faculty fellows uniformly identify release time from teaching and other duties as the most important benefit of their fellowship experience, but several lament the lack of a stronger sense of intellectual community. Faculty fellows do not consistently involve themselves in the intellectual community that ICS envisions and wishes to facilitate. Rather, many appear to “take the money and run,” working in isolation from other ICS participants and staff, and taking part only in those activities mandated by ICS.

7. There is no standard format for faculty fellows to report on their experience (not everyone gives a campus lecture, for example), nor is there a standardized and regularized procedure for gathering data about ICS participants, programs and activities. This lack of basic information makes it impossible to systematically and thoroughly evaluate the programs.

8. The current budget is insufficient to support all of the activities ICS wishes to pursue, suggesting that either ICS is trying to do too much with the resources at its disposal, or that the current level of support is inadequate. This is exacerbated by the relative lack of fund-raising activities.

9. There is a general lack of grant activity among ICS participants and this activity appears to be assigned a low priority by ICS.
Program Review Committee Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on areas of concern identified in the ICS self-study, in the external report and by the PRC in its evaluation of these reviews.

1) The mission statement should take into account the budgetary realities of ICS. The size and stability of the budget will largely determine in which of two directions ICS proceeds in the coming years. If the University is able and willing to enhance funding, then it is reasonable for ICS to continue on its present course, maintaining and perhaps further developing its current programs. The mission statement would, in this case, be a broad and inclusive one. However, if the University is unwilling or unable to increase funding for ICS, and if ICS is unable to raise additional funds on its own, then the mission statement should be revised to reflect the priority structure of the programs and their relationships to one another. In this latter budgetary scenario, the one or two programs most critical to the mission of ICS should be identified in the mission statement, and ICS should strive to make these truly exceptional in nature. Similarly, the five-year plan should reflect the budgetary circumstances within which ICS must operate. The plan should clarify and rank programmatic goals, specify the mechanisms for assessing whether the goals are being met and provide a financial blueprint for their realization. The revision of the mission statement and five-year plan should commence during the early part of the fall semester of 2002, and prior to any action concerning the remaining recommendations.

2) ICS must do a better job of making the University and local communities aware of its programs and activities. Greater awareness will lead to an increased likelihood that more faculty and students will want to participate. Increased visibility has the added benefit of attracting potential donors to the program. In short, ICS should intensify its publicity efforts. To the extent that building an intellectual community and attracting greater participation are major goals, increasing visibility locally as well as nationally should be assigned a high priority.

3) The Director should ease her administrative burden by delegating some of her responsibilities and duties. She should prioritize her tasks according to those she most enjoys, is best at, and wishes to devote more time and energy to; the remainder should be delegated. For example, the research and writing group could be self-sustaining once started; the Director could, if she wishes, free herself from managing its ongoing activities and meetings. Similarly, the research clusters could be more directly involved in the planning and presentation of the provost and guest lecture series, and could assume the role of recruiting speakers consistent with their thematic foci. The ICS Board could play a more active role in programmatic activities and in assisting the Director in planning and evaluation tasks. The PRC does not wish to suggest which tasks should be delegated and which should command more of the Director’s time and effort—she is in a far better position to make these decisions. We
encourage her to do this once the mission statement and five-year plan are revised and finalized, preferably by the end of the spring semester of 2002.

4) The Director should seek greater input from faculty and students — university-wide as well as from those involved in ICS programs — on all aspects of the program, including the selection of guest speakers.

5) By the end of the spring semester of 2002, or early in the summer semester of 2002, an executive board, comprised of three members of the ISC Board, should be elected/selected; the Board should meet monthly to aid and advise the Director.

6) There should be a concerted effort to increase the diversity of the guest speakers so that they have appeal to a broader cross section of the University and local communities.

7) Although the external review team recommended that the number of research fellowships be increased from four to six. The PRC believes that ICS should first work to increase the number of applications to this program. Expanding the program in the absence of a sufficient number of applicants makes little sense. One way to increase applications would be to encourage applications from a broader range of faculty that reflect varying research methodologies and artistic perspectives. In short, the fellowship program would be opened to all faculty conducting research on issues of society and culture. The quality of the research question—not the methodological orientation of the researcher—would guide the fellowship selection process. In this way, ICS would broaden its appeal and support so that quantitative researchers, for example, feel as “at home” in ICS as do qualitative researchers. Alternatively, if ICS does not wish to expand its inclusion criteria, it should make explicit the type of research and artistic endeavors it will support.

8) ICS should assign a high priority to enhancing interaction and building community among the scholars in its programs. The Director should explore mechanisms that contribute to professional development of ICS participants and that facilitate a sense of intellectual community. These goals are central to the basic mission of ICS and ones that faculty clearly desire. Although the sense of community appears weakest in the fellowship program, ICS should institutionalize a greater degree of interaction among members in all of its programs (for example, faculty fellows should meet with a cluster group or the research and writing group on occasion). Similarly, ICS should formalize the expectation that faculty fellows are an integral component of the ICS intellectual community and are therefore obligated to interact with other ICS participants, particularly other research fellows, throughout the fellowship period. It should be made clear that the release time awarded to faculty fellows is not the equivalent of that associated with faculty improvement leaves. The explicit assumption should be that fellows do not work in isolation from others in the ICS community. Rather, the expectation is that they become continuing members of the ICS community of scholars during and subsequent to their fellowship experience. This membership entails certain expectations and
obligations: continued participation as a consumer of ICS activities and a “giving back” to ICS by serving as a mentor and advisor to other faculty and to students. These expectations should be formalized and made explicit in all fellowship application materials by the fall semester of 2002.

9) Standardize the reporting/evaluation format for ICS participants in the fellowship, cluster group and research and writing group programs. By the fall semester of 2002, ICS should initiate and systematize the regular collection of data on ICS programs, activities and participants. This database should include a roster of speakers and their topics, as well as detailed lists of publications, papers, grant proposals and funded projects resulting from ICS participation. This ongoing database should be used to promote, assess and fine tune the programs, and be available to those who wish to learn more about ICS.

10) ICS should work to increase and stabilize the annual budget. The current endowment-based budget is sufficient to support only a limited number of ICS personnel and activities. The size and stability of the annual budget will in large measure determine in which of two directions ICS moves in the coming years: further development and growth, or a scaling back of initiatives to those that realistically can be met within the structure of the current budget. If the University and ICS wish to proceed in the first direction, ICS must devote greater time and resources to activities that will enhance its budgetary circumstances. The PRC agrees with the external review team that this will involve the expansion of fund-raising activities via such mechanisms as named fellowships, NEH Challenge Grants, and by inviting prospective donors to ICS activities and meetings so that they can observe its operations first hand and interact with participants and staff. The NEH grants and named fellowships, in particular, should be assigned a high priority. In addition, ICS should formulate, in cooperation with the University Advancement, a plan that targets two or three activities or programs to be funded by “Friends of the Institute” (for example, a faculty fellowship, cluster group or guest speaker). If ICS meets with some success on these fronts, the PRC believes that additional funding from the Provost and Vice Provost for Research might be available. In short, it is important that ICS take the initiative to improve its budgetary situation. To this end, ICS should, by the end of the spring semester of 2002, develop a detailed fund-raising plan. At the same time, ICS should continue to pursue additional funding from the University. For example, the Director should explore the possibility of adding a faculty associate to the ICS staff to aid the Director in targeted areas (for example, writing grant proposals).

11) Consideration should be given to requiring ICS fellows, as a condition of their award, to submit a grant proposal to an agency or foundation subsequent to their fellowship experience. This should be required only when appropriate (for example, when the scholar is at this point in the development of his/her project, and when the project is indeed fundable).

The Institute for the Study of Culture and Society should report annually to the Dean of the Graduate College, with a copy to the Provost, on the implementation of these recommendations.